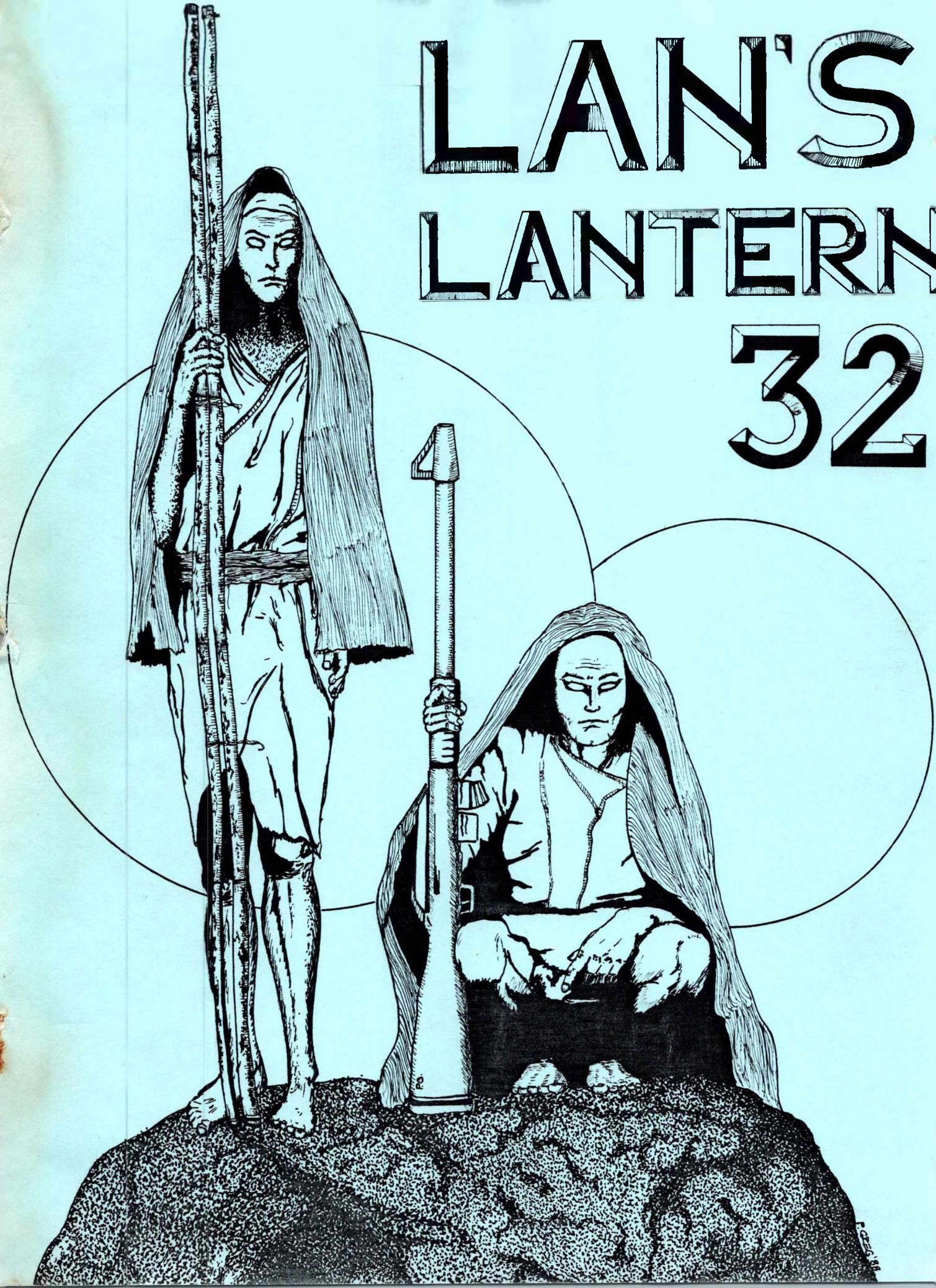
LAN'S LANTERN 32



Lan's Lantern 32

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Dedication

To Maia, as usual,
and
In memory of William F. Temple,
fan, author, and recently
found friend.

LAN'S LANTERN #32 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013 USA. Phone (313) 642-5670. LAN'S LANTERN is available for articles, art, letters of comment, even money (US$3 post paid) and the whim of the editor. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors, and may or may not be those of the editor. This is Lantern Publication #18, a division of LanShack Press Unlimited.

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TABLE OF ARTISTS

Why You Are Receiving This

___ Contribution (art, article, review, loc) in this issue
✓ Contribution (art, article, review) received, to be used in a future issue
___ Comment or loc received (it may be published in a future issue)
✓ Trade ✓ You wanted one
___ We're in an apa together
___ Mentioned in Letter Column
✓ Your book, zine, or tape is reviewed (see page 37 or 109)
___ Mentioned in my Conreports & Ramblings
✓ I thought you might find this interesting.
___ This is your last issue unless you do something

From the Editor

Another Late One

by Lan

This issue is late. It's not as late as some Lan's Lanterns have been, but this is coming out about 4 months later than I had wanted. And, of course, when an editor has an issue comes out late, he likes to tell the story. (What other purpose does the editorial space serve?)

After I finished LL #31 and started mailing it out in August (and have only recently mailed out the rest of it), I figured that I could get this one finished for CONCLAVE in October. Several things happened, as you will read in my "Conreports and Ramblings," and I got bogged down in work and convention-going. I also got caught up in a new, time-consuming hobby and dropped none of my other involvements. Thus I had very little time to devote to school, cons, reading, writing letters and for the apas I'm in, working on the Lantern, housework, AND pursuing my new hobby of collecting and watching videos. I still have not reconciled this, but am becoming more efficient in using what time I have.

Of course, since I didn't have time to finish putting this issue out, I did not have the time to work on the Special issues I had planned for the end of 1989. So, with this issue finally finished, I can concentrate on the Heinlein, Asimov, Leiber, Van Vogt, and Sturgeon anniversary issues. They will be published...eventually. So please bear with me.

We will be attending fewer conventions this year. Maia and I have decided to go to England and the Worldcon in the Netherlands. Thus we are saving money for the trip and are cutting a few cons from our schedule. However, we will be at RIVERCON this summer. I was asked to be the Fan GoH, along with Mike Resnick as the Pro GoH, and George Alec Effinger as the Toastmaster, so Maia and I are going. It has been a while since we attended a RIVERCON, and we are looking forward to it.

However, during our trip to England, we plan to stop by to see Joan Temple, Bill Temple's wife. As most of you know, Bill died last year, but not before my Special on him and Lester del Rey came out. There are a few comments about Bill by his friends and family on page 130. Maia and I were hoping to see him on this trip....

In This Issue

As usual, there is a variety of material, hopefully enough to suit every taste. Essays about fannish things abound. In particular, you should read Ray Beam's speech about "The First Fans" on page 22. Bob Sabella entertains us with his essays about SF; he has a Guest Editorial on the next page. Pavel Gregoric, who did the cover, talks about SF in Yugoslavia. We get a couple of glimpses into the life of Susan Shwartz (pages 4 and 24), and other fans. And there are some humorous items as well.

One comment about Paula Robinson's story, "Uncle Mark." She was unable to place it in any of the major markets, so she asked if I would want it. (Silly question!) It really deserves professional publication, and a wider distribution than the Lantern will give it. If you agree, let your friends and their friends read it.

There are a lot of reviews this time, 68 pages, to be exact, with some longer essays in between. Lots of fanzine reviews, too. I want to warn you, though, that these reviews were finished and pasted up in November, so they are dated, and a lot of new books have come out since then. Most of the fanzine reviews run through the end of the year, however, since I finished pasting up that part in January.

In Coming Issues

I did promise that Evelyn Leeper's trip report to East Africa would be in this issue, but I did not have the room. It will go into the next general issue, along with Jack Williamson's trip to the Soviet Union, and a "pleasant" trip to Tunisia with Laura Resnick (Mike Resnick's daughter). I have several essays lined up, and many more reviews.

Of course, as I mentioned above, I have lots of work to do on the Special Anniversary issues. They will definitely keep me busy and out of trouble.

Enough of this...on with the issue. Enjoy!

Whatever Happened to SCIENCE FICTION

A Guest Editorial by
Robert Sabella

Like most fans, I started reading science fiction for the sense-of-wonder. The exotic worlds, imaginative aliens and fantastic ideas. I was weaned on Edgar Rice Burroughs and Isaac Asimov before my taste matured just about the time the New Wave came along. My reading taste glided effortlessly into such wondrous writers as Roger Zelazny (Lord of Light and This Immortal), Samuel R. Delany (Babel-17 and Nova), Robert Silverberg (Nightwings) and Ursula K. LeGuin (The Left Hand of Darkness).

The Seventies were just as wondrous a decade as the Sixties with the advent of such writers as Larry Niven (Ringworld), George R.R. Martin ("A Song for Lya" and Dying of the Light), John Varley (The Persistence of Vision and Titan) and C.J. Cherryh (Brothers of Earth and Downbelow Station). With the popularity of Star Wars and its assorted sequels, it looked as if the Eighties would be a sense-of-wonder bonanza for science fiction fans.

Guess again.

Two trends early in the decade conspired against sense-of-wonder. The first was the spurt in popularity of fantasy. WHile fantasy started out wondrous enough with its Tolkien and Howard imitations, it soon slid out of the wondrous into the mundane. By mid-decade the majority of fantasy was either historical (most of it medieval) or urban.

The other trend was the cyberpunk movement (or whatever you choose to call it). William Gibson and his imitators strove for realistic near-future milieus, de-emphasizing the fantastic for serious extrapolations.

There were probably other influences as well. Perhaps science fiction's enlarged audience was not as imaginative as its longtime core group. Perhaps Americans as a whole have grown conservative in their reading taste as in their politics. Whatever the reasons, the results are not good for science fiction traditionalists.

Consider the following: In 1988 eight different novels were nominated for either the Nebula or Hugo Best Novel award. Two of them took place in the distant future. Of the other six, one took place in the near future, two in the present, and three in either the historical or alternate pasts.

If you think those facts are a mere aberration, consider the February issue of Locus. That is their annual "The Year in Science Fiction" issue and it containes a long essay by Mark Kelly, their short fiction reviewer. Kelly divided all 1988 short fiction into four categories:

(1) Extraordinary experiences: stories featuring fantastic incidents among familiar surroundings; generally these are present-day settings.

(2) Extrapolated futures: speculations on developments in technology and society; generally near-future settings.

(3) High SF: adventures in space, on alien worlds, in the far future and in post-holocaust societies.

(4) Alternate realities: high fantasy, sword-and-sorcery, parallel timelines and alternate histories.

According to Kelly, 930 genre stories were published in 1988 (excluding those in fanzines and a few oddball publications). Those stories fall into the four categories as follows:

Category	# of stories	% of short stories
1	344	37%
2	158	17%
3	158	17%
4	270	29%

17% of all genre short fiction published in 1988 took place in traditional sense-of-wonder settings! That is barely one-sixth of all genre short stories published. What has happened to science fiction? Certainly this weakening of science fiction's basic nature cannot be blamed on the field's increasing maturity because there was not nearly this much "normalization" during the very literate New Wave years.

Science fiction's popularity has grown so much in the past decade that I naturally assumed SF was chipping away at the fringes of mainstream fiction. Instead the opposite seems to be true: mundania is watering down science fiction so that the majority of it satisfies mainstream beliefs about what real fiction should be. If this is what mass popularity has brought, I would prefer going back to the science fictional ghetto of the Forties, Fifties and Sixties.

Any Comments? |*|

Welcome to the Starship, Mrs. Brown

THE FEMALE HERO AND ONE WRITER'S CRAFT

by Susan Shwartz

First delivered at the International Conference on the Fantastic, 1988. Reprinted here with permission of the author.

Introduction

My title derives from Ursula LeGuin's 1976 article, "Science Fiction and Mrs. Brown," which itself derives from Virginia Woolf's essay "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown." In it, as LeGuin writes, Woolf, who was "an inveterate snooper," eavesdropped on two people in a railway car:

> She was one of those clean, threadbare old ladies whose extreme tidiness--everything buttoned, fastened, tied together, mended, and brushed up--suggests more extreme poverty than rags and dirt. There was something pinched about her--a look of suffering, of apprehension, and, in addition, she was extremely small...
>
> ...all of a sudden Mrs. Brown said, "Can you tell me if an oak tree dies when the leaves have been eaten for two years in succession by caterpillars?" She spoke quite brightly, and rather precisely, in a cultivated, inquisitive voice. And while her companion was replying at length, Mrs. Brown took out a little white handkerchief and began to cry, very quietly, which annoyed the man....
>
> As Woolf says, "She looked very small, very tenacious; at once very frail and very heroic. And I have never seen her again."

This picture of Mrs. Brown, frail yet heroic, led Virginia Woolf to the conclusion:

> I believe that all novels begin with an old lady in the corner opposite. I believe that all novels, that is to say, deal with character, and that it is to express character--not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire, that the form of the novel...has been evolved. The great novelists have brought us to see whatever they wish us to see through some character. Otherwise they would not be novelists, but poets, historians, or pamphleteers.

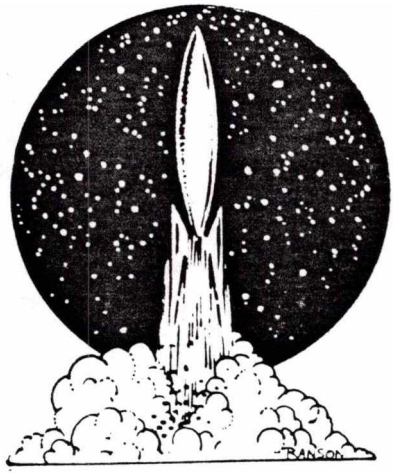
One of the good things about LeGuin's criticism is that she extrapolates, in the manner of a first-rate SF novelist, from mainstream fiction into her own work: what if? What if --as she believes-- this is what SF novelists must do? What happens, LeGuin asks, when Mrs. Brown enters a starship? She makes it look tawdry and unreal. Is there room in SF for Mrs. Brown? Is there room in fantasy, which deals with archetypes, for characters as idiosyncratically and as strongly realized?

Obviously, LeGuin believes that there is, and the essay, as do many other of her essays, devolves on a celebration of the writer's craft and the promise of SF.

When I first read this essay in 1978, I regret to admit that the Woolf passage was unfamiliar to me. Very well then: I could easily say, "But I'm an English medievalist; Woolf isn't in my area," the academic equivalent of "That's not my job, man." But I'm also a writer of science fiction and fantasy and a feminist. That definitely means that at some point, I must confront Mrs. Brown--or Ms. Brown, Dr. Brown, or Captain Brown in all her human, alien, or sorcerous manifestations. If I do it right, to paraphrase LeGuin in another essay, Mrs. Brown will probably confront me.

The Female Hero -- Stereotype or Archetype?

Before I talk about my own method for dealing with the Mrs. Browns of my creation, let's look at what -- or who else -- is out there. Now, "strong female protagonist" is one of those phrases that writers of reviews and cover copy love to use. Un-



fortunately, most of the strong female protagonists fit into the following satirical categories:

1. The Amazonian Bildungsroman. There is a good deal of wish-fulfillment about this character, the tall, awkward girl, who loves horses and hates hairdressers, doesn't want to marry and therefore runs off to prove how worthy she is to do X, Y, or Z on approximately the same premise as the female kibbutznik plows and totes her rifle: the tractor is a nobler article than the diaper, and whatever the boys do is probably more fun anyhow.

The fantasy Amazon comes from a low-tech culture where women are, she thinks (often with a good deal of justification), treated like breeding stock that chatters. Anne McCaffrey's Menolly from her Harperhall books and Marion Zimmer Bradley's Romelly from Hawkmistress come to mind. The SF equivalent has also been told what women can and cannot do and fights to protect her integrity. Almost prototypical is Andre Norton's Charis Nordholm from Ordeal in Otherwhere, which, when Donald Wollheim published it, was revolutionary for placing a young woman in the situation that the standard male juvenile hero (such as Charis' counterpart from Storm Over Warlock, Shann Lantee) finds himself.

Melissa Scott, in her Five-Twelfths of Heaven series, takes matters a step farther; her Silence Leigh is a star pilot who finds herself forced to wear veils, fights it, finds not just one but two understanding spouses, and discovers in addition that she is a magus. When this character gets out of hand (she is prototypically a handful, but that's not what I mean), she resembles Heinlein's Podkayne of Mars down to the last chin-quiver. In her mature form, the character becomes Wonder Woman (see 3) or a form of female picaresque (see 2). She is usually a type of wish-fulfillment for the female SF or fantasy reader.

2. Tom Jones with breasts. Tall, gorgeous barbarian shows that without steroids, she's at least as strong as an East German swimmer, not to mention the male mercenaries she loves and leaves on a magical ramble around a generic fantasy countryside. The SF equivalent is Modesty Blaise, supersleuth and sex kitten.

3. Wonder Woman. In her fantastic avatar, she is a queen who does everything right. In her SF avatar, she runs things perfectly. All feisty princesses and brattish cadets belong to this subcategory, that is, if they're not gawky and awkward, in which case they belong to category 1. Usually--and you only have to look at Heinlein's or Poul Anderson's heroines -- this character has born three children, suckled six, started a revolution while writing cookbooks, and is now keeping house. She never gets wrinkles, cramps, or hangovers, and she giggles.

I am not saying that no writer who deals with these...let's not call them, pejoratively, stereotypes because, by now, they've achieved the status of speculative archetypes, just as LeGuin thinks that Superman has done...characters cannot transform them into heroic women. Consider Gordy Dickson's Amanda Morgan and Marion Zimmer Bradley's Rohana Ardais, strong, mature women who are, to borrow Gordy's expression, "galloping protectors," who are no strangers to loss and pain, and who have nothing at all to do with wish fulfillment. Or, for the misfit, take David Brin's Athaclena from The Uplift War. If she weren't an alien, she'd be a girl in her late adolescence, a girl whom a war forces to turn general -- and to lead well. Or consider C.J. Cherryh's charismatic Morgaine, who admits to cowardice, chicanery, and exhaustion, or her Signey Mallory, that amoral Valkyrie of a starship captain. These character may, in part, ring changes on some of the archetypes I have defined; but they have their own integrity and validity. I personally find them profoundly moving. Other readers will, no doubt, list their own favorites.

Puns aside, when I sit down at the word processor, I cannot just hang breasts on a hero and call it female. Nor can I simply trust to instinct and type boldly where no writer has gone before. Conditioned by our society, I'm far too likely to perpetrate characters that an otherwise unremarkable writer has tagged with the joyous epithet, "Bimbos of the Death Sun."

How do I create my female heros? My particular problem is exacerbated because I writer both fantasy and science fiction, and the ideas I deal with when writing fantasy are very different from those I address when I write SF. Fantasy compels me to deal with myths and archetypes, and with subtexts that usually involve spiritual growth, the struggle between good and evil, and very probably some kind of transcendence. SF forces me to work with high-tech problems that require a solution and also demands that I explore the ethical ramifications of that solution.

That means that while my characters all start from the same premise, my desire to create a workable character who is a) female and b) worth reading about and perhaps emulating, they wind up in totally different places.

What I propose to do is pick three archetypes -- Wizard, Quest Hero, and Commander--show how I attempted to create female heroes who were powerful and believable, without being polemics, wish-fulfillments, or simply cardboard, and demonstrate how those characters fit into the archetypes that I have selected.

I usually begin from the same place: my need for a strong character to confront a problem I've been gleefully making worse. To use Aristotelian terminology, I need am efficient cause, something to get the plot moving. Then, still using Aristotle, I move over to the Poetics. My character must be of sufficient stature, may come of a family that has been implicated in problems for several generations, must have at least one major weakness, and absolutely must, in the course of the story, come to acknowledge it. Because I do not write tragedy, usually, I prefer that my character not only recognize her character flaws but come to terms with them: in fantasy, this means that she transcends her environment; in SF, this means that she solves her problem.

Then I generally find a role model, a female hero drawn from actual history, on whom I can pattern my character. Finally, just in the manner of role-playing gamers, I consider what my character would do in any situation. About the time I can tell what my character is likely to say to a bum on the subway, what clothes she'd buy, what junk food she likes, or how she would deal with the minutiae of my life, I know that I am ready, to paraphrase Robert A. Heinlein, to put my character into a situation and let her get herself out of it.

Here are three female heroes who did precisely that.

Wizard

In my Byzantium's Heirs series, of which two books, Byzantium's Crown and The Woman of Flowers are out and the third, Queensblade, is in production, the character of Alexa, renegade princess of Byzantium, is my wizard. My literary model for such a wizard is not Gandalf, not Ged, and certainly not T.H. White's Merlyn, though the Merlin of fifteenth-century romance who is half demon and succumbs to temptation may have some relevance. Instead, her re-lationship to her magic makes her akin to Sarumar or to Faustus: the magician who chose wrong and who gambles with damnation.

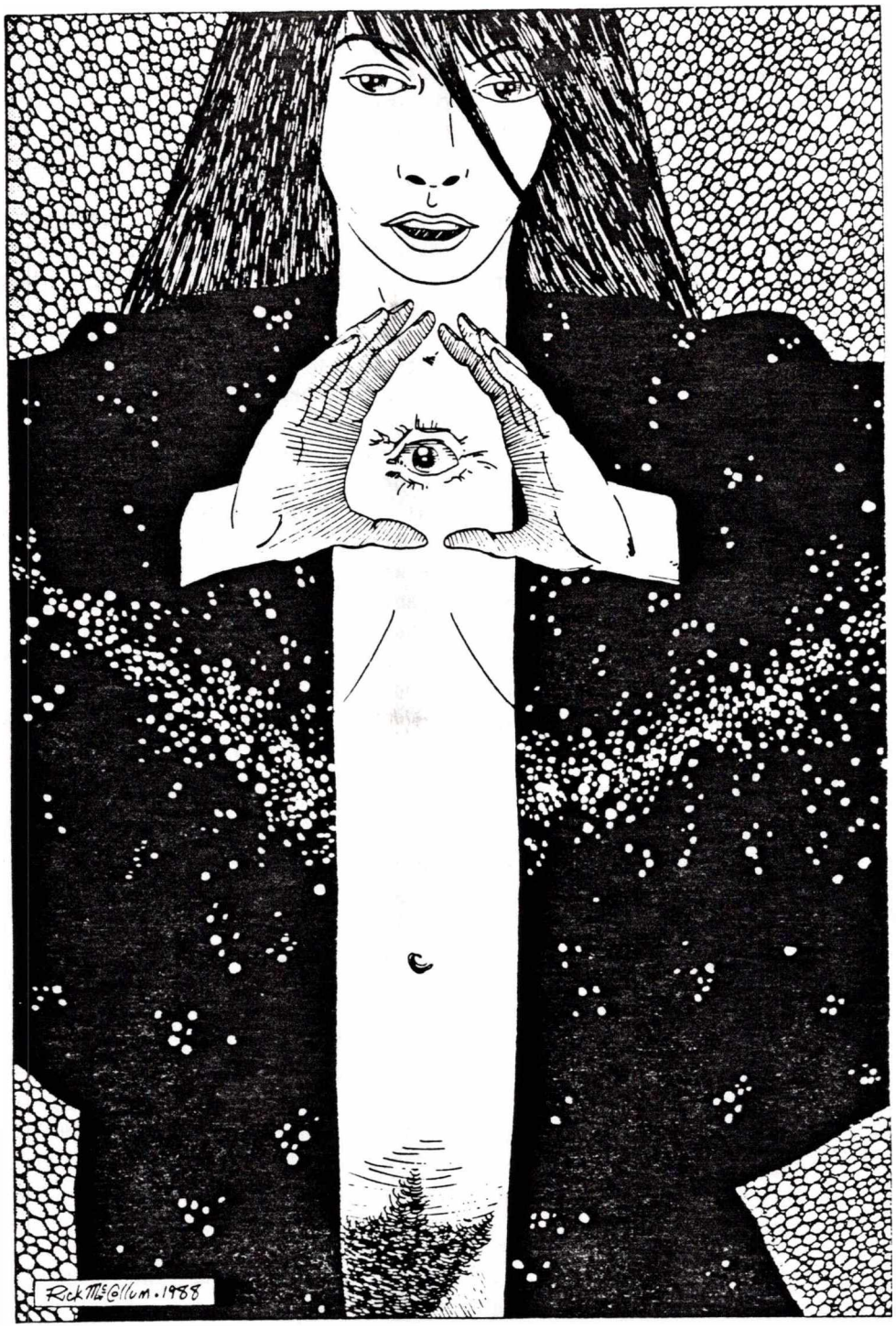
The very nature of the society that I created in this trilogy demanded a certain type of female hero. The culture is Egypto-Byzantine, an alternative history that branched out from our own when Antony and Cleopatra won the Battle of Actium. Alexa has been bred and raised to rule as Isis Incarnate while her brother and spouse rules as Emperor and Pharaoh. Thus, you have a culture that is ritual-oriented on both sides of its ancestry. Because it is a Byzantine culture, by definition, successful characters will be scheming characters. My historical model for the character was Anna Comnena, the scholarly princess who failed to overthrow her brother in a palace coup, and spent the rest of her life in a convent, writing a history of her father's reign, the Alexiad.

Once I had my model, my own brand of wish-fulfillment came into play. As a dedicated non-athlete who grew up with her nose in a book, I wanted to create a character whose intelligence, not her prowess with sports or horses or her simple rebelliousness, creates problems yet helps her to resolve them.

At the beginning of the trilogy, Alexa is no renegade. She wants very much what she has been raised to want: the sacred marriage with her brother and dominion over her Empire. Unfortunately, however, the throne has been usurped by her stepmother, who is a sorceress and who has a son, younger than Alexa, who wants both her and the Lordship of the Two Lands. Given fear and the catlike curiosity that I envisioned for her, Alexa herself turns to magic and goes bad. She even attacks her elder brother with her magic because he has dared to criticize her for her somewhat grisly method of assassinating their half-brother.

A quick synopsis for damnation, perhaps? Not really. As you'll recall, both Faustus and Saruman are offered the opportunity to repent. They refuse. As a result, Faustus is damned, and Saruman is annihilated. Alexa, however, accepts the challenge and begins what is an agonizing journey back from the Pit and into self-knowledge. In Book I of the trilogy, we see her as a magician well on her way to striking blindly at friend or foe. In the second book, The Woman of Flowers, I attempted to create the psychopathology of a penitent mage.

I use the term psychopathology quite deliberately. Guilt-ridden and practically unable to function in human terms, let alone magical ones, Alexa is very close to psychopath who seeks --and finds-- healing, love, and a new future that she is prepared to defend, even against the elder brother who turns up in the second half of the book, prepared to offer her what she thought she wanted. Her character strengths and weaknesses arise quite naturally from my original choices of setting and model: she is highly intelligent, skilled in intrigue, and possessed of a charm that she can use quite deliberatey. Throughout the trilogy, Alexa demonstrates that she is not only capable of rational choices, but that she has become worthy to wield magic once again.



The Quest Hero

In Silk Roads and Shadows, which Tor Books has just released, I turn again to a Byzantine Empire, this time with no admixture of Egyptian cuture. In this story, a Byzantine princess faces the possibilities of: marriage with a Frank, return to a convent (after evil magic has caused her to flee the in which she was living), or a convenient and regrettable accident. Thus far, my character Alexandra might seem to resemble the Amazonian adolescent whom I described earlier. But, like Alexa's prototype, Anna Comnena, Alexandra is extremely intelligent, even intellectual. I modeled her not just on Anna Comnena but also on the fabulous nineteenth century eccentrics like Gertrude Bell and Lady Hester Stanhope, fit counterparts to Sir Richard Burton in their exploration of Arabia.

But where Alexa's magic is inherent and refined by study, Alexandra very much has magic thrust upon her in the course of a quest for silkworms to restore the magic-blighted silk industry upon which Byzantium relies for both money and prestige. This quest takes her from Byzantium all the way to Ch'ng-An, the capital of T'ang dynasty (ninth century) China. That is Alexandra's secular quest. Her spiritual quest is twofold: to solve the riddles about Shambhala that tease her throughout her journey; and to find a purpose in life besides careering across Central Asia.

Then, just for the fun of it, I decided to complicate matters. Not ony has Alexandra lived in a convent, she is quite literally an Orthodox Christian who finds herself companioned by Christian heretics, Muslims, Buddhists, and Taoists. The scene in which she and a Chinese prince both regard one another as perfectly amiable barbarians is an example of the verve and humor that Alexandra brings to her task. She is no Amazon; two of her worst adventures occur when she is unhorsed, once during a game of polo outside the Central Asian city of Kashgar, where polo is played with a goat as the ball; a second time in China itself, where what is most probably a concussion renders her vulnerable to psychic attack by the infamous female Emperor Wu-Tsi-Tien.

Nor is she a picaresque, who sees each man in her train a potential bed partner. As a convent-raised spare princess, Alexandra is a virgin for much of her quest, and quite content to remain so. Though she takes on a quest over some of the most horrifying land and climate in the world and confronts hideous magic, and even manages to prevail, she is fallible. Quite often, she fears that she is going crazy.

The Commander

The third and last character that I'm going to describe is one of the many commanding officers in science fiction: dutiful, worthy of loyalty, capable of rearguard actions, complete trust, problem-solving...you know the breed. Meet Pauli Yeager, retired pilot, commanding officer, wife, mother. Like the Amazonian heroines, she is unremarkable both physically and intellectually. She is small enough to fit into a fighter craft, she lacks personal vanity, and though she's excellent in math and physics her expertise is wholly in applications. She has physical courage enough to stand up to an alien race and moral courage enough to face what else she is...a genocide.

Yes, you heard me. The heroine of my hard SF novel, Heritage of Flight, has committed genocide and wants nothing so much as to be relieved of the burdens that her actions have laid upon her. Before you shout in outrage, I suspect that I had best backtrack to around 1983 and a lunch with Stan Schmidt, editor of Analog. He told me how interested he would be in a story in which humans and friendly, intelligent, and attractive aliens faced off against one another, and humans killed the aliens. "Stan," I blurted, "you're asking me to write about genocide!"

He showed all his nice white teeth at me, pleased with the success of his scheme, and I promptly got writer's block. My characters may be many things, but they are not genocides. "Heritage of Flight," however, came out in 1983; the follow-up, "Survivor Guilt," came out in 1986.

Basically, these two novelettes and the book that Tor will release in 1989 concern a group of refugees and their military liaisons, set down on an isolated world during the last desperate struggles of a systems-wide war as a sort of genetic seed-corn for the human race. If it wipes itself out in a war that has turned from the bravura of massed-starship actions to piracy, planetary guerrilla actions, and scavenging, then colonies like this one, with their overwhelming proportion of children evacuated from badly damaged worlds, will be the human race.

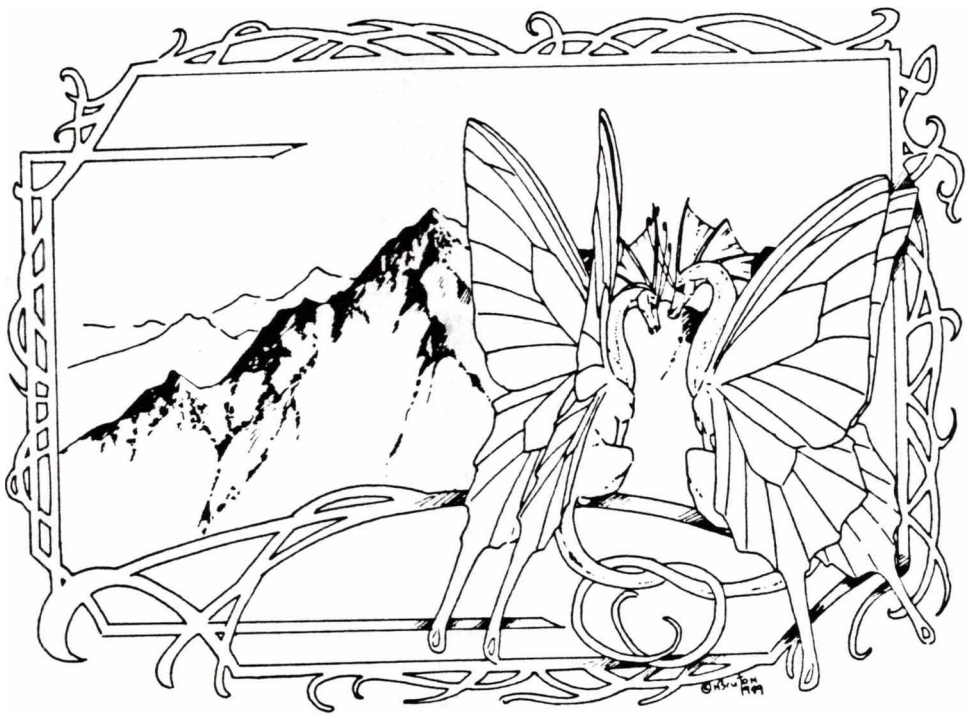
The military advisors to Cynthia colony are given their mission and told to do anything in their power to protect the colonists, especially the children, many of whom are physically or psychologically damaged. Because the supply of materiel is so limited, they are given pathetically little in the way of equipment. For example, they have no air capability.

Naturally, that hits one of the young officers most severely. At this point, meet Pauli Yeager, a young pilot who has been detached from her ship to on-planet service. Even though the mortality rate for pilots is very high, this new duty is not her choice. Had she been allowed choice, she would have liked to be a scout pilot, working as part of a team with a xenobiologist who loves her. But the war prevented that, and she became a fighter pilot.

Naturally, the Cynthia colony encounters native intelligent life--beautiful winged aliens with whom they learn to communicate. It also meets up with a swarm of meter-long grubs armed with huge mandibles and secreting a deadly digestive acid. On the surface, nothing is more simple. Talk to the intelligent beings and eradicate the grubs. Right?

Not if the aliens are a metamorphic species, with the winged aliens as the adults and the grubs --more properly, larvae--a less mature stage of development. Killing larvae means to extinction of the winged creatures too. Well, why not move the human colony? Equip their settlement with a mountain range, equip the planet with bad storms, and restrict the humans' capacity to move by establishing that they have no aircraft and no time to build any, and only limited time to get a crop in the ground to prepare for a winter that the expect to be severe. Moreover, stress that if they evacuate this settlement, it may well cause even more hardship and death among children whom they fear are already traumatized past cure. Make the situation even worse by letting black characters and Jewish characters argue about genocide--and then focus on the commanding officer who must, ultimately, make the decision.

Enter Pauli Yeager. The first name is quite deliberately androgynous, while the source of the name, of course, is fairly obvious. My immediate model for her was that first group of young women selected for the military academics: short-haired,



athletic, determined, often from military families themselves; historical models included the aviators Amelia Aerhart, Beryl Markham, and Jacqueline Cochran, fighters and, to the best of their abilities, survivors all. I decided that Pauli had to be a pilot for several reasons. Pilot training meant she might be on a command track; it argued a great deal of physical courage and independence; and, finally, it served two structural points. First, a planet-bound pilot seemed like a good symbol of the frustration and waste caused by the war; she would also empathize painfully with the winged aliens on whom she would have to turn.

Much to the horror of many of Analog's readers, Pauli Yeager gave orders for the ... here, my character and I disagree. I am about to say "control" or "elimination" or any one of a number of sanitized verbs, but Pauli Yeager insists on calling what she did "genocide." She detests the action that she feels herself compelled to take on behalf of the colony's children, and she determines to see that they are brought up without the guilt that must, inevitably, attach to the adults.

Here, my model was the settlement on Pitcairn Island of families formed after the mutiny on the **Bounty**. My limited understanding was that generations after the mutiny, they still felt some guilt for their ancestors' actions. Pauli Yeager faces the lifelong prospect of her and her associates' guilt, but refuses to let the "littlests," the traumatized refugee children, and those children, including her own, yet to be born.

Her situation is exacerbated, of course, by civilian opposition, led by xenobotonist Beneatha Angelou, a descendant of black activists and by the emergency landing of an enemy pilot upon Cynthia. Just to make things interesting, the pilot is one of those who participated in the raids on some of the children's homeworlds. But as an artificially produced member of a clone-group that is artificially and genetically linked to one another to improve reaction time, he is also a victim. Pauli refuses to let him be executed for war crimes because she is revolted, she claims, at the idea of war criminals trying and executing war criminals. Besides, she suspects that the intruder can be broken and rehabilitated: and she proves to be right.

Here, Pauli's pilot training sets up the conflict with Thorn Halgerd, the enemy pilot. To a certain extent, they understand one another, and their conflict parallels the type of fight they might have had in space. But with some significant differences: at the time, Pauli is pregnant, and Thorn Halgerd, who has been created artificially, his reflexes augmented for greater speed but rendered sterile because he is not expected or desired to reproduce, is revolted by the use of a healthy, fertile woman as a pilot. It's some dogfight.

Now, what happens when this scarred colony is reunited with the people who ordered it settled, people, I should add, who have formed an alliance with their former enemies? At this point, I should probably explain the context within which I was writing. First off, I am Jewish, writing after the Holocaust and the expiration of the statute of limitations on Nazi war crimes. I did extensive research on the Nuremburg trials, and was avidly following the election of Kurt Waldheim to the Austrian presidency, which struck me as an ominous and ironic counterpoint to my work. But that election supplied me with my answer: like Austria's, Pauli's government would have preferred to bury the episode, concentrating not on what Cynthia colony had to do to survive, but on the fact of its survival.

Pauli, naturally, has other ideas. Once the ship lands, and she has determined that it is not hostile and ordered her people back from hidden shelters to their home, she turns herself in, charging herself with crimes against humanity--genocide, intent to commit genocide, and conspiracy to commit genocide--all charges taken from the U.N.'s resolutions on crimes against humanity. She also refuses her former enemies' demand for repatriation--based on U.N. space treaties--of Thorn Halgerd, whom she suspects that they will kill. And, as U.S. army procedure now demands, she produces an investigation of the crimes on Cynthia, a report that she has worked on secretly for the past twenty years, while fighting for the colony's survival, bringing up two children, and participating in the raising of several others.

Her reasons for this, she tells her newly arrived superiors, are purely selfish: her decision to eradicate the Cynthians, in her opinion, expelled her from the human race; and she wants very badly to be human once again, even--perhaps especially--if that means execution. She has done, she alleges, what she was ordered to do. (I created that echo quite deliberately.) But, unlike the genocides whom I studied, Pauli Yeager has always been sickened by her actions. She refused to resort to sanitizing euphemisms and invariably focused on the enormity of the crime for which she, as commanding officer, tried to assume sole responsibility. One example of her revulsion is linguistic: because the Cynthians were winged, people had started to call them "moths," but Pauli managed to turn "moth" into a derogatory term like "kike" or "nigger" because, she claimed, that stripping a race of its "humanity" is the first stage to being able to wipe it out. Another example is her insistence that the colony survive with as much of its integrity intact as possible as a memorial to the race that it has supplanted.

But now, superior officers have arrived, and she is profoundly relieved to turn over her command, provided that they assume their own responsibility as she sees it: to court-martial her. She is prepared to give them every cooperation except the complicity of silence.

Now, I don't know whether I've pulled off this book. My editor says that it gives her the shivers; certainly, I'm appalled by it every time I think of it. But if you can compare Pauli Yeager with my Wizard and my quest hero, you can see several major differences: though she is from a military family, she is very much a woman of the people; she is intellectually not that remarkable, unlike Alexandra; and she is purely a secular entity, unlike Alexa. Her choices are predominantly on the level of morality, rather than on that of a psychological transformation; and she is not capable of the type of dramatics that my Byzantines use as a weapon in their armaments. She is, instead, low-key, persistent, dogged and--to use a cliche that she would hate--she usually has her feet on the ground. In short, Pauli Yeager is as unheroic a female hero as I could possibly create-and, to her own mind--her actions make her less heroic yet.

One last point. So nervous did the ideas in Heritage of Flight make me that I delayed writing the book until three months before my deadline. Then I plunged into it and completed approximately 120,000 words in three months while working in a daytime job that had become increasingly uncongenial. Right after I turned the book in, however, I quit the job. My reason? Because I could no longer sanction putting up with it for the sake of a paycheck. My motivation? Not the flamboyance of my fantasy characters, with whom, in my gaudier moments, I identify, but the quiet, unspectacular example of my SF hero, with whom I have little in common beyond the accident of literary creation. Yet in creating her, I created--or found--my own courage. It seems to me, as a writer (albeit prejudiced in this instance), reader, critic, and feminist, that strong female characters can do no more than that. |*|

SCOPES II vs USHER II

by M. L. Lockhart

Originally published in Language Arts Journal of Michigan, Spring, 1988.

For the school law class I took in the fall, I tried doing what every student has done since time immemorial: I tried to get out of work. This was my note from home:

> I object to the assigned readings for next week. Most of these were put out by the People for the American Way, a so-called "nonpartisan constitutional liberties organization." The authors are onviously secular humanists and probably communists. Why can't we read wholesome articles like Pat Roberetson's National Legal Foundation puts out?
>
> Until that time, I wish to be excused from these readings that offend my beliefs and establish that secular smut in my impressionable mind. When I go home, I will read Portals of Prayer to keep up my reading skills. And if that doesn't qualify for three (3) hours of graduate credit in this class, God will be very displeased.

The note didn't work, but it recaptured the fun of being on the other side of the teacher's desk. It also made me suspicious of some parents who brought suit in Tennessee and Alabama (and Arizona and California and Colorado and ...). They no doubt claim, "We want our children to get a Good Education," but I still can't help thinking, "What are they trying to get out of?" And I think I know what that is: they want their children to get out of thinking.

Why would a parent want an unthinking child? Better than an ungrateful one. Or uncooperative. Or all those other delinquent traits that make life miserable for parents these days. Wouldn't life be nice and easy if all children did what their parents and the Good Book said? Come to think of it, my job would be a lot easier. The only problem is I'd be out of a job because I'm a high school English teacher, and we have students read books other than the Bible and Warriner's grammar. Given their way, parents and judges across this country would put me out of work.

I had been feeling pretty good after reading the school law text. It sounded like the laws were based on reason, and reason would prevail. The courts seemed mainly interested in maintaining neutrality, so rulings were designed to protect against favoring a particular religion. The First Amendment was not interpreted as a guarantee that nothing about religion would be taught or that nothing offensive to any religion would be taught.

So what if we can't teach birth control here in Michigan? As the Prez says, they shouldn't be screwing around anyway. Besides, I don't teach those health and home and family classes. But two recent cases hit close to home. Too close.

First was Mozart et al. v. Hawkins County Public Schools et al. (Scopes II). The plaintiffs were a group of Tennessee fundamentalists who filed suit against the school district over its use of the Holt, Rinehart and Winston reading series. They claimed reading selections offended their religious beliefs in violation of the First Amendment. Federal Judge Thomas Hull ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and allowed the students' parents to teach them reading at home. This assumes the parents both read and teach. I have my doubts. Back in the days of Scopes I, H.L. Mencken referred to such people as "snake chuckers'"

The second case was Smith et al. v. Board of Commissioners of Mobile County, Alabama. Plaintiffs, again fundamentalist parents, charged the curriculum promoted the "religion of secular humanism" in violation of the First Amendment establishment clause. They also charged texts censored (these folks are worried about censorship?) information about Christianity in violation of the free exercise clause. Blatant hypocrisy -- yet Judge W. Brevard Hand, Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama, agreed with them. His decision made a religion out of secular humanism. Instead of looking for this "religion" in one of the reading series, he went after the whole curriculum and got rid of 45 textbooks. Alexis DeToqueville need not have worried about tyranny of the majority in this country. Now we have tyranny of the minority.

Such people assume their children will automatically be corrupted if they are ever exposed to a new or different idea. Despite an all-abiding faith in the Almighty God, they place little faith in their own children. Another assumption is that questioning is neither good nor even natural. Yet what child from the age of two does not exhaust the word, "Why?"

At any rate, here we have had one judicial ruling that says kids get out of reading instruction because the parents don't like the books that the district selected by democratic process. Another ruling says they can just simply dump the books if they don't like them. Does this also mean antivivisectionist parents can get their children excused from frog dissection? Wish mine had thought of that. If textbooks have often been dull fodder, at least these rulings now give school people an excuse. Besides the normally dull writing style, the material will now be dull by court order.

The desk in my room at school is plastered with bumper stickers. One says, "I read banned books." It had withstood numerous open houses without parent complaint. But it would only take one wacko to get my desk banned. Given the right judge (Hull, Hand, Bork, etc.) most of what passes for education in my room would be done away with. The first four pages of the American Lit book might pass inspection, since they're by that good Puritan, William Bradford. After that it's all downhill. Even Longfellow has sympathetic views about Indians that could raise doubts about our manifest destiny. And everyone knows Mark Twain was a bad influence; his books have even been banned in a school that bears his name.

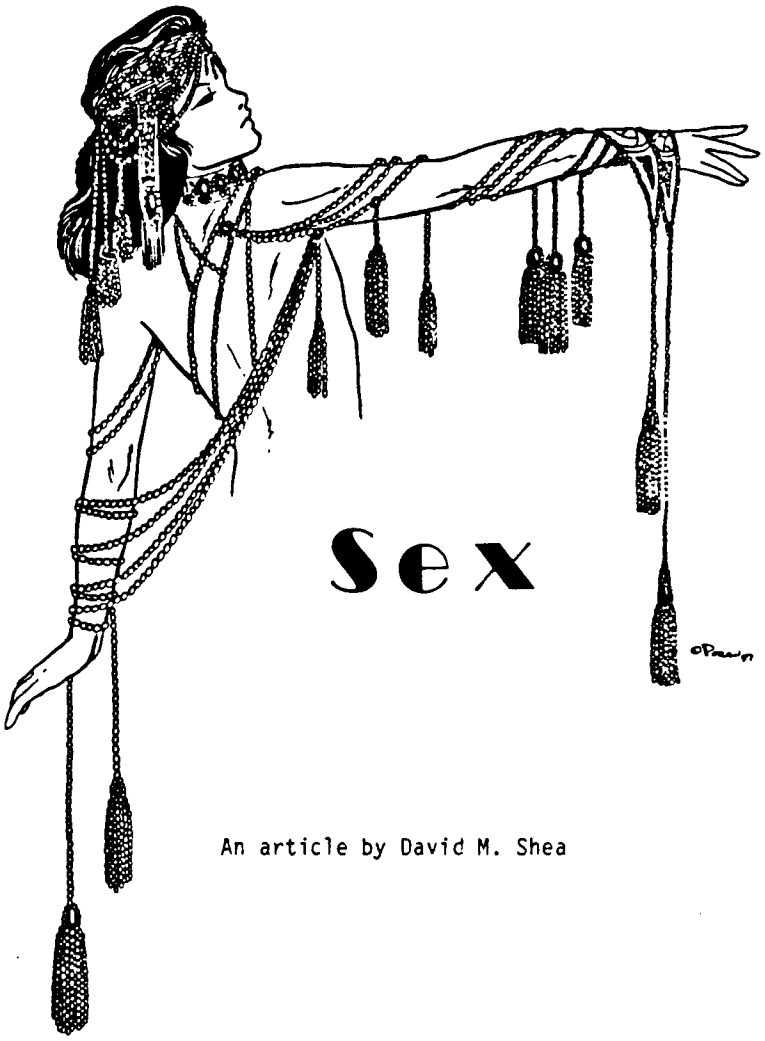
One whole class I teach would automatically be done away with. That class is science fiction. After all, it encourages imagining "beyond the limitation of scriptural authority." (This quote was from testimony in the Tennesseee case. Have I missed something? Is there an eleventh commandment: "Thou shalt not imagine?") One book I always teach is the 50's classic by Ray Bradbury, Martian Chronicles. My favorite story is called "Usher II," where Bradbury predicts a Society for Prevention of Fantasy that bans all imaginary words. No more Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, Alice in Wonderland, or Tooth Fairy.

A millionaire in that story spends all his money getting even with the Society that destroyed all his books. His ultimate revenge is to reconstruct the House of Usher and rig it with working replicas of all the tortures Poe ever described in his stories. The censors are all killed by tortures from the stories they had never bothered to read because they had been so busy burning them. Too bad. A little knowledge would have saved them.

Meanwhile, the Tennessee and Alabama decisions have been reversed by the Appeals Courts, and the plaintiffs in the Alabama case missed the filing deadline for an appeal to the Supreme Court. But if the high court should ever side with the snake chuckers, I will start a collection for a House of Usher. I'll let you know if it's tax deductible. |*|

Mary Lu Lockart is a fan and teaches at Stevenson High School in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

Future Sex



An article by David M. Shea

Arguably the first major science fiction story in which sex played a significant role was C. L. Moore's legendary "Shambleau" (1933). That the sexual tension in "Shambleau" was almost entirely sublimated does not mean that it was not present. In the half century and more since that landmark story, the use of sexual motifs in science fiction has, in the words of the cigarette advertisements, "come a long way, baby."

The question arises as to whether we may, perhaps, have come too far.

Ursula K. LeGuin opened the floodgates to what I think of as the modern attitude with The Left Hand of Darkness (1969), a sympathetic and utterly convincing portrait of an hermaphroditic society. The trend since then can be clearly traced in, for example, the works of Robert A. Heinlein. In Stranger

in a Strange Land (1961), the central character is instructed to alter his "androgynous" good looks to a more masculine appearance to avoid attracting gays, whom the author dismisses contemptuously as "poor in-betweeners." By 1970, however, there are strong whiffs of gay sex -- both ways -- in I Will Fear No Evil; a seemingly obvious corollary of group marriage the author managed to avoid in both Stranger and The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress (1966). Skipping forward to Friday (1982), we find the central character pretty much willing to boff anyone who asks her.

The most successful novel of one of the genre's most respected talents, Samuel R. Delany's Dhalgren (1974) features a protagonist who is openly bisexual and not particularly concerned about it. In the fantasy novels of Diane Duane, A Door into Fire (1979) and A Door into Shadow (1983), it is simply presented as a given that all characters are bisexual. The story features two men who are a sexual couple, but they both like girls also, and one of the girls they like also likes girls, and the Goddess just loves everybody... (Significantly, the verb used by Duane for all sexual activities is "to share.") Other examples could be cited. Many of the characters of Marion Zimmer Bradley's successful Darkover series are gay or bisexual (Regis Hastur, Danilo Syrtis, Magda Lorne, Damon Ridenow). Similar instances are seen in the writings of, say, Elizabeth Lynn and John Varley.

In short, much of the science fiction community seems to have reached a consensus that the correct, perfect, sexually liberated society would be one in which anyone would make love with anyone, and no one would care whether his/her lover/s is/are male/female/anything else. The perception seems to be that the future is, or ought to be, bisexual, that in a proper society everyone would be bisexual. As a character in Spider Robinson's Mindkiller (1982) puts it, "I don't understand monosexuals."

Well, I'm sorry. I don't think that's at all likely.

It seems reasonably clear, if an oversimplification may be permitted, that people cannot or will not make major changes in their sexual preferences. If a particular form of sexual preference is societally disapproved, the practice of that preference will not cease; it will simply go underground. (Ironically, social changes may have contributed to part of our current difficulty. Up to the 19th Century --later in some social groups-- almost anyone could get married, no matter how much of a toad he was, because this was arranged by families or third parties without regard to personal preferences. Arguably this was not desirable, but one of the net effects was that the vast majority of adults had at least some sexual outlet. In our more open society, each person is responsible for arranging his or her own sexual outlets. A side effect is that socially inept persons who are unable to arrange desired sexual outlets may resort to any outlet they can arrange. No doubt this explains many of today's child abusers and other sex offenders.

(Another likely consequence of the "completely free sexual society" which is seldom addressed in the genre is that in all likelihood our incest and pederasty taboos, which at least protect innocents to some extent, would go right out the window. There would be few or no restrictions on the sexual exploitation of children, and many children's sexual experiences might well begin with their siblings -- if not with their parents.)

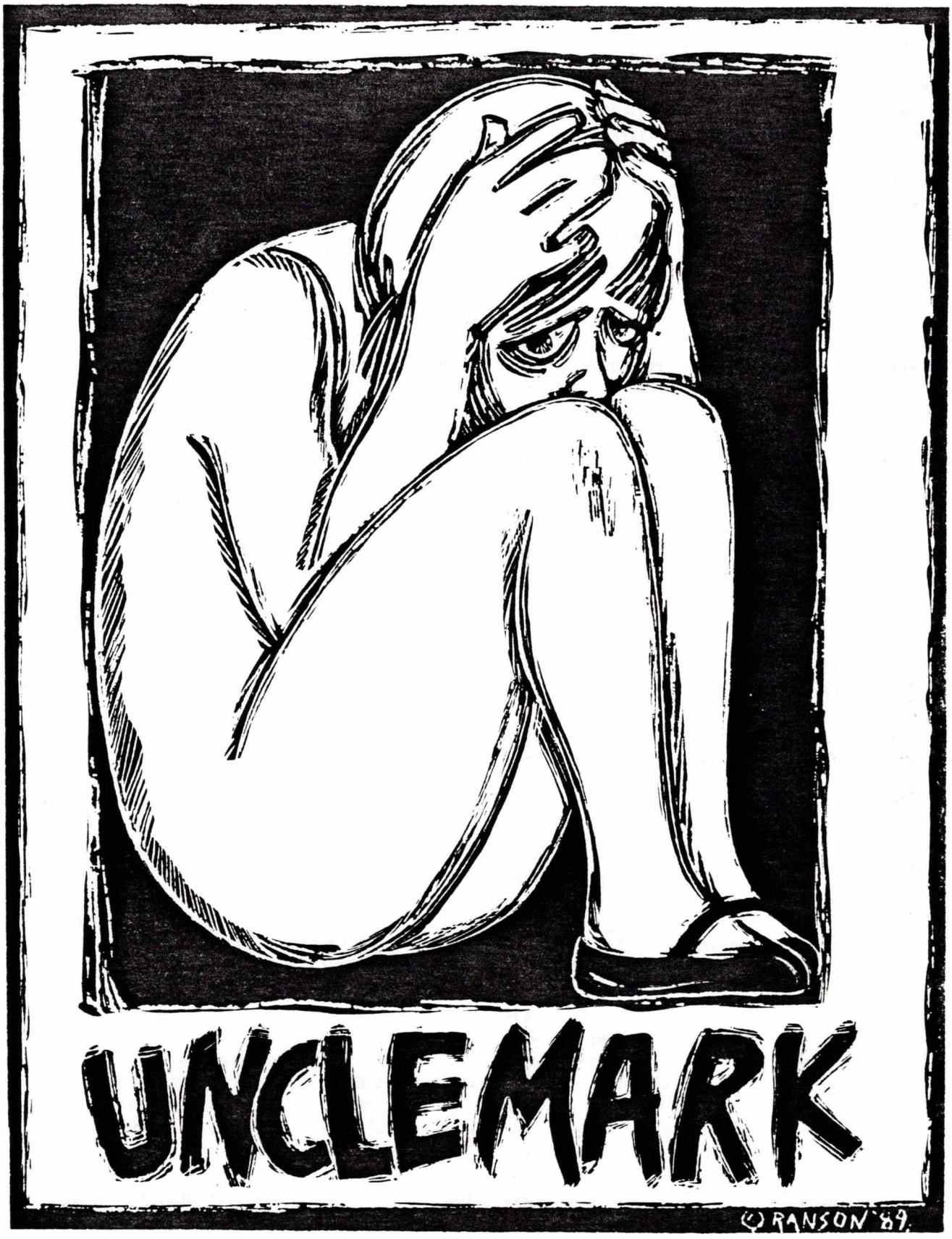
One of my psychology professors once insisted that virtually all human behavior could be explained in terms of repressed homosexual impulses. Perhaps the current trend stems from that school of thought: we should all stop repressing.

Frankly, I think that's a load of crap. The primary sexual response of a large majority of adult males is to nubile women. The primary sexual response of a large majority of adult females is to attractive males. Reacting sexually to an adult member of the opposite sex is by far the most usual human sexual preference. This isn't something we've imposed on people, it's just how it is. My best guess would be that in that "perfectly open sexual society" (which ours is not, and was not moving toward even before the AIDS crisis), mostt adolescents entering puberty would experiment wexually with both genders, yes, and enjoy it; but by a fairly early age -- early twenties -- most would settle into an overwhelmingly heterosexual life style, simply because that's what they would prefer.

I'll go even further. I suggest that heterosexual pair-bonding (broadly, "marriage" in the everyday sense) has, on the whole, served human needs very well for a very long time; and will, with some slight modifications, continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

This should not be taken as a homophobic argument. Whatever consenting adults do in privacy is their concern and no business of mine. Some, not all, of the old prejudice against our gay brothers and sisters has been dispelled, and justly so. However, I strongly doubt we'll ever achieve the type of fictional society which seems to be becoming the standard-issue SF view nowadays.

Science fiction is, in its better moments, a medium of exploration: a launching platform for new and sometimes dangerous ideas. That's a good thing; yeast serves a useful function. It does not necessarily follow, however, that all the possible futures explored in our fiction are probable, or even desirable. That we have our eyes opened to different ways is fine; but we need not jump to the unjustified conclusion that the future is bisexual. |*|



PAULA ROBINSON

Marcy stopped at the door of the therapy room. Her skin was paler than usual, enhancing the dark circles under her hazel eyes and making her dark brown hair seem black.

The red light on the video recorder outside blinked silently. Her eyes widened, then narrowed. Although the room was clearly being monitored, Norman, her counselor, was not there.

Instead, Uncle Mark waited for her.

He smiled. His hair, like hers, was dark. He wore an eyepatch as a souvenir of an old war, and was dressed in the kind of business suit men wore when Marcy was very young.

Others might have called him an attractive man, but to Marcy, his grin was cruel, mocking.

She had avoided facing him the other times he'd appeared. She knew all she had to do was call for Norman, or even just step back from the door, to have him removed.

But this time, things were different. Norman had reprogrammed the psych holo the way she wanted it. Uncle Mark sat on one of two chairs. Knives were projected in neat rows on the walls. With an internal shudder, Marcy noticed how much they resembled the imaginary knives that had stabbed her from the inside ever since...

But more importantly--this time Uncle Mark could not move. He was held to his chair with heavy shackles.

"Hi, Uncle Mark." She stepped in. Her voice, usually a meek alto, held the high-pitched tone of a child.

"Why, Marcy! Hello."

His response confused her. He seemed so friendly, so trustworthy.

"Would you like to sit down, honey?" He patted the seat next to his own.

She didn't want to sit, yet moved, puppet-like, and sat anyway.

The shackles rattled as he draped his big arm around her thin shoulders. Terror surged through her as he tightened the casual embrace. Marcy tried to move away. He pulled her closer.

"We're friends, aren't we, Marcy?"

She cringed. Yet, involuntarily, she heard herself say, "Yes, Uncle Mark."

"Friends can keep secrets, can't they."

"Y-yes."

He nodded, smiling. "You're a very pretty little girl, Marcy." He reached with his other arm to stroke her cheek. Again, the shackles rattled.

And Marcy thought, He can't move. He can't hurt me now. She stared at the knives, and at the shackles holding her uncle to the chair. He's helpless. I'm not.

She looked at his face. Bile rose in her throat. It was that look. She had seen it so long ago... hungry. Carniverous. Hateful.

Hateful.

"God DAMN you, Uncle Mark!" Marcy shoved his arms from her body and backed away.

He looked baffled. "Why, Marcy, I'm your friend ..."

This time her voice was decidedly un-childlike. "You're a stinking liar!"

The look in his eyes softened. "How can you talk to your Uncle Mark that way?"

Marcy pulled a knife from the wall, waved it under his nose for a few seconds, and then plunged it into his stomach.

"This is our secret, you dirty bastard."

Uncle Mark's eyebrow went up. The tiniest trickle of blood appeared at the edge of his mouth as he said, "I thought we were friends."

She threw down the knife. "Friends? I'd tear your dirty guts out if I could. Do you know what you did to me?"

He didn't answer.

"I was three fucking years old, Marcus!"

Suddenly speaking as if to an adult, Uncle Mark laughed dryly and said, "Three fucking years old. That's cute, Marcy."

"Do you know that because of you I never trusted a man? I never felt happy when I was in love? Do you know what it's like growing up feeling dirty and ugly and guilty, as if something's wrong with you? Because of you, I spent twenty-five years not knowing why I felt like I'd been hollowed out--like somebody's Halloween pumpkin. Scraped dry."

"Now, Marcy, don't get all upset. All I did was touch--"

"I only stabbed you once. Did the knife hurt?"

As if on cue, Uncle Mark seemed to notice the would. His face contorted. His hand went to his stomach. "But I..."

"See? It doesn't hurt right away. Oh, no; you have to wait for it to start cutting you apart, don't you. Well, pooo-oor Uncle Mark."

Blood began to flow from his mouth. "Why did you do this to me?"

"Why did you do it to me? Do you know how people treat a confused woman? They blame it all on her. She's treated like a goddam joke. Nobody believes she has a reason to be so upset. Just like they treat a molested child."

She turned her back on him and strode toward the door, but stopped and faced him again from a distance. "The wound you made led to more wounds. I'm afraid of hugs. I'm afraid of children. My husband left me because I was 'too neurotic.' Ever since then I've had a string of losers for lovers--every one looking for a victim. And it was you who made me a victim!"

For the first time, ever, Marcy saw fear in her Uncle's eye.

"I could sink every knife in this room into your

ugly gut, Marcus, and more, and never feel that I'd even half gotten even."

"I didn't mean to hurt you," he pleaded. "I didn't know."

Marcy's mood shifted suddenly. The rage fled; her arms, which had been shaking, became steady. She crossed them and stared down at him.

"You know something, Marcus? You're the goddam joke. You're sick. You're pathetic. You had to use a three year old baby girl to feel powerful, didn't you. If anybody's dirty or ugly or guilty, it's you." Analytically she squinted one eye. "I bet you're hollow, too."

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." A tear fell from beneath the eyepatch and mingled with blood on his chin.

"Well, that's too bad, Uncle Marcus. You should have been sorry twenty-five years ago. What if you'd been sorry enough to tell my parents, so they would have believed me? What if you'd been sorry enough to come to this clinic then, instead of forcing me to be here now?"

Uncle Marcus tried to turn away, but the shackles tightened.

Marcy laughed. "Does it hurt, Uncle Marcus? You're paralyzed. You can't just walk away and forget it. And no one will listen to you."

He cowered.

"This is our little secret, okay? Nobody will ever know about how I sunk in the knife." She pulled another blade from the wall and carefully tested its edge on her lip. "Maybe I could do it again."

First she smiled, then she frowned. Then, unexpectedly, she burst into tears. She threw the knife. It caromed harmlessly off the wall behind him.

"Stop the program," she wailed.

Uncle Mark, the chairs and shackles, and the knives on the walls disappeared.

"Norman!"

"I'm right here, Marcy."

She ran to him. Without hesitation, she threw her arms around his neck.

"That," Norman said, "was terrific, Marcy."

She backed away, not fearfully this time, and put her hands on Norman's shoulders. "This is the first time I ever hugged anybody," she said, as if questioning, "and felt safe."

"That's wonderful."

"I was so angry..."

He smiled, shook his head. "Healthy."

"Hurt. Empty."

"Normal."

"It felt great, stabbing him with that knife."

Norman's brows changed position briefly, then went back to their regular places. "As long as you don't try to do that in real life..."

Marcy released Norman, crossed her arms, and stared at the ceiling. "What we need to do in our imagination and what we want to do in real life are different. That's why I wanted the psych holo. I needed to hurt him. I don't know how I could have done that for real. He doesn't even talk to me--I guess the bastard's embarrassed."

"Isn't that the real revenge?"

"Yes, but it's not enough. I have to heal my own wounds."

"You need to confront him."

"I can't."

"It doesn't have to be direct, Marcy. You can write a letter, or make an audio tape. You might even try having a video made. You wouldn't have to see him."

"What good would it do? He doesn't care."

"You don't know that. Maybe you're afraid of finding out."

Her face contorted. "What if he's still...interested?"

"That's a real concern. Again, you don't need to be direct." Norman looked thoughtful for a moment, as if considering something. "We've talked about this. You feel guilty and ashamed, as all molested children do. Intellectually you know you're not at fault, but your gut doesn't agree with you. The important thing is to settle that for yourself. Until then you won't be free of the anger and shame you feel."

"I wonder how many other kids he hurt," she said abruptly.

"That's another good argument for confrontation. The harm he did to you was impersonal, Marcy. You could have been any little girl--or boy, for that matter. It's pretty likely that he's ashamed. Forcing him to see what he's done--what he may still be doing--might make him get the help he needs to stop."

"It's too late."

"That sounds helpless."

"You're right," she sighed, much calmer now. "It's a hard feeling to shake."

"We'll work on that next time," Norman said., glancing at his watch.

Marcy nodded and turned toward the wall. A moment later she wiped away a tear.

Norman put a hand on her shoulder. "You can't stab him in real life, Marcy, but you can know that he has to live with what he did."

"Does he? I'm not sure he even knows."

"Well, these things have a way of coming back on people. Somehow he'll have to face it." He removed his hand from her shoulder and glanced at his watch again. "Our time's about up, Marcy. Next week?"

"Right." She smiled. "Thanks, Norman."

"You did the work, Marcy."

She stepped out into the hallway but was unable

to move on for a moment. The video recording module in the wall outside the therapy room took all her attention.

She stared at the cassette, frowning.

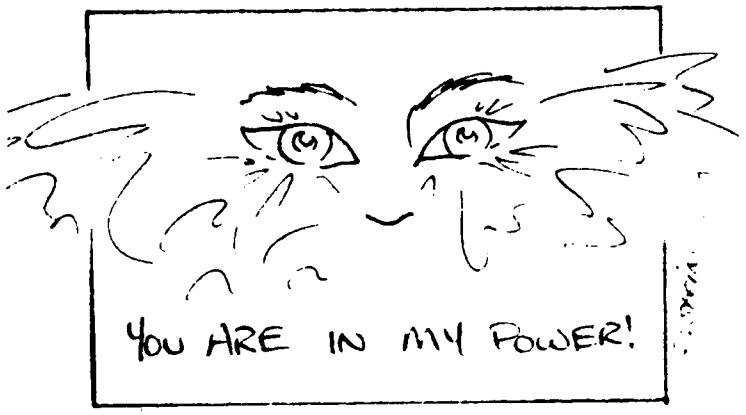
They could lock her up in a prison or a psychiatric hospital for stealing it.

Or, Uncle mark could continue to abuse children, telling himself it didn't hurt them. Marcy's mind flashed to her cousin, Marcus' daughter. Two abortions in her teens...was that just a coincidence?

Marcy wondered if she would ever find the strength to face him for real. Then, with a splash of anger, she wondered why she should have to do so.

Decisively, she snapped the cassette out of the recorder and walked carefull to the exit.

The post office would close soon, she knew, and she had to be sure Uncle Mark got the tape as soon as possible. |*|



Why Sagacity Spoils Us

by Dave D'Ammassa

The worst part of preparing for a trip for me is the inevitable trek up to the attic -- a dust chamber where a phalanx of gorgons, dragons, and warlocks would fear to tread. It is a nasty place -- cluttered, much too hot and I am always drawn to this one tiny room which is filled top to bottom with boxes of junk that a mere handful of years ago was priceless treasure. No matter how pressed for time I may be, no matter how sternly I remind myself not to delay my search through the mountains of debris here in the D'Ammassa tomb for my travelling gear, I eventually succumb to the need for nostalgia, and I begin pawing at the brittle old cartons containing relics of my early childhood, diving into their proof of past simplicity and naivete.

The last time this happened I was absolutely delighted to come across the book I scanned cover to cover on a weekly basis for several of my elementary school years: a thick paperback collection of stories starring a past hero of mine, something that publishers today refer to as a graphic novel, since that sounds better than calling it a comic book. It was a compilation of the original adventures of The Incredible Hulk. It was laughable in 1988, but back around the turn of the decade this was to me a sacred tome, availing tales of intrigue, tragedy, and nobility.

Then and there, at the age of seventeen, with the prospect of an early morning van ride to Montreal nagging at my conscience, I found myself immersed in the literature of Stan Lee, and Marvel Comics. I grew morbidly fascinated with every contrived word of dialogue, every silly plot complication, and the way the color of people's clothing sometimes changes from panel to panel; I even managed some adult disapproval of the bigoted portrayal of Russians in the militarily-oriented stories. What was once the "Necronomicon" was now a rather mediocre comic book; and yet, I managed to find something of literary value midst all of the hodgepodge.

In the latter half of the book there is a recurring villain known simply as the Leader. A custodian who was pushing a wheelbarrow around some scientific laboratory one day (details are sparse) was caught in an explosion which exposed him to gamma rays -- the same mysterious energy that caused Doctor Bruce Banner to become the green-skinned, brutish Herculean known as the Hulk. This janitor was also left with green skin, and some sort of severe neural mutation that gave him an enormous capacity for learning. He became a scientific genius who devised all sorts of diabolical schemes for world domination, usually involving his ridiculous army of humanoid sponges.

What made me decide that the Leader was a great literary character was one particularly climactic story in which the Hulk is enslaved by the Leader, and coerced into running a little errand for him. By means explained away with the vague pseudo-scientific jargon that is inherent in comic books, the Hulk is sent to the edge of the universe, there to retrieve the Ultimate Machine -- a yellow fishbowl worn over the head which would transfer to its owner all the knowledge in the known universe, down to the atoms that make up the atoms of existence. It is a great victory for the Leader, and when he triumphantly dons the Ultimate Machine, he drops dead.

One minute he's ranting about his victory, practically ejaculating at the prospect of absolute knowledge and subsequent dominance; then, mysteriously, he cries: "No, not that! No more! NO MORE!!" only to collapse to the floor in a dry heap.

Since sensible thinkers over the age of thirteen tend to pay very little attention to the exploits of the Incredible Hulk, I'm sure very little thinking has been done about how closely we should identify with the Leader. After all, what about him is similar to a human being? Aside from being a thorough megalomaniac, he has the skin color of astroturf, a head shaped like a bishop's hat, and enjoys wearing this ugly grey uniform that looks like nothing designed on this Earth by even the tackiest fashion designer. The Leader was an anomaly, a scientific freak, a quirk of nature which presumed to comprehend and even tried to redefine nature. What a jerk.

However, it was also a series of anomalies -- called evolution -- that developed the human being, a creature of reason, wit and curiosity. Centuries ticked by as man's knowledge increased and we became equipped for more complex reason and thought. And as knowledge of machines enabled us steadily to gain more and more control over our environment, society became more complicated right along with it.

Now, in the final years of the twentieth century, the whole planet is crowded with hundreds of millions of these human beings, separated by the imaginary borders between our countries, as well as by a fear of each other, ironically referred to as xenophobia; it leads to prejudice, hatred and intolerance. Politics, the daunting art of diplomacy (getting along with each other), is an impersonal web affecting all aspects of life from high school, to office socializing and backstabbing, to international relations and the choosing of our world leaders.

The breadth of our technology is awesome; yet the complexity of our human relationships, between individuals as well as between races, is so muddled with concerns over prestige and dominance as to leave the observer quite confused, or even lost.

In its time, the human race has assimilated an awful lot of information about the world, to the point where we can put men on the moon, shuttles in space, and easily achieve scientific results only dreamed about by the likes of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. The extent of our knowledge can prolong the life of the human race on this planet, or stunt it. This tremendous concept constantly stalks mankind, bearing a terrific responsibility; one the is shirked daily.

We see it shirked with every careless operation of a nuclear power plant, with every million dollars spent to pack tritium and plutonium into the warheads of missiles; already, there are plenty to wipe the Earth's crust clean several times over. Our responsibility is shirked with every misuse of science, working for the good of the self instead of the whole. Just as the Leader devised impossible weaponry and synthetic armies to do his bidding, so do we use our knowledge to benefit ourselves and court domination over our neighbors.

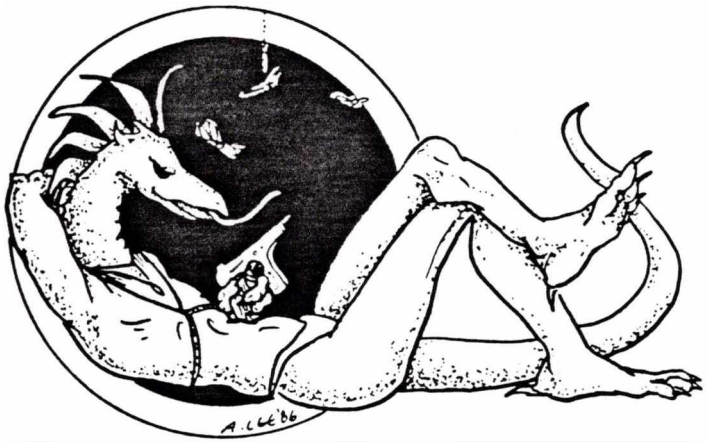
Rarely during this constant rape of our knowledge of science and wisdom about how the planet functions to remain a hospitable world does one come across any humility about our place on Earth; it would seem that by understanding what an organism is, many humans think they have surmounted their own position as a simple organism. "I think, therefore I am" translates to "I comprehend, therefore I am more."

In his 1954 essay, "The Loss of the Creature," Walker Percy wrote:

> The technician and sophomore who loves his textbooks are always offended by the genuine research man because the latter is usually a little vague and always humble before the thing; he doesn't have much use for the equipment or the jargon. Whereas the technician is never vague and never humble before the thing; he holds the thing disposed of by the principle, the formula, the textbook outline; he thinks a great deal of equipment and jargon.

He illustrates this contrast by comparing a biologist who presents a completely pre-packaged scenario for his students to follow in order to acquire understanding of a specimen, relying fervently upon instrumentation, technical language, and leaving very little room for such mental improvisations as spontaneity, to a humble biologist not adverse simply to picking up a specimen, probing it with a thumbnail, and chatting about the various functions of what he finds in a manner at once fascinated by and respectful of the subject, and even the whole of biology.

Things are the way they are in spite of our presence, contrary to what may linger in the back of the human being's mind from time to time. Knowledge and wisdom are understanding, and with understanding we lose some of the mystery of the subject; but we ought not to lose the respect that the latter biologist had. The syllogism of human superiority is not practical: "I perceive, I assimilate and translate data fro myself, which means I create the image for myself, therefore I create what I perceive." Our sagacity has made us surly, and our wisdom has given way to hubris. |*|



A SCIENCE FICTION STEW

A recipe by Robert Sabella

Welcome, viewers, to Chef Robert and his fantastic Cookbook of the Air. Today we will make a pungent Science Fiction Stew.

What's that? You are holding your nose and making a rude noise. Pourquoi? Because you believe Science Fiction Cooking is a product of the literary ghetto that is not served in elegant restaurants? Mais non! That may have been true once upon a time but no longer. In the wake of Cajun Cooking's diminishing popularity Science Fiction cooking has risen to fill the void. Is it not served regularly in Publishers' Weekly Cuisine? And reviewed in The New York Times Review of Cookery? Yes, yes, yes!

So, no more of your outdated snobbishness. I am going to make a delicious Scinec Fiction Stew and you will enjoy it.

So what ingredients go into a Science Fiction Stew? Naturally all chefs have their own views on that, but I prefer the following ingredients:

1. Proteins

Science fiction requires three main proteins to make it worthy of its name. They are:

a) an original premise
b) sense-of-wonder
c) strong plotting

Not every science fiction premise is totally original. Perhaps 10% of the premises are original (and even that may be generous) while the other 90% recycle old ideas. Perhaps another 10% do something creative with the recycled ideas. That is not necessarily a bad thing since good basic ideas have many variations. For example, the paradoxes inherent in time travel have produced such good stories as "...All you Zombies," "Up the Line," "The Man

Who Folded Himself," etc. Robert Silverberg has mastered the art of re-examining traditional science fictional ideas (as did William Shakespeare with comedy, history, and drama four hundred years ago, but that's another article).

2. Carbohydrates

Science fiction needs three vital carbohydrates to give it substance:

d) characterization
e) mood
f) writing style

These are relatively recent additions to the science fiction canon. Prior to 1950, science fiction was largely a pulp genre. Only a few writers (such as Theodore Sturgeon) incorporated mood and characterization into their fiction. McComas and Boucher pushed SF further in this direction with their Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction. Of course, the New Wave made these carbohydrates so important that since 1970 no science fiction can be considered complete without them.

3. Seasoning

A lot of science fiction contains ample amounts of the above ingredients but still fall short of the mark. I mulled this over a long time before deciding there is one more intangible needed to make a science fiction story complete. For lack of a better name, call that ingredient:

g) the ability to grip the reader

Good science fiction grabs a reader's attention and holds it page after page, chapter after chapter. The better the story's grip, the less likely a reader is to put the story down to go to sleep, to work, or whatever. Some writers excel in this ability so well that their other shortcomings are often completely overlooked. Isaac Asimov excels at this. In mundania, Robert Ludlum is the master.

Obviously few, if any, science fiction stories contain equal parts of all seven ingredients. In fact, a science fiction story can become a classic by excelling in just a few of the the above ingredients. Let's consider several examples:

Dune by Frank Herbert: This is often regarded as the best science fiction novel ever written. So how many of the seven main ingredients does it possess? Certainly an original premise, sense-of-wonder and strong plotting. Characterization? There are many interesting characters but well-developed? Perhaps a few. So call that 0.5. Mood? Another 0.5. Writing style? Herbert wrote straight-forward prose with no frills or fancies. Gripping the reader? Definitely. That totals up to 4.5 of the 7 ingredients. And this may be the best science fiction novel ever!

Childhood's End by Arthur C. Clarke: Another classic, regarded as one of the ten best science fiction novels ever. Original premise? Definitely. Sense-of-wonder? Yes, Strong plotting? Not as strong as the first two ingredients, but sufficient. Characterization, mood, writing style? I woudl suggest 0.5 for mood, but neither of the others. Gripping the reader? Yes. That's another 4.5 out of 7.

The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. LeGuin: This should be a high scorer since it is a post-New Wave novel by a writer generally considered one of the best pure writers ever to enter the field. An original idea? Yes. Sense-of-wonder? Not really. This is a slowly paced novel, more analytical than the type that causes hurrahs in readers. Strong plotting? Yes. Characterization, mood, writing style? Yes on all three. Gripping the reader? I don't know. While this is a very absorbing novel, does it really grip its readers in such a way that they can't put it down? Maybe, maybe not. Give it 0.5. That's a total of 5.5 out of 7.

Those are three of the very best novels science fiction has to offer and the highest score is 5.5. Now let's consider some novels that have achieved considerable reputations because of how they excel at specific ingredients in our science fiction stew:

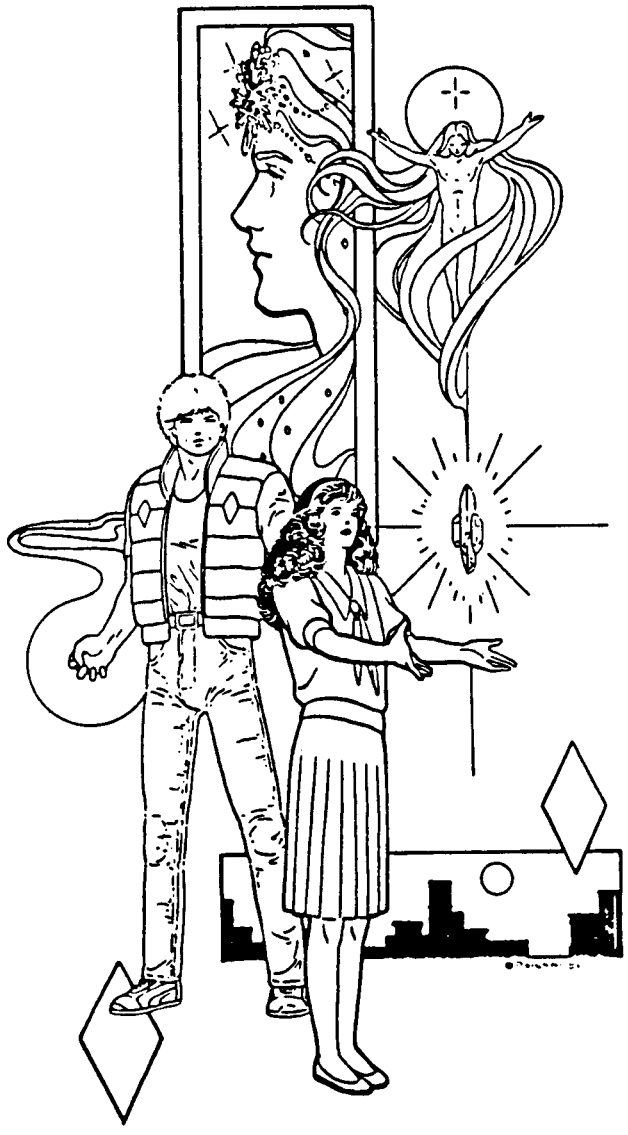
Ringworld by Larry Niven: This multiple award winner's reputation rests mostly on its sense-of-wonder. It has, perhaps, more sense-of-wonder than any science fiction novel since the days of E. E. Smith. But what else does it have? An original premise? At least two: the concepts of the ringworld amd breeding for luck. Strong plotting? Yes. Characterization, mood, writing style? Sorry, no. Gripping the reader? This is very subjective. of course, although personally I think not. So compromise with 0.5. That gives a total of 3.5.

The Book of the New Sun by Gene Wolfe: Here's a book (in four volumes, but still basically a single novel) at the other end of the spectrum. Original idea? No. Sense-of-wonder? Not really. Strong plotting? Weak plotting at best, if any. Gripping the reader? Also no. Characterization, mood, writing style? Three yesses for a total of 3.

Lord of Light by Roger Zelazny: This is one of my personal favorite science fiction novels and it usually gets ranked high on best all-time polls. Like Ringworld, it is strong with sense-of-wonder. Original premise? Not really, just a reworking of Greek mythology built around a rational premise. Strong plotting? No, just a routine adventure.

Characterization? 0.5 at best. Mood? No. Writing style? Definitely yes. That's probably Zelazny's greatest strength. Gripping the reader? Again yes, for a total score of 3.5.

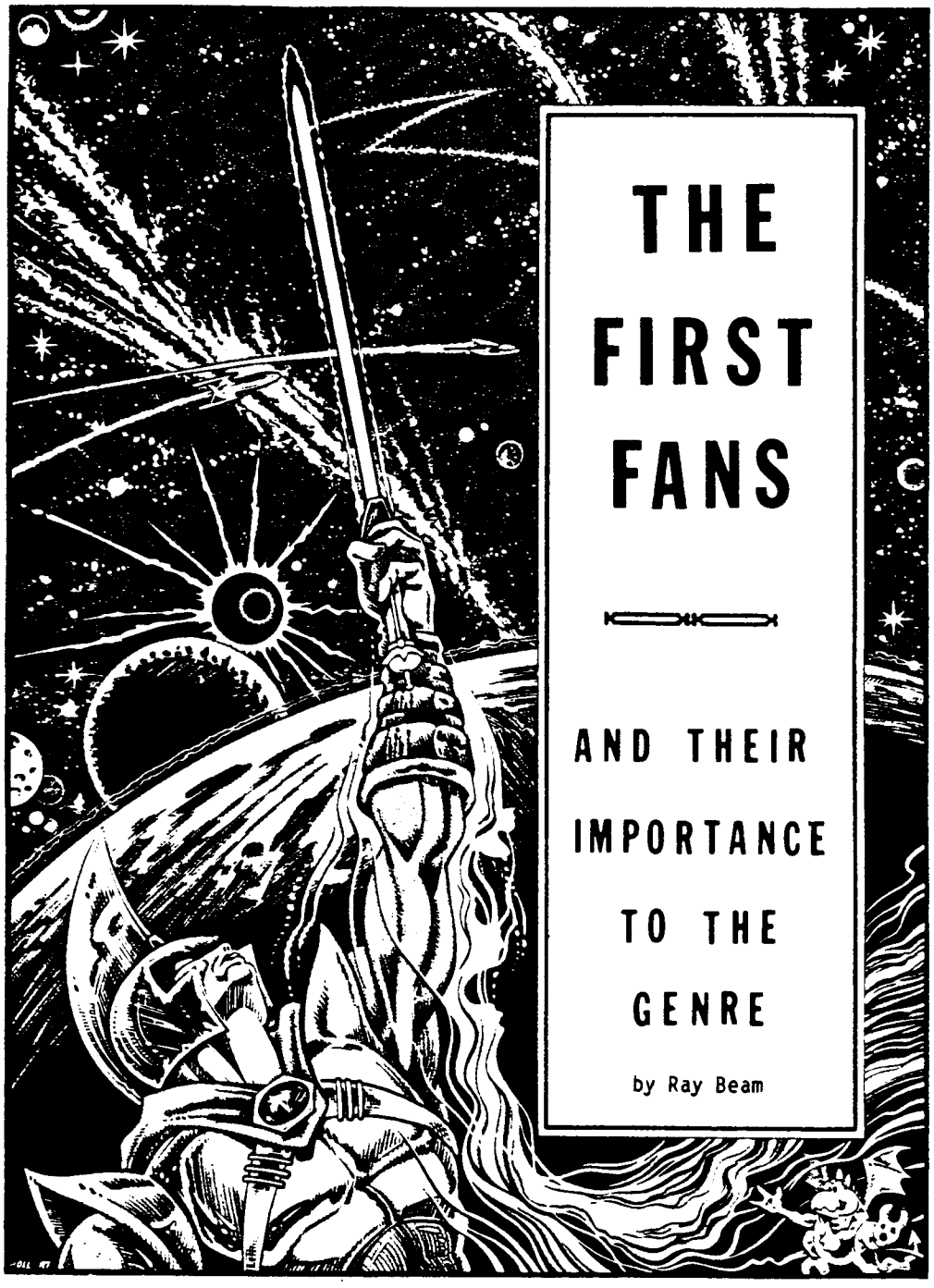
Second Foundation by Isaac Asimov: This was the third novel in the original Foundation Trilogy. Original premise? Not at all, since it has exactly the same premise as the first two novels. Foundation might have been an original premise, but not its sequels. Sense-of wonder? Again, most of the wonder of the first book has faded by the third book. Give it 0.5. Strong plotting? This is a meandering book which does have a net of plotting beneath it. Give it 0.5. Characterization, mood, writing style? Sorry, all those are Asimov's weaknesses. Gripping the reader? Definitely. Asimov is science fiction's greatest page-turner. That gives this famous novel a total score of 2!



Conclusions? The number of ingredients a particular science fiction novel contains is not nearly important as how successfully it uses those ingredients. Ringworld probably has more sense-of-wonder than all the other novels mentioned. That makes its 3.5 rating deceptive. The Book of the New Sun is so strong in its three plus categories that is has no need for any other ingredients.

Later books in series generally score lower than single novels because of low scores in categories such as original premise and sense-of-wonder. Series that are actually single novels spread over several books for publishing purposes might best be considered as a whole. And series that are just repetitions of one original premise deserve their lower ratings.

Of course, I don't think this problem is unique to science fiction. If we were to compile a list of qualities for mainstream fiction, how many classic novels would satisfy all of them? Very few, I would guess, although I'll leave the proof fo that to the more literary-minded among you. |*|



THE FIRST FANS

AND THEIR IMPORTANCE TO THE GENRE

by Ray Beam

(Fan GoH Speech given at KUBLA KHAN, 1989)

When Ken Moore first asked me down here to be the Fan Guest of Honor at this year's KUBLA KAHN, we had been discussing the difficulties encountered by First Fandom at the Worldcons. I don't know how many of you here today are aware of these problems, but before I get to them I would like to discuss the roll of early fans on the field of science fiction.

First Fandom is a group of SF fans who were active before January 1939. Some call us the dinosaurs fo science fiction and some just refer to us as old farts. Of the 46 Worldcon Guests of Honor since 1939, 38 have been members of First Fandom. Our members include such people as Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, and even the Honorable Mr. Tucker. Mr. Offutt is not a member; he's just not old enough. Actually, I am not old enough to qualify; I am only an associate member. To qualify as an associate, you only need 30 years of activity in the science fiction field.

Several years ago I came up with a slogan that appeared on our name tags at several Worldcons: "Remember us? We are the ones who started all of this." I would like to carry that a bit farther and add: "If it wasn't for us, you wouldn't be here."

I don't want to seem pompous, but it is much

easier to be a science fiction fan today than it was in past years. Since we landed a man on the moon, it has been accepted by society. Today there are tens of thousands of fans. When I first became active, they were numbered in the low hundreds. Today you can attend a convention every week if you so choose. Then we only had two or three a year, and sometimes we couldn't come up with the money to attend. Today science fiction is taught in the schools. Then it was frowned on as a flight of fancy that should not be allowed to clutter the minds of decent folks and especially children. I can remember when the Fantasy Press edition of Doc Smith's Galactic Patrol was published in 1950. Here was a hard cover SF book; surely it was legitimate now! I picked this book for a high school book report and the report was immediately rejected as not suitable. It makes me sick to think of how I had to tear the covers off my Astoundings (that's Analog to some of you who don't remember) in order to get by with reading them in study hall. This may seem amusing, and it is in retrospect. But that was not always the case.

I remember the fan who was a member of the old Indiana Science Fiction Association in the early 50s. I picked up the newspaper one day to find that he had put a gun to his head and blew his brains out. When I called to express my condolences for the loss of my friend, I was rebuffed by his wife. It was all our fault for putting those crazy ideas in his head. No, it wasn't easy being a fan then. But enough of us stuck it out and kept the field growing. So, I am not ashamed to say that if it wasn't for us you wouldn't be here.

There seems to be a tendency to forget that fandom has roots, at least when it becomes inconvenient to recognize the fact. This fact is born out by the problems of First Fandom and the Worldcon Committees. Other than being a fraternal group for old friends to get together, First Fandom's primary function to fandom in general is the yearly presentation of the Hall of Fame Award. The Hall of Fame Award was designed to recognize those people who were pioneers in the field, those people who made important contributions before such forms of recognition as the Hugos existed. If you know anything of the history of Science Fiction and Fandom, you will realize that the impact of these people on the field was staggering. Permit me to read a list of the Hall of Fame recipients:

E. E. Smith, PhD.
Hugo Gernsback
David H. Keller, MD.
Edmond Hamilton
Jack Williamson
Murray Leinster
Virgil Findlay
John W. Campbell, Jr.
C. L. Moore
Clifford D. Simak
Forrest J. Ackerman
Sam Moskowitz
Donald A. Wollheim
Harry Bates
Frank Belknap Long
E. Hoffman Price
Raymond Z. Gallun
George O. Smith
Stanton A. Coblentz
William Crawford
Manly Wade Wellman
Robert Bloch
Wilson Tucker
Julius Schwartz
Donald Wandrei
Bea Mahaffey
Lloyd Arthur Eschbach
Neil R. Jones
David A. Kyle
Charles D. Hornig

Are there names in that list that are unfamiliar to some of you? There shouldn't be, if you are a serious science fiction fan.

Each year in preparation for this award, we must deal with a new convention committee. From the very beginning there has been an effort to divert us from the Hugo Awards and relegate us to a slot on the program with such awards as the Best Dr. Who TV Broadcast, and that sort of thing. I don't mean to degrade the splinter groups that have all made contributions to the field, but I believe the greats of Science Fiction deserve more. Even in New Orleans where First Fandom was to be highlighted, there was an effort by certain factions to remove us from the Hugo Presentation. Even after this was resolved, we were asked to keep the presentation to 60 seconds per recipient. We were even warned that if we ran over we would be cut off. Is it fair that we sum up a 50 to 60 year career in only 60 seconds?

I don't want to seem to persecute New Orleans unfairly, because we have had the same trouble with almost every committee since 1963. At the very first presentation, we were refused a spot on the Hugo Ceremonies, and told we could present it at the business meeting. At that point Sam Moskowitz secured a meeting room from the hotel and set up

our own ceremony. The presentation took twenty minutes and Doc Smith broke down and cried when he received the award. The other fact to be noted here is that this ceremony emptied out the scheduled programming of the convention and filled our room to capacity. It has been said by some that the committees don't want the award at the risk of overshadowing their invited guest.

At any rate, First Fandom has had enough grief. In the last month, a majority of the membership has voted to consider moving the award from the Worldcon to a smaller convention more in tune with our needs. I want to emphasize that the vote was only to consider the move.

This is the first announcement of our intentions. We are open for proposals from all interested parties. We can provide a convention with a programming item guaranteed to be a drawing card for big names in the field.

Thank you very much. |*|

AELITA

by Tom Jackson

Russia's GRAND MASTER Award

Although Soviet SF authors and fans rarely turn up at even the largest SF conventions, the Soviet Union has a large science fiction community, including many authors, numerous SF fan clubs and at least several conventions a year. The U.S.S.R. also has at least one major SF award--the Aelita, which recognizes lifetime achievement, and is analogous to the Grand Master awarded by the Science Fiction Writers of America.

Every year, the Aelita is chosen by a committee and announced at the annual Aelita Conference held in Sverdlovsk. The award is named for the novel Aelita by Alexei Tolstoy (1883-1945). The heroine of Tolstoy's story is a beautiful Martian girl. (Alexei Tolstoy, who also wrote the SF novel Engineer Garin and His Death Ray and many non-SF works, should not be confused with his more famous distant relative, Leo Tolstoy, who wrote War and Peace, Anna Karenina, etc.)

Here is a list of Aelita winners:

1981 -- Arkady and Boria Strugatsky, Beetle in the Anthill, and Alexander Kazantsev, The Dome of Hope

1982 -- Zirovii Yurev, author of I Give You Memory

1983 -- Vladislav Krapivin, Children of the Red Flamingo

1984 -- Sergei Snegov, Men Like Gods

1985 -- S. Pavlov, Moon Rainbow

1986 -- No award

1987 -- Olga Larionova, The Sea Sonata

1988 -- Victor Kolupaev, The Spring of Light

1989 -- Sever Gansovsky, Instinct?

I have compiled some sketches of the best-known winners, i.e., the ones who have been translated, or at least written about, in English.

Arkady and Boris Strugatsky

The Strugatsky brothers are the most famous Soviet SF writers. Just as Robert Heinlein was the obvious first choice for SFWA's Grand Master, the Strugatskys were the first Aelita winners, in 1981, along with Alexander Kazantsev.

The Strugatskys' Hard to Be a God is said to be the first novel ever taken into space; Soviet astronaut and SF buff Georgi Grechko took it along on his Soyuz-17 flight in 1975. Alone among Soviet SF authors, many of their works have been translated into English. They have been warmly praised by American authors such as Algis Budrys and Ursula K. LeGuin.

Arkady (b. 1925) worked as an editor and translator of Japanese and English literature; Boris (b. 1933) is an astronomer, astrophysicist and computer mathematician. Many of their books, including Noon: 22nd Century, Far Rainbow, and Beetle in the Anthill, are set in their own future history. Many works such as the short novel Roadside Picnic are straightforward science fiction, although they have also written fantasies such as Monday Begins on Saturday, which draws on Russian folklore and describes the investigations of the Research Institute of Thaumaturgy and Spellcraft.

The two most famous Strugatsky books are probably Hard to Be a God and Roadside Picnic. Hard to Be a God describes the adventures of an undercover researcher from Earth's Institute of Experimental History on a planet with a society and culture similar to Earth's Middle Ages. Although the hero is supposed to avoid interfering with the natives, he can't resist taking sides. The hero's energy and idealism are unable to overcome the evil and backwardness of the planet's rulers.

Several Strugatsky novels and short stories feature a very advanced race of aliens known as the Wanderers. They never appear on stage, but are represented by the artifacts they have left behind on Earth and elsewhere. In Roadside Picnic the Wanderers have visited Earth and left behind piles of garbage, which humans at considerable risk mine in order to make technological discoveries. In his review in the February 1983 issue of F&SF Magazine, Algis Budrys wrote:

> This book is all the things good SF should be: Adventurous, real-seeming and about something that bears on matters of importance in the real world. And, if I may say so, it's incidentally the true successor to Rogue Moon.

Budrys also called is "one of the masterpieces of modern science fiction."

The Strugatsky's novella, "The Way to Amalteia," was reprinted recently in David Hartwell's The World Treasury of Science Fiction (Little, Brown and Company).

Alexander Kazantsev

Kazantsev (b. 1906) is one of the few writers who managed to publish science fiction in the1940s, despite Stalinist restrictions which limited the production of SF in the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s. His first SF novel, Blazing Island, was published in 1941. I don't know if he is still writing, but The Dome of Hope was published in 1980.

According to a publicity piece put out by VAAP, the U.S.S.R.'s copyright agency, Kazantsev has two main themes: (1) Scientists who seek to put their discoveries at mankind's service, and (2) Contact between Earth people and extraterrestrial intelligence. Some of Kazantsev's novels warn about the danger of using science and technology for anti-humane purposes. According ti VAAP, Kazantsev won an Olympic gold medal for chess, has written librettos for one-act operas on space, and is the "author of numerous inventions in the fields of physics and electrical engineering."

According to Patrick McGuire, author of the book Red Stars (University of Michigan Press), a study of the political aspects of Soviet science fiction, Kazantsev has argued that Earth has been visited by extraterrestrial beings and appeared in the West German film version of Chariots of the Gods by Erich von Daniken. A translation into English of

Kazantsev's novel The Destruction of Faena is scheduled for publication soon by Raduga Publishers of Moscow.

Sergei Snegov

Snegov (b. 1910) is best known for his philosophical space opera trilogy, Men Like Gods. Snegov's novels, set in the Sixth Century of the United Humankind Era, depict a just war waged by humans and their alien allies against a villainous, artificial race bent on wiping out all life in the galaxy. I haven't been able to find anything by Snegov in English, but one book, Ambassador Without Credentials, is scheduled to be published in English by Raguda.

Olga Larionova

The first woman to win the Aelita, Olga Larionova (b. 1935) often writes about love. In her allegorical fable "The Useless Planet" she uses science fiction devices to retell the classic Greek myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. A spaceship from the planet of Great Logitania secretly investigates Earth. Although the Logitanians are skilled in logic and have very advanced technology, they have no use for the arts or for love. One Logitanian spy is disguised as an Earth woman. No. 27's face and body have been designed by a computer to be free of all imperfections in an effort to make her inconspicuous; No. 27 can't understand why the natives, especially the men, can't help staring at her. When No. 27 decides to jump ship and remain on Earth, she arranges to have the statue of an Earth woman sent back to the ship and takes its place on the pedestal, hoping to remain undetected because of her Logitanian skill in holding herself perfectly motionless. Her attempt at deception is revealed when the sculptor discovers the statue has living warmth, and, feeling that she is a failure, No 27 steps off the pedestal before his amazed eyes. In the epilogue, we learn that love has revived on Logitania. A statue of No. 27 is displayed in a Logitanian museum, and an Earth man tells his Logitanian lover that the statue reminds him of an old Earth legend....

Another famous Larionova story, "Leopard on the Peak of Kilimanjaro," describes a future society in which almost every individual knows the year in which he will die.

Larionova's fans include astronaut Grechko, who took one of her books into space with him. Larionova's stories have appeared in several U.S. anthologies of Soviet SF. including The Ultimate Threshold (Mirra Ginsburg, editor; Holt Rinehart and Winston) and Earth and Elsewhere (Macmillan, 1985).

Victor Kolupaev

Primarily a short story writer, Kolupaev (b. 1936) is witty and inventive. In "Smile," a man collects smiles, which he uses as a weapon against cruelty. The vendor in "The Newsstand" sells only newspapers from the future. The hero of "Inspiration" unwittingly creates a magical painting; everyone who looks at it sees himself during a turning point in his life.

Some of Kolupaev's stories are collected in Hermit's Swing (MacMillan, 1980).

Sever Gansovsky

Before he became a science fiction writer, Sever Gansovsky (b.1918) was a stevedore, an electrician, a horsebreaker, a postman, a teacher and English student at Leningrad University. During World War II he fought with a Marine detachment in Leningrad and was severely wounded; a VAAP biography says his relatives received two "killed in action" notices and that there is a common grave where his name is listed among the dead.

Understandably, some of Gansovsky's best-known stories deal with the dangers of war and the misuse of technology. "Test Ground" is about a tank which aims its guns toward the biocurrents of its victims. "The Day of Wrath" is a cautionary tale about "otarks," half-men and half-beasts, who are intelligent but lack emotions or morals.

Gansovsky is also an artist who illustrated his own book, A Man Is Coming, and The Snail on the Slope by the Strugatsky brothers.

Other Writers

Several other very important writers have not received the Aelita, either because they died before the award began or (I presume) because they are judged to have much of their careers ahead of them.

Alexander Beliaev (1882-1942) was a leading SF writer in the 1920s and 1930s. Professor Dowell's Head, published in translation by MacMillan in 1980, features the severed but still living head of "the recently deceased Professor Dowell, the famous surgeon and scientist..." In his introduction to the book, Theodore Sturgeon suggested that the fast-moving tale would have fit nicely into the pages of Weird Tales.

Antoly Dnieprov (b. 1919) is a fine short story writer. "The Island of the Crabs," one of his best stories, describes the horrible results when robots resembling crabs go out of control on an island; the story is reprinted in Russian Science Fiction 1969, edited by Robert Madigoff (New York University Press), and Other Worlds, Other Seas, edited by Darko Suvin (Berkley).

Kir Bulychev (b. 1934) is, after the Strugatskys, the most famous SF writer in the Soviet Union. Half a Life, a collection of some of Bulychev's stories, was published by MacMillan in 1979; his excellent novella, "Another Memory," is included in the MacMillan anthology Earth and Elsewhere (1985). Bulychev's story "I was the First to Find You" is reprinted in Hartwell's World Treasury.

Vladimir Mikhailov (b. 1929) is considered one of the most thoughtful contemporary authors. The interstellar plot of A Guardian for My Brother has been interpreted as referring to the Soviet Union's 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia; the sequel, Come and We Shall Think It Over, describes an attempt to prevent an impending war between two planets. [*]

MY LIFE WITH Lawrence of Arabia

by Susan Shwartz

Mark Leeper's review of the restored Lawrence of Arabia came at a time when Maia and I have been corresponding about Lawrence of Arabia and Colonel T.E. Lawrence himself.

Brace yourself: There's a story to this -- "My Life with Lawrence of Arabia."

Which, considering the gentleman in question, is pretty damned unlikely.

I've been somewhat obsessed with Lawrence since I first saw the film back in 1962. As I recall, I came home from it absolutely chaken and fascinated, but too excited to sleep. My father marched me to the Encyclopedia, then produced a copy of the first American edition of Seven Pillars of Wisdom and told me I could have it in the morning. Though it is definitely not the sort of book you might want a 12-year-old to read (Revolt in the Desert is a lot less controversial and more accessible), I spent that summer devouring it, then checking the library for everything I could on Lawrence, including microfilms.

What did I really understand of the enigma and the torment behind the actual figure? Not a whole lot, except I got angry when people made what I referred to as "nasty insinuations." And I threw the Aldington biography across the room for its insunuations. In other words, I did precisely what you'd expect any 12-year-old in the throes of a schoolroom crush to do.

I even got the record and piano music from the film. My mother still has the charcoal sketch I made of the cover framed and hanging up (the only piece of artwork of mine my parents ever framed, and it's pretty ugly), and I used to crack people up by combining the themes from "Lawrence" and "Exodus" into something I rather wistfully called "Peaceful Coexistence."

"She'll outgrow it," is what people said.

I didn't.

My interest in Lawrence has continued and has been abetted by events in my life. For example, in 1970, I was at a summer study program at Oxford University. I was resident in Trinity College and attending sessions in various other colleges, all of which make up the larger university. I was visiting my tutor for medieval English, John Burrow (who is, incidentally, married to Diana Wynn Jones), in his rooms at Jesus College when I noticed a bronze bust and Latin plaque and let out an awful, conspicuously American yelp. Sure enough, it was in memory of Lawrence: he'd gone to Jesus College.

That set off the other people in the tutorial. Out of five potential medievalists, four of us were fascinated by Lawrence. His relation to medieval studies promptly took over the tutorial that morning. After all, it's to be expected. He did his undergraduate thesis on Crusader castles and,

throughout his campaign in Arabia, traveled with a copy of Malory, just as Alexander traveled (here comes the hero worship!) with a copy of Homer.

Then the real treat occurred. Mr. Burrows was Librarian of Jesus College, which has Lawrence's papers. Because of his position, he knew A.W. Lawrence, the youngest of T.E. Lawrence's brothers, and told us a few stories. When we got very excited about that, Mr. Burrows became most bemused at "all you Americans," but trotted us over to the library and pulled out Lawrence's letters, including one of the last ones from 1935. "The motorcycle arrived today. It's a real mankiller."

Instant shudders all around.

Then, in 1977, John Mack published A Prince of Our Disorder, the massive, psychobiographical study of Lawrence that won him a Pulitzer Prize. At the time, I was a nonresident tutor in Winthrop House at Harvard (Oxford and Yale have colleges; Harvard has houses), and sharing a senior common room with a bunch of very amiable medieval specialists and SF readers, one of whom is Paul Parks's sister. Anyhow, when I saw the book, I yelped, bought it in hardcover--no small feat for a grad student--and bore it in triumphantly.

Sure enough, more Lawrence aficionados. Well, well, well...gradually things occurred to us. Here we were at grad school, right? Here Dr. Mack was, head of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, right? Here we were at an undergraduate house, with duty to bring in faculty to speak to the kids, right?

And, after all, what were we but big kids? Accordingly, we invited Dr. Mack to lunch. Much to everyone's amazement, he came and we all talked nonstop. Much to everyone's envy, he signed my book and thanked me. When he was researching the book in Transjordan, he met people who knew Lawrence. (As a matter of fact, I've interviewed one man--who was about 94 at the time--who'd served briefly with him.)

Mack's book was useful, to my mind, for a variety of reasons. I personally found it very helpful because it provided satisfactory answers to charges that people had always hurled at Lawrence: that he was a homosexual (so what); and that he was an anti-Semite (which bothered me a good deal).

First of all, Lawrence is sufficiently complex--and sufficiently tormented--that only a psychiatrist could do justice to him and what Mack has essentially diagnosed--from previously unpublished material--as a flagellant disorder. It's logical, in a way. Here is a man who has been obsessed lifelong with Crusader castles, the idea of Arabia, and of traveling in Arabia like those British eccentrics Hester Stanhope, Charles Doughty, and Gertrude Bell. He finds himself, essentially, functioning as a knight errant; all hell breaks loose in his life; he breaks down for a variety of reasons including what we can assume was a beating and a rape at Der'aa; and reacts like a medieval penitent: he mortifies the flesh. That the beatings he arranged for himself also produced some pleasure, Mack argues, only made him feel guilty.

It's one thing to have a case of hero-worship on someone. When I read this, people asked me if it changed how I felt. It did. Mixed with the hero-worship came a more compassionate evaluation of Lawrence as a very human man, fighting terrible internal battles. I think it's a very valuable lesson to be able to feel compassion to someone you regarded as a hero. I found Mack's account of Lawrence's determination to annihilate this godfigure of Colonel Thomas Edward Lawrence of Arabia profoundly moving. After vowing to be a general and knighted before he was 30, he turned down every honor he was offered, to enlist twice in the RAF (and once in the Tank Corps): he feared his own talents and power.

I was interested, as a Jew, in Lawrence's relationship with the entore Middle East. For a man who has been called an anti-Semite (in the sense of being anti-Jewish, since Arabs too are Semites), Lawrence knew a number of influential Zionists, including Chiam Weizman, whom he brought together with Prince Feisal. He also worked closely with Winston Churchill, who supported a "Jewish State."

Something else Mack wrote about Lawrence also intrigued me. He called him an "enabler." Though he never married and had no children (being a bastard himself and with his psychological profile, that was to be expected), he was profoundly nuturant to the people around him. He was a loyal brother; he was an extremely devoted friend, frequently helping people in trouble.

I think I might have done on lifelong, turning up new books on Lawrence from time to time, fuming at the latest person who decided to debunk or expose as new and scandalous material I was already familiar with, if Greg Benford hadn't asked me to write a story for an alternative-history anthology about great men and women.

Well, well, well, I thought. What if T.E. Lawrence had survived his 1935 motorcycle crash? Think about it. He had retired from the RAF, and speculation was already under way about what he might do next. I believe that Churchill had some ideas for putting him in charge of the British Home Guard should there be another war. So, it seemed logical to me that if Lawrence had survived into World War II, he'd have played some role. I was also intrigued by what might have been his reaction to Germany's Final Solution; after all, here was a man who fought for Arabia for the Arabs, yet spoke of the "eternal miracle of Jewry" and was a friend to Weizman, yet was detested by some other Zionists.

And, of course, I knew from my reading that one of World War II's most celebrated leaders had cam-

paigned in North Africa and been called the Desert Fox for his knowledge of desert tactics: Rommel.

Talk about a "what if!" If Lawrence had survived into World War II, I thought it would be very logical--as well as a neat idea-- if Churchill sent him against Rommel. That meant I needed times, places, and strategies.

England's "finest hour" hit me first. Fine. I've always been a visual sort of person, and the picture of St. Paul's surrounded by the glare of exploding bombs has always moved me. Start the story in the blitz, with Lawrence in St. Paul's, starting at his own funeral bust (which I've seen there). Move him to Number 10 Downing Street. He won't want to fight, so have Churchill blackmail him. With what? With the letters from the man who beat him.

It was time for actual history to help me shape my alternative history.

We're talking 1941 now, right before the Siege of Tobruk and right before the United States' entry into World War II. What if Lawrence had somehow convinced Rommel to--earlier than he is accused of having done in 1944--against Hitler?

By this time I was absolutely gleeful. Since what I know about World War II tactics, especially German tactics, is minuscule, I called Robert Adams and asked for information on hardware and personalities. I also did some reading and uncovered a lovely thing--a covert action designed to take out Rommel's headquarters. The only problem was, Rommel wasn't there.

But what if Lawrence was?

Where was Rommel, meanwhile?

History provided the answer for that, too. At one point, he was at a captured English field hospital, hoping that a Scots doctor could save the life of a Panzer officer. Well, well, well, indeed. It was time to start writing. And, just to make it fun, to start writing in as close to Lawrence's own inimitable style as I could manage.

Sixty pages later that weekend...yes, Virginia, there are sixty-page weekends; and they feel just wonderful once you get your back uncoiled from sitting in a pretzel shape in front of the computer with a cat in your lap for hours at a stretch. That was in December 1988 or thereabouts.

Then, the restored Lawrence of Arabia opened in February 1989 at the Ziegfeld in New York. I had to see it. I had to see it opening night, too. And it was bound to get below zero; it was a work night; and the people at Pru-Bache thought I was nuts, of course. So I stood in line for 90 minutes, but I didn't see Mark Leeper.

Saw a lot of film freaks, Lawrence of Arabia freaks, and--a small number--a few Lawrence freaks. We tend to recognize each other when we see us; we were all very quiet and very excited.

The restored version was magnificent. Even after having seen the film countless times, even after knowing the story backwards and forwards, I was immediately swept up and away. If anything, the film was better than I remembered it.

And the restored footage? The cuts that were made, as Mark says, were intelligent cuts. But I howled at the first footage insert. It occurs right after the cycle accident. There's a shot of Lawrence's shattered goggles dangling from a bush. In the cut version of the the picture, CUT TO an establishing shot of the stairs of St. Paul's Cathedral, with people leaving a funeral. In the restored version, CUT TO a shining new bust of Lawrence in the crypt. In short, CUT precisely TO the scene with which I begin my story.

Well, they do tell writers to think visually. It's no bad thing to think like a man who's won Oscars for his visuals....

I liked others of the restorations, too. For example, there's the scene in Jerusalem around Christmas, with Allenby and the Major who's accompanied Lawrence discussing ransoms. Allenby's faint envy of Lawrence's larger ransom and his feelings that Lawrence is a rather high-risk officer to have under his command come through. CUT TO, essentially, the whole horrible Der'aa episode, which is drawn out, but not explained. No one can like that sequence, but it worked. And finally, as Mark says, the Tafas episode. I personally didn't think it made Lawrence less likable; he was already well on his way to breaking down. But I thought it explained what was going on--and it's exactly as it appears in Seven Pillars of Wisdom.

What impressed me was how well the movie has stood up to the passage of time--the social changes from 1962 to now are overpowering, yet if anything the film hasn't just weathered them, it's been improved by them. For example, Lawrence's crack-up becomes much more understandable when viewed in the

context of of the agonies of Vietnam. For another thing, the whole Der'aa sequence becomes a whole lot more understandable given our greater willingness to talk about sexual abuses. "What happened to him?" whispered the Colorado exhippie sitting beside me. "He was raped," I hissed. Instant, sympathetic silence.

I got home from the film at around 1:00 AM after commuting out to Queens. After spending four hours in the desert, I was frozen. (The next week, I was out sick for three days, too.) But I spent all the next day humming the theme song and grinning to myself. It was good to see Lawrence **and** Lawrence of Arabia again. No matter what sort of things the biographers say about the film--and they do.

Several weeks later, Sandra Miesel called me. David Drake has a story on Lawrence in one of the Heroes in Hell anthologies. OK, so we disagree. David is sure Lawrence was homosexual, and portrays him that way. I send him my story for purposes of comparison, and think no more about it. A week later, my phone rings. When I pick it up, with no warning, a voice reads one of the more sensationalistic passages of Seven Pillars of Wisdom. "Dave," I wail, "you're gonna get my phone disconnected!"

I also sent the story to Dr. John Mack. And, in all fairness, I must admit: he thinks it's fantasy, not science fiction.

Still, he thinks it's fun.

Meanwhile, I've been corresponding about Lawrence with Maia, and something has struck me. Malcolm Brown, who did the PBS documentary on Lawrence (and a recent and good popular biography A Touch of Genius, I think it's called), as issued a new edition of Lawrence's letters. The man was an inspired letterhack.

As I read his letters, I had such a sense of an extraordinarily talented, thoughtful, and tormented individual--capable of inquiring whether the pension granted the widow of one of his old officers was sufficient; of joking with noblewomen or George Bernard Shaw; drawing cartoons for a child; or manipulating people like Winston Churchill in his persona of "Colonel Lawrence," the enemy who, ultimately, he tried to destroy--but who proved to be too much for him.

Would our letters paint us so well if they were brought to light? I doubt it--yet it is something to strive for.

And it's something to realize, after more than 25 years, that the man I respected when I was 12 is a man I can respect even more now.

This story is for Maia, who asked me to write on Lawrence. |*|

THE LONELY LIBRARY

by Thomas A. Easton

My loneliness, internal suffering,
Finds solace in the lonely library
That blesses my lonely village
And fills the lonely belly of my mind.

Am I exiled from more social circles?
What fantastic prisons they two do make,
My loneliness, my library,
Not really bars, still they bar my freedom.

Or is it fair to say such awful things?
Loneliness, yes, is banishment,
But what prison holds such vistas of moons,
Wars, long voyages, and high salvations?

Of brain-blasted lovers in shiny boats
Navigating up eroded rivers,
A crystal robot for their guide,
And torches gleaming high to call them home?

I quake. Those visions hold my inner eye,
But I know their truth never can be mine.
Better by far those miles of shelves,
The library, that lock my dreams in gaol.

THE HORRORS OF FANDOM

— FILE 42 —

Living with an OE

From the Essays of Wendy Counsil

Only on its surface is science fiction fandom a safe, happy playground for the terminally adolescent. Beneath that vapid appearance lies a bubbling pit of demonic terrors, to which the uninitiated may fall victim. This story is only one of the many tragedies that have befallen the imprudent fan.

Matilda (not her real name) was a happy soul. Well, she was a reasonably satisfied person. Actually, she had a pretty average life. Anyway, Matilda lived in an idyllic home with her husband (let's call him "Bernard"), their pets and occasionally wayward friends.

Matilda, her husband, and their friends were all science fiction fans. One could ascertain this from a single glance. The thick glasses, the rounded shoulders, the absence of a savings account passbook, the lack of athletic equipment in their closets: all spoke of a set of hobbies which involved books and Hilton hotel rooms.

Matilda's husband dabbled in Amateur Press Associations. APAs, as they are known to their initiates, are loose groupings of fans who collect their random thoughts onto paper, staple several of these papers together into a periodic "magazine," redistribute the collection to the membership, then read and comment on each others' random thoughts. The membership of any given APA is led by an OE, the official editor of the APA who performs the collecting, stapling, and redistribution functions for the group.

Near tragedy struck Bernard's favorite APA when the long-standing OE offered his resignation. Originally, only one member volunteered to become the next OE. Unfortunately that member (who was a terribly nice man) lived in "Lower Slobovia," a region known for its god-awful postal service, and was therefore unacceptable to the membership at large. Bernard, in a moment of drunken chivalry, volunteered to lead the wayward throng.

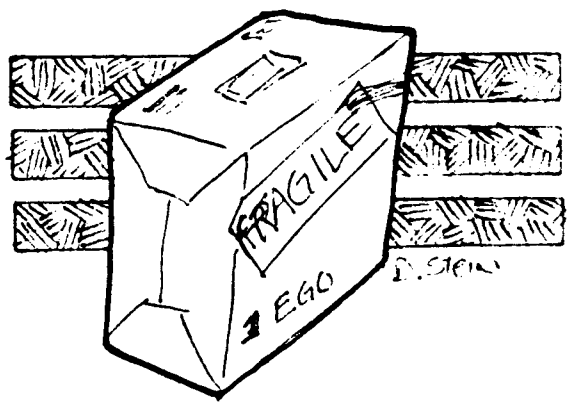
In glee, the APA members quickly embraced Bernard's overture with promises of support and eternal gratitude. Bernard enjoyed that heartfelt response for as long as it lasted -- about ten days. Matilda remained a sturdy, smiling, background figure during this time. Her words of support rang through their lovely home: "It's your life."

Bernard wrote to tell the membership the next deadline for submissions would be on the first of the next month (let's call it "may"), and that anythiong arriving after the deadline would not be included in the next issue. Financial records and the balance of the APA's general fund (some $2.32 plus a package of popcicle sticks) arrived on Bernard's doorstep well before the deadline. That is, if one considers April 30 to be "well before" May 1. Three (out of 30) members' contributions arrived via Express Mail the same date.

But this worried Bernard not at all. And why was that? Because Bernard chose the date of the first APA deadline to be 3,200 miles away from home, that's why.

Matilda did the books for the APA, put the contributions into order, and purchased the envelops, all without complaint. Well, she might have said one or two negative things. Actually, she bitched up a storm.

Bernard decided to fly 3,200 miles home (and 3,200 back the next day) in order to assist Matilda with the collating, stapling and mailing of the APA distribution. "No wonder," Matilda thought upon



seeing the bill for the airline ticket, "we are unable to have a savings passbook, nor even an exercycle in the hall closet."

In the ensuing months, things only got worse in the Matilda-Bernard household. APA members would call at midnight, begging for extensions to the deadline, offering excuses for their tardiness. "My per tarantula died," said one in quavering voice. "Duh, I forgot," said others.

During the fourth month of Bernard's OEship, Matilda approached him gently. "Could you tell these BOZOS not to call in the middle of the god damned night?" she shrieked.

Members who lived locally had promised to help on collation day. One came, once. Matilda found her Sundays consumed with collating and stapling hundred-page magazines. Members who came to town and accepted Bernard's offer of hospitality even disappeared on Collation days. "I'm sorry, but I'm taking the tour of the sewage processing plant that day," one said with a sad smile.

The phone calls continued. One member found a reason to call three times each month, always when Bernard and Matilda were making love. The cost for the stapler, staples, envelopes, additional correspondence, front and back covers threw Matilda and Bernard into debt. When deadline week approached, Matilda and Bernard had terrible fights. Once, their dog tinkled on a member's 47 page contribution, and Bernard killed the dog in a frenzy. Matilda started insulting APA members over the telephone and in other fannish publications. Their lives were ruined, their credit completely destroyed, their home trashed, their relationship irrevocably subverted by the maelstrom of forces the APA brought with it.

Sad story, isn't it? From her cell at the Pittsville Sanitarium, Matilda sends this message to those with ears to hear it: "Don't let what happened to Bernard and me happen to you. Let someone else OE the APA, even if they do live in Lower Slobovia!"

That's the end of this story. Next in the series of The Horrors of Fandom, "File 43: Chairing a Panel When a Panelist Won't Shut Up." Until then, I remain your intrepid reporter. |*|

The Critics, the Elephant, and the Supernova

by Joe Patrouch

What is SF criticism for? Who does it, and why? And why on Earth are there college courses in it?

Walk into your favorite bookstore and survey the SF racks. Imagine yourself a mundane, brought there by coincidence and circumstance. Of the several hundred paperback and hardback books in front of you, which one(s) should you read to find out what SF in itself really is? Is it better to start with the elephant's ear or tail or trunk?

In the beginning Hugo Gernsback said, Let there be Amazing Stories, and genre SF was born. For sixty years it has accumulated texts, writers, readers, editors, artists, fans, critics, even teachers. Now SF has gone nova. Its light is everywhere. It irradiates us from TV and movies, from magazines and newspapers, from advertisements and commercials, from music and music videos. There is no escape, no place to hide. Once the private property of a privileged few, SF now belongs to and is shared by everyone.

Different groups ride different fragments of the core explosion. Star Wars and Star Trek fly out parallel to one another, with Outer Limits and Twilight Zone and Logan's Run somewhere nearby. Conan and Red Sonia depart on trajectories of their own, as do Tolkien and his imitators, and Burroughs and his. Somewhere off there twist the unicorns and dragons, and over there go the comics and the illustrated novels, and the shared universes and the in-the-worlds-of's.

But every supernova leaves behind it a nucleus of itself, the neutron star that defines the center and says, This is where it all began. And the elephant that has ears of Star Wars and Star Trek and tail of Tolkien has somewhere a unity that is "elephantness." In the midst of this ongoing explosion the critic's job is to track the pieces of chaos back to the neutron star, to detect the one elephant behind such disparate parts.

Let's put it a different way. As has often been observed, once upon a time an SF fan could read all the SF published and all the SF criticism and all

the associated items, and still have time to lead a sort of imitation mundane life. Such a time is at least twenty years past. Its exponential growth curve has carried SF way beyond the reach of any ordinary human being's reading abilities. And if no reader can read it all, pity the poor writer, who once could read it all--to keep up with the field and to get ideas--and write his own stuff besides. (Many writers today--perhaps most writers today--have simply given up and so beg off voting for the Nebulas each year: "I just don't have time to keep up with all the recommended and nominated stuff, so I can't vote honestly," they say.) The point is a simple one: if neither the readers nor the writers can keep up with the field, then how does anyone even know what the field is anymore? Explosion implies destruction. Hasn't SF--due largely to its tremendous success--simply disintegrated?

What is SF criticism for? Who does it, and why? And why are there course in SF?

I have taught SF classes at the University of Dayton in Ohio for the past twenty years, and for most of that time I have been ambivalent about it. I was trained to teach English literature from Beowulf to Samuel Johnson, and early on I thought of myself as a young Chaucerian. Geoffrey Chaucer and Robert Heinlein make uneasy bedfellows, let me tell you. Literature and SF were clearly two different things, and I loved them both. But I loved Milton and Donne as an adult, and I suspected that what I loved about SF was the remembered glory of those adolescent afternoons with Startling Stories and Fantastic Adventures. I felt I loved literature for itself, but SF for myself, as an exercise in nostalgia, an attempt to be a teenager again and recapture those thrilling days of yesteryear.

It seems to me that no one teaches SF unwillingly. Who would force it on him, and why? I suspect that the present generation teaches SF because not to do so would be to deny one's self. One might as well live without using one's perfectly good right arm. Given eyesight, why choose to live blindfolded? Let others use SF in the classroom to recruit for the sciences or as a steppingstone to "real" literature, to teach physics or philosophy or sociology, to be thorough and honest in surveying contemporary fiction. We who teach SF for its own sake do so as a form of self-expression. We cannot not teach it, and still remain ourselves. In Wuthering Heights Cathy exclaims, "I don't love Heathcliff. I am Heathcliff." Just so, today's SF teacher can exclaim, "I love literature, but I am SF." SF and our selves have become so interrelated that to deny or lose the one would be to deny or lose the other.

But SF has gone nova. It has exploded, disintegrated. To switch metaphors, it is dissolving and merging with the mainstream. It may become a literary movement of the past, like the Alliterative Revival of the 14th century, or the Metaphysical Poets of the 17th. If SF is dead, and I am SF, then I too am dead. Why are SF classes being taught? As last ditch efforts on the part of SF teachers to keep their psyches alive, that's why.

What's SF criticism for? To keep SF alive: by identifying its best examples and its virtues and its traditions, by keeping it out of the mainstream, by not allowing it to get lost in peripheral forms like movies or comics or fantasy, by not letting it be exploited, homogenized, and trivialized by the big money-hungry conglomerates, by keeping it a separate and separable kind of literature.

Who does SF criticism? People who might now be any age, but who at twelve allowed SF to merge with their souls to such an extent that the two are now inseparable.

Why do SF criticism? For self-preservation. You may take away an arm, a leg; I would still be me. But take away SF--allow SF to disintegrate, dissolve, merge, become something non-SF--and I would no longer be me. I would shrivel into an accountant or a corrector of punctuation.

So I'm no longer ambivalent about doing SF criticism or teaching SF classes. On the one hand, I have no choice; on the other, SF needs criticism now as it has never needed it before. Hey, folks, it's a matter of life and death, for all of us. You might prefer Saturn or Triton or the asteroids, but the sun gives it all shape and coherence. SF is the sun that holds our system together. We'd better understand it and out relationship to it. Because if that sun goes out, we all perish. |*|

THE VIRGIN SEEKS A LOVER TRUE

by Thomas A. Easton

She neatens her gateway,
Preparing it to fall,
And dreams of harvesting
The warm rain of love.

Her love's an alien
Whom ancient texts have told
The more ancient secrets
Of coaxing gateways
To their opening, but
He knows only theory.

Joy will come in time to
Both. It is their fate.

PHROGS

by Duane Elms

"You're the best we've got," snorted Admiral Buchwald. "If you don't get through to fleet HQ, we may as well put out the welcome mat for the Phrogs. With the pounding this base has taken there's no way we're going to stop them."

Carson stood at-ease in the Admiral's office as Buchwald outlined the mission. The words confirmed most of the talk he'd been hearing in the messhall. Things weren't going well. The Phrogs, an amphibious race of unusual cunning, had started the war shortly after the two races first met, and so far as anyone could tell, they were winning in this sector.

"Well, that's about it," finished the Admiral. "Your ship's fueled and ready. Best of luck...to both of us."

* * *

As he ran through the lift-off checkout, Carson couldn't shake a feeeling of apprehension. This wasn't going to be a simple run to jump-point and then an easy transition to HQ sector. The Phrogs had to know that someone would try to get through. They also had to know that if they kept communication sealed off, this system was as good as theirs. They'd throw everything they had at him. As fast as the corvette was, it was going to be an iffy thing.

"May as well get on with it," he thought as he completed the checkout, settled into the pilot's seat, and initiated the lift-off sequence. "Let's see what we can do."

* * *

The ship's sensors cleared just as soon as it was past the interference of the planetary shield, and Carson was amazed to find that there were no hostile ships or unidentified objects anywhere near his course. He instructed the ship to run both sensor and display diagnostics, but both systems checked out fine.

Still feeling ill at ease, Carson laid in the course for the jump-point, pushed the speed up to maximum cruise and switched in the automatics. Unless the Phrogs had brought in something truly unusual, he was home free. He had a clear course to transition and the ship should be able to outrun anything in the system. He leaned back in the pilot's chair and though about it. Somehow it just didn't seem right.

It wasn't.

No more than five minutes later the collision warning flooded the cockpit with its insistent red light, instantly snapping Carson to alertness. He didn't need to run any checks to see that something was very wrong. He could see clearly the planet track across the front of the corvette as the ship swung slowly aroung and aligned in the sun.

With relfexes honed on a hundred missions, Carson switched out the automatics and took the controls. Putting the ship through a jump-point on manual wasn't easy, but it had been done. He'd pull around and take his best shot at it, that is, he would if he could get the ship to respond. So far nothing he had done had caused any deviation from the curreent course, dead center into the sun at maximum cruise.

"Sabotage," thought Carson frantically, "but where would it be? Vector control? Manual control transponders? Nav-comp? ... Nav-comp!" Ripping the cover off the navigational unit, he found it. A small black box was wired into the gyroscope. He could only assume it was sending a false signal into the Nav-comp, horribly misguiding it. As he reached to yank the box out his eye caught the light from another wire bundle and he hesitated. Tracing this second set of wires led him to another small box, but the purpose of this one was not open to speculation. It was a standard Mark-21 demolition charge, fully capable of blowing a hole the size of his chest through the ship's hull, and it was wired, deadman fashion, to the first box. Removing either set of wires would set off the charge. He had a choice. He could die now or he could die later, but not much later. No wonder there weren't any hostile ships around. He'd been dead since he left the ground.

Still staring at the sabotaged Nav-comp as his ship plunged into the heart of the star, Carson couldn't help feeling a small amount of admiration for his adversaries. "Yes," he thought, "'Twas brilliant of the slimy toads to wire the gimbals in this way."|*|

50 STARTLING, DYNAMIC YEARS AGO...

by David Gorecki

1939 is generally regarded as the watershed year for adult science fiction magazines, with the first appearances by Isaac Asimov, Alfred Bester, A. E. van Vogt, Robert Heinlein, Fritz Leiber and Theodore Sturgeon. But it was also important in the number of science fiction magazines launched; nine new professional magazines appeared for the first time that year.

Januray saw the launch of one of the most successful titles: Startling Stories. The magazine's coup in its first issue was the first magazine publication of Stanley Weinbaum's The Black Flame. The magazine's first editor, Mort Weisinger, had risen out of fandom to begin an author's agency specializing in science fiction, the Solar Sales Service, with long-time friend Julius Schwartz. When Weisinger became editor of the revamped Thrilling Wonder Stories in 1936, the agency's clients found an open door at the magazine. Since the agency handled Weinbaum's posthumous literary affairs, The Black Flame was a natural to give the new Startling Stories a flourish of publicity. The magazine itself was rather schizophrenic (as was Thrilling Wonder Stories) during this period; it couldn't decide whether it was going to compete with Astounding for a more adult market, or go for the juvenile audience it would share with Amazing. It settled for the latter, unfortunately, under Oscar Friend's editorship, occasionally featuring interesting shorts by Fred Brown, and stories by Manly Wade Wellman, Henry Kuttner, Edmond Hamilton, and other well-known SF authors who would later follow Weisinger into the comic pages when he became an editor of Superman.

February saw the birth of one of the less successful magazines: Dynamic Science Stories, under Robert Erisman. Erisman was a pulp editor, not especially interested in science fiction; he apparently gleaned his knowledge of SF from the older magazines since Dynamic's first issue had a cover by Frank R. Paul and a lead novel by Stanton A. Coblentz, a Gernsback favorite. Dynamic's policy didn't sit well with fandom, and the magazine died with its second issue in April. As an aside, it's worth noting that Dynamic Science Stories was launched by the same company, in the same year, as Marvel Comics, one of the most sought after and successful titles in comics...proving, I guess, that expertise in one area of fantasy doesn't mean you can handle another.

Also appearing in February was the first issue of Strange Stories, a rare attempt to compete with Weird Tales. The problem was, of course, that Weird Tales was barely a going concern itself, and had just been sold to a New York firm that struggled to put out the classic horror magazine on the lowest of budgets. Standard, the pulp firm responsible for Strange Stories, subsisted for a year on tales by renowned fantasistc like August Derleth, Robert Bloch, Henry Kuttner, and others, most of whose submissions were in fact rejects from Weird Tales!

March brought a magazine with another sense of deja vu: Columbia's generically titled Science Fiction, edited by former fan Charles Hornig. Hornig, formerly editor of Gernsback's Wonder Stories, re-

Thinking on what to say about 1939 with so much going on that year led to this article. It's interesting that a year was so fateful in terms of events on a world-wide scale would be similarly impactful (gah, what a word) on smaller scales: the great first appearances by so many top writers, and in another field altogether, that of films. 1939 was regarded as the apex of the studio sustem, with Gone With the Wind, Wizard of Oz, and so many others. Even in genre films the record was outstanding; detective fans saw Basil Rathbone for the first time in Hound of the Baskervilles and Adventures of Sherlock Holmes; fans of Cagney and Bogart had Roaring Twenties; western aficionados had a range of films from Stagecoach to Destry Rides Again. Universal even re-launched a horror film cycle with Karloff, Lugosi, Rathbone, Lionel Atwell and others in Son of Frankenstein. I can't help wonder if world tensions produced some kind of adrenaline-high effort. What's also interesting is that this Hollywood "high" died out about the same time the US entered the war; can anyone think of any top level classics after Casablanca in '42? I suspect that this ebbing (along with the decline of SF about the same time) was due in no small part to the creative talents entering the armed forces; but it doesn't explain why there wasn't a similar flowering of greatness post-World War II. (Maybe the SF renaissance just took a little longer, with the coming of F&SF and Galaxy among others.)

peated the mistake that Dynamic Science Stories had made by publishing old-style science fiction by Edmond Hamilton, Ed and Otto Binder and others. The cover was another Frank R. Paul primitive.

March saw another effort to compete with Weird Tales...but this title was destined to be a lot more successful. Eric Frank Russell's classic novel Sinister Barrier was the impetus for John Campbell's off-trail magazine Unknown, arguably the best fantasy magazine of all time. Basically and SF tale of energy globes that manipulate men's emotions to cause war and terror, its Fortean overtones appealed to Campbell so much that he showcased it in the new magazine. The more sophisticated, logical approach to fantasy differentiated it from Weird Tales, but there was a crossover of authors, and, in fact, Unknown became the home of Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and Gray Mouser tales originally rejected by Weird Tales.

May began with the first issue of Ray Palmer's fantasy companion to Amazing, modestly titled Fantastic Adventures. Initially issued in the large besheet size, its juvenile tone and reliance of the Ziff-Davis stable of Chicago authors left it with little distinction.

Frank Munsey's Argosy and All-Story, two of the earliest general-fiction pulps, had built up an impressive list of fantasy and SF tales since 1896. Noting the rebirth of interest in imaginative literature, they decided to create an all-reprint magazine that would present those tales to an all new audience. In September of 1939, Famous Fantastic Mysteries began reprinting the Munsey backlog with A. Merritt's The Moon Pool, Ray Cumming's The Girl in the Golden Atom, and others. What distinguished the magazine was the impressive quality of artwork by the top names: Finlay, Bok, and Lawrence. The combination of classics with fine illustration was responsible for carrying the magazine well into the fifties.

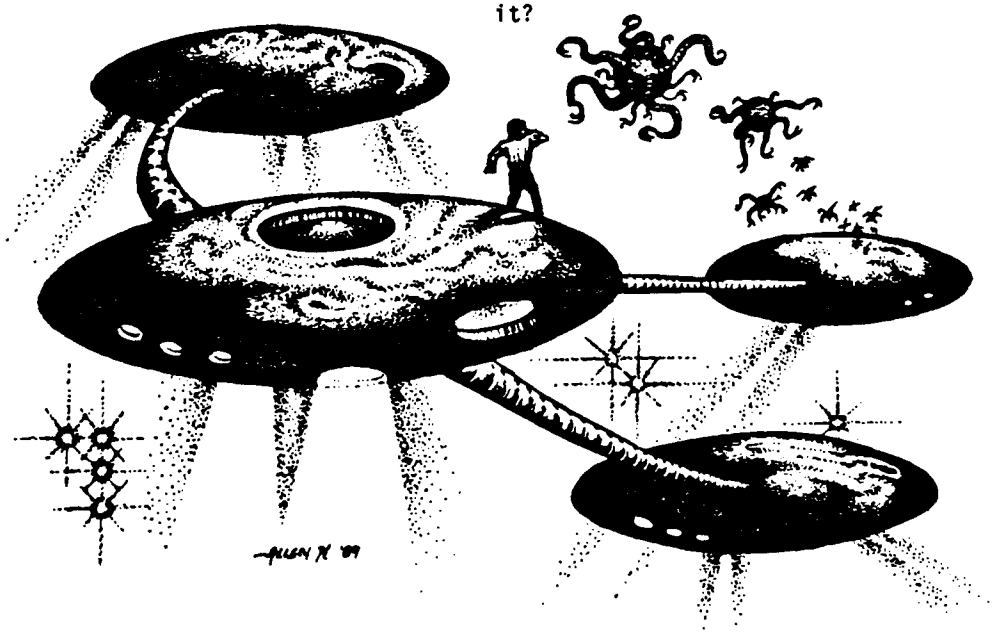
In November, Columbia gave Science Fiction a companion magazine, titled Future; again, the magazine limped along on the old-style SF stories, until it was revivified under the creative editorship of Robert W. Lawndes, who saw both magazines into the sixties.

The SF fan's 1939 Christmas present came from a company with the unlikely title of Love Romance Publishing, but it remains one of the nostalgic high-points of magazine SF: the first issue of Planet Stories. "STRANGE ADVENTURES ON OTHER WORLDS ---THE UNIVERSE OF FUTURE CENTURIES!" it unabashedly proclaimed: the first all-interplanetary science fiction magazine would last into 1955, and be an important source of authors as diverse as Ray Bradbury and Philip K. Dick in the course of its run.

Before closing, I'd like to mention two other noteworthy events in publishing that year. 1939 was the year that Hugo Gernsback attempted to carry his "scientifictional" gospel to the younger set with Superworld Comics. Alas, the pre-teens weren't buying it, nor was anybody else; the magazine perished with its third issue. Of course, the covers for all three were by Frank R. Paul who was certainly having the busiest year in quite some time. (In addition, he managed to squeeze in the Guest of Honor position at the first Worldcon in New York that year.)

On a higher literary plane, 1939 saw the first title from Arkham House, the monumental labor of love by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, H.P. Lovecraft's The Outsider and others. And, of course, like Superworld Comics, The Outsider was not an instant best seller. But its reputation and value grew. The joke of it all is that the "scientifictional" items of 1939 that have most increased in value are, of course, The Outside and Superworld Comics.

Kind of restores your sense of wonder, doesn't it?



Pulp & Celluloid

Book, film, tape, graphic novel, comic, theatre and record reviews by: Anthony D. Blokzyl, Ravi Chopra, Dennis K. Fischer, David Griffin, Ben Indick, Dean R. Lambe, Lan, Evelyn C. Leeper, Mark R. Leeper, Danny Low, Maureen O'Brien, Elizabeth Ann Osborne, Robert Sabella, Ben Schilling, David M. Shea, Skel, Dale L. Skran, Peter Thiesen and Laura Todd

BOOKS, GRAPHIC NOVELS, COMICS

RECORDS, TAPES and SONGBOOKS

FILMS, VIDEOS and THEATRE

Book Reviews by *Ben Schilling*

SOLDIER OF ARETE

by Gene Wolfe
SFBC, 1989, $10.20

This is obviously the middle book of a series. It picks up the story of Latro (Lucius), the amnesiac mercenary Latin, at the time of the Greco-Persian wars. If you haven't read the first book, Soldier of the Mist, you're going to be completely lost amoung all the characters from the first book. Latro can not remember anything that happened more than a day ago. He can, however, see the immortal gods and he writes things on a scroll to remember. He also uses literal translations of Greek place names. It is an interesting book, but it suffers from the rabbit start and it just sort of ends without much resolution. Latro is no closer to finding his memory and he is still fulfilling the prophecies, although, like most Greek prophecies, they have multiple possible outcomes.

PRENTICE ALVIN

by Orson Scott Card
SFBC, 1989, $9.98 (Omnibus edition)
Tor, 1989, $17.95

Scott Card can write better books than this. He has proved that many times in the past. There doesn't seem to be any real plot and I've had trouble reconciling the famous characters with the alternate history. I'm particularly unhappy with George Washington, a second son, as Lord Potomac.

Alvin Miller Jr is off to become a prentice smith. Of course he's good at it, he seems to be almost perfect at doing things. This makes the master smith angry, and this conflict is not resolved by the end of the book. I think that we're looking at a very long series on the life of Alvin Smith, also known as Alvin Miller Jr. Since Alvin has only reached age twenty in three books, I think that we've got at least another four or five books

to go. I also find Alvin to be like the medieval saints, too perfect to be a real person. The story just ends, with no real resolution of any of the problems. I suspect that this series is a labor of love and that we will eventually see the rest of Alvin's life.

RIMRUNNERS

by C. J. Cherry
SFBC, 1989, $7.76
Warner/Questar, 1989, $19.95

This is another story set in C. J. Cherryh's future history series while Union and Alliance are hunting Company pirates. Bet Yeager is a spacer who has been marooned on Thule station, one of the Hinder Stars. She has a checkered past, including service on both Company and merchant ships. She's at the end of her rope. She is going to take whatever she can to get off the station even though she can get a free pass working on the station. When the Alliance Ship **Loki** shows up, she manages get on as an engineer. The problem is, she is a grunt who knows weapons repair, not major ship systems. Yeager also has problems with the First Officer, a not very nice person. Rimrunners has all the things that we've come to expect from C. J. Cherryh, and will probably show up on next year's Hugo short list. It's a bit of space opera, but it's good space opera.

SPHINXES WILD

by Esther M. Friesner
Signet/NAL, 1989, $3.95

This is the second sequel to New York by Knight. It is not a sequel to Elf Defense. Instead it is the story of Sanchi, the Knight's squire, after the fall of the dragon. Sanchi is now working in a casino in Atlantic City as a runner. Unfortunately, this casino, along with a lot of other things, is owned by The Sphinx, which was only injured, not killed, when Oedipus dumped her over the cliff. There is a Roman wizard who is trying to destroy The Sphinx. This wizard doesn't seem to be either very wise or very powerful. He does manage to retrieve seven Caesars Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and Heliogabalus) from the grave, along with Suetonius and Hatshepshut, although this is more of a mistake than anything else. Of these nine, none prove to be much use against The Sphinx, although Claudius and Hatshepshut have some effect. The other six Caesars only help The Sphinx by failing to correctly answer her Riddles. Sanchi proves to be the key.

It's not the greatest fantasy ever written, but it is a fun book, and continues Ms Friesner's string of interesting fantasies. She knows her stuff and continues to improve as a writer.

Film & Book Reviews by *Mark R Leeper*

FIRST BORN

CAPSULE REVIEW: BBC-TV has done some very good science fiction stories in their 3-part, 3-hour format. First Born is not one of them. The story spreads itself too thin by touching the philosophical issues and the social issues far too lightly, yet letting them get in the way of the story values. This story of a hybrid child is neither fish nor fowl. Rating: 0.

One of the facts of life that you have to get used to is that you just cannot have it all. Most major films, at least Hollywood films, open first in the United States and may wait a while before getting their releases in other countries. The United States has the second largest film industry in the world (second only to India's huge film industry) and films play in the United States first and take longer to get to places like Britain. But a lot of good drama, and in particular good science fiction drama, never makes it to the United States at all, or does with such a low profile that few of us Yanks see it. In particular, there is some really good science fiction done for the BBC that few Americans ever get a chance to see and far fewer actually see.

The BBC seems to go for the three-part, three-hour dramas with really high production values. Every once in a while one of their mini-series gets shown in this country. Their adaptation of Day of the Triffids was one of the best book adaptations to another medium I have ever seen. Their alternate history story An Englishman's Castle is probably

the most viewed and most requested tape in my collection. The most accurate dramatic version of Dracula (not science fiction, but in a related field) was their Count Dracula. But this sort of drama is picked up for American television in a piecemeal fashion. Three-hour mini-series are an awkward length and very hard to get scheduled here. When they are, often these programs are poorly publicized. So in the long run, with the exception of a few flamboyant series such as Dr Who and Blake's 7, little of the BBC's science fiction gets much attention in this country.

However, having said all that, I have to say that last year's First Born, recently shown on the Arts & Entertainment Network, is only a competently made science fiction horror story and is not representative of the best of the BBC. First Born is an adaptation of The Gor Saga by Maureen Duffy (not to be confused with the Gor novels of John Norman). The story deals with the aftermath of a genetic experiment to crossbreed a human with a gorilla. What do you get if you cross a gorilla with a human? Improbably enough, you seem to get a human with only minor physiological abnormalities and some minor ape instincts. Tarzan is usually played more apelike than is Gordon who is half gorilla. Somehow reminiscent of the Omen trilogy, the story is told in three segments showing Gordon as a baby, a boy, and a young man. There is so little of the gorilla half in Gordon that the film is really more about the social stigma of mixed parentage than it is about Gordon's hybrid nature.

The story just compounds high improbability with high improbability. Even given that such a hybrid could survive, why is it as human as it appears to be? It starts life as a hairy baby, but soon loses most of that hair and in spite of the baby looking and acting almost entirely human, a fellow scientist who sees it every day believes the story that it is half gorilla, half orangutan. There are no orangutan characteristics at all and very few ape characteristics. In fact, late in Gor's life--Gor is short for Gordon or Gorilla--his gorilla side manifests itself in his wanting to be a priest. That is a touch that will please animal rights people somewhat more than the clergy, I suspect.

A story like this could be a thumping good adventure tale (well, maybe like a Tarzan story), or go deeply into the legal or moral or religious issues raised (as Vercor's novel You Shall Know Them did), or delve into the mind of such a chimerical person, or examine the social issues involved. First Born tries to do all four and lightly, and comes up short on each.

I would have gone for the philosophical implications, but even the film Skullduggery (Vercor's philosophical novel turned into an adventure vehicle for Burt Reynolds!) went into the philosophy in more depth than did First Born. There is certainly the implication that there are deep theological issues--one priest seems to be very bothered by them --but the audience is never actually privy to his objections. The result is a well-made television film, but still very dissatisfying. I would give it a flat 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THE NAVIGATOR

CAPSULE REVIEW: For the beauty of its photography and the originality of its concept this fantasy from Australia and New Zealand is the best that has been seen in America for several years. Yet it loses points because of a muddled narrative that leaves the viewer wondering what the story was really all about. Rating: +2.

It is March 1348 in Cumbria. In a small mining village there is the certain knowledge that the Plague is coming. Conner has been gon from the village for three months, much longer than expected, just finding out what is happening in the world. Perhaps the Plague has claimed him. His younger brother Griffin waits for his return. And Griffin suffers from enigmatic dreams, perhaps visions, of another world and a mission of faith, perhaps an act of faith so great that God will intercede an protect the village from the onslaught of the Plague. God wants the villagers to dig through the flat disk which is our world and come out on the other side, the Celestial City. There they are to forge a cross and place it on top of the mighty city that commands the Celestial City. When Conner returns with news of just how close the Plague really is, the urgency of the mission becomes obvious. They dig through the disk and find the Celestial City, a city of great wonder, though to our eyes it is just your standard 1988 New Zealand city. THings we have come to live with are to the pilgrims' eyes great sights and great dangers. And so begins their adventure.

Stylistically filmed in black and white and in color, The Navigator beautifully re-creates the life in a 14th Century village and a comparable view of life in the 20th Century, though the color photography is less interesting. It is a story told on many levels, not all of which are comprehensible. The style of story-telling is usually well told with the sort of duality of vision that The Gods Must Be Crazy has. We see the familiar, but we also see it through the eyes of a strange culture. Only at one point does this duality break down into slapstick worthy of Terry Gilliam.

The Navigator is an odd and murky fantasy that seems to be pointing to some deeper meaning that is somewhere beyond view. As a fantasy it edges out even this year's Field of Dreams for originality of

idea. But in the final analysis, the film narrative is muddled and the point of this exercise remains unclear. I give it a +2.

LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM

CAPSULE REVIEW: Ken Russell reminds us of how much fun and how much art went into 1960s horror films. Lair of the White Worm is a horror film with more style than fake blood. While less ambitious than most of Russell's output, it may well be his best-realized film. Rating: +2 (but not for all tastes).

Some of the most stylish and interesting horror films are those directed by Terence Fisher. Fisher's films include Horror of Dracula, Kiss of the Vampire, Island of Terror, and The Devil's Bride (a.k.a. The Devil Rides Out). Some have said that Fisher is to horror films what Hitchcock is to suspense. Any year is a banner year for horror fans when two Terence Fisher films come out. 1988 was such a year--well, sort of. Lamentably, Fisher died several years ago, but if the term Hitchcockian can be applied to films done in his style, you should be able to do the same thing with Fisher. For Fisher, making horror films was an art. Making films about razor gloves or hockey-masked killers and mass-producing those is at best a craft and barely that. But 1988 can boast two films in the best tradition of Fisher, both made by filmmakers with much better reputations. The Deceivers was directed by James Ivory, and Lair of the White Worm was directed by Ken Russell.

Russell liked to spice his films with sequences of near hallucinatory images. Sometimes that works, as it did in Altered States or The Devils. Sometimes it is a complete non-sequitur, as in Crimes of Passion. He let weirdness totally take hold of his last film, Gothic, but with Lair of the White Worm he is back telling a story reasonably linearly. And while it is not his most ambitious project, making a 1960s-style horror film--and doing it well --is better than trying to do a biography of Tchaikovsky and trashing it as badly as Russell did with The Music Lovers. In this case, Russell's source was the Bram Stoker novel of the same title. (Stoker also wrote Jewel of the Seven Stars, which was adapted into The Mummy's Shroud and The Awakening. And, oh yes, he wrote a book called Dracula which, if I remember, has been the basis of a few films.)

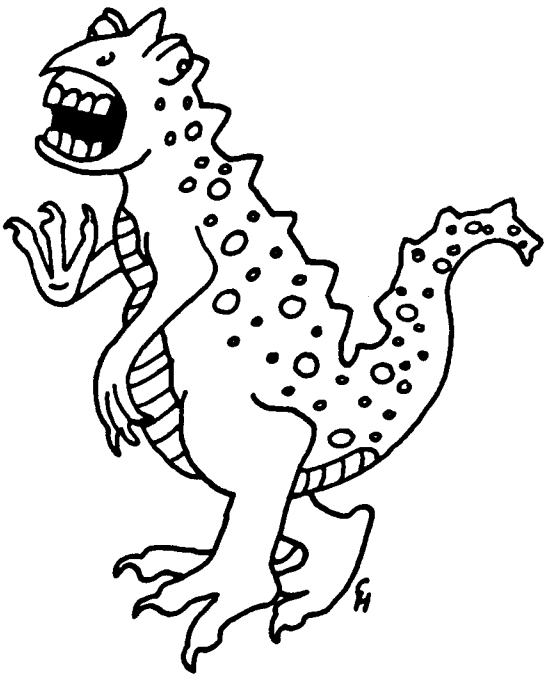
Since before the Garden of Eden the god of the Bible has been at war with the primal snake god Dionin. Through the ages various snake cults have flourished and, where necessary, opposed Christianity (as well as Conan!). A disciple of Dionin--thousands of years old, thanks to clean living and the power of the snake god--has set up shop on the English countryside where legend has it a great "worm" was slain by a Lord D'Ampton after it had feasted on people and cows. Since then there had been disappearances in the region, but not enought to cause too much fuss until the discovery of the skull of some inexplicable animal is found by a scottish visitor. Then things start to happen.

Surprisingly for a film by Russell, Lair of the White Worm is, of anything, a bit lightweight. But it is a well-crafted horror film. He finds surprising places to hint at snake shapes in the film, from a water hose to the insignia on a policeman's collar. Amanda Donohoe makes a superbly sensuous villainess and is always marvelous to watch, but never more so than when she is seducing an unlucky but eager Boy Scout for the greater glory of Dionin. Lair of the White Worm will probably be my favorite Ken Russell film. I sat through it twice and had a great time both viewings. Rate it +2.

THE LAND BEFORE TIME

CAPSULE REVIEW: Apparently inspired by the art of William Stout, The Land before Time is short on characterization as well as screen time. The idea of doing a Disney-style cartoon with dinosaurs as characters was a good one, but The Land before Time does not deliver enough. Rating: low +1.

It is surprising that Disney studios never did "cute" animation of dinosaurs. They have done cute versions of most familiar animals in their various films: dogs, cats, pigs, mice, birds, fish, insects --and those were just "bit parts" in cartoons; that does not count as continuing characters. But the only time Disney ever did dinosaurs was in Fantasia



and there they were just big, meaty blood-and-thunder engines of destruction who crashed into each other to the tune of Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring." As much as children love dinosarus already, Disney never animated a dinosaur that was even remotely likable. Not that it was a void that really needed filling, but Disney animation department veteran Don Bluth, who specializes in imitating Disney's animation heyday, has made an almost feature-length animated film, The Land before Time, about the adventures of some likable baby dinosaurs. And Bluth uses "flat animation' in what may be the only serious attempt of such animation since Fantasia and a good while before. The field of animating dinosaurs has been very nearly the exclusive province of dimensional animators such as Willis O'Brien, Ray Harryhausen, Jim Danforth, and David Allen. In spite of the principle that flat animation offers the artist greater freedom of expression--admittedly at the cost of some realism--it has very rarely been used for dinosaurs.

But I rather suspect that the real inspiration for The Land before Time came from the dinosaur art of William Stout, particularly as seen in his 1982 book The Dinosaurs (Bantam Books, $12.95). Unlike most dinosaur artists who try for a realistic, almost photographic style, Stout's art is more stylized and almost comic-book-like. He tries more for caricature rather than for realism and so is able to put more expression into his dinosaurs. I do not remember if Stout's name appeared in the credits of The Land before Time, but several of the illustrations from The Dinosaurs are dramatized in the film, including an appealing camarasaurus baby hatching from an egg. Another illustration shows ultrasauri standing among trees. The top of the painting cuts off the heads but a visual analogy between the necks and the tree trunks is implied. This scene also appeared in the film.

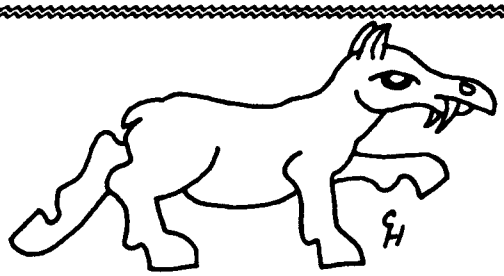
It is difficult to decide when Then Land before Time would have taken place. One needs to identify exactly what dinosaurs we are seeing. I have heard the main character, Littlefoot, described as a "brontosaurus." If that was what was intended, then Bluth and company were hopelessly sloppy. Most of the dinosaurs in the film did not live until the late (or Upper) Cretaceous Period--sort of the grand finale of dinosaur life that brought into existence familiar dinosaurs such as triceratops and tyrannosaurus. That is entirely the wrong era for "brontosauri"--more accurately called apatosauri. But then the dinosaurs of the film had more rounded faces than apatosauri would have had. They had the rounded faces that brontosauri used to be protrayed as having. Also, apatosaurus died out in the late Jurassic era; even camarasaurus, which outlasted them and lived only into the early (or Lower) Cretaceous was not contemporary with late Cretaceous animals. Littlefoot could have been some lesser-known species of sauropod, some of which did live late enough to be contemporary with triceratops. The stegosaurus also is an Upper Jussaric dinosaur, but some of its similar-looking relatives could have been alive in the mid- to late- Cretaceous. Before you decide that the questions of era are trivial matters, realize that the Upper Cretaceous has been over for 70 million years and you can see how much animal life has changed since then. Go back another 70 millions years and you are just about at the end of the Jurassic period with the Cretaceous soon to begin. "Bigmouth," incidentally, is a parasaurolophus who is respectably Upper Cretaceous. And what appeared to be a dimetrodon that should have died out 150 million years before this story was more likely an Upper Cretaceous spinosaurus. Stretching a point, all these dinosaurs could have been contemporaries, but it still seems unlikely.

Even more questionable is the geological background of the film. Yes, the Earth was geologically active at that time, but nowhere near as active as shown. In a short space we see the characters encountering powerful earthquakes and unrelated volcanos, and they struggle with a tar pit. Even in a geologically active area, this is entirely too much activity to be credible.

The story of The Land before Time is about a baby sauropod of some sort--they call themselves "long-necks"--who is born in a time when food is scarce. His mother wants to take him, along with his grandparents, to the "great valley," where for some reason food is still plentiful in spite of the fact that every dinosaur and his brother is headed there or is already there. Along the way he meets a cute, pugnacious little girl triceratops, but the parents of both know that mixed species relationships rarely work out. Each gets the sort of reaction you would get if you told your parents you were really good friends with sheep.

Through circumstances I will not describe, Littlefoot finds he must make the journey without his elders. Instead, a set of lost young dinosaurs band together to make the trip as a group. The story could be reasonable but the characterization is not. The characters are not well-developed. Littlefoot goes through all kinds of tribulations without giving up, then suddenly at some point, gives up entirely: possible but unlikely behavior. And if you doubt that real characterization can be done in an animated film, see Watership Down or The Plague Dogs.

The Land before Time is a short film, even by animated film standards. It is just 66 minutes long --so short, in fact, that it is always shown with a cartoon, "Family Dog." The cartoon, by the way, is the first half of "Family Dog," the February 16, 1987, episode of Steven Spielberg's Amazing Stories television show. If it seems like it ends a trifle



abruptly, that is why. If it means anything, they have chosen the best piece of the original broadcast. Apparently they could get the cartoon cheaply since Spielberg was one of the executive producers of The Land before Time.

The Land before Time does boast a nice score by James Horner and an okay song sung by Diana Ross. But it still does not show the effort of other animated feature films. And padding the length with part of an episode of Amazing Stories is no substitute for the kind of storytelling that Disney Studios or even Bluth himself have done in the past. Rate The Land before Time a low +1.

NOT OF THIS EARTH

CAPSULE REVIEW: Take a below-average 1950s sci-fi film, take out what atmosphere it had, put in gratuitous nudity, car chases, and feeble attempts at humor, and what do you get? Something not very good and Not of this Earth. Rating: -2.

Somebody once said that if you remake a film, remake on you can improve on, not a classic. If that is true, you could do much worse than to choose Roger Corman's 1957 Not of this Earth, a lackluster quickie with Paul Birch, looking like a businessman in sunglasses and rifing around in a big Cadillac. His real mission was to collect blood and other biological samples from humans and ship them off to his home planet where they are needed for a war. Beverly Garland played Nadine Storey, a registered nurse hired to take care of what she thinks is just an unusual patient and slowly comes to realize that he was (dah...dah...dah...DAH!) not of this Earth. Even as a fan of 1950s science fiction films, I have always been indifferent to Not of this Earth. Improving on it should not be difficult if it has to be remade.

The weakness of the original makes it all the more surprising that the remake actually turns out to be a travesty on the original. The Beverly Garland role now has ex-porn star Traci Lords, who can act her way out of her clothing much easier than she could a paper bag. The film has been peppered with tasteless nude scenes and an occasional car crash or two, but nothing that improves on the plot. Little vignettes intended to be humorous, like a bag lady who thinks she has a radio to heaven, simply fall flat. The original was a solid -1 on the -4 to +4 scale; the remake is -2.

CITIZEN VAMPIRE

by Les Daniels
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981, $9.95

Citizen Vampire is the third of four novels so far written by Les Daniels featuring the vampire Don Sebastian de Villaneuva. The books in the series are: The Black Castle, The Silver Skull, Citizen Vampire, and Yellow Fog. At least initially, Daniels seemed to make Don Sebastian different than more romantic vampire heroes such as Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's handsome St. Germaine. Yarbro's vampire could lead an almost normal (or should I say human-like) life if he just kept the dirt of his homeland in the heels of his shoes. He became a sort of typical dashing romance love hero so Yarbro could write what were basically romance novels. Daniels, by making his vampire a little more revolting, made him considerably less unctuous. Don Sebastian was not a vampire of the drawing room, but of the graveyard. Don Sebastian would tease his brother by making faces at him: Sebastian would roll his eyes into his head and blow smoke out of the empty eye-sockets. That is a scene far more vivid than any Yarbro creates by describing what all the character were wearing. That is one reason why I keep reading Don Sebastian novels while I gave up on St. Germaine after only one novel, Hotel Transylvania.

There is, however, an unfortunate sameness to the Don Sebastian novels. Each seems to be set in some historical period of great turmoil. The Black Castle was set in the Spanish Inquisition, The Silver Skull in Cortez's conquest of Montezuma's Mexico, and Citizen Vampire in the French Reign of Terror. Don Sebastian is revived only at the worst times in history and as such gets a very distorted view of mankind, not unlike the time traveler in George Pal's film of The Time Machine. The theme of each book is the same: that we do not need the supernatural for real horror, that humans with the power to do so can be far more horrifying than anything the supernatural has to offer. Daniels has given in to the temptation of putting his vampire in only the worst times and then making him a sort of nihilistic moralist. Don Sebastian has crossed over from being an anti-hero to being hero, not unlike St. Germaine.

It is perhaps a mistake for Daniels to have Don Sebastian keep turning up only at humanity's darkest hours. Jerzy Kosinski, in his excellent Painted Bird, portrayed a world of far greater horror because it was no less cruel in time when there was no Holocaust--the cruelty was only less focused. Don Sebastian could turn up nearly anytime and place in history and find equal cruelty. In Citizen Vampire, Don Sebastian is revived during the French Reign of Terror by a sorceror in the pay of a rather stupid and fatuous wife of a French nobleman.

We care little for her at first, but as the story progresses she becomes more an innocent among wolves. Along the way Don Sebastian meets his usual quota of historical notables, including the Marquis de Sade and Dr. Guillotin. We are privy to discussions on the feasibility of mass execution by guillotine and discussions of just how fast death is. The book's most imaginative sequence follows the thoughts of a victim through an actual guillotining and the moments after.

While this is the least engaging Don Sebastian novel to date, it has its moments of wit and horror. And Daniels is that rare breed among horror writers today, an author who can tell a story in two hundred pages and who does not mark time to build up word count. You could spend a worse evening.

WATCHERS

by Dean Koontz
Berkley, 1988, $4.95

To make a long story short, Dean Koontz is one of the new breed of horror writers that specializes in making short stories long. He will take a story that Richard Matheson might have told us in forty pages and turn it into a 500-page novel. He does this by expanding the characters without really improving the readers' knowledge of them. As in television soap operas, a character will get sick and we sill spend forty or so pages getting him well, meeting his doctor, and seeing how he behaves when he is sick; then the plot will course as if nothing had happened. Then there are the repetitions. Watchers has a psychopathic killer who gets an energy charge when he kills that is described with an electrical zap. Now Koontz could have been blatant and told you right off. He didn't, so I missed that point on the first killing and caught it on the second killing. I need not have been so clever. I could have waited and gotten it on the third or fourth or fifth or even seventh gratuitous killing. I think Koontz was waiting until nobody could miss the pattern that there was always an electrical zap at the moment of killing.

Given that one complaint, I have to say I rather enjoyed Watchers. The story deals with two escapees from a nasty mitilary-industrial complex research company doing vile experiments in genetic engineering. One is a dog with human intelligence but all the virtues of a dog: loyalty, courage, strength. The other is called "the Outsider" for not very satisfying reasons. Also not very satisfying are the reasons the Outsider feels a need to kill in general and to kill a dog in particular. Einstein, as the dog is called, befriends human Travis Cornell and only slowly lets him know which of the two is smarter.

Einstein brings together Travis and a mousy woman named Nora who blooms in her relationship with Travis. No how can anyone not like a story of a likable woman coming out of her shell and a loyal and friendly and super-smart dog? Koontz, who is becoming known as a best-selling writer, can tell a good story and interest the reader in his characters. I don't think many people will feel cheated after having read Watchers, but how many will remember the story a week later is another matter.

METROPOLIS

There is an old adage that says that well begun is half done. Well, clearly with Metropolis somebody began well and then went to lunch and never came back. The first ten minutes are almost worth the price of admission. The last ten minutes, on the other hand, more than offset the first and it's the last ten minutes that people will remember as much as they'd like to forget them.

Metropolis is supposedly based on the 1926 Fritz Lang film and admittedly there are a few undeniable similarities in the plot, but not enough. On the face of it, adapting the Fritz Lang classic to the stage seems doomed from the start. Metropolis worked by the sclae of its production: its huge sets, its cast of thousands, and its spectacle. Its story and its human drama were weak and the plot really makes no sense. In short, its weaknesses were precisely the things you might do well on a stage, but its strengths are precisely what would be lost by transition. One can do all sorts of amazing things on the stage, but adapting Metropolis does not seem as if it is one of them, and even less so after seeing this attempt.

Lang's film, inspired by seeing the New York City skyline and presumably by reading H.G. Wells's future history works, tells a story of a world stratified into an effete ruling class living above ground and a working class living below ground in slavery-like conditions. The play goes a step further, claiming that with Earth's resources depleted, the city has returned to human labor. Interesting, though since almost all the labor we see done could be done far cheaper by silicon chips, the slavery takes on the aspect of charitable makework.

The city is ruled over by John Freeman (Frederson in the film), who hatches several plots more cruel than logical to maintain his control. One of the joys of the film is his relationship with the mad alchemist/scientist Rotwang, a fine screen villain. The play replaced Rotwang with a mousy scientist here called Warren. If the name "Warren" seems less intriguing than the name "Rotwang," that is just how the characters seem. This play is not big enough for two villains, so sadly the film's most interesting character is lost. The play is built around Freeman's villainy and a tyranny that knows

no bounds. At one point he seems even to be able to choose who the best-liked pop-stars will be. I can imagine what would happen if New York mayor Ed Koch tried to start dictating who would be the popular recording artists in New York City. Freeman is played by Brian Blessed making the best of a badly written role. When the script calls on him to sing a solo while blowing up his own city, even his best is not sufficient.

Freeman's son--here called Steven--is supposed to look sympathetic and appealing, so he has been dressed unimaginatively to look like Rod Stewart in a jacket with rolled sleeves. Judy Kuhn plays Maria and the robot Futura. A better actress could have been the focal point of the whole play, but she is just not quirky enough somehow as the robot and not particularly inspiring as the leader of the worker activists.

Visually the story has been scaled down and elements of cheap science fiction scripts have been added to fill the vacuum. The most successful piece of scaling is the huge machine set that opens the play. One machine 20 feet high with two levels of walkways virtually fills the stage. It is rumored that they needed to excavate under the theatre to add extra support under the stage. The film's huge elevators have been replaced by elevator tubes, which are used as often as the script will allow. To simulate the electronic effects of the film, especially the creation of the robot, laser lightshow effects are used. These are mostly prosaic loops of light and figure-eights. However, since the scene is filled with dry-ice mist, it is rather obvious that they are being projected and where the laser is. The film's water effects are replaced by unoriginal fireworks a la Voyage to the Bottom of the

Sea. And speaking of the tired and overly familiar, the introduction of high-tech storm-troopers seemed gratuitous.

The music for this extravaganza was provided by Joseph Brooks whose greatest credit to this point is the song "You Light Up My Life." For Metropolis he wrote a very similar song, "You Are the Light," which is clearly intended to be another smash hit. One way you can tell is at the end of the play everyone in the cast, live characters and dead ones, join together in a chorus of "You Are the Light." It's just that kind of play.

One of the ushers quoted a critic as saying that in the play "the only thing that works are the lifts." I cannot improve on that assessment. And when you cannot improve on something, it is best not to pretend you can.

FIELD OF DREAMS

CAPSULE REVIEW: A complex and witty fantasy film that features great performances by James Earl Jones and Kevin Costner. Even if you do not like our (stupid) national pastime, this film about ghosts of the White Sox and a quest is a solidly entertaining fantasy. Rating: low +3.

I do not like baseball. And because I do not like baseball, baseball films do not work on me as well as they do on other people. Most baseball movies assume that there is something somehow noble about playing baseball. I don't buy that. A good baseball film for me would still be good if you substituted professional wrestling as the game. Pride of the Yankees just does not stack up very well under this criterion. You have to consider baseball important to respect Gehrig. Bull Durham is an okay but not great character comedy. Bang the Drum Slowly would still be a good study of the relationship of two men. I find that even with no respect for baseball, The Natural remains a fine fantasy allegory of talent and treachery, of darkness and light. Now another baseball fantasy has come along with enough human values, enough fine acting, and a good enough script that it is well worth seeing even if (like me) you hate baseball. Field of Dreams is a real surprise: a genuine piece of quality writing for the screen.

Kevin Costner plays Ray Kinsella: a would-be ball player's son, a college activist in the late 1960s, and now an Iowa Farmer. One day while working in the field he hears a disembodied voice tell him, "If you build it, he will come." After days of puzzling over hearing the message repeated, he has a vision that the "he" is Shoeless Joe Jackson of the White Sox (and, incidentally, of Eight Men Out), a personal hero of Ray's dead father. "It" seems to refer to a baseball diamond to be placed in Ray's cornfield. In time, the eight convicted White Sox have been wished out of the cornfield and are playing baseball in the field. Then another message comes and Ray finds himself on a mysterious mission to Boston to find controversial 1960s writer Terence Mann, supremely played by James Earl Jones. Jone's performance is quirky and brilliant. Mann's first meeting with Ray is worth the ticket price all by itself. Ray continues his ridiculous set of tasks and quests until at the end it all comes together and makes sense.

Faults? Well, over the rest of the story there is superimposed a rather prosaic "save the farm" plot that gets in the way of some of the better storytelling. Then toward the end of the film there is a rather gratuitous piece of cheap suspense. It is needed for the larger plot--almost every shot in this film is--but the actual cause of the suspense seems forced. Universal has taken a chance on an intelligent fantasy film with a complex script and has made one of the best films of the year. I would give it a low +3. Pity it was about baseball.

THE MUMMY, OR RAMSES THE DAMNED

by Anne Rice
Ballantine, 1989, $11.95

There have been many strange religions of ancient man. The majority have been for the most part forgotten. Yet the religion of ancient Egypt has not. Modern Egypt has a large industry just serving tourists who want to come to see the relics of its ancient religion. The mysticism of ancient Egypt, seemingly so different from modern religions, has captured the public's imagination. And perhaps no single aspect of the religion has so captured modern people's imagination as stories of mummies whose remains have apparently mystically been able to survive the ravages of time. Where our corpses decompose within months of being burried, you can still see facial and body features of Egyptians dead for three thousand years. Horror writers have taken things a step further, asking, if the remains can be preserved for so long, is it possible to bring life back to these bodies?

Revived mummy stories were around before the opening of Tutankhamen's tomb, but they were a relatively rare subject for horror. The coincidental deaths of several of the people involved in the opening of that tomb gave rise to wild newspaper stories and inspired a horror film, The Mummy, which starred Boris Karlof. It was actually a fairly good story and one that was wellgrounded in ancient Egyptian mythology. It inspired two series of horror films, one produced by Universal Pictures in the 1930s and 1940s, and one produced by Hammer Films in the 1960s and 197s. None of them were as authentic to the myth as was the original Boris Karloff film.

No doubt inspired by the films, short story writers had often toyed with the plot device of walking mummies, but other than novelizations of films, to the best of my knowledge there has not been a novel about a revived mummy until now.

New Orleans writer Anne Rice is best known for her vampire novels: Interview with the Vampire, The Vampire Lestat, and Queen of the Damned. I have read only the first of these, but I enjoyed it a great deal and I have had good reports of the other so I had very high hopes and expectations when I saw that she had written a novel, The Mummy, or Ramses the Damned.

Unfortunately, The Mummy is a disappointment. Not that it is a bad novel--at times it is fun--but while Interview with the Vampire was a fascinating exercise that really put the reader inside the mind and appetites of a vampire, The Mummy puts the reader only in some very familiar situations. Ramses, rather than being the frightful ghoul of some baroque tomb, becomes the romantic lead of the novel. Once released again, alive by virtue of an immortality elixir (the same idea used in lesser mummy movies), he inflates to his former handsome self and almost immediately understands and speaks English. He is not at all bewildered by Twentieth Century life. He is an incredibly quick study. He is sort of the handsome stranger who hides very well the secret that he is really 3000 years old. I, in fact, see in him everything I don't like about Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's vampire, Saint-Germaine.

Where Rice did such a good job of making us see the monster's point of view in Interview with the Vampire, she totally falls flat in The Mummy. Ramses is simply too interesting a concept to turn into a romantic hero. Much of the book becomes a romance novel with a rather weak murder plot. Ramses, though it is never actually said, is Ramses II, who ruled Egypt until he was an old man and must have appeared so. Hence the elixir must have done more than just bestow immortality; it must have also restored his youth. That is an aspect that Rice never actually mentions.

The plot has Ramses reviving his lost love more than a millenium his junior--Cleopatra. (With a few hundred pages more I am sure Rice could have worked Napoleon Bonaparte and Abraham Lincoln into the plot too--maybe they will be along later in the series.) Cleopatra could have brought more interest to the story in that she at least stays a monster rather than becoming a love interest, but we rarely see the world from her eyes and she too is entirely too much a quick study of so alien a culture.

I found out after I finished the book that it was to be the basis of a television movie. Or perhaps Rice based it on her own screenplay. In any case, at $11.95 it is novelization-level writing. Be warned.

EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY

CAPSULE REVIEW: Helium-weight comedy has a typical Valley Girl (played by Geena Davis) meeting a bright blue furry alien (played by Jeff Goldblum looking like a flea-market bathmat). Earth Girls is based on the Julie Brown song of the same title. Director Julien Temple also directed Absolute Beginners and it was much better. Rating: high 0.

It all started when witty and moderately attractive Julie Brown nearly made it to being chosen homecoming queen. As she tells it, rather than just being disappointed, she struck back by writing songs making fun of all the institutions her friends enjoyed. Her songs--now a popular staple of the Dr. Demento show--including "everybody Run, the Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun," "'Cause I'm a Blonde," and "Earth Girls Are Easy." The last was done in a Valley Girl accent as an air-head describes a close encounter of a fourth kind with non-humanoid aliens. When the song was sold to be made as a film, Brown rephrased it to delete the

non-humanoid references. She also co-wrote the script and plays a prominent role in the film.

Earth Girls Are Easy hides the fact that it is really a British production directed by Julien Temple. Temple directed the kinetically stunning Absolute Beginners, which unfortunately never found its market and which died at the box office. Earth Girls is a much less ambitious film, but it probably is light and mindless enough to make the profit the other film missed.

Earth Girls Are Easy opens with a sort of pop-art spaceship in a pop-art space scene. Inside are three shaggy aliens, each one of the primary colors (red, yellow, and blue), and each looking for female companionship. Loneliest of all is Mac (played by Jeff Goldblum), who is not just nerely blue, he's most sincerely blue. But our three aliens strike it lucky: they pick up a television broadcast from Earth and discover that this planet has girls!

Meanwhile, one such girl is Valerie (played by Geena Davis--a mere decade too old for the role). Valerie, the Valley Girl air-head of the song, is engaged to Ted (played by--can you believe it?--Charles Rocket!), a doctor who cannot resist playing doctor whenever he is given the opportunity. Julie catches ted about to play "Dr. Love" with a nurse and she throws him out of his own house.

(Sorry--this next part has to be done in Valley Girl accent.) Well, like she's feeling all bummed out the next day, ya know, and like sitting next to Ted's pool soaking up sun when--like wow!--this totally tubular spaceship falls out of the sky and like, ya know, splashes down right there in the pool. Awesome! She should know she can't make it with Mac because he's like blue, ya know, and all covered with hair. And, like they're from two different worlds. But then, hey, this is science fiction. (Okay, enough of that.)

Temple's view of Americans is not very perceptive. His production numbers look like they are borrowed from Grease and from 1960s beach blanket movies. He does have one very nice dream sequence, an homage to the props of better-known science fiction films, but that is as close as Earth Girls Are Easy ever gets to art. If there is an idea to this sci-fi (in the worst sense) film Temple has made it clear it is an unwelcome guest and has sentenced it to solitary confinement. I rate this cotton candy film a 0. Like wow.

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

CAPSULE REVIEW: Forget the Indian thing. This is the real Raiders of the Lost Ark II. Slightly more realistic than Raiders, a little more concentration on character, and less on chases, this is a solid action adventure film putting the series back on track. George Lucas needs a hit and for the first time since the Return of the Jedi he deserves one. Rating: high +2.

It is no real secret. The Hollywood wonder-boy of twelve summers ago and much of the time since, George Lucas, is hurting for money. Things have not really panned out for him. Howard the Duck, which featured the greatest technological duck special effects the screen has ever seen, laid an egg. And it was not a golden egg. That was only one of several projects that have enhanced neither Lucas' fortune nor his reputation. Lucas needs a hit. That much seems to be a fact. My opinion is that Lucas knows how to have a hit if all he wants is a hit rather than trying to do something new and original. He just makes one of his series films. It takes too long to do a Star Wars film, so he did another Indiana Jones film instead. The one drawback is Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom was a disappointment and done much more in the Spielberg style than in the style Lucas put into Raiders of the Lost Ark. Spielberg directs all the Indy films, of course, but I suspect some of the exaggerated cartoonish feel of the second film was Spielberg's. And many of the fans preferred the style of the first film. All Lucas really needed for a hit was to do again what he did with Raiders. And he did. The style of the first film is back.

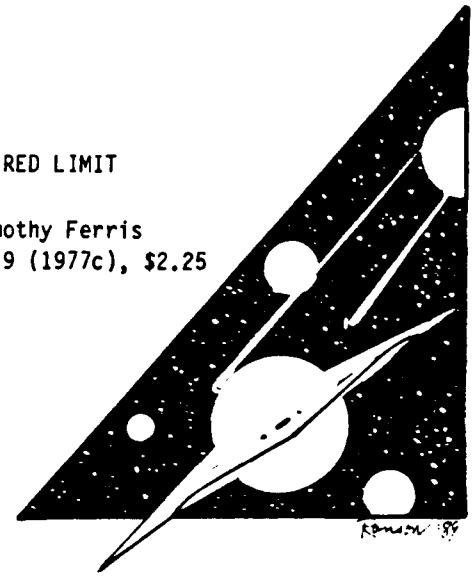
Welcome back.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade semi-fulfills Lucas's unrealistic promise that each episode woudl be a prequel to the one made before it. Harrison Ford is not getting any younger. So of the three films, this takes place the latest, but there is an extended flashback in which we learn a lot of how Indiana Jones became Indiana Jones. The young Indy is played by River Phoenix, who almost resembles a young Harrison Ford, and in fact played Ford's son in Mosquito Coast. In Indy's early adventure we see where he got a lot of what he becomes and even what he wears. When he gets older we also get introduced to his father (voiced, and in later scenes played, by Sean Connery). Indy is once again after a Biblical treasure. Earlier it was the greatest prize of the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant. This time it is the greatest prize of the New Testament, the Holy Grail.

Do you remember what you liked about the first film? If you said Karen Allen, you are out of luck. This time Indy's female sidekick is Elsa Schneider (played by Alison Doody), the most attractive of the traveling companions of the three films, but also the one with the least real personality. That means in this aspect, as in most aspects, this is better than the second Indy Film but not up to the original. If you said you liked just about everything else about the original--the gritty chases, the fights, the baroque Nazi military equipment, the ancient sites that are a gamut of booby traps,

the snakes, whatever--you are in luck. It is all back and more. You also get to see Indy's love/hate relationship with his father. You get to see more of Sallah and Marcus Brody (played by John Rhys-Davies and Denholm Elliot respectively). One disappointment is that they did a Nigel-Bruce on Denholm Elliot's character (i.e., they turned a perfectly serious and interesting character into a buffoon). But for almost any reason that you liked the first Indy film, you will also like the third.

On the -4 tp +4 scale, I give Raiders of the Lost Ark a +3, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom a flat 0, and Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade a high +2, missing a +3 only for its lack of originality.



THE RED LIMIT

by Timothy Ferris
Bantam, 1979 (1977c), $2.25

A few months ago I reviewed A Brief History of Time by Stephen Hawking. As I remember, I was generally favorable but could not give the book an unqualified recommendation. After a few chapters of understanding virtually everything that Hawking was saying, I felt that he picked up speed in his narrative and he quickly became very hard to follow. As I told some enraged readers afterward, I greatly respect Hawking as a physicist, but that does not make me think he is infallible as a science writer. There is nothing that implies that good scientists make good science writers. If being a good scientist is not sufficient to be a good science writer, at least I can say it is not necessary either. Timothy Ferris is a journalism teacher from Brooklyn College. I think I can wholeheartedly recommend The Red Limit.

I was vaguely aware that I had heard of Ferris when the BBC World Service recently broadcast a review of his book Coming of Age in the Milky Way. The reviewer was very positive, claiming she wanted to skim it and instead found herself engrossed. That prompted me to check what I had by him and found a pictorial book on galaxies and The Red Limit. In fact, the description of Coming of Age in the Milky Way made it sound a lot like The Red Limit. Perhaps it was even and expansion of the 1977 Red Limit.

The Red Limit is not as solidly technical as Hawking's Brief History of Time--if one can call a book that, like A Brief History of Time, leaves out all math to sell better, "technical". The Red Limit is a history of modern astronomy and cosmology. Ferris begins in 1751 with Immanuel Kant misinterpreting a bad translation of an account of cosmological theory by Thomas Wright and coming away from it with the mistaken belief that Wright said the Milky Way was a disk-like formation of stars. Of course that is what the Milky Way is, but that leaves us with nobody to have been the first to present that theory.

Ferris quickly jumps to Harlow Shapley in the early 20th century and we are off and running, learning about the theories and the people who presented them. Ferris explains the science in a clear crisp fashion and just when the readers' minds start to wander, he tells an anecdote about the lives of the people making the discoveries. When it's over the reader has a surprising feel for how the history and theory fit together and who were the people who made both. Ferris conveys wonder without making the science all dry. He always explains clearly why people believed what they did about the universe. There are none of the gaps of comprehension that I had with Hawking's book.

The Red Limit won Ferris the American Institute of Physics writing award. And he deserved it.

(Postscript: There is a new updated edition of The Red Limit currently in print as a trade paperback.)

STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER

CAPSULE REVIEW: This is the most flawed of the Star Trek movies. But it also has the courage to say something controversial and for once something that is not pat. For reasons I cannot say here without spoiling plot, I see this as a film of subversive ideas. For that reason I have surprised myself by liking the film a lot. Rating: +2.

Okay, what can I say? I have heard a lot of negative things about Star Trek V. Maybe my expectations were lower for this film than for others in the series. And there is a lot that is wrong with Star Trek V. There is a lot that it does not deliver that others in the series did. The special effects--which are rumored not to have been done by Industrial Light and Magic because of Shatner's and Nimoy's salaries--are not as perfect as in other films. Well, fine. The effects are not jarringly bad and did not get in the way of the story. There are a lot of silly and even stupid scenes. There is a rescue at the beginning like something out of Superman that irritated me. If you have seen the com-

ing attractions you have seen Jimmy Doohan doing a silly pratfall. There are serious style problems. This is not going to be one of the more popular Star Trek films.

But when it is all over, Star Trek V has said something about the nature of religious inspiration and the need to question it. It did not use its science fiction merely to give us an interesting backdrop for a swashbuckler. Star Trek V is more subversive that Life of Brian, and I suspect more subversive than The Last Temptation of Christ. (I say "I suspect" because I have not had the opportunity to see The Last Temptation of Christ. It seems somebody thought the ideas in it were too dangerous. Luckily there are some relatively safe havens for free thought and science fiction is one of them.)

On a remote desert planet a messianic figure, a Vulcan named Sybok, comes out of the wilderness with a religious mission, a mission that requires a starship. It is not difficult to guess what starship he is going to get. His plan, though convoluted, is perfectly logical. Meanwhile, we are treated to some very sappy scenes of the **Enterprise**'s merry men on shore leave at Yosemite National Park. These would have been well left on the cutting room floor. Rest assured the plot will soon have Klingons, ship capturings, a mission to where no anything has gone before.

There is a lot in this film that the filmmakers will have a hard time living down. Nichelle Nichols, who by now looks like a grandmother, attempts an absurd erotic dance against what looks like an astronomically impossible backdrop. There are slapstick scenes in elevator shafts. There is a sort of encounter group session in space that is pitifully cliched. There is bad camerawork at times. Then there is the puzzling question of David Warner's role. It was too big to be a cameo and too small to be considered a major part. An actor of his stature is unlikely to have signed up for such a small role, so one wonders if there was more that was cut. And the music is entirely retreaded from previous films. For much of the film, I was seriously disliking it. But when it was all over, I liked what it seemed to me the film had said. It did for me what I want science fiction to do for me. So I give it a +2.

[Spoilers Follow] I am certain I will be asked by someone what I consider to be the subversive message of Star Trek V. If I have to put it in a few sentences, it would be this: Religious inspiration is not to be trusted. You can feel what you think is the light of your god filling your life and it can be a delusion. It is possible that all religious fervor is self-delusion that feels good but has not one iota of truth. You cannot trust your feelings, however powerful they are. God, if He exists, must be amenable to logic. You have the right and the responsibility to question politely what seems to be the word of God. If it does not make sense to you, you have the responsibility to deny it.

Certainly the "god" in Star Trek V is a false god and the believers in this god are wrong, but who has more reason to believe in their own god than the believers in the film? What makes it more reason? What is sufficient reason? The film is ultimately saying that reason is more important than faith.

BATMAN

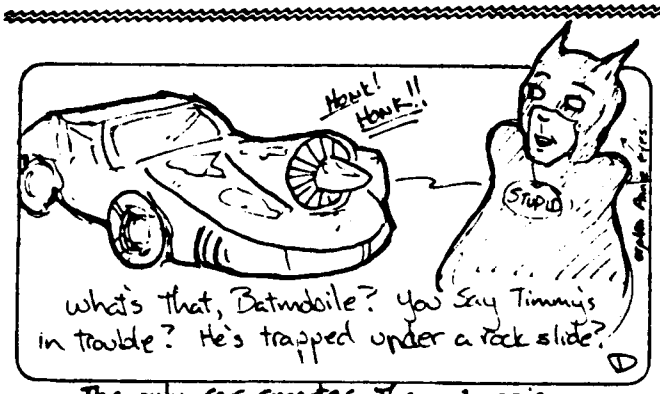
CAPSULE REVIEW: A triumph of visual imagery over story for the music video generation. Ironically, Keaton is better as Batman than Nicholson is as the Joker. The art design is superior but just about everything else is pedestrian. Better than the television series or the serials, but not as good as the comic. Rating: 0.

> [The] mind craves [images], and, of late more than ever, the keenest experimenters find twenty images better than one, especially if contradictory; since the human mind has already learned to deal in contradictions.
>
> Henry Adams, 1907

Excuse the pretentiousness of starting a review with an 82-year-old quote, but Adams might very well be talking about Batman, whose images, often contradictory or of clashing styles, far overpower the flyweight story that binds them together. Batman is a triumph of visual imagery over story.

While Jack Nicholson is the top-billed star, his character is paper-thin and just as flat. We are down here to the level of villains whose biggest crimes can be explained only by nastiness. Nicholson apparently was chosen not because he had a single responsive chord for the man behind the famous face, but because both are known for their smirking. Nicholson does not even look the part. His face is not thin and angular enough and his non-angular body is better suited to playing the Penguin. Of course, it is a pity that the original model for the Joker is well past the point where he could have played the part. Conrad Veidt, best known for playing Col. Strasser in Casablanca and Cesar in Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, played the title role in The Man Who Laughs, a poor wretch whose face is twisted into a perpetual rictus grin. His nightmarish look was reportedly the real inspiration for the Joker so he looked the role. Nicholson can be a decent actor but he lacks range, and in spite of all the fuss and expectation, Michael Keaton is much better cast as Batman than Nicholson is as the Joker.

Keaton, first of all, looks the part of Batman.



The only car smarter than Lassie

That is not all that surprising if you realize what you are seeing is two eyes, a perpetual frown, and a chin. Everything else is plastic shell. Any actor with a chin and a reasonable musculature could have looked good in the Batman suit. Keaton's role was a little more demanding when he played the man behind the mask--he is not a character out of Dostoevsky, understand, but his role did require a little acting and while he was neither superior nor memorable, he was at least equal to the role.

Surprisingly, Michael Gough played against type as a sympathetic Alfred the Butler (sort of a Batman's batman!). At one point he does severly overstep what the original Alfred would have done, but that is a script fault, not Gough's failing.

The story, what there is of it, gives us an origin for the Joker, a touch of one for Batman, and one fiendish though not very coherent schemes by the Joker which is, of course, foiled by Batman. I will not say much about the Joker's scheme, but it involves chemical contamination. The Joker makes the part about chemical contamination quite public, but apparently Batman is the only person to do a chemical analysis of the contaminated products. (To judge how likely that is, the Berkeley Wellness Letter reports, "The smoke from a single cigarette contains about 100 times more cyanide than did the two grapes from Chile that were impounded by government officials in March." Any idea how many chemical labs got involved in analysis after that tiny level of contamination was found? How likely do you find it that only Batman would do a complete chemical analysis of the Joker's product?) The plot also concerns what must be the world's tallest cathedral. At a minimum it looks to be at least 50 stories tall. That does not make for a believable story, but it is there for visual style more than credibility.

In the quote above, Adams talks about contradictory images, and that is precisely what Batman offers. There are wide mood swings from somber, dark and brooding, to just the sort of tongue-in-cheek campiness that the producers have long promised would not be in this film. Scenes of the Joker dancing Mardi Gras fashion to songs by Prince in front of cheering crowds are not classic Batman style by any means. And when Batman laments, "This is not exactly a normal world," this is not exactly a Batman sentiment. Also, one wonders how many worlds Batman has seen. Again and again the story stops--literally stops--in a time-out for a visual image. One of the most ridiculous of these has the batplane break off a confrontation with the joker so it can fly above the coulds and be seen outlined against the moon, looking like an aerial bat-symbol. If the script gives no explanation, the cheer of the audience does. Logic is less important than the visual image.

Batman is an art designer's film all the way. Gotham City is a highly stylized New York City with the art deco of the 1930s and the futuristic feel of Fritz Lang's (not Superman's) Metropolis. It is a collection of dark somber streets seen only at night or under overcast skies. This is a film without sunshine. To tie Gotham to the present, the mayor of the city was not cast for any acting ability, but because he looks like Ed Koch. In spite of the beautiful visual design for the city, the eye still rebels because of the matte paintings and building models that are just not convincing as being anything by mattes and models. That is not a serious fault in a film with a strong story, but when a film's strongest suit is its art design, it becomes very important to execute those designs flawlessly.

Finally, a word about the music. Danny Elfman has written a decent score, but choosing Prince to write the songs, apparently for the nihilism of his previous work, was as big a blunder as choosing Nicholson for his smirk. Director Tim Burton claims to be a fan of Batman comic books, but it seems to me they were better than this film.

I have to give the film a neutral 0. I guess I did not expect better, but I had hoped for it nonetheless.

HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS
and
"Tummy Trouble"

CAPSULE REVIEW: Some beautiful sets and some quality stop-motion animation make this film more of a pleasure than it had a right to be. When it tells an adventure story, it is quite good. When it tries to be goofball, it tries too hard. Rating: high +1.

Of course, one of the staples of the fantasy film has always been monsters. Big creatures lumbering around have a certain fascination. And one variant on the monster concept is to shrink the main character so it is the whole world that is monstrous. Devil Doll was probably not the first film about shrinking humans, but it is the earliest so well-known. For the most part, it did not show us the owrld from the small human's point of view.

It was, however, followed by more notable films which used the horror of being small: Dr. Cyclops, The Incredible Shrinking Man, Attack of the Puppet People, the television show "World of Giants" (not to be confused with "Land of the Giants," which was more in the Gulliver tradition than really about shrunken people), Fantastic Voyage (which introduced micro-miniaturization), The Incredible Shrinking Woman, InnerSpace, and this year's entry, Honey, I shrunk the Kids.

Like The Incredible Shinking Woman and InnerSpace, Honey is basically a comedy, though perhaps better because it was not so ambitious. Rick Moranis plays Wayne Szalinski, who works in a research lab in his attic for a major corporation. He is working on making a laser beam squeeze most of the space out of atoms to that matter shrinks down. Through carelessness and accident, the beam is accidentally turned on his children and the two children of his neighbor Russ Thompson (played by Matt Frewer, formerly Max Headroom). They are swept up with the trash and put down on the far end of the backyard. From there the story proceeds on two levels: what is happening in the parents' world and the adventures of the four victims as they try to return home. Director Joe Johnston's story is much better told and ironically is even more believable when it is about the miniaturization victims. On one hand you have a slpastick goofball comedy of the parents looking for their children; on the other you have a nice little adventure film of four people trying to survive and make their way through the grass jungle of a backyard.

What is particularly nice about the film is the detail of the giant backyard. The scale is roughly 1:240 and by gosh, everything seems very accurate to that scale. Stop-motion insects were animated by a team including David Allen, a disciple of Ray Harryhausen, and they look very good. A great deal of attention to detail was used in the big sets. What is needed to do the sets correctly is a great deal of craft labor, so filming in Mexico City's Churubusco Studios where labor is plentiful was a very intelligent decision. The sets are surprisingly moody and artistically done. In some scenes the presence of water betrayed the actual size of the sets, but generally this film's miniature world seemed as believable or more so than in just about any other miniaturization film. As a result, Honey, I Shrunk the Kids is much better than it seems it has a right to be. I give it a high +1.

I suppose something should be said about "Tummy Trouble," the Roger Rabbit cartoon accompanying Honey. The most common complaint I hear is that it may well frighten children. Perhaps, and perhaps not. The simple fact is that the cartoon is not well constructed. One thing rarely noted about a Bugs Bunny cartoon, but nonetheless true, is that it tells its story well. Even if the story is just

a rack on which to hang jokes, it should be a well-constructed rack. "Tummy Trouble" is kind of a cheesy cartoon with a lot of forced humor and a basic story that does not make a lot of sense. Bugs had a well-defined, likable character; Roger is basically just obnoxious. Sure, people laughed at it, but it is a lower form of humor than the classic Warner Brothers' cartoons, just as the Three Stooges were funny but not of the quality of Laurel and Hardy.

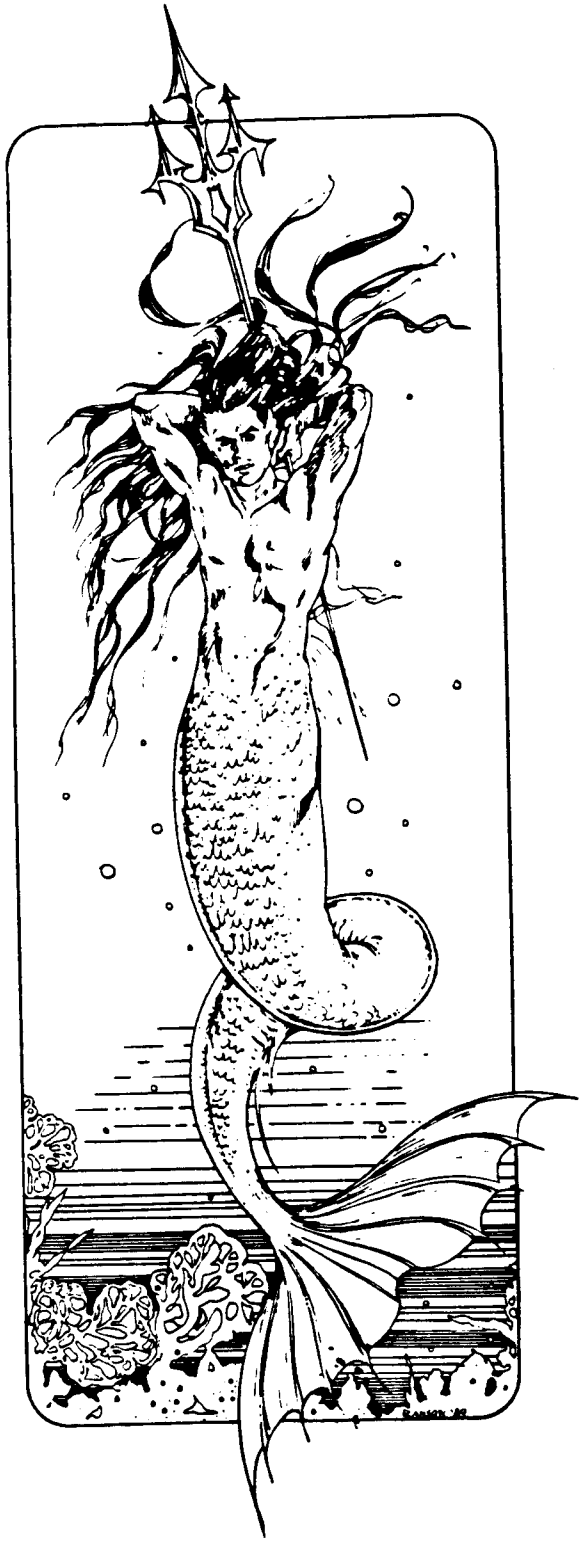
THE ABYSS

CAPSULE REVIEW: A science fiction and adventure film that just misses a +4 rating. Alistair-Maclean -type action combines with 2001-type vision to make a whale of a film that blows Batman right out of the water. Rating: high +3. If only it had more interesting science fiction ideas.

NOTE: The Abyss is a fairly long film at 140 minutes. Enough happens that it would be impossible to say much about the film without revealing a surprise or two. I will try to keep my comments general enough to avoid marring the enjoyment, at least for someone who has seen other reviews-still, I wouldn't want to read what follows before seeing the film.

The Abyss has two kinds of scenes: exciting scenes where suspense is building and exciting scenes where there is slam-bang action. And they must have about equal screen time. As such, it may well out-Lucas the Star Wars films. In style, most of the film resembles less fantasy films than films in the Alistair MacLean tradition. In fact, imbedded in this long film is really a normal-length MacLeanesque adventure that would not even be science fiction. Not that MacLean adventures are not somewhat far-fetched themselves. And like a MacLean film, The Abyss is not above throwing in the occasional far-fetched coincidence to keep the story going. But the pacing and the adventureplotting are reminiscent of a film such as The Guns of Navarone

or Ice Station Zebra. The action is not even delayed for opening credits; the film starts under a single opening title and we cut directly to the action. The U.S.S. **Montana**, a nuclear submarine, has picked up something unusual on sonar: a very fast-moving craft. They see is accelerate to over 130 knots before the sub is physically grasped by something. They are freed, but not in time to avoid piling into the edge of the Cayman Trench. A team of civilian divers from a nearby oil driller is brought in by the Navy to try to rescue any survivors. The chief diver is Bud Brigman (played by Ed Harris), a strong-willed commander in the process of divorcing the designer of the drilling facility, Lindsey Brigman (played by Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio). The antagonistic couple, a team of four Navy SEALS, and the divers go to the site of the downed sub. But there is something else there, an apparent intelligence-perhaps alien, perhaps indigenous--that is watching the mission with marked curiosity.



The script of The Abyss shows definite James Cameron touches. Cameron's films usually feature strong, intelligent, self-reliant women and never more so than in The Abyss with its character of Lindsey Brigman. The dialog is crisp, but also very humanizing. As usual, Cameron's heroes are common, blue-collar types.

One of the virtues of a good science fiction film can be to make technology comprehensible. The Abyss uses state-of-the-art technology--such as recently developed breathable fluid that will allow exploration fo greater depths. It also required new technology to be developed simply to allow the film to be made. In this category are diving masks designed to let the camera see who is behind the mask, but which coincidentally also allow a much wider field of vision for the divers than previously available.

Like Batman, this film also had a large budget and was kept very much under wraps until its release. Batman turned out to be a film that was visually fascinating, but which short-changed the story elements. The Abyss is rumored to have a price-tag of $43 million and, unlike in Batman, there are no big-name stars to soak up large pieces of the budget--or rather, there is one, but it is the Atlantic Ocean, and shooting underwater made the film much more complex to produce.

As with any major film that has been kept under wraps, The Abyss has generated a certain amount of rumor. One rumor on the positive side is that Hugo-winning science fiction author Orson Scott Card participated strongly in the scripting. He supposedly was on the set to ask the actors, "Ignoring the script, what would you do in this plot situation?" The next morning the revised script would have the character doing just what the actor wanted. And Card would add his own science fiction influence so that it is at least claimed that The Abyss ranks with Things to Come and 2001 for the degree of participation of a science fiction author in determining plot. A second and more negative rumor is that the life form was much better explained in the pre-release version (and in Card's novelization) but that the film was cut by 25 minutes, down to 140 minutes, to make it more marketable. In the cut the real logic of what is happening was considered to be the dispensable portion. (This is strongly rumored to be what happened to the film Highlander, also from Twentieth Century Fox.) Cam-

eron denies that any logic was cut from the film and says instead that where Card's book varies, it is purely Card's invention.

But even as it stands, The Abyss is one of the best science fiction films ever made. This remains true in spite of a rather superficial treatment of some of the science fiction elements. It is very much a 2001 with all the slowish parts replaced by a good, fast-paced adventure film. It is entertaining, educational, and exciting, and has compelling (albeit manipulative at times) drama. All it lacks is a sufficiently engaging concept. Perhaps it was left on the cutting room floor, perhaps not. I give it a high +3. It could not do much better than that.

MILLENNIUM

CAPSULE REVIEW: This adaptation of John Varley's short story "Air Raid" is downbeat and surprisingly cliched. This is a minor film with a 1960s matinee sort of feel, in spite of a little interesting time paradox plotting. Rating: low 0.

Millenniuum is one of those film projects that seems to take forever to come to fruition; then the fruit turns out to be a lemon. I happen to like some lemons, but they are not to everybody's taste. Years ago, there were rumors that somebody was going to base a film either on John Varley's novel Millennium or the short story the novel was expanded from, "Air Raid." Well, it came out finally based on the latter but named for the former. Varley himself is credited with the screenwriting, though it should be noted that screen credit is dubious. As far as I know Varley has no experience screenwriting and the script is really very different from the short story. And rather than the accomplished and creative story-telling of a popular science fiction author, Millennium has more the feel of mediocre matinee science fiction films of the 1960s and in particular Ib Melchior's The Time Travelers.

[Minor spoilers follow, but no worse than were in the coming attraction.] This downbeat science fiction film starts with a spectacular collision of two airliners and the resulting crash. Enjoy the special effect. It is the only one in the film both ambitious and convincing. Bill Smith is the bland name of the even blander Federal agent sent to investigate the crash. Smith is played by a bland Kris Kristofferson. Smith runs into the chain-smoking Louise Baltimore (Cheryl Ladd). Baltimore is not exactly what she seem to be. Instead she is a visitor from a thousand years in the far future where she wears a punk hairdo distressingly like what you are already starting to see in New York City. Baltimore is on a mission involving air disasters. Just what she is doing is part of the mystery.

The script for Millennium needs some clarification. There is an apparently unintentional ambiguity in the story-telling. The script clearly tries to clarify which interpretation is correct, but does so inconclusively and unclearly. With the exception of a few half-hearted humorous moments, the writing is all very downbeat and at the same time hokey. The film's version of the future is as hopeless as it is hopelessly unconvincing. The film returns to 1960s science fiction film conventions such as having a convenient scientist along to explain the idea of the film. Then there is an attempted love interest between two stars as animated as a Ken and Barbie doll and whose love is just about as interesting to the audience. Some of the time paradox play does work; some comes off as really stupid. In short, Millennium is easily better than some other adaptations of real science fiction stories--films such as Nightfall and Nightflyers--but it is far from being a winner.

I rate it a low 0.

Film & Book Reviews by *David M Shea*

MARLBOROUGH STREET

by Richard Bowker
Bantam/Spectra, 1987, $3.95

Alan is, let's face it, a nebbish. He works a nothing job, lives in a shoddy apartment, and his simple pleasures are confined to opera records, beer, and the fate of the Red Sox. His only distinction is being a part-time psychic consultant for the Boston police. Sometimes his unpredictable talent turns up murder or kidnap victims; as often, it comes up empty. Abruptly, a strange young woman bursts into, and as quickly out of, Alan's life, leaving his cat dead and his soul in disarray. What's a modest young man to do?

Here is an oddity, a book victimized by a misguided marketing decision. Had the book been marketed as what it is (a noir murder mystery with psychic overtones), it would probably have attracted five or six times the readership. Conversely, Marlborough Street may prove puzzling to the SF reader, since all its homages are drawn from another genre. Its gritty-urban-realism style and artfully-scuzzy physical description ("Alan wore a rumpled gray suit coat and corduroy pants. His brown hair needed a trim, and he had nicked himself shaving in a couple of places...") owe far more to John D. MacDonald or Elmore Leonard than to, say, the Lester del Rey of Pstalemate. Dare one to say it would make an acceptable made-for-TV movie? Nonetheless, for what it ism this is a good example of the type. It held my interest, mostly, in a puzzled sort of way. I just don't think it's science fiction; but don't let my prejudice stand in your way.

DANCE BAND ON THE TITANIC

by Jack L. Chalker
Del Rey, 1988, $3.95

Jack Chalker is sometimes categorized as a prolific writer of undistinguished adventure series. It would be amusing to propose the revisionist theory that somewhere in Chalker (deeply buried to be sure) is a writer possessing empathy and finesse. Alas, the evidence does not seem to support that hypothesis.

This is billed as a collection of short fiction. Sift through the foreword, afterword, biography, bibliography, lengthy introductions to each piece, and a self-indulgent essay on the origins of his ideas, and one is left with seven pieces of short fiction. "No Hiding Place" is a standard adventure-SF-writer's notion of a haunted house story. "Forty Days and Nights in the Wilderness" is a one-dimensional alien confrontation story which goes to great lengths to set up the last line. "Stormsong Runner" is a somewhat patronizing tale of a teacher in the hills of West Virginia: imagine a Zenna Henderson story as Robert Silverberg might have written it in a less inspired moment. "In the Dowaii Chambers," based partly on Native American lore, is an interesting perception-vs-reality study. "Adrift among the Ghosts" is a predictable piece about alien justice. "Moths and Candle" is a novella concerning events in a Bronze Age society. Nearly all of these stories share Chalker's preoccupation with a mechanistic universe manipulated by higher powers. "Dowaii Chambers" is the best read of the lot, but after a while they all seemed to run together.

Then we come to "Dance Band on the **Titanic**," Chalker's one indisputable masterwork of short fiction. Yes, this is a powerful, haunting, empathetic story of great melancholy beauty. (So was Clint Eastwood's Play Misty for Me; the word "fluke" springs to mind in both cases.) Is it worth buying this entire book for one admittedly wuperior story which has been anthologized elsewhere? Well ... probably not.

NIGHTEYES

by Garfield Reeves-Stevens
Doubleday (Trade PB), 1989, $18.95

In Connecticut, a divorced ex-alcoholic has misplaced her daughter. In California, experienced FBI agents have inexplicably blown wide open a covert stakeout. Blinded by preconceptions, the expertise of all the US government's intelligence services trails down irrelevant blind alleys. No one is aware that the future of the human race is being/has been decided.

This is not SF. It's stock Fifties sci-fi thriller, written in a solemn simplistic "See Spot run" style and geared to a mundane reader of limited education and less imagination. There are a few pro forma twists, but nothing Ed Bryant hasn't done better, sooner, and in far fewer words. If you wax nostalgic for the innocent paranoia of a book which should have been written thirty years ago, perhaps you might find it mildly amusing. Wait for the mass market paperback.

THE CYBORG AND THE SORCERERS

by Lawrence Watt-Evans
Del Rey, 1982, $2.95

The war has been over for three hundred years realtime, but that's not much help to Slant, a cyborged soldier whose "reconnaissance" mission goes on under the control of a literal-minded computer which interprets every unknown phenomenon as "enemy weapon research." Slant recognizes the planet Dest, bombed back to a semi-barbaric state, as no threat to long-vanished Earth. Unfortunately, the computer won't see it that way, sending Slant off to study the local "wizards," and seizing control of his body at inopportune moments. All Slant wants is his freedom, but unless he could enlist the wizards' aid, the computer will destroy him for "collaborating with the enemy."

To say that this is a "market-smart" book is intended as no insult; after all, if it's still in print after six years, the author must be doing something right. It seems to have all the right pieces: the careful combination of straight SF with just the proper edge of fantasy; the apparently insoluble problem, with the correct number of variants and complications; the measured quantity of

violence, for which the hero is not (quite) responsible; the calculated touch of whimsy (complete with genre in-joke) in the last line. If this is formulaic stuff, at least it's good formulaic stuff. It most reminded me of Jack Chalker, without the "playing God with the universe" quality which makes Chalkers' series all start to get tiresome around the third volume. Cyborg is good light entertainment.

CHERRY 2000

In the Year 2017, the ultimate dream machine is no longer a Lamborghini; modern robotics has produced "Cherry 2000" (Pamela Gidley), the perfect sexual fantasy object. Sam (David Andrews) has a "Cherry," but she/it shorts out in a moment of passion on a wet kitchen floor. The only place spare parts can be found is anarchic "Zone 7," so Sam hires a "tracker" (Melanie Griffith, in yet another ludicrous hair-dye job) to obtain the needed hardware. The pair go rambling across the desert, chased by various psychotics, until the predictable denouement.

This is clearly the bastard offspring of Damnation Alley out of The Stepford Wives. The plot is based on at least three different premises which are, if not provably false, at least highly doubtful. The ideas are lame ones that real SF writers mined into oblivion decades ago. The cliche action sequences involve the customary off-road vehicles and automatic weapons, but are dumb beyond description. The in-jokes are stale (the robots from Forbidden Planet and The Day the Earth Stood Still gathering dust in the back of a robotics shop). None of the characters are remotely believable except, oddly, Cherry, played with amusing vacuity by Gidley. There are flashes of humor, as if director Steve DeJarnatt wanted to play the whole thing as camp farce, but couldn't quite make up his mind to go full-out. A pity; Cherry 2000 is so dumb that with only a little more whole-hearted effort, it would have made a pretty good parody.

THE HUNGER

This is the movie of which Stephen Hunter wrote the legendary critique, "a film so sleazy that when you come out of the theater, you feel as if you ought to check yourself for body lice." Gee, I wish I could write like that; but by today's standards, this film isn't that offensive. This is just your average glossy flick about your average gorgeous bisexual immortal vampire next door (Catherine Deneuve). Her not-quite-immortal companion (David Bowie) is about to hit the end of the line, and the vamp lady is shopping around for a new candidate. For no clearly apparent reason, she settles on a research physician (Susan Sarandon). (The lesbian aspect is simply taken for granted; and one can easily imagine the butch sisters cheering the scene in which new-vamp Sarandon casually offs her boyfriend, langorously licking blood from her mouth afterward.)

The sex and violence are not especially graphic by contemporary standards. In fact, the aspect of the movie which is most troubling (and this perhaps may have been what Hunter had in mind) is that it has no ethical sensibility whatever. The question of whether Deneuve's character has any right to live forever by continuously murdering people simply does not arise. She kills, this is what she does, take it or leave it. I'll leave it. If you want to find this ethical question seriously discussed, I suggest Lichtenberg's First Channel.

THE PEOPLE

Back in the early 1970s, ABC-TV had a regular Tuesday night feature called "Movie of the Week" in the 8:30 to 10:00 slot. These were not theatrical releases, but made-for-TV films, on limited budgets with familiar TV-face actors in the leads. Though few were specially distinguished, some were of interest, such as the directorial debut of one Steven Spielberg, a clever non-SF allegory called Duel. Another interesting one was an adaptation of Zenna Henderson's stories of The People, a multitalented star folk who sought obscurity as refugees on Earth. This film was shown once and vanished into limbo; apparently about three people saw it. For years thereafter, I attempted to convince SF fans that such a film existed, and they usually looked at me as if to say, "Yes, and what have you been smoking?"

Time warp back to 1988. I'm browsing randomly at the video rental place, and all of a sudden there it is (in the "drama" rather than the science fiction section, incidentally). It is pleasant to be able to report that this is a nice little movie; not a great movie, but a reasonably faithful though streamlined adaptation of material mostly from Pilgrimage (as compared to the Disney "Witch Mountain" films, a bald-faced rip-off in my opinion, but let's not get started on that). William Shatner is the biggest name, though not the biggest part, as the Outsider physician Dr. Curtis. Kim Darby is good in the central role of Melodye. (Darby's other SF credits, you recall, included the lead in the Star Trek episode "Miri," also with Shatner.) A relatively little-known actress, Diane Varsi, gives a thoughtful low-key reading of the part of Valancy.

You may have to dig to locate this film on videocassette; or it may just fall into your lap as it did mine. But it does exist, and you should watch it.

THE BISHOP AND THE PRIEST

by David Griffin

This is a translation from the Swedish. The original was published in Spektra SF 37, December, 1988.

Despite the title, this is not an article about religion in SF; it is instead a comparison of two books written by two of science fiction's most gifted authors. From the USA we have Michael Bishop with Who Made Stevie Crye?, and from England Christopher Priest with The Glamour. Both are titles which have different meanings that become clearer on reading the work: Who created Stevie Crye of Who cause Stevie to cry? Glamour: the name of the phenomenon or that which the lead character desires?

Both authors are in their forties and have had a dozen or so books published plus several shorter works in the magazines. Priest began his career a little earlier (1966) than Bishop (1970) but both unmistakably belong to the category of "literary" SF authors, those influenced by the sixties New Wave, but coming forth during the seventies. These "literary" authors know how to write, and have learned to combine experimental and literary techniques with good old-fashioned SF to create stories that can satisfy the most critical reader. Just think of Priest's Inverted World and Bishop's Ancient of Days, for example. In 1984, both authors came out with their seventh novel. Two novels with several similarities but also revealing their authors own way of handling the ideas.

First, a short summary of the plots:

Glamour begins with the main character, Richard Grey, sitting in a convalescent home trying to get his memory back after an accident. When a young lady (Susan Kewley) who says she is his girl friend visits him, he begins to recover, but when she tells him what actually happened, it appears that he has remembered incorrectly. The question is, which is reality and which is illusion? The whole thing gets more complicated thanks to a guy called Niall. He has "The Glamour," a contradictory description, which means that people simply don't notice him. In theory he can do whatever he likes and nobody can see him unless they too have this "glamour." Of course, Richard and Susan also have "glamour," the difference being that Richard doesn't believe in it, and this is reflected in his version of the past. Niall's action can be used as evidence to support both versions of Richard's "missing" months, and it is this which makes the book so fascinating. It becomes a sort of Schroedinger's Cat experiment: the whole time either one of the explanations can be correct; everything depends on the mysterious Niall.

Stevie begins when the main character (a widow named Stevenson Crye) has her typewriter repaired. This "Exceleriter" starts behaving in a very strange way. Either Stevie has nightmares and the typewriter writes them down, or the typewriter writes down what is about to happen to Stevie. Again we have this confusion between illusion and reality, so that when she awakes in the morning she is often not sure if the events have happened or she has merely dreamed them. She doesn't dare open the to see if the cat is dead (to use Schroedinger's Cat anlogy again). The whole thing gets more complicated thanks to a guy called Seaton Benecke who has a monkey as a pet. Seaton was the one who repaired the typewriter, changing it so that it began to behave strangely.

As I mentioned above, both authors are talented and it is noticeable in their style, vocabulary and handling of the English language. In many ways these books are easy to read; they invite the reader to enter their world and try to convince him that it is reality. The characters are genuine. Richard, who is uncertain because of his amnesia and thus becomes angry and bitter, has trouble accepting Susan as she is. He wants to be independent but needs support. Stevie, who has difficulty surviving without her husband, does not want to bury the past. She blames her husband when things go wrong. Susan, who is a manic-depressive, to a great extent mirrors whomever the is with. The reader can almost imagine what would happen were Richard to meet Stevie, for example, or if Niall and Seaton should come into contact with one another. Richard, Susan, Stevie, they are simply ordinary people, people one might meet in a bar somewhere and recognize them after having read these books. Superheros they are not.

Neither of these novels can be described as "hard" SF, despite the authors' reputations. Glamour has only one SF concept -- The Glamour, the talent to become invisible. It is the book's main idea, but it is not indispensable. Of course, some scenes would be impossible, but it is used mor as a metaphor: Niall is invisible because they have never met, but he has power over Susan -- they have been lovers. Niall is quite childish in many ways; he is afraid to show himself to Richard, but is still infatuated with Susan and so wants to destroy their relationship. He almost succeeds due to Richard's uncertainty and Susan's depression.

Stevie's SF idea is the magic typewriter. The book is in fact more at home in the horror genre; the typewriter is possessed by an evil spirit. Bishop uses horror techniques--the shock effect, the slow building up of uncertainty and fear--very effectively. If the reader holds out against the shock, the fear sneaks up and gets him; if he tries to defend himself against the fear, the shock pops up suddenly and grabs him. Seaton, just like Niall, acts childishly, but he only wants revenge on Stevie. He has two faces: a friendly face when he meets Stevie, and a more sinister face when they are not together.

However, Stevie is traditionally constructed, with a beginning, a middle and an end. The terror begins at a low level, but each subsequent shock is a little larger than the preceding one until the climax is reached near the end. Occasionally (mostly due to the monkey -- who is also responsible for a very bad joke), it becomes somewhat surreal, which doesn't contribute to the right atmosphere although it does increase the uncertainty. Glamour is a little more experimental. Half of the novel is told from Richard's viewpoint (in "I" form) and half from Susan's viewpoint (in "you" form). This technique increases the alienation and uncertainty in the book. No two people see the same thing in exactly the same way (though they can usually agree on which country they are in!) and the differences are fascinating. The postcard from France, for example, is mentioned in both Susan's and Richard's versions, but in different ways. Who really sent it?

In both books one can ask the question: why has this evil power over the woman? It is nothing mystical. In the case of Niall, it is that Susan is the only one he has found who can understand him. She is a sympathetic person who doesn't think ill of others, just like Stevie who cannot simply tell Seaton to get lost, but instead feels sorry for him. Both women are products of western civilization and as such are "programmed" to be polite and helpful to people they know. No matter how independent they think they are, they have been brought up to live according to certain principles. If one is born into a Christian country one hears the whole time that one should love one's enemies, so even an atheist has trouble reacting against the idea. The difference between the two women is how much they can tolerate. For Stevie, a traditional American housewife, the tolerance level is high, and despite all her intentions it is not until the end of the book that she manages to stand up to Seaton (not a bad name for a character in a horror novel -- close to Satan!) and once more take control of her own life. Susan, on the other hand, tries to stand up against Niall, but is afraid of a real confrontation and so tries to ignore him. The American way versus the British way? Perhaps that is the difference between the two books. Stevie is very American with American people and settings; Glamour is very English. For someone who wants to study differences between the two cultures these novels make interesting reading.

Both books have the obligatory sex scene, but each one in its own way. Stevie has a tender scene where Stevie comforts her young son who is worried by his lack of sexual experience. In Glamour there is a scene where the invisible Niall tries to rape Susan at the same time she is making love to Richard. Again we have the uncertainty -- did it really happen or did the woman only think it did? It is of course in the nature of these two books that Stevie does not dare ask her son the next day, and Susan refuses to ask Niall.

The reality/illusion contrast has been mentioned several times in this article, but how do the authors resolve this theme? The villain of the piece in Stevie is her typewriter "Exceleriter" (I don't know if there is such a brand in reality; Bishop is so skilled at inventing realistic sounding names that it's difficult to know if they're real or not). When she switches it off and goes to bed it writes of its own accord. Not only that, but that which it writes Stevie experiences...or is it the other way around? She is never certain if the typewriter is merely writing down what happens (or her nightmares) or if she is experiencing (or dreaming) what the machine has written. In the end it is apparent that Seaton is behind all this. He has altered the typewriter so that when he writes something it also appears on the "Exceleriter" and happens to Stevie. In the end her life becomes a book, a book which she receives in the post and is called The Typing by A.H.H. Lipscombe, but it is Bishop's book written by Seaton -- sorry, I mean Seaton's book written by Bishop, or.... As you can see, reality and illusion conflict with each other here. Stevie wonders if she is a real person or just another character in a book. The reader sees that it is the author (Seaton, Bishop, or Lipscombe) who is in control. Seaton is in a sense Bishop's righthand man; he is the one who gets the plot to Stevie. It is only at the very end that she succeeds in taking over her own life:

> And she went downstairs into the many happy days remaining to her in this life, all of which were of her own composition....

is how the book ends.

Richard and Susan are not so lucky. At the end of the book Richard receives from Susan a manuscript that Niall had written several months earlier. It is of course The Glamour. Just like Bishop, Priest has used a person (Niall) to pass on the plot to the characters in the book. Niall is invisible of course --that is the author's lot-- but the

characters and the author influence each other:

> You scare me Grey. We both threaten each other, you with your blundering ability to cause pain, I with my freedom to manipulate you. But now I am in control....

Priest says it more clearly than Bishop: it is the author who is in control.

It is almost like saying, "I am God in the world I have created." The idea of God is something that Bishop has worked a lot with (see, for example, his latest collection Close Encounters with the Deity), but Priest is usually more interested in people. Perhaps that is why he says "We both threaten each other" to Grey, a God must take responsibility for his creation and Priest is affected by what he writes. Bishop, on the other hand, holds a certain distance to his creations.

I hope that I have shown the similarities as well as the differences between these two books. It seems strange that two such talented authors came out with roughly the same idea at the same time (although, as far as I know, quite independently). Perhaps they are going in the same direction? Or was it just that their paths crossed at this point? Someone is certain to ask, which is the better book? That question is impossible for me to answer. Both are well worth reading: BUY BOTH.

EXCUSE ME, BUT YOUR EXPOSITORY LUMP IS SHOWING

by Skel

Being a bit of a bong-brain, I generally try to avoid writing about SF. Understandable really. There's a terrific film, nothing to do with science fiction, called Teacher's Pet, in which Clark Gable gets the hots for Doris Day. That's understandable too. The film was made back in 1958, but even watching it a couple of weeks ago I still felt a reawakening of all my adolescent Doris Day Fantasies. You will note the capital letters. Well, I was young then, and if ever fantasies deserved capital letters, those were they. As subsequently sis my Jean Simmons, Shirley MacLaine, and Jane Fonda Fantasies (I was growing up...and no, Beulah Mae, those are not what we mean by the term "expository lumps.") But that's by-the-by. I was telling you about Teacher's Pet. Clark Gable plays a newspaper editor who's studied at the University of Life. He has no High School Diploma even, and feels insecure around "educated" people. To protect and bolster his self-image he pretends he has no time for these people, and that while they may know a lot, they don't know anything useful.

Well, to a degree I can empathise with that too. In the circles in which I'm active, the Group Computer Centre where I work, and fanzine fandom, where I play, it often seems that the only person I know who didn't go to University...is me. When you are The Inferiority Complex That Walked, this can be a mite awkward, and nowhere is it more awkward than in fanzine fandom where just about everyone who puts pen to paper majored in English Lit. I am firmly convinced that if I try to join in the discourse on SF criticism I will use the wrong word in the wrong context, AND EVERYONE WILL LAUGH AT ME, or SNIGGER BEHIND MY BACK! I will become an object of ridicule. Better by far to stick to fannish chit-chat. We thickies know our place.

Well, bugger that for a game of soldiers!

I'm coming out of the intellectual closet. In Teacher's Pet the Clark Gable character has to come to terms with this chip on his shoulder. The newspaper has a copyboy who worships the very ground upon which the Gable character walks. The boy's mother wants him to quit and go to night school, so

he can get some "education" and better himself, but he won't. She appeals to Clark to try and make her son see sense, but at first he refuses. As I said, though, he finally comes to terms with his problem, and does the right thing. He fires the kid, for the kid's own good (I hope for Christ's sake my boss never watches this film!), and gives him this big lecture about how you learn all the really important stuff at night school. He tells the boy that he, Mr. Hard-bitten Editor himself, has always had to make an excuse on social occasions whenever the topic has turned to something vaguely intellectual, and piss-off to the men's room. He says he spent the better part of his social life either going to, being in, or coming back from men's rooms.

Me too. In fandom, whenever the conversation has come around to SF or SF criticism, I've headed for the men's room, metaphorically speaking. Well, no more. I've gotta fight it (amd does that make it my "piss de resistance"?). Perhaps. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single cliche. If Clark can do it, why not me? Besides, I want to tell you about a couple of books I've just read.

Of course the fact that I should have read these two books back to back as it were, with them both making use of the same SF device, is sheer coincidence, but when you're in my position, having received several tons of Lan's Lanterns (at 3 issues to the ton), each with a tick in the "I want you to contribute" slot, you get pretty desperate. Then, when coincidence walks into the room, throws you a "come hither" look over her shoulder and tantalizingly wiggles her ass in your face, you've just gotta grab it. Know what I mean squire? Anyway, the two books in question are John Brosnan's The Sky Lords (Gollancz, 1988, 314pp), and Phillip Mann's Pioneers (also Gollancz, 1988, 320pp), and the SF device they both make use of is Genetic Engineering.

John Brosnan used to be a fan, and published fanzines under various titles -- Scab, Big Scab, and Scabby Tales spring to mind (hands up those who think to detect some common thematic link), and he still may be a fan for all I know, though I haven't noticed any fanzine activity from him in absolutely yonks. As a fanzine writer he was, contrary to any impression that might be made by the scabrous nature of his titles, a class act--one of the better fanwriters. On the evidence of this The Sky Lords though, he doesn't appear to have carried over that excellence into the area of professional SF. Even so, he's OK. The impression I got when reading it was that it was aimed at a juvenile audience, or rather pitched at that level of sophistication, with everything fairly straightforward and laid out on the surface. The feel of it put me very much in mind of John Christopher's **Tripod** works like The White Mountains and City of Gold and Lead, which were intended for juvenile readers.

Johns novel is essentially more adult than these, but this is offset by the fact that the protagonist (the word "heroine" is just about the last you'd apply to her), is a total and utter nebbish. Look, get the scenario -- she is a citizen of a City State with a population of, what 10, 20, 30 thousand? At a fairly early stage the Sky Lords stomp the piss out of the place, and there are but four survivors. Needless to say, despite being an incompetent smeghead, the girl is one of them. Being an SF reader I am used to willingly suspending my disbelief, but really! If there'd been 29,999 survivors out of the original 30,000 the smart money would have been on her not making it. Not to put too fine a point on it, she's a wanker.

Which is where the expository lumps come in. This girl is such a klutz that the situation and background have to be explained to her (and the reader -- Gosh, how fortunate!) at any and every opportunity. During the course of the novel things are explained to her by her mother, her father, by a deranged cyborg, by a genetically engineered immortal superman, by a computer, and even by a hologram. John of course is too smart to stick it to us in one unswallowable chunk. Instead we get expository lumplets, in the hope that we won't gag. It works...just.

Now I'm not very sophisticated in my reading habits, as I was explaining earlier. I read SF the way the average person watches TV. I want to be entertained. I'm happy if the Earth Empire Star Cav-

alry rides over the Event Horizon in the nick of time. That'll do me, but even I could see these expository lumps for what they were. "Oh-oh," I'd think to myself, and sure enough along would come 2-3 pages of explanation as to how the world got to be this way. If I can see it coming, then anyone can see it coming. Believe it.

In John's genetically engineered future, against almost insuperable odds, his protagonist wins through. Again, that's fine by me. I like it when the good guys (of whatever sex) triumph. Colour me traditional. I like the goodies to win and the baddies to get creamed. Good guys should win, and bad guys should lose. This ought to be written into the small print of The Universe, and doubtless would be if the universe was the copyright of Steven Spielberg rather than God Software Services Inc. The way it seems so be going though I think the bad guys have all the best lawyers. The novel's basic premise seems to be that the Genetic Engineers (Oh irresponsible scientists, why must we ever suffer thee?) have screwed things up something rotten, and the world has gone down the tubes. Humanity, be it somewhat modified, is morally outraged. Society, turning its back on science and its face away from the future, begins to regress. Some though first fill their metaphorical pockets with all sorts of technological goodies before climbing onto their high horses and riding into the sunset they mistakenly see as a rosy new dawn. Accordingly they tend to regress more slowly and less far, and come out on top. Very much on top in fact, for these are the eponymous Sky Lords, who sail the skies in their hi-tech airships, and hold the fragmented groundling societies in thrall. Which is where we come in.

It's been hundreds of years since the Gene Genies escaped from science's magic lamp, and the Sky Lords are very much lording it. Most of the airships are still flying. Patched and bodged it's true, much deteriorated and way below their best, but flying nevertheless. This is, if anything, an even more far-fetched stefnal concept than genetic engineering. Certainly it must be so to anyone who is, like me, a member of a society whose most advanced technology can't create a single domestic appliance that will endure even as much as a month beyond the date when its 12-month guarantee lapses.

So, John takes this scenario and writes a straight-forward science fiction adventure story for the less sophisticated reader. He succeeds well enough. My only complaint is that he didn't try to do more and, in failing to fulfill his own potential, he sells the readers short too. That's a very personal reaction though, and leaves me guilty of judging not so much the book he wrote, but the author himself for not writing a different book... which is a habit to fall into. Watch it Skel! Don't do it again! On the basis of what he presumably aimed for, he did OK. It's a page-turner.

* * * *

The old song goes, "It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it. That's what gets results." Certainly Phillip Mann could be said, in his Pioneers, to be working with much the same conceptual clay, but whereas John Brosnan was content to turn out the equivalent of "A Souvenir from Sunny Weymouth-on-Sea," Phillip is much more ambitious. Both authors succeed in what I judge they set out to do, but because Phillip set out to do so much more, then his success is correspondingly greater.

The main protagonist of Pioneers is Angelo, who we come to know and care about, along with his friends, companions, and their society, through the pages of his journal. This journal is the evidence of Angelo's journey of self-discovery. He writes very early on that "...it is a truth that I am not quite human, but almost." Those two short words tagged on at the end carry a heavy emotional freight. He is aware that he and his partner Ariadne have both been "manufactured" and writes:

> Are we more machine than man? That is a hideous question. It has the face of death. For if we are more machine than man, why give us life? Why give us consciousness? What manner of creator would it be who gave us consciousness only so that we could be aware of our own futility?

A question, obviously, that transcends its immediate setting.

The book stands or falls on the character of Angelo, and how real the author can make him feel to us. Here's a longer quote this time, again from the early part of the book:

> I am called Angelo. That is the only name I have. I was made many years ago, though I cannot remember my making. My first memories are of myself as I am now. Ariadne has likened me to an ape. That is something of a joke between us, though it is a comparison that has been made before, insultingly, by full-humans. It is the kind of name that is called from a crowd and can be directed at myself or one of my true confreres such as Boniface, Larum, Lindis, Kingi and Raven. Perhaps I will write more about them later.
>
> I am like an ape...a gorilla...a ginger gorilla, though I have a human nose, brow, forehead and chin. Nevertheless I know I am frightening to look at.
>
> My strength is in my shoulders and arms and in my low-slung pelvis. You would find it hard to knock me down even if you were taller than me, which is unlikely. My legs are like stumps of trees and widely spread so that I walk with a rolling gait. Most of my body is

covered with fur. Why I am covered with fur I do not know. The fur serves no function that I can see...unless it is to make me feel inferior. No, that is silly, but I will let the sentence stand. Like Ariadne, I was created to do one special job; to bring the Pioneers back. I have often wondered shy Ariadne was created so beautiful and me so...strange. But there we are. In my work is my pride. Earth no longer sends out full-humans to do its work. Full-humans are too valuable since the Catastrophe and few of them have the stamina for deep space. But I am the last of my kind too. They no longer know how to make us. We are, in our confined way, unique.

Do you have the picture? Whoever you are? Well, there is one other thing you should know and which may make me real to you. My right are is normal and I can hold a pen or work a computer or fire a gun. But my left arm is a claw with three closing talons. In all matters I am completely ambidextrous, but my left arm is the most sensitive.

Now that wells you a lot about Angelo, but it also tells you quite a bit about the society which made him. Not an expository lump in sight. What exposition is required is strained through the filter of Angelo's sensibilities and sifts gently down upon the reader.

Basically, the Pioneers were genetically modified people, the modification making them super-adaptive. Then they were sent off into space, to find new worlds for humanity. Once they landed they adapted to their new environment, if this was possible, and having adapted they proceed to shape that environment for the colonists who will follow them. Only the colonists never do follow, on account of the Catastrophe mentioned in the above quote. Society begins to regress, though more slowly than in John Brosnon's novel because here science is not rejected. Unfortunately the Catastrophe has glitched Man's germ plasm and the race begins to go downhill biologically. But there is still a source of genetic material untainted by the Catastrophe...the Pioneers, who were conveniently off-stage at the time. And so the teams are created, each of an Angelo-type and an Ariadne-type, to go out to the ends of the universe and bring the Pioneers back. This is probably the most inconvenient sperm-bank ever devised.

Out the teams go, and back they come, bearing Pioneers, and are feted by a grateful populace...at first. Unfortunately the scheme contains the seeds of its own failure, because the Pioneers were designed to be genetically unstable and after all these hundreds of years they are no longer genetically viable when attempting to cross-fertilize the basic human stock. But they're the only game in town, so the teams go out again and again, and as successive Pioneers prove to be disappointments, and humanity's hopes are dashed again and again, people begin to turn against both the Pioneers and their rescuers. As the spark of intelligence and initiative burns ever more feebly, society becomes increasingly less able to support the rescue program. Things are winding eventually down. Then begins this novel, with the journey of Angelo and Ariadne to rescue Pioneer Murray, apparently Mankind's last hope.

Pioneers is ultimately a very positive and uplifting book. One shouldn't overpraise it. I have read better SF novels, quite a lot in fact, but I haven't been introduced to, and made to care about, many characters as well developed as Angelo.

V FOR VENDETTA

A GRAPHIC NOVEL IN TEN PARTS

by Alan Moore and David Lloyd

An Essay by Danny Low

Long before Alan Moore wrote Watchmen, he wrote V for Vendetta starting back in 1981. The serial was originally published in an English black and white magazine called Warrior. Unfortunately, the magazine went under before Moore could finish the story. As a result of the success of Watchmen, Moore was able finally to complete the story. DC Comics has reprinted V for Vendetta as a limited series of 10 comic books.

Undoubtedly for marketing reasons, DC Comics colorized V. V is one of the few black and white comics that used the black and white medium effectively. Most black and white comics are nothing more than color comics without the colors. David Lloyd used shadow and black fill to create a dark and somber look that matched the film noir theme of the story. While Lloyd also did the coloring, the visual impact of the story suffers from the colorization.

The story takes place in a post apocalypse England where an Orwellian fascist government rules the country. While the story is told from several different viewpoints, the main character is a mysterious man called V. Dressed in an archaic costume and always seen wearing a mask that resembles a puppet's face, V's identity is never revealed but his past is gradually disclosed. He was the survivor of a concentration camp used to do medical experiments. As a result of those experiments, V gained some superhuman powers which enabled him to destroy the camp and escape. He now plans to similarly destroy the government that created the concentration camp.

V's superhuman powers are handled very adroitly. He is stronger, faster and hardier than normal, but he is not stronger than a roaring locomotive and is not faster than a speeding bullet. Most significantly, V is also smarter than normal. He succeeds because he out-thinks his opponents.

Unlike Watchmen, which only had one theme, V for Vendetta has many themes. One of the themes is totalitarian governments exist only if the people allow them to exist. Much of V's actions are intended to awaken the people and show them what they allowed to happen. Another theme is that power corrupts. The ruling members of the government are shown to be a decadent, scheming and cruel group of people. Another theme is that acts of evil are often the result of people trying to do good. The Leader is shown as a man dedicated to his ideas. While the reader is expected to know the Leader's ideas are wrong and the methods despicable, it is also clear the Leader believes his ideas are correct and his methods justifiable. V himself murders and tortures people in his attempt to destroy the evil tyranny of the Leader. This is an interesting moral issue that Moore never resolves. Another theme is the idea that even the most broken person can be made whole again given the proper guidance. Early in the story V takes under his protection a young girl at the bottom of the social heap who has been emotionally destroyed by the system and slowly rebuilds her hopes and her will to live.

The most interesting theme involves Finch. Finch is a good man, a dedicated policeman in the best sense of the word. However, because he works for an evil government, his deeds are indirectly evil although he does no evil himself. In the end Finch is redeemed by his realization that being a good citizen in an evil system is wrong. It is significant that the story ends with a panel of Finch walking down a long empty highway.

While Watchmen has garnered the greater fame, V for Vendetta is the better work. First, Moore had more time to write the story, especially the end. When Warrior stopped publication, Moore stopped writing V. The intervening years allowed Moore to more thoroughly think out the consequences of his story. While he could not change what he had previously written, he could compensate for them in the end. While the ending is predictable, it is also very suitable. The story is more complex with its many themes, although the story situation is rather unoriginal. The resemblance to Nazi Germany is all too obvious. While both Watchmen and V end on a hopeful note, the hope is not so obvious and bright in V for Vendetta, which is more in tune with the nature of the story.

Film Tape & Book Reviews by *Lan*

KRONO

by Charles L. Harness
Franklin Watts, 1988, $16.95

Charles Harness publishes too little. The reason may be that he takes his time to put together a story that makes use of religious mythologies and literary allusions. I enjoy reading a Harness novel because it gives my mind a workout in sorting out the various leves of meaning he lays into his writing. Even several days after reading his novels things "fall into place" either about the overall structure, and the parts thereof. All one needs do is read some of his classic stories--The Paradox Men, The Rose, The Ring of Ritornel--to know what I mean.

This isn't to say, however, that his work is all "literary;" Harness tells a good, fast-paced adventure story as well. In Krono, he mixes the themes of time travel and Greek mythology with a bit of Norse mythology and politics to come up with a intriguing story of a lost time-placed colony (called a boro).

James Konteau is a krono, a time expolrer and surveyor. His job is to search out places in the past in which a boro could be established to help relieve Earth's burgeoning population. He is good at what he does. While on vacation in Xanadu, a resort on one of the Martian moons, he is not only seduced into writing a proposal for a 5 million person boro placed in the Martian past, but is also drawn into the political intrigue of choosing the new Overlord leader. When one boro disappears--one

that Konteau had surveyed and recommended be anchored with triple stabilizers because it was near a "time fracture" (but whose record showed no such recommendation)--he defies direct orders to the contrary and tries to find it.

Kronos is the Greek god of time who ate his children so that none would overthrow him. The kronos are slowly consumed with insanity as they continue their time-travelling work. And the lost boro of 5,000 people may be a fitting sacrifice for Kronos-- (Chronos) time--to consume.

Konteau lost one eye and has a mechanical substitute which can do amazing things. Like Odin, he has learned much more than other kronos since the loss of his eye. And thus he can do more in his efforts to find and save the 5,000 lost souls of the boro.

Konteau's ex-wife is Helen, described as in Edgar Alan Poe's poem "To Helen," who is one of the few female kronos and the best temporal navigator. Together, with a third person (the mystical number: 3) Helen and Konteau work to recover the boro. She doesn't launch a thousand ships, but she works to save 5,000 lives.

These are some of the more overt connections to mythology and literature. The more one thinks about the novel and draws on knowledge of our literary traditions, the richer the story becomes, and the greater the admiration of Harness. Those who have forsaken their studies of Western literary culture --whether by choice, or by poor education--may have trouble with the novel, in spite of the good story. Still, it's a good mind exerciser, and it sent me running to my copy of the Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythoogy more than once, and to Poe's poems to refresh my memory.

LOST IN SPACE

by George O. Smith
Avalon, 1959 (c1954), $2.75

Flight 79 to the "twin" stars of Castor and Pollux did not make it to its destination; it explodes but all passengers and crew make it to the lifeships in time. The problem now is rescue. Commodore Ted Wilson has more of a stake in recovering the lost passengers than simple duty; his girlfriend Alice Hemmingway was on that flight.

Attempting a rescue in three dimensions is extremely difficult, especially when the equipment is inadequate to pinpoint locations in space. Earth technology has not progressed to that point, a fact noted by the alien fleet poised and ready for contact with humans. They watch and plan their approach to that first contact. And the lifeship that holds Alice is about to become a pawn in a complex game of negotiations.

The book is dated. It is sexist, logically inconsistent in places, and farcical in its allowances of habits in enclosed environments. Smoking on a lifeship with limited air recirculation equipment? Much more is known now about space habitation and survival than the time this was written, so one approach to the novel is to consider it "quaint." Still it is a good drama of the "search and rescue" variety with some interesting aliens thrown in.

The book is old, and not currently available. It was reprinted in 1960 as half of an Ace double. Lost in Space may have been brought out again in the late 70s when Smith's other stories were reprinted. And there's always the used book stores.

TWISTOR

by John Cramer
Morrow (SFBC), 1988, $?.??

Few novels written nowadays involve scientists and their discoveries. Twistor is one of those few hard SF novels. David Harrison, a young physicist, and Vickie Gordon, his graduate assistant, discover the "twistor" effect, although they don't know what it is at first. Allan Saxon, department chairman, wants everything kept quiet while he thinks of a way to exploit the effect in his small company. However, Saxon's backer is thinking the same thing, at which point the plot becomes sinister.

Harrison and Gordon eventually work out that the twistor effect is like a matter transmitter. With experimentation and the help of a battery-operated videorecorder, they discover an alternate universe. Or is it another planet in this one?

When the industrial espionage gets real nasty, Harrison is forced to use the twistor effect on himself and shifts to this other place. With him, however, are the two children of his best friend, so returning to the lab becomes of the utmost importance. Fortunately, Harrison does have a few ideas on how to do this.

For a first novel, author John Cramer has done a lot of things right. The characters are well done, the plot is complex enough to keep one guessing, and Twistor is fun to read. It's also satisfying to watch how Harrison and Gordon handle the attempts at suppressing their discovery. A sequel is promised, and I am looking forward to that.

IN A DARK DREAM

by Charles L. Grant
Tor, 1989, $17.95

Everything seems normal in the small town of Hunter Lake, New Jersey, nestled on a horse-shoe shaped, spring-fed lake. But Sheriff Glenn Erskine is worried about his town. Hunter Lake is getting larger; city people with little sense of "country"

are bringing in some problems. And it's his wife Marjory who is selling real estate and hoping for her big condominium deal to go through. Glenn's desire for a peaceful summer decrease when he finds out that Jimmy Hale, who murdered his parents, has been released from the asylum -- delcared sane. And thefts have been taking place in some of the outlying houses.

Glenn's son and three daughters have their problems too: Bern lost his girlfriend and is worried about going away to college in the fall; Nancy is concerned on earning enough money to buy a car; the youngest, Cheryl and Dory, are having nightmares.

Then strange things begin to happen. People's tangible dreams begin to crumble; their nightly dreams turn to nightmares. Reality and unreality begin to mix. Is the Erskine family falling apart? Does Glenn want to put the effort in to saving his family or his town?

Charlie Grant has centered this story around the family and dreams (of both kind). The characters are real, well-defined people whose lives and troubles become the readers' concern. Some scenes are sensitive and poignant; others make you shudder. Charlie has done a good job with In a Dark Dream, better in some aspects than The Pet. Definitely a good psychological drama.

PADDYWHACK

by John Stchur
St. Martin's Press, 1989, $3.95

Some people are convinced that their pets are intelligent. Cats, dogs, rats, birds, horses, whatever -- the owners see personality and an independently thinking mind in the actions of animals. Ask them about it; most pet owners have stories they could tell.... Maybe there is some truth to this. On the other hand, maybe there another explanation for the "intelligent" behavior. Could the animals be possessed?

Bruce is the dog -- it seems and acts almost as if it were human, a spiteful, vicious person who protects Aunt Blanche. When she dies, Bruce kills himself in his attempt to remain at her side. But he doesn't disappear. Bruce returns to stalk Jack Blanche's nephew, for keeping him apart from his beloved Blanche, and nothing will stand in Bruce's way of killing Jack.

As in Charlie Grant's novel, In a Dark Dream, dreams and family are at the heart of John Stchur's Paddywhack. Jack Lerille's dream of being a hero was not fulfilled. He tried becoming a Broadway star but the "big show" closed within a week of opening, so he moved to Granger, Michigan, where he could at least provide a living for his famiy--wife Judy and daughter Rachel. Working in the town library was a step down, and having to live with his maiden Aunt Blanche was worse, especially having to deal with the dog Bruce.

Blanche's dreams of getting married and having a family ended when he lover refused to be tied down. Bruce Holmes used Blanche to his own ends, leading her on -- for years. When he left for good, Blanche was alone and despised by the town. When she got the dog named Bruce, she treated the Boston Bull as if it were human.

Hank Mallory, Blanche's next door neighbor, dreamed of being a football star. His dream ended in World War II when his knee was damaged. Now retired, Hank still thinks about it, but has resigned to being a good man -- son, husband, lover, friend and neighbor.

The two best defined characters in the book are Jack and Hank. The two quickly become buddies and their interactions are among the best parts of the novel. Blanche and Bruce and their motivations are well done, as are other minor characters. Judy and Rachel are family members, but there seems nothing special about them, except Judy's willingness to fight with Jack despite the real danger that Bruce's spirit presents. That "man's best friend" turns out to be one man's worst enemy is a nice twist. The background, the narration and descriptive passages add to a nicely paced novel of gradual horror.

This is as good as Stchur's previous novel, Down on the Farm.

WATCHERS

by Dean R. Koontz
Putnam/SFBC, 1987, $18.95/$7.95

A single dog is also the topic of Dean Koontz's Watchers. In a genetic experiment to increase intelligence in dogs and also create strange supersoldiers, a Defense research-backed laboratory succeeds in one, and almost succeeds in the other. The golden retriever who eventually gets to name Einstein escapes from the laboratory, as does the Outsider, a creature designed to kill. Specifically, the Outsider is linked to Einstein and wants to kill him, mainly because Einstein is what the Outsider is not.

Travis Cornell is the human who finds the dog and soon discovers its intelligence. Through Ein-

stein he meets and rescues Nora Devon from a would-be rapist and from a life of spinsterhood. Along the way, other humans become interested in the golden retreiver, particularly the government who backed the experiments, and the enemy who hires a killer, Vincent Nasco, to do away with the scientists who had anything to do with the experiments. Nasco loves killing because he gets an "energy transfer" of life force from his victims. Although he usually does not get involved in the "why" of his victims, he does this time, and joins the pursuit of Einstein. With everyone after the dog, none is about to give up until they themselves are dead, or are shown that the dog is.

Koontz works hard to establish believable characters and he succeeds, even with some of the minor ones. I was interested in their lives, in the developing relationship between Travis and Nora, in the safety of Einstein, in the veterinarian and lawyer who help them, and even how the assassin Nasco would get his just desserts. The loyalty to Einstein that the characters feel is shared by the readers. How can you NOT like a dog that likes Mickey Mouse videos?

I enjoyed reading Watchers, and readily forgive Koontz for keeping me up late to finish it.

HELLSPARK

by Janet Kagan
TOR/SFBC, 1988, $4.95/$7.95

I missed this novel when it first came out. I heard it was good, and I kick myself now for not reading it earlier so I could at least have put in on my nominations ballot for the Hugo.

Tocohl Susumo is a Hellspark, a trader, whose has an expertise in langauges. She is a polyglossi, whose knowledge of languages goes beyond the words to the culture, body positions, and facial expressions. She is called to Flashfever to help decide if the strange inhabitants are really sentient. Their world as their own hangs in the balance; otherwise, it will be opened for exploitation.

The idea is not a new one. Vercours handled the concept of determining intelligence well in You Shall Know Them, which was paralleled in many ways by H. Beam Piper in Little Fuzzy. The concept of language was dealt with by Samuel R. Delany in Babel-17. And newcomer Marti Steussy has had such communications difficulties at the heart of her two novels, The Forest of the Night and Dreams of Dawn. But none has carried the ideas to the extent that Janet Kagan has in Hellspark. She has developed several distinct cultures and physical extensions of languages for this novel, and it makes one read carefully, but with enjoyment. The writing is fascinating, and again I spent a long night finishing the novel. I look forward to more books from her.

BROTHER and Other Stories

by Clifford D. Simak
Edited and introduced by Francis Lyall
Metheun, 1986, L2.50

This is the second of a series of Clifford D. Simak story collections, the first being The Marathon Photograph and Other Stories. Frank Lyall has a love of Simak's fiction, and has worked to get his most recent short stories into print. Since Simak's death in 1988, Frank has been working harder to bring off this project.

In this collection, the stories included are "Brother," "Over the River and through the Woods," "Auk House," and "Kindergarten." Each has its own flavor and style of Simak, yet each is tied to the land, particularly the area of Grant County, Wisconsin. Even though "Auk House" is centered on the East Coast of North America, the touches put in by Simak reflect locations of the midwest.

"Brother" relates the story of a man's twin who goes out among the stars and returns occasionally to tell his brother about the wonders he's seen. Edward Lambert stays on Earth as an anchor for Phil, but Simak weaves a tale of mystery and irony around these twins.

"Over the River and through the Woods" tells of two children meeting their great-grandmother, even though it is temporally impossible. The touches of farm life in the late 19th century add to the atmosphere of this tale, and hope for the future of the human race.

In "Auk House," artist David Latimer is looking for a quiet place to rent for a few months so he could concentrate on painting. He stumbles upon the Auk House while traveling up the coast toward Wyalusing, and enters. He suddenly finds himself no long in his time period; more accurately, he is no longer on our Earth, but an alternate place where human life never developed. How and why was he placed there with other artistic people is the central mystery of the story. (Lyall adds in his introduction that "Wyalusing" is the name of a bluff at the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers, near the old Simak farm.)

Like many of Simak's stories, "Kindergarten" starts with a "down-home" character finding something strange and unusual on his land. Peter Chaye has come to the country to spend his last days in pleasant surroundings. Dying of cancer, he takes care to notice his world, filling his walks with detailed examination of the countryside. He finds a machine, a strange box that gives him a gift--a jade egg. To Mary Mallet it gives a fancy bottle of expensive perfume. Others who stumble upon it are also given gifts--something the person has wanted. Soon the machine starts to construct a building. And the government and military become involved.

Eventually, Peter and Mary put together some strange facts. The polio epidemic is halted. Peter's cancer is gone. The attacks on the building are turned aside with no one harmed. And the two get a call to return to the building. It's all an alien plot, and "missionary" is the key.

While other authors stratch the imagination in space, in machines, in the currents of computer cyberspace, Simak continued to write about human beings on Earth, and how technological advances affected the common man. The stories are rich in Human, Earthy, detail. And Frank Lyall's introduction points out the depth of feelings that Simak had for his Earth.

SHAKE THE DUST OFF

by Bill Sutton
DAG Productions, 1989, $10.00
(1810 14th St., Santa Monica, CA 90404)

I don't care for country-western music. Unfortunately most of the music on Bill's tape is done in that style. In spite of that, I did enjoy the tape, although there is a fairly large number of songs I don't care for (even if he did write all of them). That is, they fall below average of what I expect

from Bill, especially after his first tape, Past Due. Still, there are some gems here.

Bill Sutton's humorous songs are always masterfully done, so "Beer Bed," "The Electron Waltz," and "To Be Announced" are good selections. His more serious songs, such as "I Saw My World Go Down," "Cobra," "Heros," and "Solitary" are better, but he reaches his best with the title song "Shake the Dust Off," which is about relationships and a person's worth. This song alone is worth the price of the tape.

Quality? There's a lot of talk about quality of the recordings in filk tapes among the filkers and listeners. There is no question about that with DAG tapes. The vocals are clear; the blend of voice and instruments is even--neither overwhelms the other.

Overall, I was surprised to have enjoyed the music as much as I did, given my dislikes. But a good song is still good, no matter how it's arranged.

STRANGERS NO MORE

by Brenda Sinclair Sutton
DAG Productions, 1989, $10.00
(1810 14th St., Santa Monica, CA 90404)

Brenda Sinclair Sutton (Bill's wife) is a filker in her own right. This is her first solo tape, and a very adventurous start it is. All the songs are by Brenda, two of them in collaboration with another person. Some are serious, some are humorous, like "Don't Ever Call Me Stupid" (based on the movie A Fish Called Wanda), "In the Blood," "Mama's

Hands," and "Another Day of Loving," but there is a tinge of seriousness in all of them that evokes strong emotions other than humor. As a songwriter, Brenda manages to pull a mixture of feelings from the listener, no mean feat for even professional lyricist.

The topics of the songs range from films to books to personal feelings. Brenda's voice is strong and getting stronger, although she still has some trouble shifting from chest to head tones. The production and engineering overcome most of these problems, but I've heard her singing better and better, stronger and "fuller" in person.

As with Bill's tape, the quality is there. And the best of the songs is the title "Strangers No More." This is a biographical song for any filker, and it builds to a beautiful chorus wherein filkers join in joyous song and become friends ("strangers no more"). And, like Bill's tape, the title song alone is worth the price.

The Planet Builders

#4: VISIONS FROM THE SEA
#5: ZERO-SUM GAMES
#6: NIGHT OF TWO NEW MOONS
#7: CHILDREN OF THE STORM
#8: HORRORVID
#9: GIANTS OF ELENNA
#10: FIRE IN THE SKY

by Robyn Tallis
Ivy Books, 1988/89, $2.95

In LL #30 I reviewed the first three books in this Young Adult series. I was positive about the individual stories and the continuing story which were presented in the novels. With these next seven installments of The Planet Builders, my enthusaism continues. I heard from Bob Eggleton, the cover artist for the first 5 books, that the series ends with #10. I hope not. I have grown to like the 8 teenagers who have been the continuing characters in these books. Sean Matthews, Zach Yamoto, Will Mornette, Arkady Davidov, Phillpa Bidding, Clea Tourni, Daphne DeVries and Norika Wilder, have become interesting and believable characters. The first six mentioned experienced a recording of what happened to the original inhabitants of the planet Gauguin, and were called to "bear witness" to the events. They were telepathically linked together with something they called "the current." In Visions from the Sea, Daphne and Noriko are linked with the other six. Together, they expience adventures on their planet, discover things about themselves and each other, and uncover the intelligence behind their "linking."

In Visions from the Sea, as I mentioned above, Daphne and Norika , while on assignment at a marine reasearch facility with Will and Arkady, encounter sea creatures who try to contact them as the others were contacted before. Thus they are "put onto" the current that links the other six teens. Their vision of the underwater city is set aside when an approaching tidal wave reduce all thoughts to survival. Of course they survive, but with a better, but not perfect, understanding of their linking.

Sean Matthews is seriously injured in Zero-Sum Games. He is captain of the freeball team at Bradbury School, but the team will have to work without him in the championship games. What bothers his seven close friends is that the scooter crash which caused his injuries couldn't have happened where he was found, which means Sean and the scooter were moved. What had Sean found out that would cause someone to move the accident elsewhere? And Where did it really take place?

The climax comes in several ways. Rogue miners are captured, Sean comes to a greater understanding of what the current is and recovers with few side effects, Will finds more control with his telekinetic ability, and Miguel (Phillipa's friend from her past, related in book #3, Rebel from Alphorion), is killed. The plot is complex, but the resolutions are logical. But there is still the mystery of the "intelligent species" on the planet.

In Night of Two New Moons, Sean continues to be in touch with this "intelligence" on the planet, while he recovers from his accident in the previous book. The human inhabitants prepare to celebrate the birth of the first native human Gauguin, Ginny Riedel-Mornette, Will's sister, but something is up which only the eight teens detect. Soon after her birth, Ginny is stolen by the theskies and only the group linked by the current know where she is taken, and eventually why.

Clea and Zach are the central figures of Children of the Storm. Their assignment, in the community duties that they all must perform, is to accompany and babysit the children of scientists working on the outer islands so that they can see their parents. On the way, a storm forces them to abandon ship and the two teens are left trying to survive with the six children on an unknown island. Something on the island is blocking Clea's telepathic abilities; could that be related to the theskie/quufer village they found? That these natives of the planet are more intelligent than the original survey indicated is becoming more apparent.

In Horrorvid, Daphne DeVries and Will Mornette go off with a holovid crew to make a horror film. Daphne is there because she wants to end up acting, like her mother. However, Daphne's mother is one of the actresses on the set, and Daphne is less than enthusiastic about that. She feels as though her mother abandoned her and her father to pursue her acting career. Will is along to make sure that the film company doesn't destroy any of the land, flora

or fauna than necessary in making the holovid.

Complications arise when the emotions between mother and daughter flare, and when the film crew uses explosives to clear some land. Then some practical joker pulls a few pranks, and one of the company disappears. It seems that there is more on that island site than what has been found elsewhere on the planet.

This book is the most unsatisfying of the 10. The film company is not taken to task for their blatant disregard of the planet's rules. Hoever, Daphne and her mother come to a better understanding, as do she and Will.

Phillipa once again is the star of another of the books, Giants of Elenna. Fed up with her parents, and after a fight with Arkady, Phillipa decides to head for Elenna, a new city being built elsewhere on the planet. She gets caught up with the work and almost forgets her friends, but the current won't let her. And when giant native lifeforms begin striding through the area, she realizes she needs help from her friends

In parallel to this are the preparations for visits from scientists for the determination of intelligent indigenous life on Gauguin. And the interactions among the other teens. In the end, most things work out, and Phillipa becomes independent of her parents, made a ward of the colony with three trusted adults as her guardians.

In Fire in the Sky, the final book of the series, the group of eight teens prepare to graduate with the rest of the senior classmates. They will be going separate ways, but the planet becomes quarantined because of the question of alien intelligence. However, complications arise with interplanetary mercenaries trying to lift minerals from the planet, and their willingness to destroy all the humans on the planet to ease their operation.

Cooperation between the eight human teens and the quufers puts an end to this threat, and establishes their intelligence. In the end the close friends depart on their separate ways, though there seems to be the promise that all will stay in touch, and perhaps return to Gauguin.

The series ended well, with a desire for more. I think I would prefer it that way, than it finishing with such finality (or with a bad story) that I would not want to read more. The group author who is Robyn Tallis is to be commended for some good work. The books of the series stand on their own, yet the continuing story adds to the development of each character. You would hope that writers of trilogies and other series books would learn this. But at least I know this series is around for me to recommend to adolescents who show an interest in SF. And I have.

THROUGH MY EYES

by Larry Warner
Thor Records, 1989, $10.00
(PO Box 40312, Downey, CA 90242)

When I heard that Larry Warner was finally putting out his own tape, I became very adamant about getting a copy. Ever since I heard his voice and songs on the DAG tape Other Worlds, Other Times, I've been interested in getting more of his works.

Then this tape came out.

And I'm glad it did.

Some of the songs I have heard before. His version of "Hero's Song," written by Julia Ecklar, is well done. "Lies" by Stan Rogers, is a hallmark song for the filk group Technical Difficulties. And I have heard Larry sing his own "Ender's Game" on another tape.

What sets these apart from other renditions is the arrangement and Larry's voice. I'm not saying that Julia singing "Hero's Song" or Technical Difficulties' version of "Lies" aren't better or worse that Larry's. His is different; the strong baritone adds a new dimension to the lyrics I had not heard before with the female voices. And I like it.

As for the other songs on the tape, they range from very good to excellent. Chris Thorsen who did the arangements and played some of the backgrounds is a talented person who has done justice the content of each song. The engineering is excellent so that the listener can hear and understand the lyrics. This makes for a plus in my book. And the vocal supports from strong voices such singers as Mary Ellen Wessels, Kathy Mar, Linda Melnick and others adds to the pleasure of hearing.

I can't say I disliked any of the of the 13 songs, though if I had to skip over any, it would probably be the humorous "Reality Evasion 101." The other humorous song is "Mundane Girl," a parody of Billy Joel's "Uptown Girl," which had me rolling in my seat (on the plane coming back home from NOREASCON) when I first heard it. The rest are fairly serious -- love songs, story songs, songs depicting feelings and emotions. Some come from stories: "Persistence of Vision" from the John Varley story of the same name, "Lesson" from Orson Scott Card's Songbird, "Ender's Game" also from Card's novel of

the same name, and "The Star" from Arthur C. Clarke's haunting short story. There are referneces to Star Wars ("Reality Evasion 101" and "Twins") and Star Trek ("From the Heart"). To pick a favorite would be difficult, but I am partial to "The Same Old Song, the Same Old Way."

I want to hear more from this man.

(A plus, particularly for the female fans of Larry Warner, is the picture of this handsome man on the cover, and a "beefcake" photo inside.)

Dr. JANE'S WACKADEMIA

by Jane Robinson
Thor Records, 1989, $10.00
(PO Box 40312, Downey, CA 90242)

About three years ago, Off Centaur Publications put out a tape called Dr. Jane's Science Notes which had a number of marvelous humorous songs about science. Since then, OCP has gone out of business, and thus the tape is no longer available. Thor Records, however, has now re-recorded most of the songs from that tape, and released them on Dr. Jane's Wackademia. The advantage now is that one can hear and understand all the lyrics, and the arrangements fit better with the content. There is also a sense of vitality and spontaneity in the presentation here, something that seemed to be lacking on the previous incarnation of the tape.

Dr. Jane Robinson wrote and performed all the words and music (except the music to "Drivel", written by Dave Van Ronk), with the help of The Primordial Oohz. Her science background enabled her to poke fun at science and academia. In "Drivel" she looks at the "act" of writing papers. The frustrations of registering for classes and other administrivia are summarized in "Anthem to Bureaucracy" and "Song of the Middle Manager." Other topics include cats ("The Overflowin' Catbox Blues"), research ("The 'I Don't Know It' Blues," "We Can't Find...(The Creature in Loch Ness)," and "A Look at Things That Don't Exist"), geology ("Dooda Rock Rock") and chemistry ("Battle with the Elements").

For anyone with an interest or "bent" for science, these songs are right up your...periodic table.

WAR BIRDS

by R.M. Meluch
Signet/NAL, 1989, $3.95

I have dutifully bought every Rebecca Meluch novel that has been published. They rested for a year or more on my "to-be-read" shelf before finally being relegated to the permanent shelf--unread. Then I received this one from Rebecca herself, suitably inscribed, and figured I had better read this one.

I'm glad I did.

Her others are being put back on the to-be-read shelf.

War Birds is on my list for Hugo Nominees for this year.

You get the idea? It is GOOD. I've seen very little promotion for this novel, but it is a sleeper--a phenomenally good story, a protagonist so well-drawn he seems a real person, three distinct cultures described, one of which is very alien--a book that might be overlooked, but shouldn't be!

Anthony Northfield is a Professor of literature at the academy for fighter pilots of Tannia. From his words (first person, singular, point of view) we learn about him, the worlds of Tannia and Erde (a double planet), and Occa, the only other habitable world in the system. I can't say too much about Anthony and what he does without revealing a lot about the story. It is a novel of discovery, of who Anthony is, his relationship with Maggie and the peoples of the three planets.

Get this book and read it. See if you agree that it is worthy of a Hugo Nomination.

GODSLAYER

by Mickey Zucker Reichert
DAW, 1987, $2.95

In the midst of the Vietnam war, Al Larson calls on Freyr, the Norse god of war, to come to his aid, and Larson is transported to a magical land as an Elf with a mission. Of course, he has no idea what his mission is, much less how to survive in this world based on Norse mythology, but he manages to find a couple of friends who aid him in his heroic quest to free the god trapped in his sword.

Larson is designated a hero, but he lives with the fears most of us have in our day-to-day lives. This is augmented by the fact that he has no knowledge of the countryside, or customs, or methods of fighting in this land. His companions are interesting characters as well. Silme is a sorceress, and Gaelinar is a swordmaster and an expert with unusual weapons (like throwing stars). They both protect "Allerum" until he learns enough to defend himself. Then they accompany him on his quest, both performing heroic feats inspite of Gaelinar's protest that he is "not a hero."

It is nice to find someone using a mythological background other than the Celtic or Greaco-Roman. Reichert's handling of the heroic themes, plot twists, and characterization is extremely well done for this her first novel. I look forward to reading the two sequels, Shadowclimber and Dragonrank Master.

HERITAGE OF FLIGHT

by Susan Shwartz
Tor, 1989, $3.95

The war between the Earth Federation and the Secessionists is going badly, so the "Higher-Ups" decide to put "Project Seedcorn" into effect. Thus, Pauli Yeager, fighter pilot, is relegated to be leader of a group of survivors on a planet called Cynthia, in hopes that at least some of humanity could survive the war.

Unfortuantely, the survey made of the planet was incomplete and there is native intelligent life. However, the larva stage of the Cynthians was a slug-like creature with an appetite for any living thing, including humans. To save the colony and maybe the entire human race, Pauli had to decide whether or not to commit genocide.

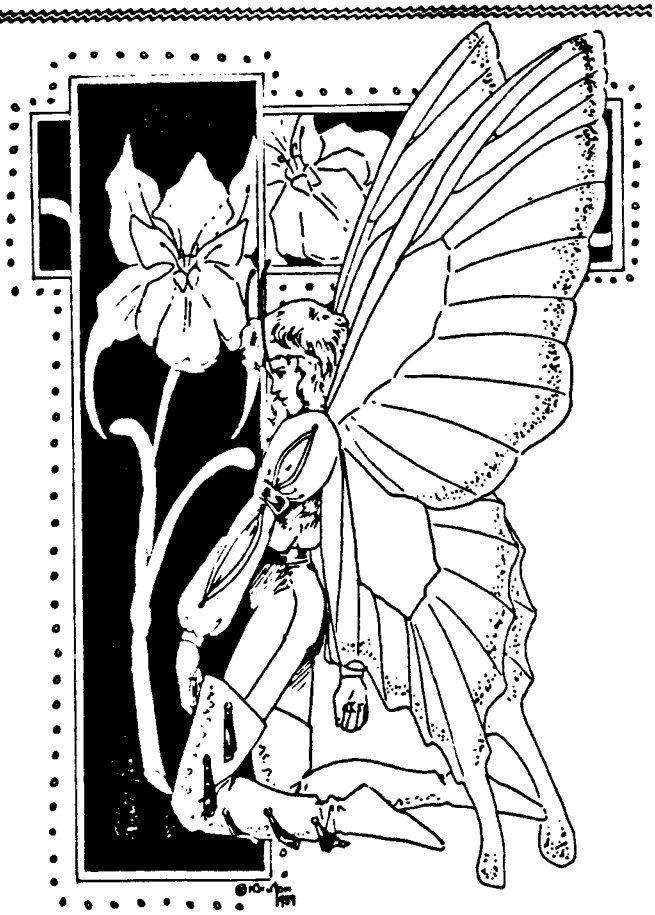
This is one of the main plots woven into this novel by Susan Shwartz. However, dealing with the character of Yeager, and Yeager's interaction with the colonists, her superiors, and the other plot twists Susan throws at her, is the main focus of the novel. The plotting is complex, and Susan does not relent in throwing new challenges at Pauli Yeager, all of which help to make the character stronger and more flexible. And when the Alliance finds the colony, Yeager takes full responsibility for all that has happened, all the decisions she made to keep the colony alive, regardless of the consequences.

Although two parts of Heritage of Flight were published in Analog a few years ago, they get a fresh airing (and rewriting) in the novel. They way she developed the character and story is described in "Welcome Aboard the Starship, Mrs. Brown: The Female Hero and One Writer's Craft" on page 4 in this issue of LL. Justly so, then, the book is dedicated to Dr. Stanley Schmidt, editor of Analog.

...PLUS C'EST LA MEME CHOSE

by Kathy Mar
Thor Records, 1989, $10.00
(PO Box 40312, Downey, CA 90242)

I was very much looking forward to Kathy Mar's new tape, particularly after hearing her first one from Thor Records. I had high expectations, and when I listened to ...Plus C'est La Meme Chose, I



felt cheated. It wasn't as good as Plus Ca Chance. At least, that was my initial reaction. After I heard it a couple more times, I realized that neither was better than the other; they were different. Kathy is stretching her voice. Chrys Thorsen is experimenting with arrangements centering around Kathy, and the results are coming out as showcase pieces for their talents. Kathy's other friends who have helped put this album together (Larry Warner, Michael P. Kube-McDowell, Mary Ellen Wessels, Gwen Zack, Joey Shoji, Sandra Kleinschmitt and others) are also being showcased with their musical abilities for singing, playing and arranging. This is an incredible listening experience.

The present arrangements of some of Kathy's previously recorded songs are much better. The lyrics of "Songbird" and "Call Him Lord" are clearly heard and the support music and vocals don't overpower the lead. There are some humorous songs ("Nobody's Moggy Now," and "Mr. Right"), but most are serious. "Vapor Angels" is a blues number with a wonderful calrinet solo. "Television Blues" and "Marching in the Street" lament the conditions of todays society in different ways. "Heartwarming" and "The Circle Song" talk of love in different ways. And at least two songs come from SF novels: "Songbird" and "Sea Cradle," the latter arrangements being soothing and rolling like the surf of the sea.

With this tape we see more of Kathy's versatility in singing. My only question now is: what will she do next?

RAW MILK II: STRINGS

Turn of the Century Records, 1989, $??.??
(37 May St., New Britain, CT 06052)

I received this compact disc in the mail from Douglas Turek who asked for a listen-through and a review. It took a while to get the disc translated to a medium we could use (since we do not have a compact disk player), and I have listened to the album a few times. Familiarity breeds understanding sometimes, and I have come to enjoy a few of the groups in this compilation of up-and-coming new artists.

The opening cut is from "Sons of Bob" (coming from the fact that all members of the group have fathers named Bob), and has some good drum work. It reminded me somewhat of Scott Richard Case of a couple decades ago. "Mental Gymnastics" holds the second position. The song starts mellow and progresses to some nice guitar picking. This one reminded me a lot of McKendree Spring.

The third cut is by a group called "The Thorns." Technically this is one of the worst on the album. The lead singer aspirates the ends of phrases, dropping and scooping notes with his voice. It's very distracting. The beat is good but the overall effect is terrible.

Leigh Gregory, solo singer on track 4, has an okay voice, but there is little variation in tone quality. I got tired of it real fast in this song; I couldn't imagine a whole album of him singing!

"Oobop Shebam" plays bland rock. It sounds good enough to dance to, and has good guitar solo at the end.

Track six brought another solo singer, Brad Robinson. This one I liked. The voice is strong, varies in tone, and he can sustain notes well without too much tremolo. His guitar work is good too. This is the best cut on here, and I think he has a promising future.

"Those Melvins" and "Motive 8" both played songs with good, "dance-able" beats. Motive 8's backgrounds were interesting, and kept my attention more than most of the pieces recorded here.

Of the groups on this disk, "Out of Sorts" sounded the most together, the ones having the most fun with their music. The song itself was not that interesting, but something in their approach made me sit up and listen. This one may go far.

The album closes with "Flying Nuns," who play another good dance number. The words are difficult to understand, but most kids these days don't care about lyrics.

Overall, its a sampling of groups and singers of varying quality. These groups might be good in live performances, but for cold recordings, I'd give Brad Robinson and "Out of Sorts" as having the best chance of making it big.

PARADOX

by Barry and Sally Childs-Helton
Space Opera House, 1989, $10.00
(5141 Norwaldo Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46205)

Following up the success of their first tape, Escape from Mundania, Barry and Sally Childs-Helton present Paradox, another selection from their vast repertoire of serious and silly songs. Both musicians of this team hold PhDs in ethno-musicology (thus the title), and both have studied fandom for a long time and have chosen several of their talented friends to help with the backup vocals, support instrumentation and arrangements. Michael P. Kube-McDowell gets a workout with his synthesizer, and Beryl Rosenthal (not to mention Barry himself) sound like they were having fun with the various voice characterizations.

Production quality? Need you ask? For the most part the quality is high, although some words were muddled in a couple of songs, and I had to turn the treble up to highlight the melody line in parts of "The War-of-the-Worlds Top-40 Radio Musical of 1963". But these are exceptions. The variety and power of the music is almost overwhelming. I was happy to hear that Barry and Sally were going to put out another tape, and after hearing it, I was not disappointed.

Several of the songs tread a fine line between humor and seriousness. "Relativity Paradox Calypso" is about going into sapce and "traveling at point 9 c." "Body Shop Blues" talks about a UFO abduction, and many the secrets of the governement are talked about in "Talkin' Building Q Blues." And "Alphabet Soup Blues" relates the frustration of holding advanced degrees and being unable to get a job.

Some are more overtly funny and silly. "Moose and Squirrel" (to the tune of "Duke of Earl") is about Rocky and Bullwinkle. "The War-ofthe-Worlds Top-40 Radio Musical of 1963" uses two 60s songs, "Silhouettes" and "Heat Wave", to retell War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells with "Cylinders" and "Heat Ray." In "Galactic Personals" Barry gets to try out various voice characterizations for "famous" SF and horror personalities placing "personal ads" -- like James T. Kirk, Audrey II, Gort, Marvin the paranoid android, and others.

The rest are more serious. The idea of future archaeologists trying to make sense of a dwelling found in the desert is depicted in "Motel of the Mysteries" (to the tune of "Hotel California"). "Monorail to Atomland" talks about the current state of society and what the future might hold. Barry writes and sings two songs about evolution: "Alpha-Male Star Pilot" is a humorous dipiction of ancient astronauts who influence our ancestry; "Whistling in the Dark" talks about more contemporary evolution.

Finally, the two songs that end either side are delicate, pretty, but serious songs. They show Barry's sensitivity in songwriting, and leave the listener in a mellow mood.

All in all, a very good tape, worth listening to several times in a row.

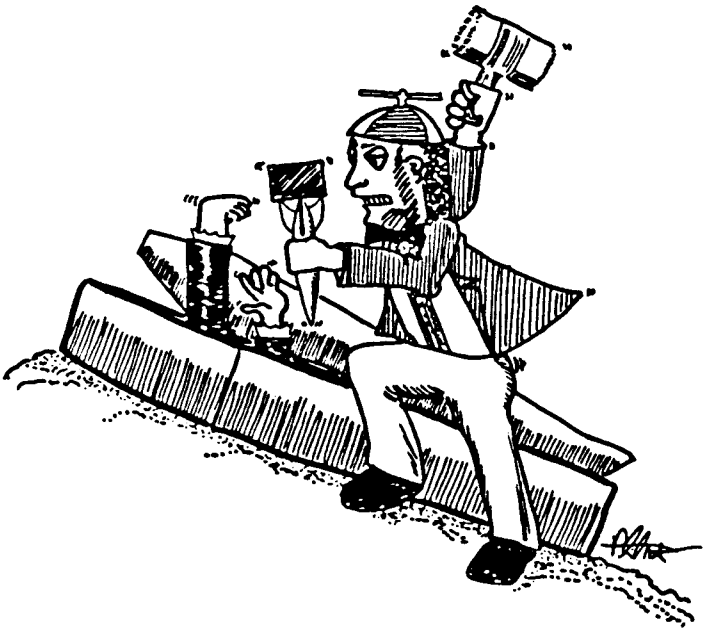
MOON SHADOWS
Songs of the Night!

by Cynthia McQuillin
Unlikely Publications, 1989, $10.00
(1741 8th St., Berkeley, CA 94710)

Cynthia McQuillin has been responsible for several classics in filking, and her strong voice has been evident in the background vocals on many tapes. She has had her share of taps produced, but this is the first on the Unlikely Publications label. As is true of the new group of tape companies, the production quality of this tape is very high. The arrangements support the vocals, and add variety to the songs. To sum up, it's a good production.

As for the content, the songs chosen for this tape are geared specifically to depict night people and creatures. Most are about vampires, some coming from stories ("Blood Red Roses"), novels ("Fever Dreams"), and movies ("Sweet Alice"); others could be from any idea about vampires but with a nice twist, like "Gay Vampire Boogie". Some songs are haunting -- a melody line that lingers and one has to hear the song again so that it doesn't drive one batty (pun intended). All songs are by Cynthia McQuillin, which shows her versatility in composing.

For those fascinated with the creatures of the night, this is a must.



A GUIDE THROUGH THE WORLDS OF ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

by J. Lincoln Thorner
Gryphon Publications, 1989, $5.95
(PO Box 209, Brooklyn, NY 11228)

The death of Robert A. Heinlein, one of science fiction greats has prompted a number of studies of his works. Indeed, the Special issue that I planned for RAH on his Golden Anniversaru has turned into a Memorial issue. Others have done special things in their own way to honor this man who has been hailed as the best science fiction writer. J. Lincoln Thorner has done no less. In this slim volume there are no real surprises, or any new deep insights into the man or his writing. What one reads is a compilation of things that have been said elsewehere, but filtered through a fan who has loved the works of Robert A. Heinlein. This is a wondeful primer for new readers of SF who may need in introduction to the master; for others familiar with the works of RAH, it is a nice trip down memory lane.

The cover art by Bill Ware shows Heinlein in his later years. The title page illustration, showing a younger Heinlein, also looks like Bill Ware's work, but is uncredited. The interiors are mostly covers from the various books and editions of Heinlein's books. The entire package looks good, and is worth collecting, particularly for all Heinlein fans. But act quickly, for there is a limited run on this.

REDSHIFT RENDEZVOUS

by John E. Stith
Berkeley, 1990, $3.50

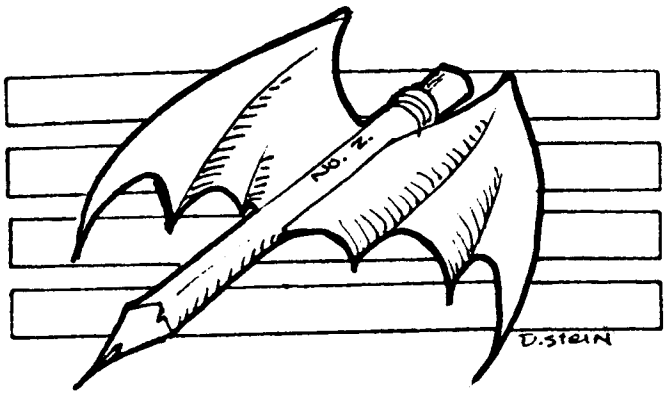
John sent me this uncorrected proof copy for review early in 1989. Since the publication date was not until February, 1990, I held off on reading it. I should have read it sooner.

Aboard the starship **Redshift**, a woman who earlier tried to commit suicide is found dead. Murdered. This is not good, considering that the ship is traveling faster than light, and only someone who is aboard could be responsible. But which of the dozens of passengers could it be? Then a crewman turns up missing as well, and unlisted passengers appear.

John Stith sets up a wonderful mystery, and works against an interesting science background for this story. In trans-light space, some of the physical laws are different: light moves slow enough that you can see your own back in a mirror by turning fast enough; the speed of sound is slow enough that you can break the sound barrier by running, gravity in the ship differs from you feet to your head so that time runs differently as well. John has worked this out to the extent that these different physical laws become extremely important in the story.

The main character, Jason Kraft narrates the story as he participates in it. He is the first officer aboard **Redshift**, and it is he who aborts Jenni Sonder's attempt at suicide. Eventually it is Jason who has to deal with the unwanted visitors aboard his ship. These pirates soon reveal their plan, and although his life and the life of everyone else on the ship is forfeit, his mind works furiously to find a way to staop them.

This is good, high energy reading; I found it difficult to put down.



BATMAN

Just about everyone in the world has seen the movie, and most everyone has written a review, or at least has read a review (or 10) about it. So how about another one?

I deliberately tried to stay away from all the hype about this film. I was pretty successful in doing so, and when I saw the trailer for it at MARCON, I was blown away by the effects. Yes, it would work, I said to myself. And it did.

I saw it twice and noticed more the second time. I won't summarize the plot, as that has been overdone. I just want to make a few comments on odd bits that I noticed.

The city is dark and crowded. It does not look like a pleasant place to live. Trash and garbage are everywhere. Even in the daytime it looks dark. And Wayne Manor, as brightly lit as it is for the charity party, still has this dark and brooding aspect to it. The joker's costume, although made of gaudy colors, are muted tones.

There are only two bright spots in the movie. The first is Vicki Vale. She wears the bright, white colors. The final scenes show her in white. She is the bright spot in Bruce Wayne's/Batman's life. The second place is Vicki's apartment. The walls and ceiling are white. The sun streams in through the windows. Whenever we see her there, the place is bright.

Symbolism? You bet. Vicki is not the untouched, young maiden upon whom we all pin our hopes, but she is a pivotal person in the film, a contrast to the darkness that surrounds her.

Batman doesn't prevent crimes. Not once did he actually interrupt a crime except to rescue Vicki Vale. Instead, he beats the crap out of people who commits those crimes. The film might have been better served had Batman actually stopped a crime.

Why kill the Joker at the end? He could have been used for another movie. In a conversation with Brian Earl Brown, we talked about this and decided that the Joker had to die for cathartic reasons. Someone who is killing on that scale for no apparent reason other than whim needs to die. Our minds scream for that release, that punishment of such senseless killing. By destroying the Joker, we experience that catharsis.

The machines are wonderful. I want a Batmobile. A voice activated car would be nice.

All in all, a good film. Now bring on the next one.

THE ABYSS
The Novel and the Movie

by Orson Scott Card
from a screenplay by James Cameron
Pocketbooks, 1989, $4.50

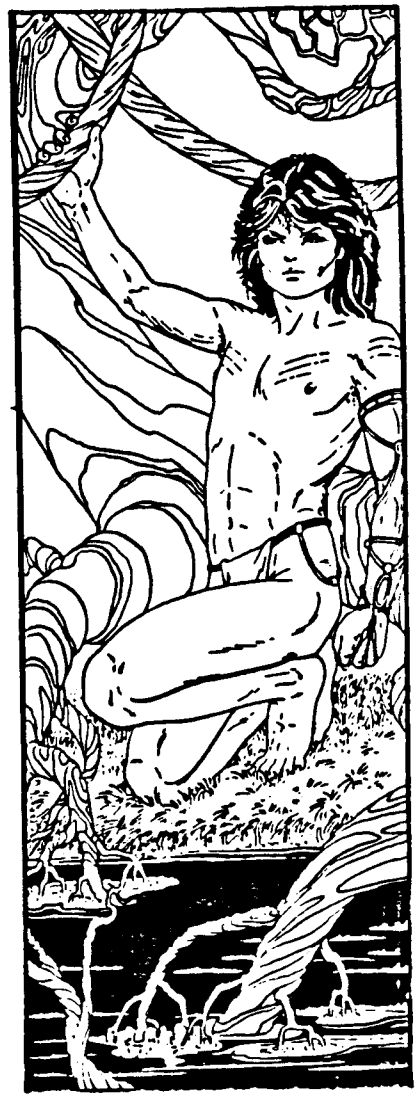
The film, in the words of David Stein, is 7/8 of a perfect movie, and 1/8 okay. The ending had problems, apparently because the budget was cut. But everything until then was enchanting. The 140 minute film kept me at the edge of my seat the whole time. I had a some questions about the depths that Bud Brigman had to go, Lindsey's immediate leap to the conclusion that the creatures were extra-terrestrial, and of course about the final scenes, but all-in-all I was able to suspend my disbelief in those cases without trouble.

Let's look at it this way. If I'm ready to pay full price to see it again, or the high prices to pick up the video as soon as it's released, I must have liked it.

A deep-sea underwater drilling rig is comandeered by the Navy to rescue the survivors of a sub that went down in the Caymon trench in the Gulf of Mexico near Cuba. Something downed the sub; the Navy thinks the Russians did it. Bud Brigman and his crew, Lindsey Brigman (Bud's soon-to-be-ex wife) and a group of four Navy SEALS head for the sub in 2100 feet of water, and encounter something that is definitely not made in the U. S. of A. To compound the situation, half of the Atlantic US fleet is in the area, Russian ships are closing in, and so is hurricane Frederick. The result is a compounding of complications that have the crew and extras of the Deepcore struggling for their lives, and the SEALS determined to carry out their orders regardless of what they have to do to the civilians to do so.

Card not only worked up his novel from the screenplay, but worked with the actors, with John Cameron, with the actual film that was to be released. He turned in the manuscript almost four months late, after the last bit of film had been edited, and he had the writing corresponding as close to the film as possible. Yet there is so much more in the book -- the background of the main characters, the history that motivates them to act as they do. Whether you see the film first, or read the novelization beforehand, each compliments the other. All the dialogue is there. All the description in the book is there, but conveyed through the acting.

I think The Abyss is one of the best pieces of SF film this decade, and that's saying a lot (considering Alien, Aliens and Predator were released in the last ten years). This will definitely be at the top of my Hugo nominations.



Book Reviews by *Laura Todd*

WAY OF THE PILGRIM

by Gordon R. Dickson
Ace, 1987, $4.50

I'm not familiar with Dickson's other works, so I'll have to review this on its own merits. Here Earth is under the domination of the Aalaag, a 9-foot tall race of warrior aliens. (Picture a cross between Klingons and Vulcans.) These folks conquer other races for a living, and view their subjects as beasts and cattle. Granted, they're not sadistic monsters; they'd never harm a human for no logical reason. The Aalaag think they've done Earth a favor by eliminating dirt, disorder, crime and unfit humans. And by "equalizing" the Earthlings' living standards (slightly above subsistence).

The linguist Shane Evert works for the Aalaag as a translator. As such he learns much about their values and behavior that no one else knows. Shane, a loner all his life, plays up to his alien master in order to survive. Survival is his only interest --until one day when he witnesses an Aalaag execution. A small fitness of madness overtakes him and he scrawls a furtive symbol on a wall. Then he gets drunk and whispers to the bartender an invented tale of "the Pilgrim," who wanders at will and whom the Aalaag cannot touch.

The story, and the symbol, get away from him. Within a few months the symbol is appearing in cities all over the world. Shane is soon confronted by members of the Resistance, who believe he is the one who will liberate Earth. He dares not dissuade them. Soon, in the interest of self-preservation, he is drawn into their cause. He carries out daring schemes--and at the same time he continues to serve his alien master, playing one side against the other in a bid to gain security for himself and the woman he loves.

Eventually, of course, Shane begins to care about the human beings who have put their faith in him. He comes to believe in the Pilgrim as a collective manifestation of humanity's refusal to be enslaved. He believes that the Aalaag, when confronted with such a manifestation, will logically conclude that humans make unfit cattle and will leave the planet.

A pretty ambitious plot. Does it work? Partially. I was fascinated with the portrayal of Shane's inner turmoil; his transformation from a cynical, self-centered man to a caring human being. Yet I had trouble believing some of it. Most of all I

didn't buy that someone as hard-headed as Shane would begin believing in a semi-mystical concept two third of the way through the book.

I was impressed by the author's attention to the aliens' language and speech patterns. By the way the aliens converse with themselves and with their "cattle," one gets a clear picture of their outlook and culture. However, there are a lot of passages that would benefit from the blue-pencil treatment. Too much space is taken up by the aliens' conversations with each other and with Shane, their favored "beast." This gets pretty slow. The Aalaag never say anything briefly, and when Shane talks to them, he has to use a special servile third-person-passive mode. Needless to say, the Aalaag never heard of humor. (Humor seems to be in short supply among world-conquering aliens in general. Wonder why they are all such dull, poker-faced guys? Maybe writers figure that a sense of humor is incompatible with the aggression needed to conquer worlds?)

The story does get better as it progresses. By the end, I had trouble putting it down. Since the Aalaag are centuries ahead of Earth militarily, Shane vows to defeat them without violence--by appealing to their logic and their own deepest beliefs. Does it work? Would it work in reality? Hmm... Nonviolence is a concept that seems to be hard to pull off in SF--but it's one of those things I want very much to believe in, so I am willing to try harder to suspend disbelief. To me it's always commendable when a writer avoids the usual "blast 'em to smithereens" climax. I didn't buy the conclusion one hundred percent, but I found it worth the trip.

PENNTERRA

by Judith Moffett
Worldwide (Davis Publications), 1988, $17.95

In much of the SF canon, the universe is full of planets ripe for the taking. But not this time. The planet called Pennterra will not allow itself to be exploited by human colonists. This is the message brought by the native hrossa to the group of Quakers who have come to settle there. No machines, no expansion, no "progress," and certainly no population growth. The colonists, whose religion teaches humility, have learned to live with these limitations. And then along comes a new group of settlers, known as the Sixers, from desperate and depleted Earth.

These newcomers are not about to take orders from a bunch of neolithic "natives." They proceed to tear up the land and build their high-tech colony. So the hrossa bring the message to the newcomers: the planet will not allow you to transgress its rules. "If you do, you will be destroyed."

Some of the Sixers dismiss this vague threat as mumbo-jumbo while others prepare for war. Eventually the role of mediator falls upon Quaker colonist George Quinlan, who shares an unusual rapport with one of the hrossa. He and a group of researchers spend a season among these highly empathic beings, learning to communicate with them and to understand the nature of their threat. Do the hrossa plan violence? No; they are incapable of that. In fact, after observing the hrossa and their natural surroundings, George and his teammates arrive at some strange conclusions. The rules of evolution, "survival of the fittest," don't seem to apply. Cooperation, not competition, marks every aspect of Pennterran ecology. Even predator and prey cooperate. The hrossa speak of the planet as a sentient being. Is it possible they are right?

The section detailing George's research provides one of the most fascinating studies in xenobiology I've ever read. Pennterra seems to be an enchantingly Edenic world, reminiscent of C.S. Lewis' Perelandra (to which this book makes reference). Yet this world is portrayed with such a logic one could almost believe it would work.

And what of the Sixers, with their pathetic but all too human wish to expand, to live as "normal" humans, masters of their own destiny? And what of George's son Danny, an adolescent caught between the two cultures and exposed to the joyous mayhem of hross breeding season? The reactions of the characters to alien mores are hilarious and instructive. And the promised destruction, when it does come, is manifested in a way that is both unexpected and chillingly logical.

This book has a lot to say about human sexuality, about nonviolence, about our relationships with nonhuman life forms. It's logical, thought-provoking, and reasonable. It's not at all like, say, LeGuin's Word for World is Forest, with its utterly evil human colonists. Everyone, including the Sixers, are threedimensional and fully human.

In addition to being an escellent book, Pennterra has appeared ar just the right time. It fits perfectly with our current environmental concerns, and with the "Gaia" concept of Earth as a living organism. I hope a lot of people read this book because I happen to agree with its message. In fact, I am probably prejudiced, but I think it ought to win an award or two.

WALKABOUT WOMAN

by Michaela Roessner
Bantam, 1988, $3.95

The Dreamtime: perhaps it is the collective unconscious of the Australian Aborigines. Or perhaps it is the real dwelling place of the spirits of rocks, animals, vegetation and the Land itself. Or an alternate world, superimposed upon this one?

Perhaps all three. Whatever it is, this powerful and unique book gives us an inkling of how it would feel to be intimately connected with such a world.

Raba, a young Aborigine girl, is raised by her aunt to be a healer and to learn her people's magic. Even as Raba attends missionary school, she also gathers herbs with her aunt and learns how to detach her awareness and go dream-walking. She becomes far more adept at magic than the Clever Elders who rule the tribe. She also becomes horribly entangled in conflicting taboos, goes mad, and is forced to take refuge among the "white-fellas." She then turns her back on her past, goes to a university and becomes a professor of European history. For years she denies all connection to the Dreamtime--but eventually her magical talents reassert themselves and the Dreamtime calls her back.

Parts of this book may be rough going for the logical, linear Western mind. There are many passages describing astral journeys and Aboriginal magic, and in some places I had a hard time differentiating which was which. What was "real" in the story, as opposed to visionary and symbolic passages? In a few places, the narrative and the plot seemed to get lost. For instance, the book skips over the years in which Raba gets her doctorate and becomes part of the white world. Whatever culture shock and emotional struggles may have occurred during that time, they are left disappointingly offstage.

But aside from these faults, Walkabout Woman is well worth reading. It stands out far above most books labeled "fantasy." There's not one tired cliche, and the characters come across as real people, not idealized "primitives." Raba's experiences in both the "waking world" and in the spirit-realm are depicted with breathtaking imagery. Raba herself is an intriguing character, one whose abilities set her apart both from the white world and from her own people. There may be other books stronger in the "logical plotting" department, but for those who want a phantasmagoric reading experience, this is one book not to miss.

A Dirt-Encrusted Gem:
GARBAGE WORLD

by Charles Platt
Ace, 1967, $.075

I'd like a few moments of your attention while I talk about a book you won't find on the current shelves. You definitely won't find it in anyone;s list of Golden Classics. Only if you frequent dusty Book Swaps might you encounter this dirt-encrusted gem. This book is unmitigated trash. Literally. So why am I writing about it? Because it's so perverse, so far from the established conventions, that it should be recognized for the high camp it is.

For starters, take the setting: the asteroid called Kopra (get it?), which the neighboring "pleasure asteroids" have been using for a dumping ground. The place is covered about 10 feet deep in solid garbage. The slovenly, unwashed inhabitants (all 200 or so of them) live by scrounging in the stinking much for usable materials. A man's standing in the community is measured by the size of his trash hoard. These are not your typical SF heroes!

And take their headman, Isaac Gaylord. He's a big, loudmouthed slob who likes to throw drunken parties for the villagers. His worst day was when his backstabbing son tries to get in good with the offworlders by tidying up the place and planting flowers. Stomp! Crash! Watch Gaylord trample them to bits. Sort of reminds me of Oscar the Grouch, that lovable green trashcan-dweller on Sesame Street. Yet, when the chips are down, ol' Gaylord always manages to find just the right item in his hoard to save the day.

Above all, the Koprans despise the "lily-white, clean-living, offworld scum" from the neighboring worlds, who can't stand to live with their own garbage. The Koprans apparently glory in squelching through the much and breathing the fetid air. Yet they resent the fact that they are exploited, despised and forced to live on rich men's garbage.

Anyway, into this prostine setting comes a ship from the Interstellar Command with the order to temporarily evacuate the planet. The gravity generator needs repairs,says the fastidious Commader Larkin. This guy is the spotless antithesis of the Koprans. Just having to set foot on Kopra gives him the horrors.

The main protagonist, Oliver Roach, is Larkin's junior officer. His function is to observe and record. In the tradition of all "anthropoligist goes native" stories, he ends up doing more than recording. In this case the native who interests him most is Juliette, Gaylord's daughter. She "could be attractive, under the grime and filth."

Of course the relationship can never work. Not until Oliver sheds his fear of dirt and learns to wallow in it. "Deep down, you want to," says Gaylord. And in the end, of course, Oliver does...after Commander Larkin does a dirty deed (no pun intended) which leaves our protagonist stranded on a mud lake. And sure enough, it turns out Larkin was lying about the gravity generator. He actually means to blow up the planet. Yep, it's the clean folks in spotless suits who are the real slimeballs here. It seems the neighboring worlds can't stand the idea of a garbage asteroid floating about in their midst and they'd like to arrange things in a more sanitary way. The Koprans? They'll be mindwiped. Don't worry about their rights. "Anyone who

loves dirt that much is sick...not human," says Larkin. (Sorry I gave the story away, for all you folks who were planning to rush out and buy this book.)

Seriously, though, does all this ring any bells? Are you starting to see any similarities with our own culture, with its disinfected, deodorized bathroom...and its fetid streams and overflowing landfills? I did. I think this is a remarkably prescient little book. It accurately foreshadowed the present environmental crises brought about by our failure to face up to our own messes.

Okay, so Garbage World is not Great Literature. The writing is pulp-competent, that's all. Nevertheless, we need books like this which take our deepest prejudices and stand them on their heads. I'm reminded of another real "stinker," Brian Aldiss' The Dark Light Years. This features a race of aliens who believe in wallowing in their dung as a religious sacrament. As a result, Earth explorers ignore all evidence of their sapience and dismiss them as hogs," when all along the "hogs" behave a lot more rationally than the clean-living humans!

Moral: Sometimes you can learn an awful lot from garbage.

Tape & Book Reviews by *Dennis K Fischer*

IRON MAN

by Pete Townshend
Atlantic Records, 1989, $11.95

Pete Townshend has been for years the creative force behind the rock band The Who and has composed two of what I think are the 10 best rock albums of all time (Who's Next for The Who and Empty Glass, an impressive solo album). He has tried to expand the horizons of rock music, labeling his last studio album White City: A Novel, though it failed in the ambitions of its subtitle. He created the first rock opera, Tommy, and composed an equally impressive follow-up, Quadrophenia (about a mod who felt himself split into four personalities, each represented by a member of The Who). So clearly the man has some impressive credentials.

Sad to say, Iron Man, a new Townshend musical, is a disappointment. Based on a children's book by Ted Hughes (which I have not read), it tells a disjointed tale involving a self-reassembling robot, talking animals, townsfolk and farmers, and a beautiful but highly destructive dragon from outer space.

Townshend sings the fole of Hogarth, the 10 year old boy who is telling the story. A character called Vixen (Deborah Conway) acts as his conscience, urging him to be brave, upright and quick-thinking. The Who's lead singer Roger Daltry plays Hogarth's father, though at one point seems to portray the space dragon which is otherwise played by Nina Simone. Ace bluesman John Lee Hooker plyas the Iron Man, a robot programmed to "destroy any machinery or system that ultimately threatens man."

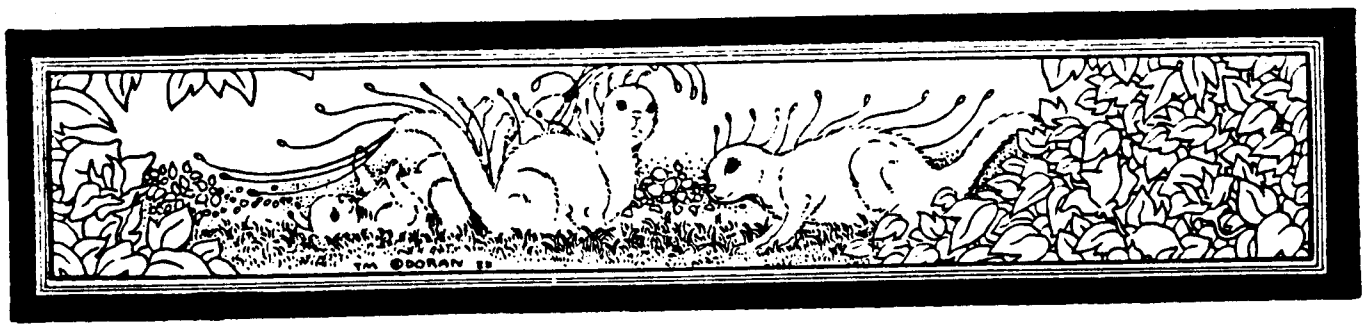
Instead of the typical solo rock album, there is a connected story to the numbers and a number of different singers. The music is not bad and there are some good numbers-- "I Won't Run Any More" and "A Friend Is a Friend" are two Townshend anthems that proclaim their intentions with their titles and are catchy; after breaking up a half a decade ago, The Who get to rock again on "Dig," in which Hogarth's father exhorts the other farmers to dig a trap for the Iron Man; and Hooker is delightful singing "I Eat Heavy Metal."

However, although Townshend produced the hit version of "Fire" for The Crazy World of Arthur Brown in the 60s, The Who's rendition of it on this album is lamely arranged and fails to even approximate the power of the original (admittedly Brown's best song and only hit).

The song "All Shall Be Well" warns that "right under your nose/A revolution grows" and is used to lead into the ironic "Was there Life," in which Hogarth sees in a star rushing to Earth the face of a beautiful girl and falls instantly in love with her only for him to discover that his beloved is the massively destructive space dragon (by now you should be aware of the heavy-handed symbolism in which the space dragon represents an uncontrollable force capable of consuming everything), leading finally to his disillusioned song "A Fool Says," in which he feels ridiculous for having professed love for this awful creature/technology.

The playing throughout is professional and competent in the best modern manner, but Townshend isn't being especially interesting or daring. He's not really taking any chances and many of the songs are designed to support the narrative rather than be interesting tunes in and of themselves, an approach he did not take with Tommy or Quadrophenia.

Townshend's major piece of science fiction still remains the unfinished Lifehouse project, portions of which comprise the Who's Next album, about a future where music is outlawed and each individual has his/her own vibration. Townshend realized he was no Ray Bradbury, but at his best, he's one of the top and most enduring rockers in the business. Iron Man simply showcases him on low flame.



WAYS IN WHICH THE WORLD ENDS

An essay by Dennis K. Fischer

LUCIFER'S HAMMER

by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle
DelRey, 1980, $3.95

SWAN SONG

by Robert R. McCammon
Pocket Books, 1988, $4.95

THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS

by James Morrow
Ace, 1988, $3.95

Not too long ago former JPL engineer and longtime science fiction fan Dan Alderson died because of complications due to diabetes, a condition that had rendered Dan blind and which he failed to control. Those who have read Mote in God's Eye are aware that Alderson contributed the concept of the Alderson drive to the book. He was also the basis for the character of Dan Forrester in Niven and Pournelle's Lucifer's Hammer, and his passing prompted me to go back and look at the book.

There is still much impressive about this massive collaboration. For those unfamiliar with it, it chronicles what would happen between the time a comet is sighted that ends up smashing into Earth and for a period afterward. The scope is large, encompassing a larger number of characters, many of them Tuckerized local science fiction fans, but the setting concentrates on the Southern California area which the authors know well.

Niven, I would guess, drew the characterization of Tim Hamner, the amateur astronomer who initially sights the approaching apocalyptic comet, on himself, while the character of Barry Price, the supervising engineer of the San Juaquin Nuclear project, is clearly patterned after Pournelle, though Price proves to be a minor character in the action of the novel.

Through multiple viewpoints the authors describe the growing anxiety that builds while experts are assuring everyone that the comet will definitely not hit Earth. There seems to be an attitude of barely veiled contempt at the foolishness of people and politicians not to come to grips with the possibility and to prepare just in case. These viewpoints bring together various social strata, physical locations, personality types (for example, one sociopath is set off because he becomes convinced that with the world ending, he has nothing to fear from jail as it will all be over soon anyway; a religious leader based on Herbert W. Armstrong whips his followers up into a frenzy over the coming last days and God's supposed wrath). Niven and Pournelle do a good job of keeping these characters distinct so that you remember who is who as the story switches from one group to another. Eventually, everything is tied together when everyone heads for Senator Arthur Clay Jellison's ranch in an area above the flood waters brought on by the tremendous earthquake and tidal upheavals that the impact of the comet creates.

There is no doubt that Niven and Pournelle know their physics and use it well. They also have some insights that appear to me quite credible about how some people react and might think in such a situation.

There are other things in the book, however, that I have a few problems with. One is the authors' attitude that once civilization ends after the comet hits, women's lib is over. While they do have strong female characters, particularly Maureen Jellison, the senator's daughter, it is taken for granted that all women will immediately look to men for support and protection and will recognize once and for all that it's a man's world and that feminism is simply a civilized luxury.

Jerry Pournelle fought in the Korean War and has tremendous respect for the military establishment, but that still does not convince me that after civilization ends, those few who are not following whacked-out messiahs or are members of roving bands of brigands will automatically look to and trust politicians and the military to organize them and save their lives. Haven't the events of the past few decades made us too suspicious for that kind of simplistic trust, or at least kept people from being single-minded about it?

One of the propaganda aspects of the book is that in addition to wanting to entertain, Pournelle wanted to propose that nuclear energy plants are so well built that they would survive a tremendous disaster such as occurs in the book, and lo and behold, one does. Perhaps he's right--he knows a hell of a lot more engineering that I do. But the authors dismiss public fervor against nuclear power plants as unthinking fear and never directly address some of the serious questions that people have about this energy source that they are promoting (such as where they can safely store the highly toxic waste, dangerous for up to centuries afterward). They don't even bother considering the effects created of a plant that doesn't survive the devastation.

Of course, this has been a trend in their works, which has its most ludicrous stacking of the deck in Footfall where a confirmed environmentalist changes his mind 180 degrees on the subject of power plants when he learns that they can be useful in fighting invading aliens. If that's the most convincing argument they can come up with, then they are really reaching. People fanatically devoted to a particular viewpoint don't give up their convictions that easily.

Also dating the book, it seems to show contempt for environmentalists, especially those concerned with preserving the ozone layer. Now that the scientific community acknowledges that ozone hole to be real and a genuine health hazard, the authors' smugness in dismissing it seems foolish.

However, Niven and Pournelle have given some serious thought to what would happen if the social order was dismantled and the slow process by which it could be brought back, as well as how human nature could contribute or detract from the final goal of rebuilding a broken world. You may quibble with the authors on some points, but it is an enjoyable yarn and makes good reading. I particularly likes the depiction of how Dan Forrester has the foresight to seal up the tomes needed to provide knowledge and resurrect civilization and store them inside multiple plastic bags deposited in a cesspool for safety. The mildmannered but clear-thinking astrophysicist truly is crucial in saving the day, and it is a loving tribute to the man who inspired his portrayal.

Robert McCammon has primarily been known as a contender to challenge Stephen King for his throne as the King of Horror Writers. McCammon's book They Thirst was an apocalyptic vision of a plague of vampires descending upon Los Angeles told through multiple viewpoints. While the book did have some truly powerful moments, McCammon tries to keep too many unconnected stories in the air and it was easy to lose track and interest in some of his characters.

Now he returns some years later with a new, semi-science fictional apocalyptic novel and shows himself in much better form. Swan Song is an after-the-bomb story that should appeal even to non-horror fans, as it is mostly a fairly realistic look at how people in the U.S. would cope, or fail to cope, following nuclear devastation. However, McCammon can't resist injecting some horror and fantasy elements to tie his tale together, so there is also a Satanic embodiment of evil, capable of assuming any face of physique it desires and a magic tiara with jewels that works minor magic and leads one set of characters to another.

The book is long (956 pages) and broad of scope, but it primarily breaks down into three stories, which is a good thing. The first of these stories is that of a bag lady, who calls herself Sister because she's forgotten her own name, who discovers the magic tiara in the aftermath and has been shocked back into a semblance of humanity from her trance-like and depraved state.

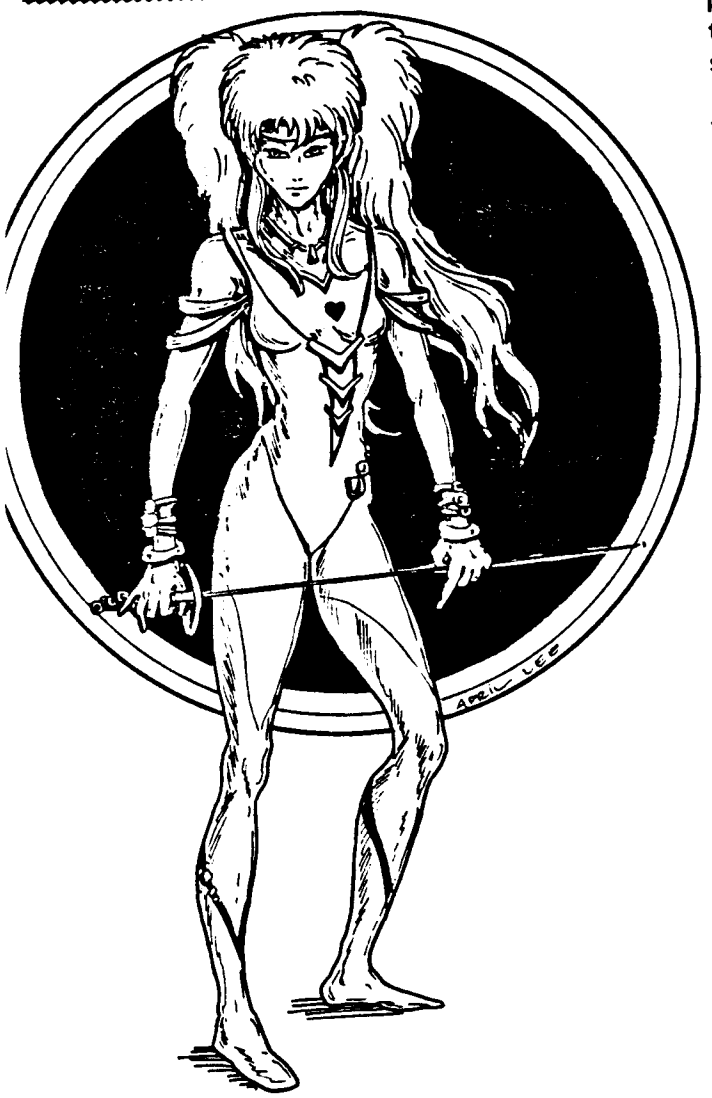
The second story is that of Josh and Swan. Josh is a black wrestler who takes on the responsibility of taking care of a little girl names Swan, who happens to have the green thumb to end all green thumbs, and is therefore very special, when Swan's mother dies after the nuclear holocaust.

THe last is the story of Roland Croninger and Colonel Macklin. Roland is a computer nerd who gets off on a computer D&D-like game who changes into a perversion of the concept of the hero/soldier/warrior under the tutelage of Colonel Macklin, who is responding to his own personal demons. Roland is a personality type who has an obsessive need to serve somebody and is ruthless about doing it, which inevitably ends up creating more misery in a world that has had a surfeit of it.

Roland and Macklin survive because Macklin has set up a time-share holocast system whereby people vacation for two-week stints in a reinforced bunker under a mountain (the idea apparently being that people will buy into it hoping that if they are "lucky," nuclear devastation will just happen to occur during their two weeks). However, this pseudo-military operation proves to have been substandardly built and largely collapses, killing almost all the occupants immediately, and Colonel Macklin loses a hand in the process. Roland's first test of manhood comes when he is drafted to severe that hand from the colonel's arm.

McCammon obviously has a very anti-military attitude and is particularly biting in his depiction of the senseless suffering that Roland and Nacklin later inflict as they kill of enlist everyone they come across into a growing army which Macklin hopes will rule the devastated continent. McCammon is canny enough, however, to provide them with motivations as to why they would think this is a good idea and how they are slowly able to achieve great success.

The novel covers quite a span of time, Swan



slowly growing to womannood as the book progresses. Unfortunately, the key to Swan's importance is planted quite early on, much like Taylor Caldwell's inane SF novel The Devil's Advocate so that it seems a bit thick of her not to recognize her special power before she does.

Still, the book is quite interesting and does have some powerfully written scenes. My favorite part of the novel is when the characters begin to come together at the town of Mary's Rest. Mary's Rest represents a not very thriving community where there is no hope and no cooperation, a doomed area just holding on this side of extinction. With Swan's arrival, she proves a catalyst to change--changing the attitudes of the community so that it works together and becomes stronger by having individuals help each other and share their burdens in common.

I don't want to give too much away, but McCammon makes a powerful parable out of it, at once inspirational and emotionally crushing. Overall, this is a fine piece of work, but I think I might have liked it a bit better if McCammon had eschewed the use of fantasy elements and stuck to his gritty and powerful realism, though I don't begrudge any of the sweet moments of hope and renewal that he sprinkles throughout this downbeat tale.

One of the heavy-handed aspects of Swan Song is that there is a terrible disease that randomly covers some individuals' faces, making them particular targets for prejudice and persecution, but when the disease runs its course, those person's true inner nature is revealed (i.e., good people become more beautiful and bad people are horrendously disfigured). In James Morrow's This Is the Way the World Ends, Morrow concerns himself a lot with people's true and inner nature.

Specifically, this novel is about what are the attitudes that brought about the world's destruction. Morrow's conceit is that after the world is destroyed, a handful of representative survivors are rounded up and put on trial by the dead for causing the end of humanity, a sort of science fictional J'Accuse.

I was attracted to the book by a friend's recommendation and by the cover blurb by Arthur C. Clarke saying, "The only book in the last ten years that I've read twice...a remarkable achievement."

Morrow uses the strange device of having the novel be a story being told by that infamous seer and charlatan Michel de Nostredame or Nostradamus in 1554. The prophet tells the story to explain the way the world will actually end.

The main character is George Paxton, a substitute Everyman (this is obviously a morality play) with a wife and children. George becomes convinced that even though they are very expensive, he must buy a Self-Contained Post Attack Survival suit, or scopas suit, to assure the continued happiness and safety of his daughter whom he loves very much.

Morrow makes the point that when everyone's energies are turned toward finding a way to survive a nuclear attack, not too many people are really going to be spending the time and energy needed to prevent a nuclear holocaust. Civilization has taken on a deluded, it-can't-happen-to-me, attitude which proves ultimately disastrous. (After all, how many people do you know who are actively doing something about this very real problem--most people throw up their hands, consider it beyond them, and do nothing.)

In preparing for a nuclear attack but not really expecting one, the scopas suit manufacturers are creating a product that they don't expect will be put to the test. When it is, the results are disastrous as the suits are not up to specifications, do not provide ample protection, and the people wearing them die, perhaps a little slower than the people who weren't wearing theirs at the time, but nevertheless they die.

Except mysterious George Paxton, who gets picked up by a submarine with other survivors where they are put on trial. George has two important ideas to

communicate about mankind--that it was better than it knew, and that it never had a chance to find out what it was doing here. Mankind's death is ultimately unnecessary and premature.

Morrow does stack the deck by this very presentation, but what he also does is show the people responsible for the policies in a satirical but sympathetic light. Through the trial, each one is represented as well-intentioned and truly believing that he was doing the right thing, that his thinking was sound, even if it led to disaster. George is put on trial not for what he did, but for what he didn't do to prevent it, plus a magical contract he signed when he received a very special, working scopas suit that acknowledged his complicity in the nuclear arms race.

Certainly such political shenanigans as arms reduction talks that merely trash obsolete weaponry to be replaced by newly developed systems and technology are ripe targets for satire, as is thinking you can assure world peace by making any potential aggressor think you are insane enough to destroy the whole world at a moment's notice if things don't go your way. The concepts of maintaining a posturing of superiority and an ambiguity to leave "victory" in doubt are appropriately skewered.

However, while the concepts of what makes a nuclear defense are built up and torn down, the book reaches its best moment at its most fundamentally human. Paxton is granted a temporary reprieve from misery by having his daughter returned to him for a short period of time. In this brief section, Morrow outlines just what it is that mankind will lose, and in a very personal and direct fashion. As Paxton moves from joy to heartbreak, he realizes this and it makes for a passage that is at once moving and masterful.

This is a book for thinking people and it is at times dry in spots. Some of the satire has the unfortunate broadness and simplicity of the Pohl and Kornbluth collaborations of the 50s, but Morrow's critical barbs do find many apt targets. To anyone who has done any thinking or has any concerns about this topic, Morrow's book makes interesting and engaging reading. As such, this is an important work of science fiction and I commend it to your attention.

Book Reviews by *Evelyn C Leeper*

I'LL CRY WHEN I KILL YOU

by Peter Israel
Mysterious Press, 1988, $3.95

Raul Bashard is a thoroughly obnoxious science fiction author who thinks someone is trying to kill him. He's right. Set in the super-charged world of science fiction publishing and fandom.... Ooops, I got carried away there.

Anthony Boucher was the first to set a mystery in the science fiction world (Rocket to the Morgue). Others followed, most recently Sharyn McCrumb with Bimbos of the Death Sun. But where McCrumb concentrates on the wackier side (fans), Israel looks at the business end--buying, selling, competition. McCrumb's characters are caricatures, which is fine for her book, which is basically a light comedy. McCrumb's book could not have changed setting successfully; Israel's book could and is of wider appeal because of this. Even non-science-fiction people can appreciate it.

In any book like this, people try to match characters to real-life people. It seems inevitable that Bashard will be read as being Isaac Asimov--he resembles him in many ways and, of the major science fiction authors today, Asimov is the only one not mentioned separately in the book. Yet Bashard has several traits so negative that one almost feels Asimov should sue for defamation of character.

In summary, I'll Cry When I Kill You is a well-written mystery with a background and characters that make it of particular interest to science fiction readers.

THE COMIC BOOK KILLER

by Richard Lupoff
Bantam, 1989, $3.95

If I'll Cry When I Kill You is a mystery for science fiction fans, The Comic Book Killer is for comic book fans. I don't mean fans of the "graphic novel," that art form that strives for "respectability" (whatever that is), but comic books, complete with superheroes, letter, and tacky ads. (Who can forget the marvelous X-ray glasses?)

Hobart Lindsey, insurance adjuster, is called in when a quarter of a million dollars worth of comics is stolen--not as difficult as he first thinks, as only thirty-five items are involved. Soon robbery

turns to murder and Lindsey is more involved than he suspects. His involvement is one of the weaknesses of the book--there's some pretty heavy duty coincidences going on here. Another weakness is Lindsey's somewhat inconsistent social philosophy; one moment he's a raging reactionary, the next a social liberal. It doesn't quite wash.

Since Lupoff is a comic book expert, I'll assume the research was accurate and the book true to reality in that area. As such, it seems a reasonable introduction to the field for outsiders such as myself. And because of this I'm willing to overlook its faults, including the total implausibility of the motivation for the robbery and killings. Given that this is Lupoff's first mystery, one is permitted to make allowances.

I am curious what knowledgeable comic book fans think of this book. Any comments, anyone?)

FULL SPECTRUM

Edited by Lou Aronica and Shawna McCarthy
Bantam Spectra, 1988, $4.95

This is certainly the most talked about anthology of 1988, and of quite a while before that. It contains one Nebula winner and three Hugo nominees, so it will obviously be a best-seller (as anthologies go). Yet I was less that entirely satisfied with it.

First, the good points. There were several good-to-excellent stories, including Jack McDevitt's "The Fort Moxie Branch" (with the now-famous typo of labelling it "The Fourth Moxie Branch"), Thomas M. Disch's "Voices of the Kill," Walton Simons's "Ghost Ship" (yet another **Titanic** story, but a more evocative one than most), Lisa Goldstein's "My Year with the Aliens" (though it was somewhat predictable), and Pat Murphy's "Dead Men on TV."

There were the usual set of mid-range (average) stories. Jack Massa's "Prayerware" is of interest to computer types, but not outstanding. Nancy Kress's "Phillipa's Hands" and Charles Oberndorf's "Mannequins" reminded me of a Twilight Zone story (or maybe a Tales from the Darkside; at any rate, a television anthology type of story -- this seems to be true of a lot of stories these days). Elissa Malcohn's "Moments of Clarity" was an interesting idea, but nowhere hear the bombshell that the editors claimed. Most of the other stories I don't mention here are okay -- nothing great, but worth a read.

Countering this are such disappointments as Andrew Weiner's "This Is the Year Zero." Whether intentionally or not, this is basically that story of the Pol Pot takeover in Kampuchea presented as science fiction. Rewriting a historical event as science fiction rarely results in good science fiction, no matter how tragic the event. Lewis Shiner's "Oz" is of no value that I can determine. (Fred Bals's "Once in a Lullaby" was equally bizarre, but at least he the virtue of charm.)

Gregory Benford's "Proselytes" strikes me as racist, and while I know it's a mistake to try to assign a character's beliefs or words to the author, it seems to me that Benford must take at least some of the blame for identifying all of Islam with its more violent proponents. This is particularly disturbing in that it promotes the currently popular view that Islam is a religion of violence and all its adherents want to convert the world by the sword. As the current joke goes, the Ayatollah has decided to deal with Salman Rushdie in a more Christian manner, and is just looking for where he can put the stake without starting a fire in an oil well. People who live in glass houses....

Norman Spinrad's "Journals of the Plague Years" has been analyzed by far better reviewers than myself already, so I can merely concur with most of their criticisms. Bigelow, the main character, having found a cure/inoculation for the AIDS virus(es) which are sweeping the country (which he does in about a month working on his own, while whole teams of researchers working for years have found nothing), inoculates himself against the disease. This cure is designed to be transmitted in the same way as the disease. He then decides to protect his wife and son, but he concludes the only way to pass the protection to his wife is by raping her, and the reader is supposed to sympathize with how bad he feels about having to do this. To protect his son, he goes to even more baroque lengths -- he hires a prostitute to have sex with him and then a couple of days later, with his son.

Now first of all, the cure is transmitted in the same way as the disease. But the primary method of transmission of AIDS now is through infected blood (mostly between intravenous drug users). Even assuming some sudden needle shortage that Spinrad fails to mention, Bigelow should have been able to pass it through infected blood somehow. (It certainly seems to be transmissible enough that one session guarantees its passage.) Secondly, Spinrad seems determined to show us that a plague requires drastic means to contain it -- Bigelow is willing to rape his wife (he doesn't tell her he has the cure for reasons too flimsy to stand up) and this is "necessary." But Bigelow's (adult) son knows his father has the cure, so one would imagine Spinrad would have Bigelow use the same method, minus the force. But no, that would be incest and homosexuality, and even to save his son's life those are evil -- rape is okay, but homosexuality between consenting adults is not, according to Spinrad. I find this moral structure odd, and Spinrad doesn't convince me of its necessity. And without its necessity, the force of the novella is lost. By making his "unpleasant choices" too easy to refute, he de-

stroys the message he seems to intend -- that sometimes unpleasant choices are necessary.

On the whole, I almost have to recommend the book -- it contains many of the major stories of 1988. But it also contains some of the major disappointments.

GRAY VICTORY

by Robert Skimin
St. Martin's Press, 1989 (1988c) $4.95

This is half Civil War buff's novel masquerading as an alternate history novel, and half actual alternate history. That is to say, about two hundred pages are devoted to the alternate history aspect and about two hundred pages to an indepth analysis of the battle of Gettysburg, why it turned out the way it did, what might have made it different. Yes, in this alternate history, it is not Gettysburg that is the turning point that lets the South win the Civil War, but a change in a later event in history: David did not send Hood to defend Atlanta, but left Johnston there instead. So Atlanta held out, Lincoln was defeated in 1864, and the rest was alternate history.

This is being marketed as historical fiction ("An Epic Saga, A Passionate Struggle -- and a South That Hever Fell..."), so naturally there's a fair amount of sex and related shenanigans. All this leaves less time for the most interesting part of the book -- the plot to assassinate the Confederate leaders and bring about a slave uprising. Toward the end I found myself skimming (no pun on the author's name intended) the long descriptions of Gettysburg being given as evidence at the inquiry into possible incompetence or treason on the part of J.E.B. ("Jeb") Stuart, and concentrating on the uprising plot. This did keep me interested, with vivid characters and a well-maintained level of tension. Unlike Remember Gettysburg!, which in my opinion had nothing to offer a person who was not a Civil War buff, this novel would be of interest to the average science fiction reader. (Well, probably more to American science fiction readers than those in other parts of the world.) It's just a pity that there is so much battle detail, especially since I suspect the Civil War buffs will find the uprising part of little interest. Still, if Skimin can sell to two different audiences and keep both reasonably satisfied, he's much better off financially if not artistically.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, VOLUME 1:
ALTERNATE EMPIRES

by Gregory Benford & Martin H. Greenberg
Bantam Spectra, 1989, $4.50

This is the first of a projected series of alternate history short fiction. Most of the pieces seem to be new in this volume, though at least one ("We Could Do Worse") has previously appeared elsewhere. Benford in his introduction describes one of the constraints placed on authors for this volume: the alternate history must be the result of a failed event. Well, one man's success is another's failure; if the United States had won the Vietnam War, wouldn't that also be the failure of North Vietnam to defeat us? (Note: in discussing the stories, I will often be telling what the failed event was. For some of the stories this might be considered a spoiler,as the event is not disclosed until the end of the story. Reader, beware!)

Three stories deal with changes in the world's religious history. Poul Anderson's "In the House of Sorrows" postulates a world in which the Assyrians captures Jerusalem and the Diasporah occurred before Christianity had a chance to even get started. "To the Promised Land" by Robert Silverberg is the story of a second attempt at a Hebrew exodus from Egypt, the first having ended in disaster at the Red Sea three thousand years ago. (So wht does Silverberg have his first-person narrator talk about the holiday of Simchat Torah? And how did this error get past the editors?) Both Anderson and Silverberg draw civilizations that seem three-dimensional, that give the reader the feel of being somewhere where things are not quite the same. This (to me at least) is one of the major jobs of an alternate history story and whether I like or dislike one often stands as much on this "flavor" as on whether the world is a reasonable extrapolation of the changed event.

"Bible Stories for Adults, No. 31: The Covenant" by James Morrow is another attempt in his series of "Bible Stories;" this one examines what might have happened if Moses couldn't have gotten a set of replacement tablets for the ones shattered over the Golden Calf. Rather than draw the alternate world, though, Morrow has a dialogue (admittedly interesting) between two computers, one of whom has reconstructed the tablets from the fragments, about how the Ten Commandments could be perverted. In other words, he spends his time describing our world. Interesting, as I said, but I find the implication that the world would be more moral without the Ten Commandments not very convincing, presented here more as an axiom than a conclusion from facts and reasoning.

Three deal with political changes. In "Counting Potsherds" by Harry Turtledove, the Persians de-

feated the Greeks and democracy never developed. Turtledove has done his research on the Near East (used also as the setting in his set of alternate history stories collected in Agent of Byzantium, though the latter is based on a change farther down the line), and the world here is as well-developed as those of Anderson and (in a different way) Silverberg. Benford's own "We Could Do Worse" is based on changes to the Presidential elections in the 1950s and set in that time period; "All Assassins" by Barry Malzberg is a fairly bland twist on the early 1960s, with its ending not much of a surprise at all, though it seemed to be intended as one. Neither gives one much feeling for the world the author draws, but then both are much shorter than other stories in this volume, so maybe I'm expecting too much.

The remainder are a mixed bag. "Remaking History" by Kim Stanley Robinson is a sort of "what if the rescue of the Iranian hostages had worked," but not up to the level of most of the other pieces here. (It's not clear what the "failed event" Benford required is in this case; I guess it's that the Iranians failed to stop the rescue.) "Leapfrog" by James P. Hogan is not, strictly speaking, an alternate history (so far as I can tell), but a tale of how our current history could have been manipulated into being, rather than an alternate history which would have arisen had events taken their "natural" course. In any case, it is mostly a polemic on how we are mishandling the space program, and while I sympathize with the opinions held, I'm beginning to tire of stories which exist only to beat the reader over the head with them.

George Alec Effinger's "Everything but Honor" is a combination of time travel and alternate history. A black American physicist in an America in which the Civil War ran quite differently decides to use his newly-built time machine to "fix things up" and improve the lot of his race. The results are, I fear, predictable. "Game Night at the Fox and Goose" by Karen Joy Fowler gives us a description of an alternate world in which the war of the sexes has developed differently. We never get to see this world; instead of alternate history by demonstration we get alternate history by explication. Someone from an alternate world tells someone in our world what it's like (another approach is to have two people in the alternate world ruminate about why the world is the way it is... "Oh, if only someone had shot Lincoln in 1865, he wouldn't have gotten brain fever in 1866 and signed that terrible Re-enslavement Act that led to the Second Civil War!") Note that this is not the same as characters speculating about what would have generated our world (such as the Morrow story), because we know what our world is like. It's more like the old space opera stories where the hero explains everything he's building to his girlfriend. I much prefer alternate history by demonstration (a la Anderson, Silverberg, and Turtledove).

"Waiting for the Olympians" by Frederik Pohl is another "Rome never fell" story, with the addition of some arriving aliens. Pohl's main character is a "sci-rom" (scientific romance) writer, who can't seem to grasp the concept of alternate histories when someone suggests that he write one. Cute, and the ending is supposed to be one of those the-reader-knows-something-the-characters-don't sorts of things, but while it was a reasonable way to wile away some time, it was basically only an average story.

The final story has a history behind it. Larry Niven was asked to contribute an alternate history story; he agreed as long as he could include Robert Heinlein as a character. "The Return of William Proxmire" was finished and Heinlein read it shortly before he died. It too (like the Effinger) combines time travel with alternate history. While having Heinlein as a character makes it of interest to science fiction folks, it falls into the same traps as the Hogan and Effinger stories: the Hogan in that it is preaching to the choir, the Effinger in that readers know by now that if someone goes back to change the past to improve it, things will go wrong (at least from that person's point of view). Frank Capra knew this back in 1947 in It's a Wonderful Life. Come to that, Robert Burns knew it in 1785 ("The best laid schemes o' mice and men/ Gang aft agley"), Ihara Saikaku about 1680 ("There is always something to upset the most careful of human calculations"), and Homer about 3000 years ago ("Zeus does not bring to accomplishment all the thoughts of men").

So the score is three good to excellent (the Anderson, Silverberg, and Turtledove); five so-so (the Morrow, Effinger, Hogan, Pohl, and Fowler); and four below average (the Benford, Malzberg, Robinson, and Niven). I notice that the three I liked are precisely those set in an Eastern empire world, and maybe this shows some sort of bias on my part. Then again, they're also the three longest in the book. In any event (an apt phrase when talking about alternate histories, I think), while the book has its low points, its high points make it more than worthwhile (I wouldn't be at all surprised to see any of them on next year's Hugo ballot), and I recommend it as well as look forward to the others in its series.

A STUDY IN SORCERY

by Michael Kurland
Ace, 1989, $3.50

This book continues Michael Kurland's continuation of Randall Garrett's Lord Darcy series. Garrett wrote Too Many Magicians, Lord Darcy Investi-

gates, and Murder and Magic, all set in a Britain where Richard I was not killed in the Crusades, the Plantagents still rule, and magic works (all technological advances are done through magic). After his death, Michael Kurland continued the series with Ten Little Wizards and now A Study in Sorcery. Darcy has always been patterned somewhat on Sherlock Holmes; this latest title merely emphasizes it. There is less of the historical explication in this novel than previously, probably because Kurland assumes that by now the people who are reading these know the alternate history and don't need it recounted to them. The mystery is fairly mundane; there's the usual court intrigue, and perhaps the series is starting to run down. A study in Sorcery is enjoyable enough for an evening's entertainment, but nothing new or original. If you haven't read the previous books in the series, don't start with this one; if you have, you'll know whether you'd enjoy this one anyway.

(One interesting thing to note is that the covers of the series have changed over the years. The first, at least in the edition I have, was strictly a modern--for the time--science fiction type cover; the second seemed to be a black magic cover, the third a Gothic romance cover. This one is a humorous cover with Victorian-costumed characters. What next?)

MEMORIES OF THE SPACE AGE

by J.G. Ballard
Arkham House, 1988 (1962-88c) $16.95

This is a collection of eight stories by Ballard set in and around Cape Canaveral in the post-Space Age. While Ballard writes wel, he is a better poet than a scientist (boy, there's an understatement!) and his attitude toward space travel and science in general is liable to turn off the readers who would be most attracted to a work of this description--those interested in space and space travel.

In "The Cage of Sand," for example, Ballard postulates that people become so worried about the amount of material being shot off into space that they start bringing sand back from Mars as ballast so that the Earth's gravity doesn't change. The sand, however, turns out tio contain bacteria which destroys all plant life they come in contact with, although they live in symbiosis with human intestinal bacteria. This is discovered when Florida is laid waste, and so Florida is quarantined, thus saving the rest of the Earth (and thus providing the setting for the story). Of course, all the tourists who acquired the bacteria in Florida and excreted it elsewhere are ignored. So, for that matter, is the fact that it is impossible to bring back enough material to make up for what is fired off, since the latter includes all the fuel. To bring back more requires firing off more fuel to do it. Assume you launch a 100 pound rocket which is 10 pounds payload, 60 pounds fuel to get to Mars, and 30 pounds fuel used to get back (and these are extremely optimistic figures). If you try to bring back 90 pounds in sand, you then need another 270 pounds of fuel to bring it back. But then you need to bring back another 270 pounds of sand, ... If we could ship as ballast as much sand as Ballard suggests, we'd have one hell of a space program.

But according to Ballard, we won't. Each story deals with its own disaster brought about by the space program. In one, those who travel ito space (and eventually others) become susceptible to fugue states, in which they blank out for hours at a time. In another, they become suspceptible to just the reverse--relative to them, everything else slows down. This, in fact, is one of the major faults in this collection: as a collection it lacks continuity. Each story contradicts the others. In "The Cage of Sand," there is Martian sand surrounding the Cape; in "The Dead Astronaut," there is no

Martian sand. In one it's fugue; in another it's time dilation. Sometimes it's one set of dead astronauts circling the globe, sometimes another. Ballard really likes the image of dead astronauts circling the globe in their capsules, especially when he can have them achieve flaming re-entries as needed for the plot--always landing at the Cape, or course. It's not clear how this is accomplished, though one story mentions radio beacons in passing. Right--the whole Cape is deserted and covered by sand, but the beacons still work.

There are a few stories that do not harp on the theme "there are some things man was not meant to tamper with." "A Question of Re-entry" is sort of your basic cargo-cult story. The final story, "The Man Who Walked on the Moon," is the most interesting, in that it doesn't try to slam the space program, but rather examines our need for heroes and myths and who will fill that need.

Now all this sounds very negative, and to a certain extent it is. But there is no denying that Ballard can write poetic and vivid prose (when not sabotaged by poor copy-editing that talks about "the siting [sic] of a satellite"). And I suppose it's reasonable that even pro-space advocates need to read the material of the opposition to be able to understand and counter it, though Ballard's total disregard for science or scientific law makes it difficult to discuss the issues raised logically. And the cover by Max Ernst and the interior illustrations by Jeffrey K. Potter are much better than a lot of the artwork one sees on and in books these days. (Potter's illustrations go particularly well with the stories they illustrate, indicating a real effort on his part and on the part of the publisher to produce a coherent piece.)

(While I was putting this review together, I serendipitously ran across the following quote from Algis Budrys, which sums up much of what is wrong with these stories and Ballard's stories in general:

> A story by J. G. Ballard, as you know, calls for people who don't think. One begins with characters who regard the physical universe as a mysterious and arbitrary place, and who would not dream of trying to understand its actual laws. Furthermore, in order to be the protagonist of a J. G. Ballard novel, or anything more than a minor character therein, you must have cut yourself off from the entire body of scientific education. In this way, when the world disaster--be it wind or water--comes upon you, you are under absolutely no obligation to do anything about it but sit and worship it. Even more furthur, some force has acted to remove from the face of the world all people who might impose good sense or rational behavior on you, so that the disaster proceeds unchecked and unopposed except by the most inevitable thumb-rule engineer type who for his individual comfort builds a huge pyramid (without huge footings) to resist high winds, or trains a herd of alligators and renegade divers to help him out in dealing with deep water.
>
> --Galaxy, December 1966

And that says it all.)

THE COMPLETE TIME TRAVELER

by Howard Blumenthal, Dorothy F. Curley, and Brad Williams
Ten Speed Press, 1988, $13.95

Micro-review: You absolutely must go out and read this book!

Have you finished it? Good, now I'll continue.

It was for books such as this, I believe, that the "Other Forms" Hugo Category was invented. Of course, the category is gone, so now The Complete Time Traveler sits on the shelf, fitting nowhere. Which is a pity, as this is certainly as deserving of a Hugo as many of the nominees who have the benefit of actually fitting into a category. It's not non-fiction (yet), though it's certainly presented as non-fiction. It's not a novel (though I suppose one could stretch and call it a novel written in the second person). So what is it?

This book is subtitled "A Tourist's Guide to the Fourth Dimension" and reads very much like the books on videocassette players that came out in great abundance in the early 1980s. It starts with a description of time and time travel, then goes on to describe the various devices (TTV devices, Chronovision, etc.), complete with brand names and consumer evaluations. It covers the various governmental rules regarding time travel, time travel basics ("Don't flick your Bic in medieval Europe."), and destinations. And it does all this from the perspective of 2038. Yes, everything about this book--even the copyright page and dust jacket--is done as if the book had been (will be?) produced in 2038. You want to know where to get appropriate clothing for 1902 New York? This book tells you. What happens if you try to wear a brassiere to Crete? This book tells you that also. (Time Customs and Immigration has a storeroom full of confiscated brassieres.)

I could go on and on, but that would spoil your enjoyment in reading this book yourself.

Of course, given my nit-picking temperament, it would be difficult for me to read a book such as this without wanting to pick nits. And though Blumenthal et al do an excellent job of avoiding 95% of the time travel paradoxes, they do make a couple of slips. THey claim, for example, that 36% of all

travelers have taken the "Cradle of Liberty" tour (or similar) which visits the major events of the American Revolution. Assuming a couple of million time travelers (a low estimate), that would be 720,000 people watching the Battles of Lexington and Concord. You'd think someone in 1775 would have noticed.

But, nits aside, this is an absolutely wonderful book, with its charm not only in its content, but in every aspect of its production. For science fiction fans, a must, of course, but also a must for those who love to read travel books. If your local bookstore is sold out of this volume, you should hop back a few months and pick it up then.

THE AQUILIAD, VOLUME III
Aquila and the Sphinx

by S. P. Somtow
DelRey, 1989, $3.95

Somtow Sucharitkul wrote an alternate history novel (actually a collection of novelettes) called The Aquiliad. Then he decided/discovered that people couldn't pronounce his name and started writing under the name S. P. Somtow. The second volume, The Aquiliad II: Aquila and the Iron Horse, was published under the new name. Now volume three has been published and in addition, the first volume has been reissued under the name S. P. Somtow as well.

The setting of volume three is the same as that of the first two. Nine hundred years after the Founding of Rome (or around 200 AD to those who follow the strange Christian religion), Rome rules the world--or most of it--including Novum Terrum, in which Bigfoot exists, technology seems to be at the level of about one hundred years ago on our Earth, and a deranged traveler from the future is trying to destroy the world. The latter "feature" was introduced in the second novel and definitely represents a downhill turn.

While some things have improved over the second volume (Somtow spends less time harping on the differences between the Roman and Lacotian [Amerind] ways of life), others have not. There are still far too many cute names (Equus Insanus isn't bad, but "longus porcus" is ridiculous!), and the series seems to have degenerated into a slapstick conflict between Aquila and the interdimensional green pig that is trying to control the universe. Aquila flies pyramids and sphinxes around (they were left from ancient astronauts) and the green pig shrinks cities down and puts them in bottles. Had the series started out this way, I probably wouldn't object so much (I would have given up much earlier), but Somtow showed he could do serious alternate history, and now he's opting for cheap laughs instead.

THE HIGH-TECH KNIGHT

by Leo Frankowski
DelRey, 1989, $3.95

The second volume of "The Adventures of Conrad Stargard" is finally out. Given that the first (The Cross-Time Engineer) came out in early 1986, this is a long time to wait for volume two. (Frankowski promises that volumes three and four will be out later this year, so it won't take a lifetime to finish reading the series!)

As you probably don't remember from three years ago, the premise is as follows: Conrad Schwartz, loyal citizen of Communist Poland, goes to sleep in the basement of an inn and wakes up in 1231 AD. In the best "Connecticut Yankee" tradition, his knowledge revolutionizes the society he falls into. Of course, he does all this in the spirit of good Marxist dedication. He doesn't worry about the paradoxes of trying to change history so that the Mongols are defeated in their (in our universe, successful) attempt to overrun Poland in 1241. There are also some time travelers in the future who are watching him via a viewscreen and who have provided him with a bionic intelligent horse.

The High-Tech Knight continues the story with yet more inventions, yet more progress, yet more nude saunas and other bits designed to keep adolescent boys interested (this being written from the male perspective, the women involved in these episodes tend to be interchangeable and uniformly attractive--strange that Conrad never meets any homely women). There is a fair amount of build-up to a duel, which finishes in about four pages, leaving the reader with the feeling not unlike that of those people who pay hundreds of dollars for boxing tickets and then see the bout end in a knockout after fifteen seconds.

The horse is still annoying me--the time travel premise would be plenty without her. The interference from the future still smacks of deus ex machina to me. The sexual interludes still bore me. But the Mongols are still off on the horizon somewhere, and I want to find out what happens. My recommendation to wait for the entire series anc then read it still holds.

THE RADIANT WARRIOR

by Leo Frankowski
DelRey, 1989, $3.95

This is the third volume of "The Adventures of Conrad Stargard;" volume four (the last volume--at least so they say) is due out in a couple of months. Once more, the premise: Conrad Schwartz, loyal citizen of Communist Poland, goes to sleep in the basement in an inn and wakes up in 1231 AD. In

the best "Connecticut Yankee" tradition, his knowledge revolutionaizes the society he falls into. His main concern is defeating the Mongols, due to invade ten years after he arrives. There are also some time travellers in the future who are watching him via a viewscreen and who have provided him with a bionic intelligent horse.

The Radiant Warrior is like the second volume, The High-Tech Knight, only more so, in its emphasis on how to build nifty inventions. Well-researched it may be, but stopping the plot to explain in great detail how to build a framis does not make the book flow. It almost seems as though Frankowski is marking time until the invasion. And the male chauvinism of the first two volumes is even worse in this one, with Frankowski even stooping to a scene in which a knight basically rapes the woman he wants, and that's how he wins her heart. (One suspects he did less research on women than on machines, borne out by the biographical note at the back of the book, which describes him as "a lifelong bachelor.")

Much of the book is spent with Conrad building up an army to fight the Mongols. Whether his ideas of how to build a modern army in 13th Century Poland would actually work I can't judge. In the book, they work fine, but then so did floggin for traffic violations in Starship Troopers. Having stuck with the series this far, I'll read book four, but it's getting more difficult to recommend it to anyone else. (Of The High-Tech Knight, I said it seemed to be aimed at adolescent boys, but given the attitude toward women in this one, I can't even recommend it for them.)

BROTHER ESAU

by Douglas Orgill and John Gribbin
Tor, 1982, $3.50

Interestingly enough, this book was labeled by the publisher as "general fiction" rather than "science fiction." But I read another novel, with basically the same premise, last year that was definitely marketed as science fiction. That novel was Orphan of Creation by Roger MacBride Allen, and it's difficult to avoid comparing the two.

In Brother Esau (the earlier of the two by six years), an American paleontologist has a theory about the origins of man in the Himalayas. While digging there, she (or rather her party) find first the bones of what appears to be a Homo erectus from the mid-1800s, and then a live Homo erectus. This (he?) is, of course, immediately tagged as the "Missing Link" as well as the Abominable Snowman. In Orphan of Creation a black paleontologist reads in her great-great-grandfather's diary of "Beasts" brought in to work the fields alongside the slaves. She digs up the bones of these beasts and discovers that they were Australopithecus boisei alive in Africa today. In both cases, the following questions arise: Are they animals? Are they people? Are they something in between? What will this do to the theory of evolution or to creationism? How will it be resolved?

As I said last year, all these are interesting questions and were when Vercors wrote his novel You Shall Know Them in the 1950s, asking the same questions. However, though Brother Esau and Orphan of Creation show us something of how paleontology works, neither probes the philosophical issues are not probed any deeper than Vercors did. Orgill and Gribbin spend as much time examining the border tensions between India and Pakistan (where their story is set) as it does looking at the actual discovery. There is also some mystical mumbo-jumbo with one of the digging party being driven insane by the discovery after having all sorts of premonitions about it. This is unfortunate, because they have a lot of material for a thought-provoking story here, and they chose not to use it. Perhaps creationism was not such a hot topic in 1982 when this book came out as it was in 1988, when MacBride Allen's book was published.

A few other works have been written about this idea, making this almost a sub-genre. Gor Saga by Maureen Duffy (upon which First Born, a BBC three-hour miniseries recently run on the Arts and Entertainment Network, was based) dealt with the supposed cross-breeding of a gorilla and a human. Another film, Skullduggery, was loosely based on You Shall Know Them. And then there is H. Beam Piper's Little Fuzzy, a more science fictional reworking of the same theme.

While I am not wholly satisfied with Brother Esau, I can say that of you are interested in this sub-genre it is not a book without merit. It may, however, be hard to find.

THE LILLIPUT LEGION

by Simon Hawke
Ace, 1989, $3.50

This is the ninth of a series of time travel adventures entitled collectively, "Time Wars." (The first eight are, in order: The Ivanhoe Gambit, The Timekeeper Conspiracy, The Pimpernel Plot, The Zenda Vendetta, The Nautilus Sanction, The Khyber Connection, The Argonaut Affair, and The Dracula Caper.) Throughout the series, the U.S. Army Temporal Corps is busy trying to prevent people from going back and disturbing history, because to do so would cause a "temporal split" that would destroy the universe. (Actually it would destroy more than just the universe, because we find out in book seven or so that there are parallel universes; the temporal bombs we set off in ours are ricocheting into oth-

ers, and the inhabitants there aren't very happy about this.) The basic idea is not very original, but Hawke (a pen name for Nicholas Yermakov, I believe) does add a couple of new twists: the parallel universes and the fact that the history that people go back to centers around fictional characters and events. (If a roman a clef is a novel in which real characters appear, thinly disguised, then what is the term for a novel in which someone else's literary creations appear as real characters? My friendly literary reference person says she knows of no such term, but certainly there have been many such novels; I suspect the most prolific are those involving Sherlock Holmes.) So we have seen characters from Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Baroness Orczy, Anthony Hope, Jules Verne, Rudyard Kipling, Greek mythology, Bram Stoker, and now Jonathan Swift. In fact, Swift himself is a character in this latest entry in the series.

Hawke has also added a mad scientist and an evil villain (is that redundant?) along the way and this, coupled with the parallel universes, tends to make the story more difficult to follow. Characters seem to pop in and out, and given that characters can travel between universes, even death may not be permanent. The "Time Wars" books certainly aren't great literature, and the parallel universes aspect has been downplayed (at least so far), but they do each provide an enjoyable evening's reading.

THE CRYSTAL EMPIRE

by L. Neil Smith
Tor, 1989 (1986c), $4.50

This alternate history novel slipped by me when it first came out. Based on the premise that the Black Plague (actually a variation of it) killed off, not 33%, but 95% of Europe, the result is a world in which there are three large empires: a "Saracen-Jewish" one, a "Mughal-Arab" one, and a Sino-Aztec" one. Europe is ruled by the Saracen empire, which is currently fighting a war against the Mughal empire on "the island continent." (I never could quite figure out where this was--at times it seemed to be Japan, but that seems an unlikely place for those two empires to interface.) The story takes place at the present time (well, about the year 2000 C.E., though dates are given in the Islamic calendar).

The main character, Sedrich Owaldsohn, lives in a Europe ruled by superstition. Technological advances are, for the most part, prohibited and religious groups are in authority locally. The two main groups are the Brotherhood of the Cult of Jesus in Hell (a Christian group run by men) and the Mistresses of the Sisterhood (a Wiccan group run by women). Sedrich develops a new invention and is persecuted by the head of the Brotherhood, who eventually drive Sedrich out. Sedrich then travels to America where he changes his name to Fireclaw and lives as an Amerind (or whatever the term would be in this universe) on the outskirts of the Aztec empire and gets involved in a mission to deliver a Saracen princess to the Aztec prince.

The alternate world is of some interest, though I suspect that had the Spaniards had not conquered the Incas, the Incas would have eventually spread northward and overcame the Aztecs. But more importantly, I find it hard to believe the level of technology achieved by the Aztecs while at the same time they retained massive human sacrifice and other cultural attitudes that would seem to result in a stagnant rather than an advancing culture. In part this can be explained by the "Dreamers," six million people who dream of alternate worlds (including ours) and technology. (There was an interesting counterpoint in the opening scene of a medieval pogram against the Jews of the village with the scenes toward the end of the six million dreamers.) However, I still find the results unconvincing.

Some may say my final complaint has to do with "political correctness." Smith has written a very brutal (though not explicit, per se) rape scene for no reason that I can discern (the rape scene may be necessary to the plor, but not the manner of it). What particularly struck me about it was its similarity to rape scenes in J. Neil Schulman's Rainbow Cadenza. Now normally I wouldn't make anything of this, but there are two points worth noting. First, both Schulman and Smith have won the Libertarian Party's Prometheus Award, which would indicate a certain similarity in their philosophies (at least to the people who give the award). Second, Smith acknowledges a phrase of Schulman's at the beginning of The Crystal Empire and refers to Schulman as a "so far unindicted coconspirator", and thus I think it more than just a coincidence that they have written similar scenes. And as in The Rainbow Cadenza, there is a scene in which the characters discuss this rape and how it's just a manifestation of male violence, the same as warfare and fighting.

Now this is not the main part of the book, and perhaps I am overreacting to it, but I found this offensive, unconvincing, and trivializing. This may have colored how I felt about the book as a whole (though I wasn't greatly enamored of it even before then), but the bottom line is that I cannot recommend this book.

WAITING FOR THE GALACTIC BUS

by Parke Godwin
Bantam/Spectra, 1989 (1988c), $3.95

Waiting for the Galactic Bus seems to owe a slight debt to Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy,

though not as much as the back cover blurb implies (the blurb doesn't mention it explicitly, mind you). Two stranded aliens, Barion and Coyul, "uplift" prehistoric primates and then have to deal with Roy Stride, the neo-Nazi product of several million years of evolution. If Stride's planned marriage to Charity Stovall goes through, their child will destroy the human race. So the two of them are taken on a roller-coaster-tour of hell, with the assistance of Judas Iscariot, John Wilkes Booth, and Florence Bird, a bit of London crumpet.

Tours through hell are becoming a bit of a subgenre themselves. Dante started it all. Yes, there were visits to Hades by various people in Greek and Roman mythology, but I think it's safe to say the Western literary tradition of "hell tours" began with Dante's Divine Comedy. (It's interesting to note that while Dante also wrote of tours through Purgatory and Heaven, few people find those as interesting. Fewer still have written pastiches of them.) Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle did an updated "Inferno" many years ago, and there have been various other attempts since then. (The "Heros in Hell" series doesn't count here, of course, since everyone in them is dead and no one is taking a tour.) Godwin adds a more off-beat humor than most, with touches such as the man of Charity's dreams talking like a television commercial, because that's how Charity's dreams were shaped. Yet under the humor there are some important points, and if his position on television evangelists and fundamentalism (of any religion) is a bit unsubtle, he makes up for it in the rest of the book. I would describe Waiting for the Galactic Bus as Hobanesque (as in Russell Hoban), but that's not very informative for most people. So let me just say straight out that I highly recommend Waiting for the Galactic Bus.

THE STORY OF THE STONE

by Barry Hughart
Doubleday/Foundation, 1989, $17.95

Like its predecessor, Bridge of Birds, The Story of the Stone is set in 7th Century China. Both are apparently based on exceprts of the classic Dream of the Red Chamber, though only on a small part of it (much as the film Erendira was based on a half page from the epic novel One Hundred Years of Solitude). Of the first I said, "It's full of the feel of China and the Orient." In retrospect, I'm not sure I would still say that. There is a certain atmosphere to the books, but I'm not sure it isn't just a village atmosphere that could easily arise from a book set in Russia or Scotland or anywhere else. Consider Fiddler on the Roof. It is a very popular play (and film) that people in the United States think is very Jewish (whatever that means). When it first played in Japan, people there liked it, but expressed surprise that it was popular in the United States. "After all," they said, "the story is so Japanese." And when Mark recently lent the film to a co-worker, the co-worker's father-who had been born in China and spoke little English--loved it, from which Mark concluded that perhaps Chinese village life was not so different from shetl life after all.

This is not to downgrade the books. I'm not sure at this point how one would write a book that had a "Chinese village" feel rather than just a village feel. And I do recommend the book, though I have several nits to pick.

It seems picky, I know, to point out mistakes. But there were several, and I found them annoying. For one thing, Hughart says that AD 650 is the Year of the Serpent. No, the closest years of the serpent to 650 are 645 and 657. Then later he talks about people with mercury poisoning and how hatters frequently suffer from this because of the mercury they use. I didn't think felt hats were that common in China in the Seventh Century; maybe they were, but it sounds wrong.

One of the references that I thought was a mistake may not be one. He has one clue refer to the "one hundred and forty six scales of the dragon" and has Master Li try to analyze this as "one, four, and six." I didn't think the Seventh Century Chinese did arithmetic in base ten. But upon looking it up, I discovered that 1) the Hindus had zero (necessary for positional notation) as early as 100 BC, and 2) it is thought that the Hindu-Arabic numerals that we use may have been derived from the Chinese. So maybe the Chinese did do base ten arithmetic in the Seventh Century! (Though a Chinese friend says no, they did arithmetic in base 60.) But Master Li also refers to an item thirty-six inches long corresponding to the 360 degrees of a circle. There are two things grating about that sentence. One is the use of the word "inches." Now if the author says, "The town was two miles away," I figure that's a translation of the actual units, and maybe the character really said it's twelve blargs away (or whatever). But here, the number of unites is important, hence the unit cannot be just a translation of the number would change as well. And secondly, I don't think the Chinese used a 360-degree circle. It's possible (the Babylonians could have shipped it East as well as West, or gotten it from the East), but, again, it sounds wrong. One can argue that an author shouldn't have to worry about the truth sounding wrong, but the publisher probably should have suggested as afterword clarifying some of this.

As I said before, I do recommend the book, though not as whole-heartedly as I recommended the first one.

THE GATE TO WOMEN'S COUNTRY

by Sheri S. Tepper
Doubleday, 1989, $17.95

The premise of this book is that a nuclear war has taken place and civilization has fallen back to a technology somewhere around the 14th Century level (in general--more on that later). There are no guns; wars are fought with bows and arrows or close-contact weapons. Children are raised in the towns (the "women's country" of the title) until they are five years old. Then girls stay within the towns and boys are sent to their warrior fathers in the permanent army camps outside the towns. From age 5 through 15, the sons visit their mothers twice a year, during carnival. In fact, all the soldiers visit the town during carnival. That's when the couplings take place that produce children. At age 15, the sons must choose whether to stay outside the walls (except for carnival) or return to women's country permanently as "servitors." This option is open to them until age 25, when they become full-fledged warriors and cannot return. Approximately 5% return. Women seem to have no choice other than to join gypsy camps or become prostitutes whom the warriors can visit year-round.

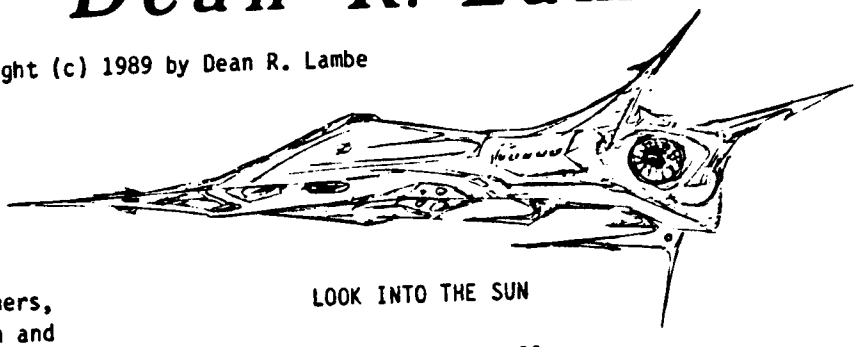
Now I claimed, upon hearing a summary of the preceding, that it sounded like the sort of book that promotes the philosophy "Women are all wonderful; men are all horrible brutes (except for the ones who come over to the women's way of thinking)." But it was recommended by so many people that I figured I would give it a try.

Well, it does managed to rise above my first impression on parts. Unfortunately, it takes a good three-quarters of the book to even attempt to rationalize its theses (byt showing a different post-holocaust society and what it would be like), and it is not until the very end that many of the motivations become clearer. At that point, much of what the reader may have dismissed as ridiculous begins to make a certain sense, but it may get the reader to that stage too late. It seems less a logical sequence than a magic trick, and magic tricks are notoriously poor things to base societies on.

And, along with the others who have been less than bowled over by this book, I find that the book does seem to say "women are good, men are bad." Though it shows some men as good (i.e., peace-loving), it does not show any women as violent or warmongering. And the book's dismissal of homosexuality as having been discovered to be a hormonal imbalance in the mother during pregnancy that is "easily corrected," strikes me as a scientifically inaccurate premise, not to mention the "solution" being out of line with the technological level shown in the rest of society. In fact, the plot seems to hinge on some technology being hundreds of years ahead of the average technology, without an industrial infrastructure to support it (or without much clue to the reader before the rabbit is pulled from the hat).

This is one of those "study war no more" novels that have been increasingly common of late. While I don't disagree with that philosophy, I think assigning all the blame to men and all the hope to women is too simplistic an approach. As a post-holocaust novel, The Gate to Women's Country works; as a philosophical look at the causes of conflict, it does not. If I were to compare it to another author's works, I would say that it is most similar to Heinlein's, for two reasons. First, the story is interesting, but the philosophical underpinnings may turn the reader off. And second, the society portrayed works in the novel, and in fact characters point out how well it works, but it works because the author wrote it that way, not because the society really would work that way in real life. Whether you enjoy The Gate to Women's Country depends on what you're looking for.

Book Reviews by *Dean R. Lambe*



BUYING TIME

by Joe Haldeman
William Morrow, 1989, $18.95

No doubt much to the dismay of his publishers, Haldeman doesn't write the same novel again and again. His latest is no sequel, no series opener, but a fresh look at living forever.

Dallas Barr is one of the oldest people in the solar system, thanks to frequent renewals via the Stileman Process. As one of the few immortals, however, Barr is captive to the secret rejuvenation treatments from the Stileman Clinics in London or Sydney, and he must renew those treatments every 10-12 years--at not less than a million Pounds sterling each time. Thus Barr and his fellow immortals amass wealth between renewals, only to have the clinics take all they own, ostensibly for good works as well as personal rejuvenation.

At a party in Australia, playboy Barr hears the sobering news that immortality may be cut short by lethal brain degeneration--after less than two centuries. But Lamont Randolph hints of an underground Steering Committee of "Stilemans" who may have an answer to that death threat. Then Barr finds his lost love, Maria Marconi, and they take a side trip to "adastra," the starship that Stilemans are building in orbit. When he and Maria meet fellow immortals in Dubrovnik, Randolph has been murdered, and Barr rejects the offer from Sir Charles Briskin to join his Steering Committee conspiracy to rule the world. Within minutes, assassins narrowly miss Barr and Marconi, as the two lovers escape Yugoslavia for the relative safety of the Conch Republic in the Florida Keys. With a price on Barr's head (thanks to Briskin's corruption of the Stileman Foundation and control of the media), their only hope lies in deep space, among the anarchists of Novysibirsk on Ceres. Added to the cold equations of their junkyard spaceship, Maria's approaching rejuvenation deadline forces the lovers to make cruel choices, choices that will ultimately affect all mankind.

With this run at life extension, Haldeman offers rapid action over philosophy. The characters move fast enough, and the scenery backdrops keep changing, so that the reader rarely notices the holes in the fabric. Clever gimmicks and good science buoy the disbelief balloon all the way to the derring-do climax, and a good read is had by all.

LOOK INTO THE SUN

by James Patrick Kelly
Tor Books, 1989, $17.95

Better known for his striking short fiction, Kelly's second solo novel portrays one man's agony in the face of alien demands. A mix of hard SF and other-directed philosophy, this tale of two planets offers memorable characters but muddled science.

New Hampshire architect Phillip Wing, happily married to Daisy Goodwin of a monied Old Yankee family, is about to realize his greatest work, the completion of his "Glass Cloud." Yet this huge, mutable combination of artwork and Disneyesque blimp ride through Down East scenery leaves Wing oddly unsatisfied. Enter Messenger Ndavu to this hungry world of 2056, an alien in human form, who represents a galactic commonwealth of species that are both religious missionaries and interstellar traders.

Daisy invites Ndavu to a house party, and Wing's life comes to an end, as he finds Daisy in the arms of another and his essence manipulated into an alien body. For five parsecs down the road, about the star we call 82 Eridani, the ancient Chani on the planet Aseneshesh seek Messenger help for their dying Goddess. Teaqua, the oldest living sentient being, has forsaken shriving--yet another biological rebirth, and has decided to pass her throne and powers to priest Ammagon, and to scholar Harumen. Before Teaqua dies, she insists that the star/god Chan has foretold a human architect, Wing, who will create an appropriate tomb.

Thus Wing is transformed into the tall, monkey-like body of a Chani, implanted with a computer wetware interface that threatens to drive him crazy, and transported to Aseneshesh with a similarly transformed Ndavu. A typical tourist, Wing doesn't much care for the climate, the politics, or the food. He despairs at Teaqua's requirements for a mausoleum, and is thoroughly confused by Harumen's sexual advances. Then Daisy, who he thought long lost to relativistic time dilation, uses the newly discovered tachyon transmitter to make demands of her own.

As is so popular of late, the nature of Man is engulfed by an alien Other--here two others plus a

computer construct. Our hero is mere pawn, and a challenge to reader identification and sympathy. The futuristic whizbang and alien world-building, while creative, is just a tad off. If Kelly wishes us to believe his lifespan of 82 Eridani to four significant digits, then he really should get the size and color of that star right, especially if the star is also a god. Still, it's a readable, oft lyrical story that I recommend despite the flaws.

FADE

by Robert Cormier
Dell, 1988, $4.50

Cormier is best known for his mainstream young adult fiction, so many genre readers might miss his first venture into adult fantasy.

Presented as the autobiography of a writer, Paul Moreaux, Fade explores the tortured soul of an invisible man, a man who finds that the strange gift he has inherited is truly a curse. The novel opens when Paul is 13, in a 1938 mill town near Boston where his French-Canadian family has settled. As Paul faces the trials of puberty, two wandering relatives return to Frenchtown to change his life. With his Aunt Rosanna, a young beauty who Paul's father describes as unable to resist anything in pants, the boy discovers lust, shame, and the sins of his Catholic upbringing. When his mysterious uncle Adelard returns, however, Paul learns that he is not alone in his ability to disappear from sight, that "fading" is a family trait, somehow passed from uncle to nephew. Then, Paul's father and other relatives begin a brutal strike against the Monument Comb factory, and Paul discovers the terrible two-edged sword that his secret talent entails.

Halfway through the story, Cormier pulls out a literary gimmick that almost destroys the tale. Abruptly, we jump to 1988 and the viewpoints of Paul's distant cousin, Susan, and his literary agent, Meredith Martin. Then, the reader is moved back to 1963, where Paul--now a successful but very reclusive novelist--faces the strains on his talents, both public and secret, and searches for the nephew who carries the fading ability to the next generation.

A seemingly simple tale, as is often the mark of fine young adult fiction, Fade recalls the agonies of Robert Silverberg's classic Dying Inside. It's well worth your time, and a worthy read to push on the nearest teenager.

Film & Book Reviews by *Elizabeth Osborne*

OUTRAGEOUS CONDUCT:
Art, Ego and the Twilight Zone Case

by Stephen Farber and Marc Green
Arbor House, 1988, $??.??

What became known as the "Twilight Zone Tragedy," and later the "Twilight Zone Case," began when a huge explosion shook through the movie set killing actor Vic Morrow and two illegally hired children. This book by a film critic and a Hollywood reporter looks at the build-up to that accident and the very long court case that followed.

Generally, this is a very messy book, full of directors' egos, nasty studio policies, illegal actions, broken friendships, and ruined lives and professions. While the book is not supportive of Hollywood in general, it is terrible to Steven Spielberg and John Landis, both of whom come out as spoiled-rotten artistic brats who if not guilty of outright manslaughter then of gross criminal negligence as well as obstruction of justice and in violation of several child labor laws. That's a long way from the Starlog inspired view of Spielberg and Landis as wonderful, talented fans.

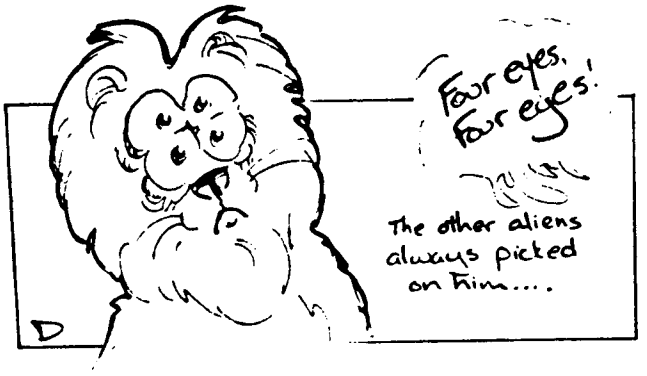
In fact, this book hardly lets anyone out without criticizing them, including the chief prosecuting attorney whom they blame for mismanaging the case against Landis. A quick and easy read, this book is an interesting look as a terrible accident as a SF movie set, involving two of Hollywood's most active SF and fantasy directors and producers.

ALIEN NATION

This is an interesting movie that is not able to make up its mind about what it wants to be.

According to this movie, within the next three months an alien spaceship will land in the Southwestern desert with a quarter of a million alien slaves. After a few years, the aliens are trying to become members of Earth society. This is the story

of a bigoted cop whose partner is killed by aliens in a holdup. He is then teamed with an alien. While they first handle minor street crime, they also seek out the killer of Sykes (the human policeman) and finally uncover an massive alien drug ring. This movie came to be seen as a SF movie about aliens in L.A., as a standard shoot 'em up cop case, or as a film treatment about racism, etc. These three parts, however, never really join to form a single film. That's a great shame because it's a good flick to spend your time on. (My only gripe is that I'm getting _really_ tired when the villain is a well-respected rich guy who everyone looks up to.)



THE WILD, WILD WEST: The Series

by Susan E. Kesler
Amett Press, 1988, $??.??

A very interesting new book on the late 60's series, _The Wild, Wild West_. This series lasted nearly four years and can still be seen today. This book deals with the development of the series, the cast, the writers, the stunts, the props and the girls. The book also deals with some of the grimmer sides of the show: the accidents, the infighting, the clash between actors, production leaders and the studio. Well-written with a great deal of research, the book provides plenty of information on the western/spy action adventure show. The book includes a complete guide to the episodes and plenty of information on the changes the show went through. For the old _WWW_ fans like me, this book is quite good and is a great find.

MURDER AT THE CONS

THE MURDER MYSTERY AND THE SF CONVENTION

The science fiction mystery has been a popular if small genre. Now, with the rise in popularity of the science fiction convention, it should come as no surprise that a convention should become the scene of a murder mystery. Does the publication of _Bimbos of the Death Sun_ mean that a whole new form of mystery has come into being? Well, you might be surprised to know that _Bimbos of the Death Sun_ is by no means the first mystery to be set at a con. Sharyn McCrumb is only the latest of authors to use a SF convention as background for the dirty deed.

In this article I will examine five books I have read: _Murder at the ABA_ by Isaac Asimov, _Sci-Fi_ by William Marshall, _Murdercon_ by Richard Purtill, _Murder at the War_ by Mary Monica Pulver, and _Bimbos of the Death Sun_ by Sharyn McCrumb. Some of these books are out of print but can be found through your local library.

The first book, _Murder at the ABA_, does not really take place at a SF con but at the annual American Booksellers Association convention. It is written by Isaac Asimov who also appears as a character. It is the story of Darius Just, a middling successful writer. When an up-and-coming new writer takes a fatal fall in a hotel bathroom, most people think it is just a terrible accident. Darius Just, however, knew the victim better than most people and suspects something funny. With plenty of red herrings and the help of Sarah Voskovek, the hotel PR person, he solves the case. The reader may feel short-changed. After all the motives, passions and turmoil in the publishing industry, the real reason that Giles Devore was killed is a bit of a letdown. A pleasant enough read for the murder mystery fan.

Sci-Fi is also a murder mystery set at a huge media convention in Hong Kong. A silver-suited stranger is setting roms and people afire. This mystery story is of a type known as a police procedural, so most of the action is seen from the inspector's viewpoint. Con-goers appear as costumed walk-ons or as professionals in business meetings. A side story involves a mugger who attacks people in parking lots. In all, _Sci-Fi_ is a disappointment as the case turns from a look at fandom into an investigation of the Hong Kong Fire Department. _Sci-Fi_ has a fair amount of humor and surrealism but not a good dose of fandom, and even the mystery has a few holes that left me with questions.

Murdercon is a very good book. Set in the late 70's at a convention in San Diego, the main character is a female philosophy professor. It is a well-crafted mystery story and the author knows a bit more about fandom beyond the funny costumes and strange behavior. The author shows well the tension between media and reading fandom and understands the values that fannish people have; even the mo-

tive for the murder makes sense to a fan. Still, I had a few problems with this book. Everything seemed too easy for the detective. She had no trouble at all in getting any information that she needs; the police chief turns out to be an old college roommate. The professor also spends most of the weekend running around San Diego--this could be used as a guidebook to the city--yet she has the time to be at all the major events of the con! The biggest problem I found was the fact that quite a few people get killed this weekend and no one seems to care. No one leaves the con or even checks into a different hotel. In short, Murdercon is a good murder mystery and a good look at fandom with a few minor points against it.

A fairly recent book is Murder at the War. This takes place at the Pensic War, the equivalent gathering as the Worldcon for the Society for Creative Anachronism. When a not-very-well-liked member is knifed during one of the battles, Detective Peter Brichter, an SCA member, is placed in charge of the investigation by one of he SCA Kings. Peter has a good reason for accepting the case; his wife Kori is a major suspect. The book does well in describing the SCA without excessive wordage and uses the device of a questionnaire to examine the reasons why people join the Society in the first place. There are plenty of motives and opportunity to go around and our detective takes on three of the main suspects at Court.

It has a few problems. There are far too many points of view, switching from first person to third to second all within a single chapter. I also found it hard to believe that Kori Brichter was ever really considered a suspect. Despite these points, it is a good murder mystery and takes a good look at the Society too.

That brings us to our most recent example, Bimbos of the Death Sun written by Sharyn McCrumb. It is a rather straightforward mystery story about the death of an popular but obnoxious and caustic writer at a con. The mystery is pretty dull, and more time is spent looking at the convention and attendees. The author does provide interesting characters, but the descriptions verge on the stereotypical and nasty. I wouldn't be surprised if the author had recently been thrown out of some fannish club or group, so bitter is the outlook. (I recently read one of her other mysteries and it was just as mean-spirited as Bimbos of the Death Sun toward many of its characters.)

So here is a list of the novels I am familiar with. As science fiction conventions become more popular, there certainly will be more written.

More Film Tape & Book Reviews

THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION
SIXTH ANNUAL COLLECTION

Edited by Gardner Dozois
????, 1989, $13.95

A book review by Robert Sabella

A book such as this one is a reviewer's delight. A positive reviewer can find lots to praise in its 28 stories while a frustrated critic can pounce on the many holes caused by the book's definitive title.

So which approach chould I take? The book was certainly enjoyable reading and a fair representative of the state of short science fiction in 1988. But only 4 of my 10 personal favorite short stories were selected by Dozois. So I guess I'll settle for a mixed bag review, a one-thumb-up, one-thumb-down in Siskel & Ebert terminology.

First the positives. Only one story seemed unworthy of inclusion, a misguided Kim Newman satire from Interzone entitled "Famous Monsters." All the others ranged from decent to award-worthy.

My favorites were Brian Stableford's "The Man Who Loved the Vampire Lady," an original approach (thank heavens!) to the overworked vampire canon; Connie Willis' "The Last of the Winnebagos," an enjoyable casserole combining equal parts satire, mystery and wistfulness; Kim Stanley Robinson's "Glacier" and D. Alexander Smith's "Dying in Hull," two effective views of dismal future Bostons, the latter being slightly more effective.

Other stories just fell short of those four: Walter Jon Williams' "Surfacing" is a fascinating story of humans and aliens on an exotic world that might have been the best story in the book if it did not stop right in the middle of the action; Steven Gould's "Peaches for Mad Molly" is a clever thriller whose only flaw is a thoroughly unbelievable premise; James Lawson's "Sanctuary" is a surprisingly good police thriller; Judith Moffett's "The Hob," Robert Silverberg's "House of Bones," and Mike Resnick's "Kirinyaga" show three excellent writers near the top of their form.

I also liked the book's science fictionalness. We are in the midst of an era when the majority of science fictions stories are fake SF. They are little more than mainstream stories with just enough differentness to tickle the edges of the genre. 15 out of the 28 stories in this collection are pure SF and 4 others are pure fantasy, a decent percentage compared to the overall numbers being published nowadays. While I have nothing against mainstream

SF per se, my teeth grate when a majority of so-called SF barely fits into the genre. Fortunately, Gardner Dozois avoided that trap in this collection.

All right, enough positives! Let's get into the ever-popular gripes. My biggest complaint is with Howard Waldrop's Hugo and Nebula nominee "Do Ya, Do Ya, Wanna Dance?" It is a story that totally rubbed me the wrong way. I could not stomach either its childish anti-establishment (childish because it seems motivated by the thrill of it all rather than specific causes), its strident disdain of education (yes, I'm a teacher) and its absolute worship of the wonderful Sixties (a decade in which I grew up and had a wonderful time but it's been over now for nearly twenty years; let it rest in peace and let's get on with our lives!). I can understand its popularity though if you're into cutesy writing or seeing arrogant SOBs get their comeuppance or aging teenagers reliving their youths. I hated it.

My other complaint -- and I apologize if you've heard this before in previous reviews of this series -- is that Dozois seems fixated on selecting stories by certain authors (friends?) whether they are award-worthy or not. Thus we find the mandatory James Patrick Kelly story (5th selection in 6 volumes), Michael Swanwick (4th selection) and Pat Cadigan (6th selection). Granted, the three of them have written some worthy stories, but certainly not 15 in the past six years!

Just one last trivial gripe that I can't resist including and then I'll leave you alone. Dozois should consider varying his introductory praise. He calls Walter Jon Williams "one of the hottest new talents in science fiction," James Patrick Kelly "one of the hottest new writers in science fiction," George Alec Effinger "perhaps the hot young writer of the 70s," and so on. I was beginning to wonder if Dozois' prime requirement for inclusion was the story's quality of the author's body temperature.

But this book, especially if you don't read Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine which contributed 12 of the included stories. All grumping aside, you should enjoy it immensely.

NEVERNESS

by David Zindell
Bantam/Spectra, 1988/89, $4.95

A book review by Dale L. Skran, Jr.

One of the most ufair aspects of the Hugo nominating procedures is that good books by new authors stand little chance of winning. Typically a book is published in hardcover one year, and a few thousand people read it. The next year a paperback comes out, and many more read it, realizing to their chagrin that it is far better than any of the Hugo nominated novels from the previous year, the year in which it was eligible. Due to this effect, only books that go immediately to large paperback printings, are serialized in magazines, or are writte by well-kown names have a chance. The net result is a whole string of "sympathy" Hugos. The most recent example is George Alec Effinger getting a Hugo for "Schrodinger's Kitten" after he missed out on the Hugo for When Gravity Fails. This is not the perfect example, since Effinger was fairly well known when Gravity was nominated. A better example is Donald Kingsbury's Courtship Rite or Vernor Vinge's Marooned in Realtime, both books that I voted in first place, but which had little chance of winning due to their publishing history. Meanwhile, anything C. J. Cherryh, Orson Scott Card, or William Gibson puts out will be nominated and has a good shot at winning.

Neverness should have won the Hugo in 1989. It is a fabulous sense of wonder novel with real characters and a compelling story, written with more style than most polished writers ever achieve. If this is Zindell's first novel, his tenth should get him the Nobel Prize. Neverness is also the best hard SF novel I have read in some time. Basically, Zindell builds on the groundwork of Stapeldon, Sterling, and Vinge, portraying for the first time a vivid, believable portrait of a man's ascent to godhood. Neverness is more novel than anything Stapeldon or Sterling have ever written, and more daring in its speculation than anyone except Stapeldon. Add to this enough action to fuel an Alistair MacLean novel and enough lyrical beauty to illuminate the darkest night. On top of all this, Zindell makes mathematics abnd mathematicians the focus of the story, and one of the high points of the story is the proving of a theorem.

You should expect everything from Neverness because it is all there. The only complaint I might have it that Zindell has not so much originated a new vision of our future as combined elements from various sources into a unified whole and told a story that has never been told before. The ideas of Greg Bear's Forge of God and Blood Music and Larry Niven's Ringworld are mere footnotes in this galaxy-spanning tale of men, man-gods, gods and Gods. And through it all, Mallory Ringess, Zindel's hero, loves, fails, dreams, grows, cheats, lies, lusts, and finaly grows toward his final destiny.

You will not read a better *new* book this year unless Borges writes something (very unlikely since he died recently), and according to the jacket blurb, Gene Wolfe, Michael Bishop, and Orson Scott Card agree with me. And you will remember the colored ice of Neverness, the final city of humanity, Kalinda's flowers, the words of the warrior-poets, the glory of the Lavi transform, and cold of the winter wind for a long time to come.

TALES FROM THE END OF TIME

by Michael Moorcock
SFBC, 19??, $6.98

THE DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME TRILOGY

AN ALIEN HEAT

by Michael Moorcock
SFBC, 1972, $4.98

THE HOLLOW LANDS

by Michael Moorcock
SFBC, 1974, $5.98

THE END OF ALL SONGS

by Michael Moorcock
SFBC, 1976, $6.98

Book reviews by Ravi Chopra

I have been a fan of Michael Moorcock's works, but have put off reading these classic tales of his for a long time. It was worth the wait.

These stories are all set billions of years in the future at what is known as the End of Time. The End of Time, a time when technology has eliminated death (or at least has made it a non-permanent condition), birth as a method of reproduction is a scarcity of great interest, and the few remaining humans are as carefree, amoral, bizarre gods whose lives and world are supported by the ancient cities which draw their power from the remnants of the dying universe around them.

This small remaining population lives solely for the purpose of entertainment. A person's reputation is based entirely on how amusing and creative he or she (or both or neither) is, creating wild and insane landscapes and scenery in attempts to amuse the other denizens of the End of Time.

The Dancers at the End of Time trilogy focuses on a native of the End of Time, Jherek Carnelian, one of the two end of Timers who was actually born, and Mrs. Amelia Underwood, and unfortunate accidental time traveller from England of 1896, and how Jherek decided to fall in love with Amelia and carry out many amusing lovers' scenarios (suicide and whatnot).

But what trouble it is when, just as his love for Amelia turns real, she is snatched away from him and sent back to 1896. The Dancers trilogy chronicles Jherek's quest for Mrs. Amelia Underwood and her physical and emotional love through all time. Of course, along side of the main plot are the many colorful characters and subplots which weave humorously in and out of the story at the strangest times, such as the alien Yusharisp bringing news of the imminent end of the universe, the alien Lat, whose only goal is to rape and pillage (rather inconveniencing a group of End of Timers who happen upon them at a most inopportune time), and of course the other natives of the End of Time such as Jherek's mother, the Iron Orchid, the depressing Lord Mongrove, the gaudy Duke of Queens, and of course Lord Jagged of Canaria.

Jherek's tale gets increasingly outrageous and humorous as the tale progresses, even bringing in the seemingly universal characters, Una Persson and Captain Bastable. This story, written in typical Moorcockian fashion, is highly entertaining and strongly recommended to all but the chronically serious.

Tales from the End of Time are more tales of the denizens of the End of Time other than Jherek Carnelian, filling in gaps passed over at the End of Time in the Dancers trilogy while Jherek was in the past (pre-End of Time times). These are also very entertaining and similarly are highly recommended.

CYBORG

A film review by Dale R. Skran

Cyborg belongs to a small sub-genre, the Science Fiction Marital Arts film. This sub-genre is larger than might be supposed, since it includes all those terrible "gladiators in a future arena" movies such as Death Race 2000 and After the Fall of New York. Another recent example is Steel Dawn which had a slightly more substantial SF plot than the various "death races." A +1 film that fits into this subgenre is The Running Man which featured Arnold Schwarzenegger duking it out on a game show with hockey-stick wielding psychos. These films as a group are poorly made and exhibit low quality, unrealistic fighting.

Recently, a number of martial artists have attempted to put on the screen a higher level of realism in fighting. The two major examples are Steven Senegal, an Akidoist starring in Above the Law and Jean Claude Van Dammn in Bloodsport. Neither film has a very strong or believable plot, but both contain excellent fight scenes that are well above

the typical Hollywood slam-bang. A digression into the world of stunt-fighting is called for at this point.

Hopefully movie audiences are aware that movie fights are carefully planned to maximize the breakage to surrounding walls, tables, lamps, etc. to increas the drama of the moment. Another "Hollywoodism" is that scene where the hero, punched/kicked many times by the villain, draws from deep within themselves the resources to go on and win. Another "Hollywoodism" is the villain gaining the upper hand, and then squandering it to explain their plans for world domination or just getting the girl (guy). A final "Hollywoodism" is that in spite of all the slam-bang, people just dust themselves off, and escape more or less unharmed.

Jean Claude Van Dammn plays a ninjitsu trained fighter (Frank Dux) in Bloodsport who enters a secret, illegal, "no rules," all styles contest. The framing plot is about a -3, the training scenes about 0 level, but the fights are +2. They are excellently filmed, diverse, and very well thought out. Van Dammn is an extremely flexible martial artist who clearly has mastery of an enviable variety of techniques. He is pleasing to watch on the screen, and seems fairly convincing in his relatively simple role. Much of the impetus of the story derives from the knowledge that it is supposedly true: a Frank Dux really exists who claims to have won such an underground tournament. I have read interviews with Dux, and apparently the fights are fairly close to what he claims actually happened. Bloodsport was a very low budget film that played surprisingly well and propelled Van Dammn into the limelight.

With this background, it was with bated breath that a tiny group of fans of SF Martial Arts awaited Cyborg, a new SF movie starring Van Dammn. It should be noted that there is also a written branch of SF martial arts, notably Streetlethal and The Kundalini Equation by real-life Kung-fu stylist Steven Barnes, who co-authored Dream Park with Larry Niven. Other examples include Matadora and The Man Who Never Missed by Steve Perry, and to some extent all cyberpunk, but especially Neuromancer, Johnny Mnenomic, Hardwired, and Voice of the Whirlwind.

Variety reviewed Cyborg as just a series of futuristic fights. This would have been a considerable improvement! In fact, there is just enough plot to seriously impede the fights. Cyborg resembles Mad Max in that they are both revenge tales with colorful villains set in a violent postholocaust world. Both have boring and ill-conceived sets of flashbacks to the bucolic days the hero spent with a wife/girlfriend who eventually gets wasted by the colorful villain. Both have a few good scenes here and there, but overall are very poor films.

There are several things that make Cyborg much worse than it should have been. One is that Van Dammn's female sidekick is totally miscast. She should have been played by an unknown but technically proficient female martial artist who had some minimal acting skills. Instead, she is played by your basic movie bimbo. Her continued survival in spite of her obvious lack of martial skill and general stupidity greatly decreases the credibility of the film.

Another problem is that a lot of Cyborg builds up to a big fight between Van Dammn and a colorful villain. There is nothing wrong with this, but unfortunately all the interesting fighting takes place between Van Dammn and various henchmen about midway through the film. Many of these scenes were fairly realistic and well executed. Unfortunately, when Van Dammn confronts the main villain, he forgets all the skills he displayed earlier, and behaves like someone who knows zip about what he is doing. The same pattern is repeated in their final confrontation. Basically both fights are pure Hollywood and a considerable waste of the audience's time.

I should also mention that the dialog is not very good, and many scenes are mis-directed, although production values are higher than in most low-budget films.

It is unfortunate the Cyborg is not better than it is, since it may sink Van Dammn's career. Overall, Cyborg comes in as a low -1 or high -2. The squeamish are reminded that although Cyborg is not a "splatter" film, it is "R" rated for a reason, and it is fairly violent.

OF SHOES AND SHIPS

by Cecilia Eng
Firebird Arts and Music, $11.00, 60 minutes
(PO Box 453, El Cerrito, CA 94530)

A tape review by Peter Thiesen

When I first heard Cecilia Eng sing four or five years ago, her mellow singing voice and good-humored lyrics impressed me. But why did she have to sing those silly "Dr. Who" songs all the time? Several years later, when I heard her at WESTERCON 40, her repertoire displayed a new variety, maturity, and depth of feeling. Furthermore, I envied her intricate guitar technique.

Cecilia's filk tape, Of Shoes and Ships, shows that Cecilia keeps improving. There are no turkeys on this tape; every song is at least pleasant, and many are quite beautiful. I even liked the "Dr. Who" song.

As the table of contents at the end of this review shows, Cecilia's songs express a wide variety

of emotions and themes. Her tape includes humorous songs, spooky songs, pro-space songs, and songs that are just plain beautiful.

My favorite songs on the tape are in the "just plain beautiful" category. "Morgaine at Ivrel" expresses the dedication and devotion of duty of C. J. Cherryh's character. I enjoyed the song so much I immediately read the book. "Helva's Song" is also beautiful, with a memorab;e melody that is musically interesting yet easy to sing.

In my opinion, "Absent Hosts" is Cecilia's masterpiece. This song warns of the threat of nuclear extermination. Many of Cecilia's other songs will be forgotten by the time the books that inspired them fall out of print; but "Absent Hosts" expresses a warning that we must remember forever. Fortunately, its grim moral does not make the song any less enjoyable.

Despite an occasional somber song, Cecilia's underlying optimism and humor shines throughout her tape. "Relativity" reminds us that "life is one big chocolate-chip-type cookie, just for me." "Passion Flower" is from the point of view of a man-eating plant with a crush on Star Trek's Mr. Sulu. If that doesn't sound amusing to you, you haven't heard the song.

Cecilia's tape also includes haunting songs of vampires, fairy folk, and magic spells. "Red As Blood," one of my favorites, supposes that Snow White was a vampire. This explains her white skin and ruby-red lips.

Cecilia's pro-space songs are as finely crafted as her other songs, but I find them less convincing in view of the wobbly state of the U.S. space program. Cecilia's line "Our shuttle flights were monthly, with cargo space to spare" sounds like it was originally written in the present tense, and changed after the **Challenger** disaster.

Cecilia's supporting cast deserves credit for the success of this tape. This tape would not be nearly so wonderful without Ernie Mansfield's outstanding harmonica, flute, saxophone, and clarinet work, which makes up for the lack of vocal harmony on many songs. I particularly enjoy Ernie's saxophone part on "Passion Flower." His clarinet playing on "The Grandfather Clock" may not be flawless, but it adds a great deal to the overall feeling of the song.

Kristoph Klover and Melanie Mar deserve to be congratulated for their fine job producing and recording the tape.

Of Shoes and Ships is one of my Favorite filk tapes. I am hoping for the sequel, Of Sealing Wax.

Song Title	Inspiration/Subject Matter
Absent Hosts	SETI, nuclear war
Creatures of Habit	pro-space
Eyes of the Beholder	fairy folk dancing in the night
The Grandfather Clock	Dr. Who
Helva's Song	Anne McCaffrey: The Ship Who Sang
Humanifest Destiny	pro-space
Lady Howard's Coach	a flok ballad expanded by Cecilia
Love of Mine	"Scarborough Fair"
Loyal Hamster Blues	Danger Mouse
Morgain at Ivrel	C.J.Cherryh's Morgaine series
Old Dets to Pay	the Det river, in Merovin (C.J. Cherryh)
Passion Flower	Mr. Sulu meets man-eating plant
Patience's End	Anne McCaffrey: Dragonflight
Relativity	Humor, optimism
Red as Blood	Tanith Lee: "Red as Blood"
Sidhe Who Must Be Obeyed	the queen of the fair folk
Travels with a Friend	humorous misadventures of a farm boy
Unicorn's Heir	Roger Zelazny's Amber series
Unreal Estate	real-estate scam in space

THE SILVER BRANCH

by Patricia Kennealy
Signet/NAL, 1989, $4.95

A book review by Maureen O'Brien

Book three of the Keltiad, the Saga of the Star Empire of Keltia, is finally out in paperback, and as soon as I get back to college I'm going to run down to the bookstore and get my own copy. Fortunately, my local library has the hardback and I can review it now.

The Silver Branch is the prequel to the events related in The Copper Crown and The Throne of Scone. It begins with the death of the Ard-Rian Aoife. Its primary focus is the early life, schooling, and ascent to the throne of Aeron, her great-granddaughter. However, it also relates the love of Weron's father, Prince Fionnbarr, for Basilea, the fiancee of Prince Bres, heir to the throne of Fomor, and what that led to, as well as Fionnbarr's later marriage to Emer.

It stands alone, but as a reader of the other two books I am frankly impressed by the way Kennealy uses the prequel to enlarge and enrich understanding of the war between empires which will follow. Characters which were ciphers in books 1 and 2 here come alive, with their own motivations. Once again, Kennealy demonstrates that she can make believable characters out of both friends and traitors. Also, the very atmosphere of the book is good. One may not think it likely that vast star empires like Keltia, Fomor, the Phalanx, and Cabiri Imperium would be ruled by monarchical systems, even constitutionally. But frankly, that's not the point. Don't expect scientific explanations of everything either. This is space opera on the grand scale. Just sit back and watch it like a mini-series.

However, be warned. The Keltiad is about Celts in space. If you object to names with 8 vowels or none, if you hate Celtic mythology, and/or if you hate books that involve people with destinies or neo-paganism, you will not like The Silver Branch. At all. If none of these things apply to you, put on your Celtic folk tape for mood and then start reading. Also, clear a space on your shelves for the other four trilogies which will be part of the Keltiad.

THE LONG RUN

by Daniel Keys Moran
Bantam/Spectra, 1989, $4.50

A book review by Maureen O'Brien

So you though a projected 15 volumes of the Keltiad was plenty. Well, welcome to volume 2 of a 33 book series. Personally, I love long series as long as the author keeps doing new and original things within it. So far, so good. With all the green-eyed, genetically engineered telepaths of the Castanaveras family supposedly nuked from orbit in the last book, naturally this book takes a different direction. It follows the only nontelepathic Castanaveras, Trent. Trent left the family a few years before they got nuked. He survived as a boy on the streets using the skill ar hacking into computers and by becoming the perfect thief, Trent the Uncatchable. However, this highly lucrative life is disturbed when he finds out that (a) his sister Denise is alive, well and reading minds, and (b) the United Nations Peaceforcers are after him for hacking ("web dancing" in the Data Network.

The process by which Trent becomes a revolutionary and the mechanics of his escape have a rare flair. However, this is space opera in a fairly hard science environment. This is a very plausible future. Trent is a great character. We're looking ar a guy who could outcon the Stainless Steel Rat or the Scarlet Pimpernel. The other characters are also memorable, and neither villains nor heros are black and white.

The hints of what is to happen in the future are tantalizing. If Daniel Keys Moran tries to die before writing #33 of The Tales of the Continuing Time, I will personally keep him on life support until he finishes.

By the way, book 1 was called Emerald Eyes. If you don't have it, get it.

ORBITAL DECAY

by Allen Steele
Ace, 1989, $3.95

A book review by Anthony D. Blokzyl

I managed to borrow a pre-release copy of Allen Steele's first novel, Orbital Decay. As I have been taken with his first published stories, appearing in the latter half of 1989 in Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, I fairly leapt at the chance. In sitting down to actually write a review, though, I found that I need to write in different personae, depending on what I am inspecting, and who I'm talking to.

Proofreading Quibbles

The prose is awkward in places; I sincerely hope that some of these things won't make it into the final printing, as they are both distracting and embarrassing. "Through the center ran a central shaft..." makes the writer look incompetent, when it's probably just a post-editing oversight. Ditto for page 111: "crystal-clear clarity" is at least doubly redundant. On page 83, a character raises something to "shoulder length"; no, hair can be shoulder length, but you raise something to shoulder level, or shoulder height.

Throughout, decades are misstyled: "the 1960's" is possessive, and should be "the 1960s": it's a common error, a mental slip from "the '60s". A simple basic error, and hence one that shouldn't happen dozens of times.

There was also an overuse of trademark terms throughout that probably bordered on trademark infringement, specifically Muzak and Velcro; the latter wasn't even capitalized. On page 58, a Frisbee is attributed to "Whammo"; it should be "Wham-O".

Research Doubts

Steele talks a little over his head throughout the book, which is very distracting in the early chapters before the plot seizes control.

Foremost, he talks a little over his head about standard federal secrecy procedures. He refers to something beyond "top secret" as "eyes only", which is amateurishly vague, at best, since "eyes only" can apply at just about any level; the bureaucrats are much more fond of "need to know", "restricted", "closed-drawer access", and such terms, nowadays.

Steele is referring, though, to employees of the National Security Agency, out nation's experts at everything from coded messages to spy satellites. If Steele had wanted to say "above top secret", he could have simply used the magic phrase "HANDLE VIA COMINT CHANNELS ONLY". Plus, a little basic research would have unearthed a few classification names; NSA is heavily need-to-know, and has gone beyond simple hierarchic classifications. So, to read a NSA document tagged TOP SECRET HOLYSTONE UMBRA GAMMA DACE means you would not only have to have clearance for top-secret materials, but for each of the other tags.

The Big Brother-type project in here is called "Big Ear". I don't think Steele is aware of the actual NSA project of that title, which was in fact meant to use the moon as a reflective surface to listen in on most of the hemisphere. In any case, he should have had the data beamed down, not to NSA headquarters at Fort George Meade, but to the "National Radio Quiet Zone" at Sugar Grove, West Virginia, which contains the original Big Ear dish, which is only 60 miles or so from the COMSAT microwave link. In other words, Steele paints a very nice paranoid vision that pales slightly in comparison to a project that is probably older than he is. Ah, life....

Finally, page 30 introduces a possible violation of Newtonian physics. A Character has a habit of tossing his flight helmet out of the cockpit with enough force to propel the unfortunate recipient violently backward. As these are fabric-sided headsets for earphones, I doubt there is more than a pound of mass there. I haven't worked this out, but a one-pound mass accelerating an inertial 150-pound mass to a meter per second or so would probably have to be flying at a pretty good clip. Now, even given that there is no gravity, a helmet of any type would grab a lot of air. In all, the initial velocity of the helmet is such that I'd expect the thrower's arm to creat a whip-crack, something not mentioned. I'd be happy to see the equation for this one.

Brief Literary Critique

Inept editorial handling of this novel has left the reader with a story that could be called "readable" or "a pretty good first effort."

Orbital Decay shows Allen Steele to be a good writer, and I believe it'd be worth four dollars if you are at all interested in a long-due updating of humankind's first unsure steps off the planet, and it is safe to say that the characters are rounded, realistic, and sympathetic in a well-conceived plot structure.

However, a slightly firmer editorial hand, overseeing everything from a small rewrite to the repair of some ugly typos could haveb made this a solid blockbuster. The editorial handling reminds me of Kadrey's Metrophage, which was allowed to slip into forgettableness due to the death of editor Terry Carr.

Metrophage, though, lacks the seeds of excellence that I see in Orbital Decay. With better treatment, I expect that Steele's first novel could have been a not "adventure of the near future" on the best-seller lists, as well as a great SF tale of the paradoxical frailty and strength of the human spirit.

Review

This is a very good tale of early efforts to develop cislunar space, focusing on the human factors of space development in a realistic fashion. Steele knows a good bit about the technology likely to be used, but it is his deft portraiture of the characters that make the story shine.

I am inclined to doubt cover blurbs, since publishers tend to search out anyone who will give the

book (or a subsection thereof, or the author, or the author's parakeet) a kind word, even out of sheer pity, and then attach lots of exclamation points to it. The front shout on this book is by Greg Benford, who I am normally inclined to trust. Unfortunatley, "Reads like Golden Age Heinlein!" turns me off--I'd hate to think of Steele as a self-conscious Heinlein clone.

While the first hundred pages is occasionally rough, the story begins to reel you in, and you will have a hard time putting the book down as you thunder through the final hundred pages. The book ends well, and I hated to see it end: I was hooked (a rare event) and could easily have enjoyed another hundred pages.

The author is the hottest find of 1989, having already published "Live for the Mars Hotel," "Red Planet Blues," and "Ride to Live, Live to Ride" in IASFM. They all seem to be roughly in the same version of the future, spread out along time. The novel could easily be a foundation piece for these stories, along with the in-process sequel, Clarke County Space. I am very interested in seeing where the next dozen books will take us, something I have said about only two other series.

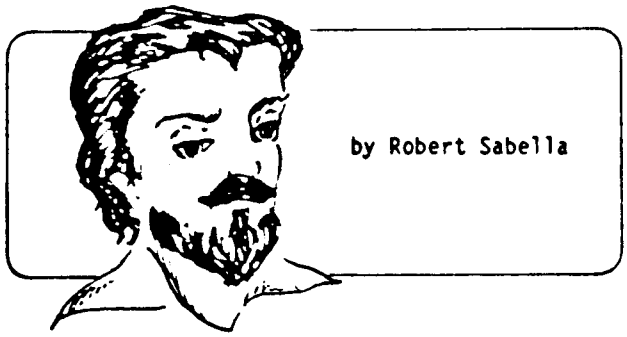
My only complaint is the constant mention of The Grateful Dead. Whatever happened to Quicksilver Messenger Service? or The Great Society? or Jefferson Airplane? or Steppenwolf? or Chilliwack? or Steve Miller Blues Band? or Canned Heat? or....

PAPA WAS A BANANA

by Thomas A. Easton

I was a blushing virgin gay, when
Between the cushions of my love's couch
I found a mad banana
That insisted on posterity.
I though it quite a peculiar thing,
Logical in all its rhetoric,
Its famous volleys quick to fell me
With forces of gravidity.
Now the pain is past, the joy is come,
And I can lean upon those cushions
While our posterity, still small, drinks
From the mountains of my breast.

TEN YEARS AGO IN SCIENCE FICTION



by Robert Sabella

Arnold Abramson finally sold Galaxy Magazine after years of mismanagement. This caused general delight throughout fandom as the new publisher was Vincent McCaffrey, respected owner of the Avenue Victor Hugo science fiction bookstore in Boston and publisher of Galileo. McCaffrey announced elaborate plans for Galaxy, including an 8.5 by 11 inch size, the return of the two-sided borders on the cover and the appointment of Floyd Kemske as editor. He also announced the possible revival of Worlds of IF as a fantasy magazine.

Alas, all the elaborate plans lasted a single issue as McCaffrey's bookstore went bankrupt and Galaxy Magazine ceased publication after thirty years of influence in the science fiction field.

This is as good a time as any to pay tribute to some of the outstanding stories and writers published in Galaxy. They included Clifford D. Simak (Way Station), Damon Knight, Robert Sheckley, Alfred Bester (The Demolished Man and The Stars My Destination), Isaac Asimov (The Caves of Steel), Ray Bradbury (Fahrenheit 451), Theodore Sturgeon ("Slow Sculpture"), Frederik Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth (The Space Merchants), Cordwainer Smith ("The Boy Who Bought Old Earth" and "The Dead Lady of Clown Town"), Robert Silverberg (Nightwings and Dying Inside), Jack Vance ("The Dragon Masters" and "The Last Castle"), Poul Anderson (Tau Zero), Arthur C. Clarke (Rendezvous with Rama), Avram Davidson ("Or All the Seas with Oysters"), Gordon R. Dickson ("Soldier, Ask Not"), Harlan Ellison ("'Repent, Harlequin,' Said the Ticktockman"), James Gunn (The Listeners), Robert A. Heinlein (The Puppet Masters), Frank Herbert, R.A. Lafferty, Keith Laumer, Fritz Leiber (The Big Time), Larry Niven, Edgar Pangborn, William Tenn ("The Men in the Walls"), John Varley, Michael Bishop, Jack Williamson, Roger Zelazny ("Damnation Alley") and Robert F. Young. It featured science columns by Willy Ley and Jerry Pournelle and book reviews by Algis Budrys and Theodore Sturgeon.

A strong case could be made for Galaxy Magazine being the leading science fiction prozine of both the 50s and 60s based on its domination of the Hugo Awards during that period.

——— Fall 1979 - Winter 1980 ———

Ben Bova became executive editor of Omni and selected Robert Sheckley as the new fiction editor.

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Continuing the upheavals among science fiction prozines, Conde Naste sold Analog to Davis Publications which already published Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine as well as such other genre publications as Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine and Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine. Publisher Joel Davis announced no drastic changes would be made in the fifty-year-old Analog.

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Micahel Moorcock's Gloriana won the World Fantasy Award as the Best Fantasy Novel of the previous year.

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A number of important books and stories were published this season:

Peter Nicholls' The Science Fiction Encyclopedia, generally considered the most important SF reference work;

Robert Asprin released the first volume of his Thieves World. It featured a format that was unique at the time: a jointly-created world in which various authors set stories. The book and its successors proved so popular that an entire subgenre of "shared world anthologies" sprung into being as a result;

Michael Bishop released two underrated books: Transfigurations (the novelization of his Hugo and Nebula-nominated "Death and Designation Among the Asadi") and Eyes of Fire (a complete revision of his first novel A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire);

Gordon R. Dickson's "Lost Dorsai" appeared in Jim Baen's bookzine Destinies. It is considered one of the best stories in the Childe Cycle, winning a Hugo Award as Best Novella of 1980;

Richard Cowper's novel The Road to Corlay was released to general praise. Its introductory section was the Hugo-nominated "Pipers at the Gates of Dawn."

Two novels by much-heralded science fiction writers were released to mixed reviews: Ursula K. LeGuin's The Beginning Place and Roger Zelazny's Roadmarks. |*|

YUGOSLAV SF SCENE

by Pavel Gregoric, Jr.

Yugoslavia is a small country with a small population. Due to its size of 98,766 square miles (or a bit more picturesquely, like the areas of Illinois and Tennessee together) and approximately 22.5 million inhabitants, therefore it is hard to define Yugoslav fandom as a particularly spirited one. Broadly speaking, it isn't as well developed as American or British SF fandom, but there are people who like and appreciate SF, people who could run Yu-Fandom successfuly, modernize it and make it the equal of any other fandom. (The problem as to why they aren't doing so is an entirely different subject, which I can talk about some other time.)

Let me enumerate some of the SF clubs in Yugoslavia: "Gea" in Osijek, "Lira" in Nis, "Nova" in Ljubljana, "Lazar Komarcic" in Belegrade, "Pulsar" in Skopje, "SFera" in Zagreb, and a few smaller ones. I, personally, am a member of the Zagreb SF Society, SFera, and I will try to describe the activities and give a club profile, so that you can compare it to your clubs.

We have our meetings in a room of a secondary school, and it's exclusively ours. We don't even have to pay rent for it; it is simply--ours. Regular meetings are every Wednesday. The film section of the club have meetings every Thursday; they talk about SF films and watch them, if circumstances all for them to get some videotapes. There are twenty chairs and two large tables, a TV set, video-recorder, wall panel for messages, and bookcases. We own about 750 foreign SF books (English, French, German and Italian), and a majority of the SF books and prozines published in Yugoslavia. All these items can be borrowed for three weeks at a time (but if you are an experienced solicitor, you can take them out for more than a month!). There are nine sections in the club formed since 1977: film-section, art-section, photo-section, computer-section, etc.

SFera's clubzine is called Parsek and it looks like any other A-1 fanzine. Oh yes, apropos of fanzines, there aren't many fanzine fans. You might have come across these names: Krsto Mazuranic, Bruno Ogorelec, Damir Coklin, Zika Prodanovic, Pavel Gregoric, Jr, and perhaps a couple other names which aren't on the SFera membership list.

One of SFera's special activities is organizing SFERACON, the local convention (usually held in February, but starting this year and hereafter in May). Another very crazy activity for the SFera club members is preparing all the necessary stuff for the Worldcon in 1993 bidding. It'd be great fun if we would win!!!

Yeah, I mentioned SFERACON. Last year (1988) it was the 10th anniversary of the convention and it was pretty good. There were three video-halls showing films 24-hours-a-day, a second-hand SF book sale, meeting halls, and round-table rooms. Art GoH was Bob Zivkovic, a very popular SF illustrator; he was a regular artist for Alef, one of the rare SF magazines here (but it was discontinued--pity!). The GoH should have been Iain Thomas, but to our regret he was unable to attend the con.

There's also a convention called YUCON which should be the national con, but it wasn't held last year because of some, to me, unknown reasons. I assume there are some other local conventions held around Yugoslavia, but I don't know their names, places, and dates they are held (you must take into consideration my "neo-ness"!).

Since the year 1945, there hasn't been more than 500 SF books translated and published here. Translating jobs are poorly paid, and that jeopardizes the number of translations, not just in the field of SF. Those translated books are mainly SF classics and by reading them you can, theoretically, get some general knowledge of SF. Specializing is impossible. You can't enter a bookstore here and say, "I want all of Asimov's SF from 1967 to 1972," or "Give me all the story collections by Eric Frank Russel published in the edition of...," or "What's the latest cyberpunk you've got?"

But, of course, there are second-hand bookshops in which you can find some interesting and not-yet-translated SF books in English, or, rarely, German. Books in second-hand shops are much cheaper than books in standard bookshops. Let me give you an example. My pocket money monthly varies from 30,000 up to 50,000 dinars (sounds like a lot). A translated hardcover of Lord of the Rings costs 98,000 dinars. Another example: Isaac Asimov's Guide to Modern Science, a 300 page paperback, untranslated, costs 112,000 dinars. Multiply that price by 4.5 and you'll get an average monthly salary of an average worker in Yugoslavia.

However, I think that the main reason why SF

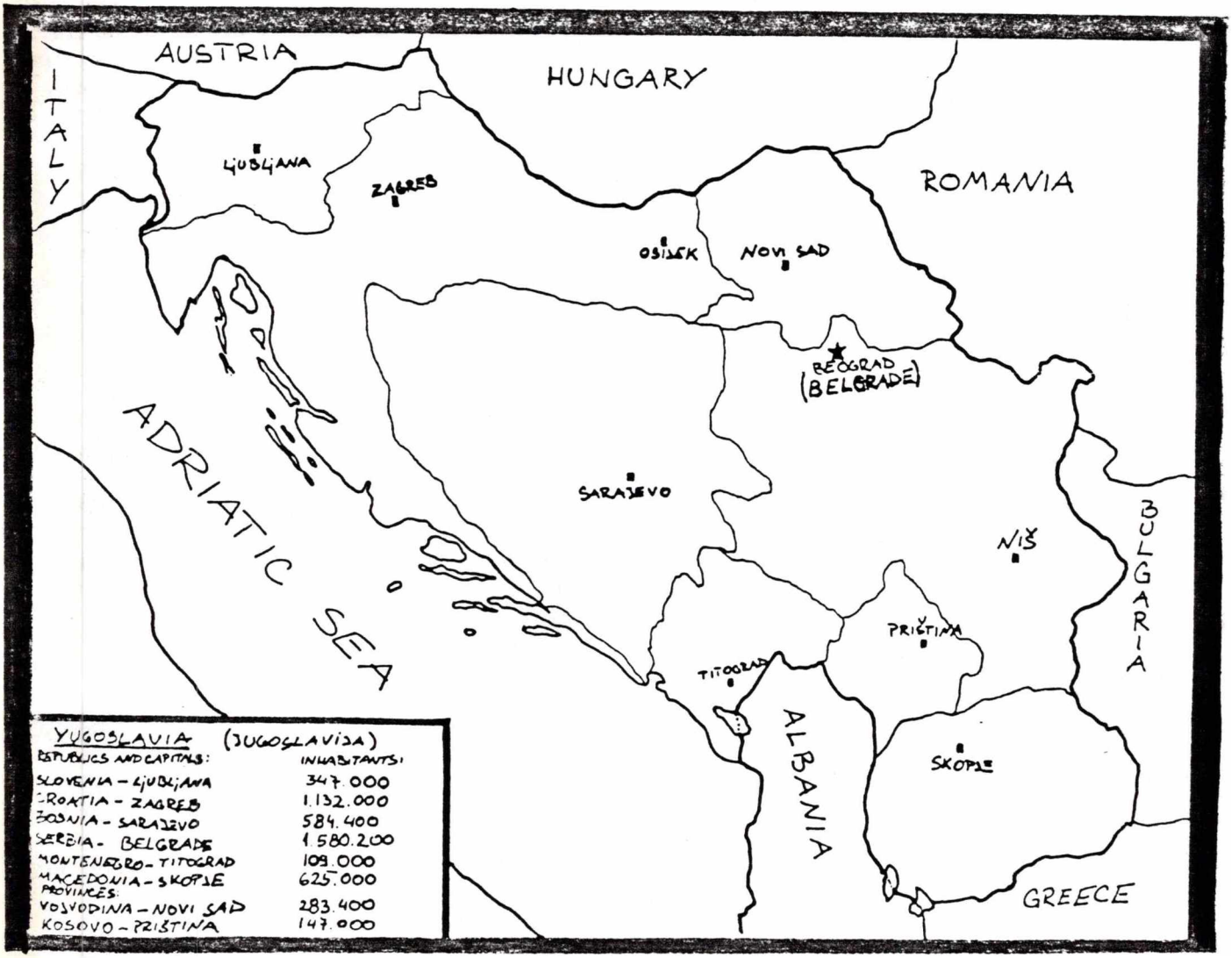
books aren't translated more often lies in the fact that mundane people mostly hold it in contempt. SF isn't really considered as a literature. Nevertheless, in recent years, SF is getting more and more popular (I hope not just in Yugoslavia!).

Reading all this you might have wondered about Yugoslav SF authors. As a matter of fact, there aren't many books written by Yu-authors (certainly not more than 10--don't know precisely!); they confine themselves to publishing stories in the now-defunct Alef or in Sirius. Some of their names are: Predrag Raos, Slobodan Petrovski, Radmilo Andjelkovic, Predrag Filipovic, and Damir Mikulicic. There are indeed many very interesting works which might be, theoretically sold to Analog, F&SF, or IASFM, but were written in the Serbo-Croation language, which is, undoubtedly for you, equally as strange as an extraterrestrial one.

I mentioned Sirius. It's the leading SF magazine in Yugoslavia, having been published since (June, I think) 1976 until now. It has the longest tradition and has not yet discontinued publishing. Some of the authors who appear in the pages are: Bruce Sterling, Gordon R. Dickson, David Drake, Howard Waldrop, Murray Leinster, Aleksandar Vukovic, Goran Stankovic, Isaac Asimov, Ben Bova, Karl Hansen, Chistopher Anvil, Dean R. Koontz, Predrag Raos, Gerard Klein, Richard D. Nolan, J & D LeMay, Fredric Brown, Karen Anderson, Philip K. Dick, Brian W. Aldiss and Arthur C. Clarke.

You know, I found out (to my regret) that for the majority of Yu-fans the most popular, most represented, and generally most appreciated media of SF is film. But it's understandable because SF films are full of laser-shooting, suspenseful action and canvincing star-battles (thus, very interesting) and besides it doesn't take any special effort to sprawl lazily in a warm sofa, buy some popcorn)or any other mouth-occupation) and watch the hero-adventures of Warrant Officer Ripley, lethal Terminator, or fearless amalgamation of Coke-can and expanded human brain called Robocop. Actually, I too like to see a good suspenseful SF film, but I still think the medium of all is a good ol' book.

There's a lot left unsaid; I've really only scratched the surface of Yugoslav fandom, but if anyone would like to know more about some detail, I'll gladly explain.



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE FILKING COMMUNITY

From Tera Mitchel

Regarding: Rumor Mongering

Starting a couple of years ago, the filk rumor mill started up with various rumors about Thor Records. It is past time to set this particular story straight.

I first met Chrys Thorsen at a filksing at Paul Willett's home in September, 1987. It was then that she told me of her interest in starting a record company to produce filk tapes. I immediately introduced Chrys to both Kathy Mar and Eric Gerds. Within two months, even before Thor Records had become a reality, we were hearing rumor to the effect of "Don't sign a contrat with this new company. They are going to steal your songs." Thor Records' response to this was, "We are not interested in publishing songs; we just want to put out tapes." The following July I received a new contract from Off Centaur which included reassigning my publishing rights to them.

Let us not forget the rumor that a large amount of money (ten thousand dollars) was given to Chrys Thorsen to buy equipment to start a studio. Fact: Chrys Thorsen owned her equipment five years before getting involved with filking nad has receipts to prove it. She also had been running her studio, doing demos, for two years. If someone had been generous enough to <u>give</u> Chrys that much money, she would have a lot more and better equipment that she has presently.

Now I am going to skip some of the "hot dirt" that has been passed around this last year and a half and get to the latest journey into the realm of the ridiculous. I have been able to track down this rumor all the way to its origins, and I think it is funny and pitiful how a conversation in northern California about how in the real world a music company can (and does) charge an artist for studio time, as much as 20 thousand dollars (and it could be more), can spread and become distorted. Within three weeks the rumor was going around that Thor Records was charging 20 thousand dollars to their artists to do a tape. In the middle of the August we got news from the mid-west that a rumor was being circulated that Thor Records charges 35 thousand dollars to do a tape. Believe me, Thor Records does not charge anything to its artists to do a tape. Thor Records' budget is very modest. The budget of their artists is, if anything, even more modest. 20 thousand?? Who do you know among the filk artists with that kind of money to throw around? But (giggling insanely) if someone wanted to invest a large amount od money into a project I am sure that Thor would be willing to talk.

I have heard a lot of rumors. Some are ridiculously funny while others are insidiously destructive. I have brought out a few here that I know are to be the truth, verified by Chrys Thorsen of Thor Records. Sometime, we must stop the sniping, weaselly snide innuendo and get down to truth, and return to filk as fun.

So the next time someone starts off with the latest hot rumor, just ask yourself, "What axe does this person have to grind? And from what I know of the people involved, is this even sane?" And what is their story. Drag the beast out from under the dark corners and let it see the light of day. And then maybe the rumormongers will crawl back into their holes and the filk community will once again be a community.

Sincerely,

Tera Mitchel
14450 Pickwick Lane
Garden Grove, CA 92644
September 2, 1989

Fanzines

by Lan

Since June of 1989, when I last put this column together, I tried to keep the stack of fanzines that arrived in a single pile. Well, it worked for a while, but the pile became unbalanced so I split it into two. When school started, I wasn't as consistent about where I put everything. In the end, when I tried to collect them all, I had a stack about 13 inches tall. I knew there had to be more than that, so I scurried and rooted around until I got this present 15 inch stack. Then it took me a while to get around to making comments, and the stack grew even as I wrote up short reviews. I don't know what the final size of the stack turned out to be, but I have a few pages of reviews now. Don't expect much. I am very busy doing about ten things at once, but I'll do do what I can. All are available for the usual unless mentioned otherwise. Please make checks out to the editor, not the name of the zine.

A & A #122-24. Frances Valery, 11 rue des Vigneron-ons, 33800 BORDEAUX, FRANCE. This is a publication of l'ACADEMIE DE L'ESPACE; 100 francs for 8 issues. A very nice looking fanzine from France. The covers and interior art (when there is any) is very interesting, and the print is clean. #122 (June) contains lots of reviews, and information on the World Fantasy awards and the British Fantasy awards. There is also information about various French SF happenings (fanzines, TV, etc.). #123 (July) has Neo News, an essay on Dianetics, a literary chronicle on Robert E. Howard, and a lettercolumn. #124 (October) concentrates on general fannish news, reviews and conventions.

Airglow #7. Terry L. Bohman, Box 14, East Thetford, Vermont 05043 USA. $1/2 issues. I continue to hold up Terry's personalzine as one of the more intertesting ones that have passed my eyes. I grab a coke, sit and read about Terry's experiences. Excellent writing.

Andruschak-zines. Harry Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309 USA. Harry sends three zines from his apa output, including a long one about his trip to the Grand Canyon.

Anvil #49-50. ANVIL, Charlotte Proctor, 8325 7th Avenue So., Birmingham, AL 35206. The usual or $6 per year. The usual pleasant issue of writing by Buck Coulson, Charlotte herself, and a host of others. In #49, the short article by Eva Hauser (from Czechoslovakia) about her reactions to America, and American waste--both productive and non-productive was I think the high point of the issue. There were also fanzine reviews and a smaller than usual letter column. #50 has another essay, a con report about a Czech convention this time, by Eva Hauser, a larger fanzine review column by Roy G. Bivens, and the more normal hefty and active letter column.

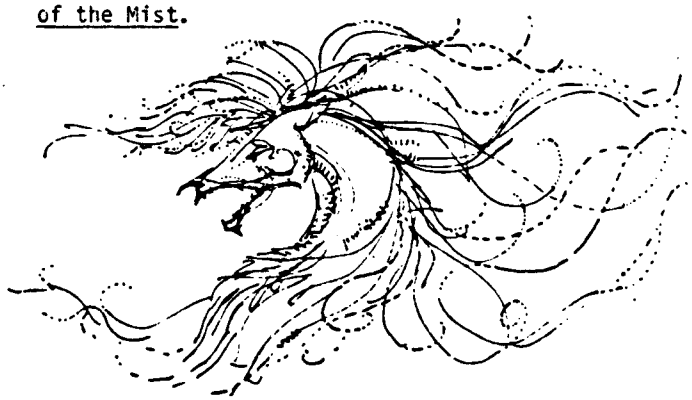
Apple of Discord #2. David Palter, 55 Yarmouth Road (Basement), Toronto, Ontario, M6G 1X1 CANADA. A short zine/letter informing friends of the latest events in his life.

Ben's Beat 13. Ben Indick, 428 Sagamorer Avenue, Teaneck, NY 07666 USA. This is Ben's FAPAzine which includes his Theatre Beat. Good and interesting stuff.

Wendy's Best of 1989. Wendy Counsil, 1224 Eleventh Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122. A personalzine of the best/worst things that happened to Wendy in 1989.

Black Hole #28. Ian Creasey, ed., c/o Luu SF Society, Leeds University Union, PO Box 157, LEEDS LS1 1UH, UNITED KINGDOM. The usual or 40p a copy. The new editor has put together an assortment of aarticles, news, fiction poetry and art in this latest issue of Black Hole. Some good reading.

Book of Gold, The #2. Jeremy Crampton, 302 Walker Building, University Park, PA 16802 USA. $.50 in check, cash or stamps, or the usual. This zine is subtitled "A Newsletter on Gene Wolfe and his Works." Rather interesting -- not extremely scholarly, but well done and well written. Crampton continues with his chapter by chapter explanations of some of the Greek references in Soldier of the Mist.



Brad's Scrapbook. Brad Westervelt, 1224 11th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122. A collection of cartoons, art and articles from various places that have meant something to Brad this past year. It's an experiment, and an interesting way to find out what he's all about. I've known him for a few years, and he still surprizes me.

Bruzzfuzzel News #59-60. Baton Rouge Science Fiction League, PO Box 14238, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4238, USA. Typical clubzine with occasionally exceptional reviews, some good art and locs.

Cathay Contrivance. Peter Smith, 16 Tresta Walk, Woking, Surrey, GU21 4XF ENGLAND. Has a trip report on Peter's travels to Hong Kong in January of 1989. fanzine reviews and locs on Illyria, his previous zine.

The Centaur Gatherum Newsletter #16-17. Ed Pegg, Jr., POB 10216, Colorado Springs, CO 80932, USA. A fanzine/newsletter about centaurs -- art, stories, et al.

Chris Drumm, Books, Book catalogues #31-38. PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226, USA. Catalogues, obviously; Chris also puts out his own line of little books which are well worth looking at.

Cleveland Ansible. #1, 3, 4. Julie E. Washington, editor and staff. PO Box 14841, Cleveland, OH 44114. This is a new fanzine which gives news about Cleveland SF & F fandom. The first one was totally written by Julie. Subsequent issues did have different contributors. Some interesting reading.

Con News #3. Claude N. Warren, Jr., 7735 Osceola Street, Westminster, CO 80030. $12/year. Put together as a newspaper, Claude and his staff hope to get submissions and ads about SF and related conventions, and establish Con News as the newszine of the convention world. Looks good, and the articles/ads are informative.

Convention Log #53-55. R Laurraine Tutihasi, Katnip Manor, 5876 Bowcroft Street #4, Los Angeles, CA 90016, USA. Whim. Laurraine's diary/personalzine; has some reviews and conreports, locs; summarizes her life and feelings.

Cooperative Cauliflower, The. Harry Bond, 6 Elizabeth Avenue, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5NX, ENGLAND. The usual. This is better than Nowhere Fast and the other zines Harry has put together. The articles are mostly interesting, particularly the one by Terry Broome called "Burning Down the House," though I can't tell if it's fiction or fact.

Darkfawn 2. Diana Harlan Stein, 1325 Key West, Troy, MI 48083. Whim only. "This is a collection of stories and art based on the Darkfawn Campaign," as Diana writes in the introduction. Diana runs a gaming group and this is the results of some of the group writing stories based on the characters -- not the adventures they have had during a game -- in the group. Some very interesting stuff here, and wonderful art by Daina, Russ Herschler, Sandy Schreiber, Tom Dow, April Lee and others.

De Profundis #207-214. Los Angeles Science Fiction Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. The official newsletter of LASFS, filled with con and fan information, reviews, minutes, etc.

Delineator #7. Alan White, 455 E. 7th St. #4, San Jacinto, CA 92383. Usual, or $10 in cash, stamps, or check made payable to Alan White. Reviews, a hefty lettercolumn, art, a special appreciation of Forrest J Ackerman, and various articles. There are lots of photos reproduced, which is probably why to price is so high, not to mention that it has over 150 pages. This is the last issue of Delineator.

Desert Sun #7. Craig Chrissinger, 915 Idlewilde Lane SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108, USA. A zine filled with poetry, art (some excellent), articles, reviews, cartoons, etc. Pleasant reading, and Craig would love contributions.

Don-o-Saur #55, 56. Don C. Thompson, 3735 W. 81st place, Westminster, CO 80030. For the usual, $2/issue, $8/year. #55 has a long essay about education, and Don invites comments. In #56, Don reveals that he is going into business for himself, selling off duplicate books, and review copies. He is retired, and has the time to put into a bit of self employment.

Dreams and False Alarms #5. Bruce Gillespie, GPO 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA. This is Bruce's FAPAzine, gratefully accepted in trade for LL. His writing is always interesting, though I never get around to writing to him. He has lists of the "Best of" various things for 1987; and he has a number of marvelous record reviews.

8-1/2 X 11 zine, #6. David Thayer, 7209 DeVille Dr., North Richland Hills, TX 76180-8257. A wonderfully funny/serious zine from David. His account of his family happenings, his withdrawal from Vietnam, and other things are fun reading. Good art and layout.

Enchantment, The: A Trip Report by Walt Willis. The South Florida SF Society, PO Box 70143, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143. $5/copy (includes P&H), $6.50 overseas; make checks out to SFSFS; $.50 from each copy goes to TAFF. This is a trip report (obviously) of Walt Willis' journey to the US as the GoH at TROPICON. Good, interesting reading.

Erg Quarterly, #106-108. Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ, E. Yorkshire UNITED KINGDOM. LOC, $5/6 issues in US bills (not check -- costs too much to process). Terry celebrated his 67th birthday on October 1, 1989. He continues to produce these zines which are extremely interesting. They are filled with his personal life and thoughts, evocative essays, short book reviews, and his wonderful art. I must force myself to write a loc to Terry. Highly recommended

European Trash Cinema #1-6. Craig Ledbetter, Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325 USA. Craig continues his excellent coverage of Grade-B horror films and home videos, with guest reviews as well as his own. However, Craig is now concentrating on foreign horror films, a special interest of his, and thus is asking for such material. These first five issues show that there is no dearth of people interested in this subgenre of the horror film. If you are interested, send him a buck for a copy or two.

Fantasy Collector, The, #213. Camille "Caz" Cazedessus, Jr., 7080 Highland Road/ Bayou Fountaine, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808 USA. $18/year (12 issues). If you are interested in pulps, get this fanzine. It has articles and ads, and nicely reproduced pulp covers.

Fanzine Fanatique Quarterly #70. Keith A. Walker, 6 vine Street, Greaves, Lancaster, Lancs., LA1 4UF ENGLAND. A small issue this time with reviews of then current fanzines (sorta like this column).

FILE:770, #79-83. Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Ave., #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, USA. 5/$5 The premiere fannish newletter. Lots of interesting writing.

Firewird Arts & Music, Winter 1990. PO Box 453, El Cerrito, CA 94530. A catalogue of various tapes, art, music books and records in the filk and folk vein.

Fosfax #139-146. Fosfa, PO Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, USA. A fairly large, consistently produced monthly clubzine filled with reviews, commentary and locs. The lettercolumn is lively with many authors participating. The page count keeps going up. Soon each month will have a mailing half the size of my fanzine. Does the editor, Tim Lane, ever sleep? Recommended.

Full Circle, #4. Joseph G. Colgan, 4618 Mia Circle, San Jose, CA 95136. A comics fanzine that critiques the superhero comic books. Joe is asking for contributions.

Generic Fandom News #16, 17. Brian Youmans, 27R Albion St., Somerville, MA 02143, USA. This is filled with all the sorts of things: fannish news, reviews, conreports, and Brian's personal journal. Quite interesting.

Girabbit #5. David Bratman, PO Box 662, Los Altos, CA 94023 USA. David's FAPAzine sent in trade for LL. He reports on some of the interesting this that have happened to him in the past year.

Gradient. Robert Sabella, 2 Natalie Drive, Budd Lake, NJ 07828. This little fanzine is a collection of stories and essays that Bob has written over the past few years. The fiction is mediocre, but the essay, "A Mathematical Definition of Science Fiction" is very good

Harpings #18-#20. The Filk Foundation, 34 Barbara Drive, Little Rock AR 72204. USA. Available to Filk Foundation members, contribution of news, and editorial whim. Contains news of interest to filkers and those who enjoy filking and conreports of the recent Filkcons held around the country.

Hi-Tech Terror #43. Craig Ledbetter, Box 5367,

Kingwood, TX 77325, USA. This is the last issue c Craig's excellent reviewzine of horror and trashy films/videos. He continues to publish, though, in European Trash Cinema.

Hickman's Zines. Lynn Hickman, 413 Ottokee St., Wauseon, OH 43657. This time Lynn has sent a number of different zines in trade for LL. Wauseon Wonder Stories #14 & 15 (his MYRIADzine), Old & New #8 (his KAPAzine), and Packrat #2 (his zine for FLAP and PEAPS). Interesting stuff about Lynn's past and present life in fandom.

Ibid #66. Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ, 07666 USA. Ben's zine for The Esoteric Order of Dagon. Included in this issue is an article entitled "My Pretty Pony: An Odd Couple Produces a Work of Art," which was originally published in the April 1989 issue of Castle Rock: The Stephen King Newsletter.

I'm Not Boring You, Am I? #7. Robert Runte, PO Box 4655, P.S.S.E., Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5G5 CANADA. A personalzine of Robert Runte. He talks about CUFF (Canadian Unity Fan Fund), the two conventions he was at in Eastern Canada in the fall of 1989 (BANFFCON, PINEKONE II/CANVENTION 9), various places visited, and the Casper Awards. Some brilliant writing, and comments on French Canadian versus English/American SF.

Inner Frontier, The, #1. Seann McAnally, Editor, 16600 Ellison Way, Independence, MO 64055 USA. The sub-heading on the cover reads: "The Official Publication of the Mike Resnick Fan Club." Its 34 pages are filled with articles, art, and even a short story inspired by the works of Mike Resnick. It's an ambitious project, and the editor asks for submissions of material appropos to Resnick's works. I'm considering writing an article myself. Mike, to say the least, is thrilled by it all.

It Goes on the Shelf, #6. Ned Brooks, Sign of the Purple Mouth, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, VA 23605. Interesting zine mixing book reviews with letters received. Ned continues to request strong line art that will xerox/thermofax well.

It's My Dance, #9. Joel Zakem, 2091 Sherwood, Apt. #2, Louisville, KY 40205 USA. Joel's zine for ALPS. Joel gave this to me in trade, but sparked specifically by my comments in a previous "Ramblings" about one particular incident with a Jewish family from on of my classes. Quite interesting.

Knarley Knews, The, #16, 17 & 19. Henry L Welch, 66 9th St., Troy, NY 12180. Henry Welch (aka Knarley) has put together a little zine which is mostly a personalzine, although he welcomes contributions. #16 has a mixture of writers; #17 is mostly about his stay in the hospital with a collapsed lung; #19 has a few reviews and a SCI-CON report and a strange cartoon series. Not a bad read.

KONTAKT #1 & 2. Ladislav Peska, Na Dolikach 503, 274 01 Slany, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. Written in English for the purpose of making contact with English-speaking and writing fans, Ladislav is encouraging comments and submissions from all. He packs a lot of different things into these 8 pages.

Last Ripples, The. John D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks., MK16 9AZ UNITED KINGDOM. This is the "Last Ripple" of mail that John Owen has received since folding his excellent fanzine Crystal Ship.

Life in the Fast Lane: New Orleans Science Fiction Fandom from the 1960s to the Present. Lester Boutillier, 2723 Castiglione St., New Orleans, LA 70119. $1/copy. Lester has put a lot of work in compiling the information here about NOLA fandom. It's worth much more than a buck to read it.

LOOP GAROU #4. Guest editor: Raja Thiagarajan, 303 E. 8th #10, Bloomington, IN 47401. This issue is a Special Cyber Punk edition of the fanzine established by the Science Fiction Loop, a SF club in Bloomington. It is a surprisingly good issue, with some very good material on the cyberpunk movment. There are also a couple of decent stories as well.

Low Orbit #42 & 43. R'ykandar Korra'ti, editor. 252 East Loudon, Lexington, KY 40505-3636 USA. An excellently produced zine, aiming it seems for the semiprozine market. There is a good mix of different types of articles, features, locs and reviews. #42 features a conference with Orson Scott Card; #43 has an interview with Jack Chalker and a conference with Lawrence Watt-Evans.

Marvin - the Lehti #4. Ari Veintie, Harjukatu 6 A 2 A, 00500 Helsinki, FINLAND. This is the clubzine of the Helsinki University Science Fiction Club. #4 is the "Hitch Hiker's Guide to Helsinki and Women in Science Fiction" special issue, and is an interesting collection of articles reviews, and a couple of fiction pieces. The art is very nice.

Matalan Rave, The, #17. Michael Hailstone, 204 Station Street, Box Hill, Victoria 3128, AUSTRALIA. Some reviews, articles (written with a sharp edge to evoke comments), some personal stuff, locs, etc.

Memphen #133. Gregory Bridges, 266 Garland Place, Memphis, TN 38104. This is the semi-official publication of the Memphis SF Association. Mostly information about Southern Fandom awards, upcoming conventions, and club news.

Mentor, The, #64 (August 1989). Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. A mixture of articles, locs and fiction. Good, pleasant reading, with a variety of articles (one by Buck Coulson), reviews, a short story, poetry and locs. Some excellent art by Steve Fox, very well re-produced. I wish Ron well in his expanded home.

Metaphysical Review, The, #14. The Music Issue. Bruce Gillespie, GPO 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria, 3001 AUSTRALIA. US$25/6 issues. Some very delightful and interesting articles about music--written by music lovers, not necessarily fans who understand the technical and structural aspects. Included is a special insert by Bruce on the death of his father. Very moving.

Metcalf Zines, Norm. PO Box 1368, Boulder Colorado 80306 USA. In return for issues of Lan's Lantern, Norm sent me various zines from the different apas he's in: The Devil's Work (Vol 2, #10-16) for FAPA, Resin (Vol 2, #9, 11-13) for SAPS, Sulph (Vol 1, #2-7) for PEAPS, and Tyndallite (Vol 1, #15, 18-22) for SFPA. Norm has been around fandom for a long time and has lots of information about SF, authors, and books. Although these are mailing comments to various people in the apae, the information is interesting.

Mimosa #6. Dick & Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1270, Germantown, MD 20874 USA. An excellent genzine, with lots of different articles to appeal to most people's tastes. Some very good artwork, especially the stuff by Teddy Harvia.

NASFA Shuttle (Vol 9, #5-12) NASFA, PO Box 4857, Huntsville, AL 358154857, USA. Current Ecitor: Nelda Kathleen Kennedy, 7907 Charlotte Drive SW, Huntsville, AL 35802 USA. The newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association. Locs, reviews, meeting & club news, etc. It continues to be interesting, and downright frustrating because it comes out monthly on schedule (like FOSFAX). Keep up the good work, Nelda!

National Fantasy Fan, The (TNFF), Vol 49, #2-5). Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood, CA 91606 USA. Comes with membership in N3F. The official newsletter of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F).

Nature to Wander, The. Vol 1, #6. Dale Denton, 2016 Ravinia Circle, Arlington, TX 76012. A small zine with some interesting writing and reviews. Dale's ecitorial is serious, and worth reading.

Neology Vol. 14 #1. T. Phinney, ESFACAS Box 4071 PSSE, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8. $12/year, quarterly. The Edmonton Science Fiction And Comic Arts Society clubzine. Some good articles and reviews, active loccol, and club news. The artwork, some of which in the past has been excellent, is vastly improved with the new printing technique. This issue has an emphasis on SF and writing. There is also a special insert of SUBTEXT, the daily newsletter of CONTEXT 89 (Canadian SF con).

Niekas #39-40. Edmund R. Meskys, RFD 2, Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9729 USA. A nicely put together fanzine full of excellent commentary and reviews. Hugo winner in 1967; nominated again for 1989 (lost to File:770 as I did). #40 is dedicated to and all about Andre Norton, released at NOREASCON III, the Worldcon where Andre was the GoH.

9-Innings, #6. Andrew P. Hooper, Shandwick Hall, 315 N. Ingersoll St., Madison, WI 53703. A fanzine about baseball.

No Sex. Vol 4, #5. Jerry Foley, 896 Cundiff Lane, Eastview, KY 42732. $1.50/issue. A small fanzine which publishes articles, art and stories in the SF/Fantasy field. Some interesting comic strips.

North With the Sun. Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills, CA 91344. A travelogue of Bruce and Elayne Pelz's trip/cruise to Alaska, taken from The Kiarians' Luncheon 75 from LASFAPA #153. Good, interesting reading.

Notes from Oblivion #22-23. Jay Harbor, 626 Paddock Lane, Libertyville, IL 60048. An odd little zine that is mostly hand-printed. Jay would like to correspond with people and talk about serious things. Because of his poor eyesight, he needs letters to be typed or printed with large script. Jay explains his medical problems in these issues.

Nova Express, Vol. II, #2-4. Michael Sombera, ed., 301 East 35th St., Austin, TX 78705 USA. $8/year inside USA, other rates apply. Nice layout and production values abound in this fanzine. These issues have some good articles. #2 is their "Steampunks" issue. #3 has a nice interview with Kim Stanley Robinson, and #4, aside from a delightful cover by Ruth Thompson, has an interesting interview with John Kessel.

Odd #2. David R. Haugh, 550 N 3rd Street, Woodburn, OR 97071 USA. An odd little zine. Dave has an article about a four mile run and what goes through his mind while running (I wonder if I should do that with a mile swim!). Some other stuff and locs.

Other Worlds #3. Edited by Gary Lovisi, Gryphon Publications, Box 209, Brooklyn, NY 11228-0209, USA. $4/copy. A small press publication of new stories in the tradition of the original Other Worlds edited by Ray Palmer. This has sf, articles and a couple of nice columns. He is soliciting submissions; payment is in copies of the issue in which the submission appears.

OtheRealms #24 & 25. Chuq Von Rospach, 35111-F Newark Blvd., Suite 255, Newark, CA 94560, USA. Still one of the best reviewzines around, with an active lettercol. #24 is smaller; Chuq had to cut costs somewhere so is using a slightly smaller typeface and made some tough decisions about content and features. #25 is larger; Chuq is back to using photocopy, so the page restriction is lifted somewhat.

Penguin Dip #24-30. Stephen H. Dorneman, 94 Eastern Ave #1, Malden MA 02148 USA. $15/year (10 issues). Various articles about SF, zine reviews, comics, and gaming. Nice writing by Lawrence Watt-Evans on Comics, and an active lettercol. Steve has some beautiful covers by Ruth Thompson and Peggy Ranson.

Pigs Might Fly. Marc Ortlieb, PO Box 215, Forest Hills, Victoria 3131 AUSTRALIA. Marc's ANZAPAzine sent in trade for LL (along with an article which will see light in a future issue of the Lantern). He makes some interesting comments on being a new parent.

Pirate Jenny #3. Pat Mueller, 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116, USA. $3/issue. A spectacular issue, better than #2. It has a good Brad Foster cover (dated 1988!), and lots of nice interior art. Pat talks about her winning the Hugo back in 1988, and lots of book reviews abound.

Probe #75. Neil van Niekerk, SFSA, PO Box 2538, Primrose 1416 UNION of SOUTH AFRICA. A clubzine of SFSA, filled with various storues, poetry, reviews and locs. Interesting perspective.

Pulsar #13, 14. A. E. Ubelhor, 2425 Highway 41 North, Suite 134, Evansville, IN 47711-4063 USA. $9/year (6 issues). A magazine-sized fanzine, filled with reviews, locs, articles, and fiction. #13 includes an interview with Stephan Donaldson, an article about the George Pal films, an artist profile of Keith Berdak, and an interesting guide to Africe by Mike Resnick. #14 has an interview with Raymond Fiest, an artist profile of Steve Fox (with lots of his art scattered throughout), and more.

Reluctant Famulus, The. #4-7. Tom Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221. Bimonthly. A fanzine with some reviews, but mostly personal observations on SF, fandom and conventions. Very pleasant reading. Tom is looking for submissions of art, articles and reviews. He has just passed his first year of publishing, and hopes to continue doing so.

The Rivendell Review. Vol 11, #2. Renee (Arwen) Alper, 730F Northland Rd., Forest Park, OH 45240 USA. Phone: (513) 742-4384. Quarterly; $5/year. The Rivendell Review is the newsletter of The American Hobbit Association. The newsletter contains news (obviously), poems, stories, and other items of interest to Tolkien and fantasy fans.

Robots and RoadRunners, Vol. 4, #2-3. Lynn Garcia, URSA MAJOR, PO Box 691448, San Antonio, TX 78629-1446 USA. $1.50/issue, bimonthly. The clubzine/newszine of Ursa Major (formerly the San Antonio SF Association). Some enlightening articles about club members, some good book and fanzine reviews, and even an interesting piece of fiction or two.

Rune #80. Jeanne Mealy and David Romm, MNSTff, PO Box 8297 Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55408 USA. The fanzine looks wondeful this time with a multicolor cover. The articles are interesting, and there are a lot of letters this time, and fanzine reviews too.

SF Commentary, #67. Bruce Gillespie, GPO 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria, 3001 AUSTRALIA. US$30/5 issues. Some very de- tailed reviews and insights on books from the Australian viewpoint. Of interest to readers of SF.

Samizdat #16. Philippe Gauthier, 197 Du Bearn, Saint-Lambert, Quebec J4S 1L2 CANADA, and Claude J. Pelletier, 20 Chemin du Mistral, Iles Laval, Laval, Quebec H7Y 1S1. $3/issue. A genzine for French-Canadian fans, written in French. It has cartoons, pro and fan reviews, interviews, locs, etc.

Science Fiction Journal, #152. Ahrvid Engholm, Renstiernas Gata 29, S-116 31 Stockholm, SWEDEN. "The leading Scandinavian SF Newsletter" is the billing on this fanzine. It has lots of conreports on various conventions from around the world, and some reviews.

Science Fiction Randomly, Vol. 2, #3. PO Box 12705, Gainesville, FL 32604-0705 USA. Some humorous and tongue-in cheek articles, fiction and comic strips; some interviews and ads.

Sglodion #1. David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, ENGLAND RG1 5AU. A "replacement" zine for Ansible, which passed away after the 1987 Worldcon. An amusing zine filled with Langford's humor and comments.

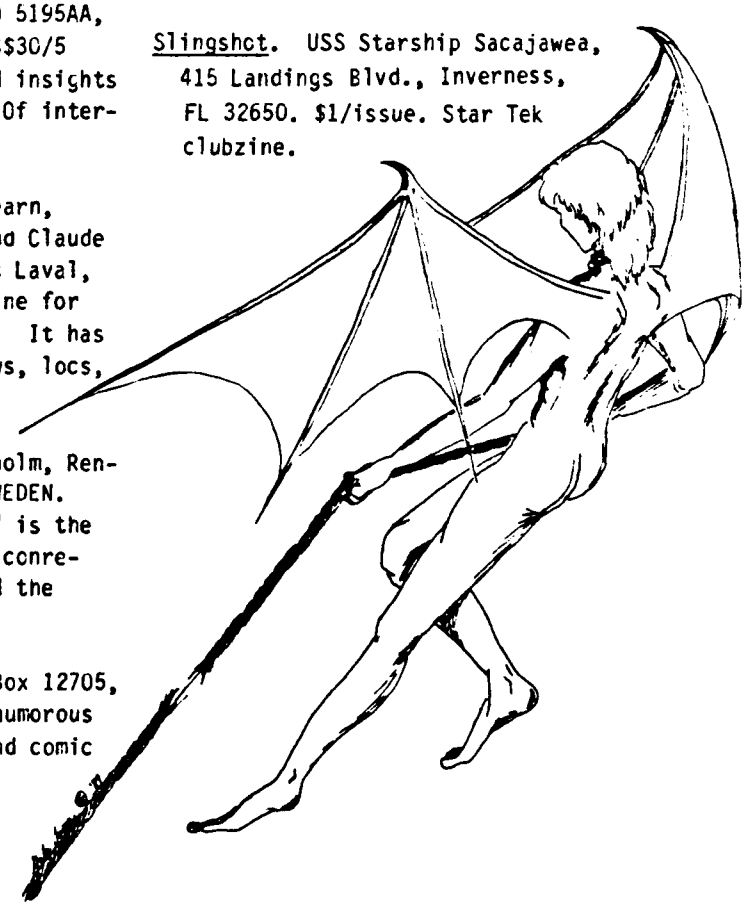
Shuttle, The SFSFS, #47, 53, 55-57. PO Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307 USA. "Official Newszine of the South Florida SF Society." Typical clubzine with news and reviews.

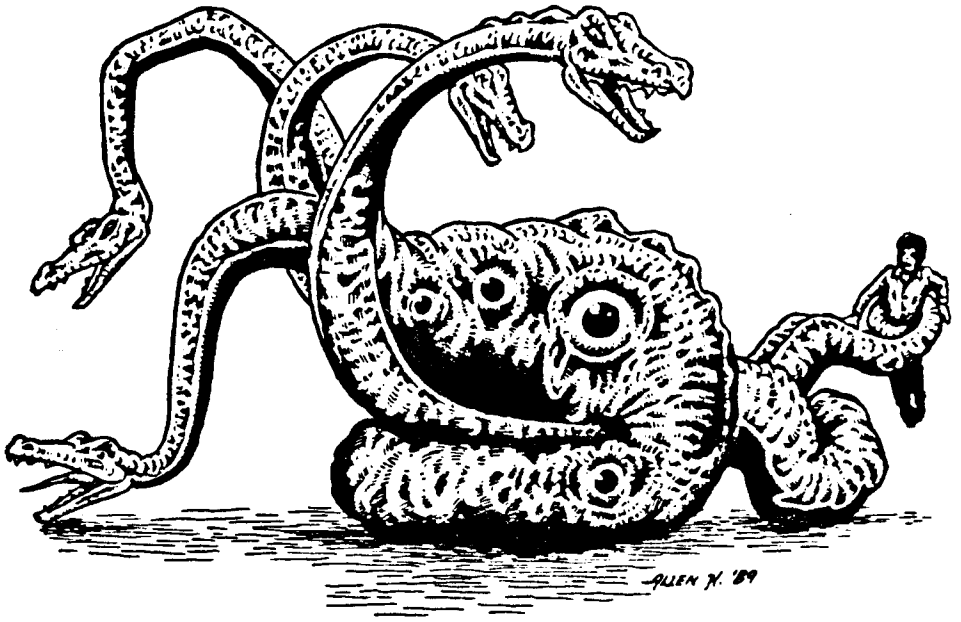
Shipyard Blues, #1-2. John D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks., MK16 9AZ UNITED KINGDOM. The replacement zine for Crystal Ship with a slightly different focus, more fun and more timely articles. The reporduction is excellent, and the artwork impeccable. Great reading and response.

Sikander #15. Irwin Hirsh, 26 Jessamine Avenue, East Prahran, Victoria 3181, AUSTRALIA. Nicely written fanzine, full of special news -- seems like most of Autralian fandom is/was pregnant, with births occurring in the mid to latter half of 1989. This also contains the trip report from GUFF winner John Foyster.

SKUG, #10, including Ditto II Progress Reports #1 & 2. Gary Mattingly, 7501 Honey Court, Dublin, CA 94568 USA. Whim. A personalzine about the life and times of Gary Mattingly and his wife Patti Peters. Has locs and other goodies.

Slingshot. USS Starship Sacajawea, 415 Landings Blvd., Inverness, FL 32650. $1/issue. Star Tek clubzine.





Solaris #83 - 87. Luc Pomerleau, Case Postale 25, Succursale A, Hull, Quebec, J8Y 6M7 CANADA. $3.50/issue. This is the semiprozine of French-speaking Canada. This is a nicely produced zine with reviews, stories, interviews, and lavish illustrations. Since it is written in French, I have trouble reading it, but Maia can make some of it out and says it's nicely done. The French teachers at school continue to marvel at its quality. #87 is a special 15th anniversary issue of the magazine. It also won the Prix Boreal 1989 in Ottowa last year. Congratulations!

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin, The, #5. SFC, P. L. Caruthers-Montgamery, 2629 Norwood Avenue, Anniston, AL 36201-2871, USA. A well laid-out zine filled with news, convention listings, club roster, fanzine guide and some nice art from Southern fans. PLCM's calligraphy adds to the issue.

Sweetness & Light #1-3. Jack R. Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, Victoria, 2006, AUSTRALIA. $1 issue. Another newszine of world and Australian fandom and the SF field. Has various articles and reviews, con and trip reports.

Tales of the Unanticipated #6. Eric Heideman, PO Box 8036, Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55407. A magazine of the Minnesota SF Society that publishes articles, fiction and poetry which are augmented by artwork. There is some good reading between the covers of this issue, which is dedicated to and about Fritz Leiber.

Teague-zines, Robert. 3926 Wolcott Circle, Atlanta, GA 30340. A collection of small minicomics drawn, written and published by Robert Teague. Includes, Advnetures in Meter Reading, Super Hotdog, Watch* Men, and a M.A.R.S. Universe Special. Funny reading.

Terrornauts, The #5-7. Dennis K. Fischer, 366 Spaulding Ave. #12, Los Angeles, CA 90036 USA. Whim, or $10/4 issues. A wonderful review of sf/horror films and TV in the US. Each issue has short articles on various topics and people of SF, fantasy and horror media. #6 has a couple of articles about The Adventures of Baron Munchausen. In #7 Dennis has a moving tribute to Bette Davis.

Texas SF Inquirer #32. Alexander R. Slate, 1847 Babcock #406, San Antonio, TX 78229 USA, and Dale Denton, 2016 Ravinia Circle, Arlington, TX 76012. The newszine and magazine of Central Texas. Production has gone downhill since the days of Pat Mueller. And although this is #32, #30 and 31 have yet to be published. Soon, says editor Alex Slate. It seems that Alex is borrowing from his work on Robots and Roadrunners, and featuring profiles of Texas SF fans -- like Willie Siros in this issue. The most interesting thing though is the profile of Fred Pohl.

Thrust - Science Fiction and Fantasy Review, #35. D. Douglas Fratz, editor. Thrust Publications, 8217 Langport Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD 20877, USA. Quarterly, $8/year. An excellent semi-prozine with reviews, interviews, articles and locs.

Thyme #76, 77. LynC, PO Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Victoria 3052 AUSTRALIA. Another news magazine of Australian Fandom and SF. Has some convention reports, reviews, and news. #77 Also includes some fiction.

Tightbeam #158, 159. Current editor is Lynne Holdom, 3808 Macalaster Dr. NE #25, St. Anthony,

MN 55421, USA. The letter-zine of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F), and it also contains some reviews and some very nice art.

Torus #5 & 6. Lloyd Penney, Keith Soltys, Michael Dennis Skeet & Michael Wallis. PO Box 186, Station M, Toronto, Ontario M6S 4T3 CANADA. Two good issues. Highlights include a Ben Bova interview, and the continuing "Travels with Pepe" by Derek McCulloch. The art and production are very, very nice.

Twilight Zine #40. MIT Science Fiction Society, Room W20-473, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139. Lisa Kroh, editor. Some articles and some good reviews highlight this clubzine from MIT. Artwork is plentiful and nicely placed.

Uncle Hugo's SF Bookstore / Uncle Edgar's Mystery Bookstore. Newsletter #1-3. A newsletter (obviously) of books published, recieved and for sale at these two stores owned by Don Blyly. There are some reviews included, both short and a little longer.

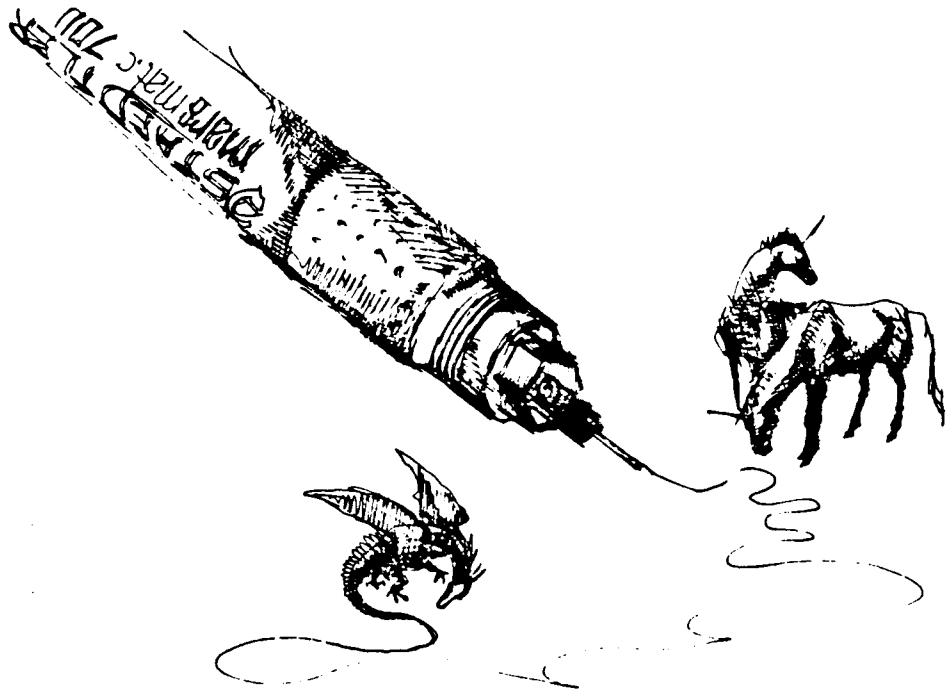
Urbane Gorilla, The, #3. Wendy Counsil, 1224 Eleventh Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122. A personalzine about the life and times of Wendy Counsil and her husband Brad Westervelt. The bulk of this issue is an interesting travelogue of their trip at the early part of 1988.

Wail Songs, Fall 1989 Catalogue. Wail Songs, PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604, USA. A catalogue for filk tapes produced by Wail Songs. Prices for tapes range from $8-$11 and filk books are also available.

Weber Woman's Wrevenge, Vol 6, #1-2. Jean Weber, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Wonderfully written, feminist oriented (though not exclusively) fanzine. I enjoy it immensely. The bulk of these issues concentrate on Jean's trip to North America. She isn't finished with it, and hopes to continue with it in the next couple of issues.

Whole Fanzine Catalogue, The #29. Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224. USA. A catalogue and review of all the fanzines that Brain has received during 1987 and 1988. Maybe he'll catch up on everything else (as I'm trying to do) in the next issue.

YHOS #47-48. Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563, USA. As Art's FAPAzine, he does a remarkable fanzine. The articles are interesting and thoughtful, and not just by him. He has an irregular column by rich brown, and presents fan news and gossip on all fronts. #47 has an interesting dialogue about "Fandom and Condom". And as always, Art has a lengthy and interesting letter column. His good humor pervades the zine, and it is no wonder that he was presented with the Goodheart Award at the 1989 Worldcon. |*|



by Lan

CONREPORTS and RAMBLINGS

RAMBLINGS 32.1

In June, 1989, a small group of fans had made plans to visit some caves in Southern Ohio and King's Island (an amusement park with the Hanna-Barbera cartoon characters as the theme) over the Fathers' Day weekend, but individuals and pairs dropped off as the date approached. It ended up that the trip was canceled, so instead, Maia and I drove down to Columbus, Ohio, and stopped at the Olentangy River Indian Caverns along the way. The excursion into the caverns was fun and interesting, although our guide kept calling the caverns, "cavrens". However, I don't think they were worth the high price we paid for the entrance fee.

After checking in our hotel room, we headed for Circleville to visit with Maia's dad in the hospital there. This time, in addition to the emphysema, he had a broken tailbone. Norb was weak, but hanging in there. He looked a lot better than the last time I had seen him (MARCON weekend at the end of April).

MIDWESTCON

The next weekend was MIDWESTCON. Again I had a good time, talked to lots of fans and writers and editors, passed out more copies of LL, and visited Mike Resnick's house. There were built-in bookshelves everywhere, lots of space, a greenhouse, and walkout decks and patios. It's a lovely place, and it gave me some ideas of what I might want when we finally buy a house. While I took the house tour, Maia went back to Columbus to visit her sister Joy and see the "Son of Heaven" exhibit again, and visit Norb in the hospital again.

I met Kathe Koja for the first time, and found out that she and friend Rick Lieder will be getting married. Kathe is a graduate of Clarion, and a newly published author. At first I found it unbelievable that her first SF sales were to IASFM. That meant that Gardner Dozois was FINALLY showcasing new, previously unpublished writers. On further questioning, I found that Kathe had been published in a couple of other places before IASFM, her first sale being in Science Fiction International.

Rick Lieder himself had done some art that was published as the cover and interiors for Bruce Sterling's Crystal Express. I bought a copy and had him sign it.

I had some interesting discussions with Roy Lavender, Dean Lambe, Brian Earl Brown, Ken Moore, and Bob Tucker. Tony Ubelhor was there with Julia Davis, the Chairman of CONTACT, and we talked about programming items for the convention. I was going to the the Fan GoH, and we discussed my commitments for the con. The pool was an indoor/outdoor arrangement with a nice "strait" connecting them. I enjoyed the exercise, and had a wonderful time talking with lots of fans in and out of the pool. The number of parties was down somewhat from pre-

vious years, but there were enough to keep people occupied.

Carolyn Doyle and David Rowe were also there. After being away from midwest fandom for several years, Carolyn finally returned. We spent a little time catching up on things. Of course I handed out copies of LL #30, and showed Mike Resnick what I had so far of LL #31, with his trip report to Africa augmented by Diana Stein's illustrations. I also spent time talking to Marie Miesel, Toni Weiskopff, and several other fans. Ray Beam handed me his Fan GoH speech from KUBLA KHAN and asked if I wanted to publish it. After reading it, I said yes indeed (it's on page 22).

RAMBLINGS 32.2

During the week between cons I worked on LL #31, tended the garden, did some baking, made sure dinner was ready for Maia when she came home from work, catalogued books, did some reading (like all the hugo nominees except Cyteen by C.J. Cherryh), and saw all the Hugo-nominated films I hadn't seen in the theatres. I had to get the Hugo stuff finished because I was on a panel at INCONJUNCTION about the awards and I wanted to be prepared.

INCONJUNCTION

INCONJUNCTION was also fun. I shared a room with Lynn Margosian, my friend from St. Paul, Minnesota. Maia decided to stay home because that would have been the third week in a row of long distance travelling and her back and shoulders have been giving her trouble. The drive there didn't bother me at all; I had fun listening to tapes all the way down. I also stopped off at my sister's place in Jackson, Michigan, and gave a birthday present to her son, my nephew and Godson. I also picked up a copy of the Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour on video as a surprise gift for my sister; June has been a Beatles fan since their first appearance on TV on the Ed Sullivan Show.

The Hugo panel went well, though I was the only one fully prepared for it. The others had read a smattering of the nominations. It seemed that the only category everyone was fully familiar with was the dramatic presenation. Says a lot for our reputation as a literary group. However, Don Maitz, on the Hugo Ballot in two places (Best Artist and Best Non-Fiction book) spoke eloquently about the artists, and C.J. Cherryh's Cyteen. He was very familiar with that novel since he did the cover(s) for it. And he praise Tom Canty's work.

Opening ceremonies were all right. Joel Rosenberg did a good job as a stand-up comic as he introduced Raymond Feist and Janny Wurts as the Pro Guests of Honor, Don Maitz as the Artist Guest, and Tony Ubelhor as the Fan Guest.

The other panels I was on went off fairly well. The interview with Tony Ubelhor was more of a conversation between us and the audience than an actual interview. I was on the Dr. Ruth Alien Sex Panel for the first time, and the jar of Sander's Hot Fudge (that I had brought for my friend Beryl Rosenthal) was one of the topics of interest. My past panel was on Sunday. Tony and myself and Scott Merritt talked about fanzines.

Because the hotel had booked a wedding into the prime function space on Saturday night, the filking moved from room to room (smaller to larger, thank goodness). I didn't get in to hear as much as I would have liked. I caught the end of a song that Janny Wurts singing. My, she is a beautiful lady, and very talented. Besides filking, she is an expert horsewoman, she writes and creates art. She and Don Maitz were planning a September wedding. After hearing both, and seeing their art, I would like to see them again. Maybe one of the local cons would consider asking one, or the other, or both as a GoH.

The funniest thing that happened was Tony Ubelhor's GoH speech. He decided that his fanzine, Pulsar! needed a new look, starting with the editor. He put on a fake goatee and a coonskin cap. Then he brough out a telephone book with the name Tony's Lantern on the cover. I was rolling in my seat with laughter, and people kept looking at me to see how I was taking it. It was one of the funniest set-ups I had seen in a long time. It was a stroke of genius on Tony's part; I thought most of the people in the audience understood it.

I managed to spend a little bit of time talking to Marty Stuessy. I've enjoyed the two novels she's written so far, but her next book won't be for a couple of years. She is working on her doctoral dissertation, so fiction writing is on hold for now. However, I only saw Tim and Anna Zahn in passing. I did not get a chance to treat them to a meal, or find out what Tim was working on. I did however had breakfast with Naomi and Randy Pardue,

and invited Lynn to come along. Since I was to write up Naomi's biography for the CHAMBANACON program book, I needed to find out more information. Besides, it was a pleasant time talking with her, Randy and Lynn.

The best part of the con, though, was spending time talking with Lynn. We have cried on each others' shoulders before, and helped talk out problems. This time was no different, and I hope that she benefitted from my advice.

RAMBLINGS 32.3

On Saturday (July 8) Maia and I attended a garden party put on by a couple of friends--Dan and Kay Jarrow. It was pleasant. Kay is a chef, and prepared a splendid feast. I'm glad that this was the last weekend of "pig-out" eating for a while. I wanted to lose weight during the summer, and keep it off this time. So I tried working out a bit more --swimming in Lake Jonah on campus, and walking from place to place than driving.

Maia decided to go camping with friends at Starwood, which was all right with me. I spent time relaxing, watching videos, gardening, and sleeping in (until 7!). I also went to my niece Sarah's birthday party which was quite pleasant in spite of the heat.

We saw Cats on Maia's birthday. It was wonderful. A lot of people are in love with that musical; I didn't find it as good as the hype about it. There is no real plot; it's more a series of vignettes about cats. It's based on T.S. Elliot's "Old Possum's Book of Cats" with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber (who did Jesus Christ Superstar, Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat, Starlight Express, Phantom of the Opera and a few other shows).

For her birthday (and anniversary) I got Maia a pendant necklace, a star formed by six long oval sapphires with a diamond at the center. It is really pretty, and she has shown it off at work. (I also got her a large York Peppermint Pattie, which I wrapped for her to unwrap.)

On July 30, we visited my older sister's place. Judy and her husband Denis had their "retirement" house built. They both have many, many years before they retire, but everything fell into place--lakefront property (on an old gravel pit), a builder willing to give them what they wanted, a location close enough to where both work--so they took it. It's a huge place. We could fit our entire apartment in the living room on the main floor! It was overcast most of the day, so no one wanted to go swimming, or even out in the paddleboat. (No speedboats are allowed; only sailboats, paddleboats, canoes, rowboats, and pontoon boats with electric motors--no gas-powered engines.) We sat out on the deck, relaxed and talked. It was a very pleasant time.

On the last day of July I had lunch yesterday with Jill Smethells, a student of mine who graduated this year. Although she was not able to get to any of the local conventions, she seemed eager to make WINDYCON. Jill was going to Northwestern University in the fall and was hoping to have time to get to the con. While we were waiting for our food, John Winter (head of all the Dorms), his wife, and Stevie Chimitz (new Dean of Women) came in to eat. I wonder what they thought of the two of us sitting there eating lunch--you know, rumors of students and teachers going out together....

On Wednesday evening of August 4, I went to a meeting of The Galactic Cartographers Society. The topic for discussion was the Hugo Awards. Marshall, the club dictator, dropped it in my lap. I had no problem with it, since I had been ready for discussing the Hugo nominations since I was on that panel at INCONJUNCTION. (I also brought by Hugo for everyone to see and touch. I re-polished it afterwards.) Jean, Marshall's fiancee, works at the library where the meetings are held. She had copies of all the novel nominations. After a brief history of the awards and process of nominations and voting, we started talking about two categories: Novel and Dramatic Presentation. No one else seems to get the magazines and reads the short fiction. *Sigh* Actually, that was good in a way. We had just enough time to finish talking about those.

About this time in early August, we noticed that our wash was coming out spotted black. We called a repairman, and I waited for him three times--three no-shows. We cancelled him, and called someone else who showed up early on Tuesday. The problems was a leaking transmission. Cost: about $130 for a new transmission, $120 for labor, plus $25 for the service call, plus whatever else might be wrong. I called Maia at work, and we both agreed it would be easier, and cheaper in the long run, to get a new washer. I looked around and found them priced about $400. Maia balked, but when she went comparison shopping, she found that in the 5 years we've had the machine, prices had gone way up. The cheap ones around $300 didn't have the features we wanted. So, Tuesday night we stopped at a warehouse showroom and picked up a Speed Queen washer for $400. Add tax and an extended warranty (15 years on the transmission), it was close to $500. (Glad we have Visa!) It came Wednesday morning.

Maia and I and 8 other fans finally went to King's Island, the Serpent Mound, and Seven Caves Park in southeastern Ohio on the weekend of August 12 & 13. (This was the trip postponed from June.) We had a great time. Michael Kube-McDowell was in the group, and he used the trip to do some research for an upcoming novel. (I wonder how the roller coaster is going to fit in!) We went in Mike's van and Myra Bernson's mother's car (big and roomy).

The time at King's Island was spent running around the park and finding rides to go on that didn't have lines with an hour or more wait. We stayed late to watch the fireworks, then headed for Cincinnati to the motel where we had reservations. We stopped for dinner along the way, and got to the hotel well after 2 AM. The ten of us crammed into two adjoining rooms, and slept the night away. I woke up first, early as usual, and spent time doing isometrics until I relized that, since I slept on the floor, I could read with the light coming in from under the window curtain.

When we got to the serpent mound, we found it interesting, but it was a disappointment. The "sensitives" among us felt nothing. It looks nice, but it is not a burial site; there were a few burial mounds found nearby, but nothing in quantity to indicate that it was a religious site. It's as though a group of indians got together to build it, had a party, and left. The "serpent" is situated on a bluff that overlooks a large valley, with head and tail at the edges, and the body curling around so there is a large area between the serpent body and the cliff edge. It seemed to be a nice place for a concert.

It was after 5 PM by the time we hit 7-Caves park, but we hiked until dark. The caves were magnificent, though not the deep caverns and passages one thinks of; some went deep into the sides of the cliffs, but many were quite shallow. In one of them, Mike, Gwen Zak, Mary Ellen Wessels, Iain Sedgeman and Myra Bernson started singing--in harmony, and others of the group who could sing joined in. It sounded beautiful and fitting in that setting. (Gwen and Mary Ellen, along with Kathy Mar, are the three women who comprise the Android Sisters. Both Gwen and Mary Ellen, along with Mike and Iain, have done backgrounds for Kathy Mar's tapes. So you KNOW it sounded good.)

By the time we got Myra's house (in Ypsilanti) it was 4 AM monday morning. Everyone except Mary Ellen and Iain slept over and most everyone called in sick. Maia had an engagement to go shopping for fabric with Liz Huffman, a seamstress friend of ours who is making her a flashy skirt to wear to the Hugos this year. So Myra drove me home on her way to dropping off her mother's car. I got home while it was still light enough to empty the mailbox and collect the newspapers jammed into the paperbox. I cooled tha apartment down enough before Maia got back, and we went to sleep in our own comfortable bed.

On Wednesday, Maia's sister Joy came by for a visit with two of her daughters. They stayed until Friday, and on Saturday Maia and I went to see A Chorus Line. It was wonderful. Different from the movie...or I should put that the other way around, since the stage musical came first. The hit song from the show, "What I Did for Love," refers to dancing. In the movie, a minor sub-plot of the play --the love affair between Cassie and the director-- becomes a major storyline, and the song takes on a different meaning. Anyway, we got to see a lot of energetic dancing, hear emotionally-wrenching stories, and miss the rain that fell while we were inside.

I rented and watched Not of This Earth while stuffing envelopes with LL #31. (I sent out about 240 to people who would be at Worldcon -- I planned to send the rest out when I got back.) The film had some nice special effects, but it was a terrible plot, mediocre acting, and lots of gratuitous nudity. It did star, after all, Traci Lords (ex-porn star). She actually didn't do too badly as an actress, but she needed better lines to work with. I

saw the original Ghostbusters again; it still held up as a reasonably funny/ serious film. I also saw The Abyss. The soundtrack was wonderful, and the main storyline very good, though it stumbled at the end. It was very tense throughout and I was at the edge of my seat most of the time. I wanted to see it again, and would even have paid full price to do so, but I didn't get a chance to do so before the film left our area.

It rained like crazy Tuesday morning (Aug 22) and part of the afternoon. It was still somewhat cloudy when I started the charcol for grilling some steaks I had been marinating over the weekend. Our friend Sandy Newbauer came by for dinner, then we went to a nearby park to hear the Chenille Sisters in a free concert. Except for the mosquitos and inconsiderate talkers, it was wonderful. Wednesday afternoon, in spite of more threatening rain, I seasoned six pounds of ground chuck and shaped them into 33 hamburgers, and grilled them on the barbeque. We had some for dinner, but the rest we saved for future meals.

My (second) cousin got married and relatives from California and Pennsylvania came in for the wedding. Everyone gathered at my parents home on the Sunday after the wedding, and everyone brought food to pass around. Maia and I brought vegetables and dip. (We also brought some of the prepared hamburgers. All you have to do is pop them in the microwave and instant, charcol-flavored burgers. Of course, cooking large quantities of things as one time means that I don't have to cook the next day--just re-heat. Microwave ovens are wonderful.)

As the time for the school year to start came closer, I found myself going into my classroom more often, but not to work on school stuff. I had been entering reviews and articles for this issue of LL. I STILL had not started working on any of the special issues other than collecting the material for them. Our neighbors from next door (who had been away most of the summer at their place in Holland on Lake Michigan) returned on Monday, and their oldest daughter Beth prepared to make some college visits. She's a senior this year, and will be spending her first semester as an exchange student in Cranbrook Kent, England (I'm so jealous!!), so she had to do the "college thing" before she left on September 1. All this indicated to me was that the school year was fast approaching and I was not ready for it to happen yet. But I knew that I would be working on class materials starting on Monday (August 28); that meant I would clean up my room and clear off my desk of all the stuff I didn't put away last June when school ended.

I spent some time working on the Dorm Duty schedule. It took me almost three hours to revamp and update the template of the schedule from last year. We had more three-day weekends, and some fall in different places than last year, so I had to do some fancy moving around to accommodate these changes. Next was to find out about special duties, and then who will be on duty when. I had a meeting with Esmeralda and John, the two heads of the dorms, to talk about scheduling for Kingswood, the girls dorm. It wasn't too bad. It didn't last very long. We talked about various duties and how to arrange coverage in the dorm with one and a half fewer people than last year. We think we have it figured out. Anyway, it will fall to me to actually put the schedule together, something for which both John and Esmeralda are very grateful.

During the summer, in addition to the shows and movies already mentioned, I saw Batman (twice), Ghostbusters II, Honey, I Shrunk the Kids and the Roger Rabbit cartoon. I would like videos of Batman and The Abyss. These are, in my humble opinion, good films, and it has been some time since I have enjoyed a films so much that I wanted to see it twice.

One of the science teachers at school and I were talking during the spring and summer about the Science Club he advises during the school year. Since very little happens in the fall, we bounced ideas of making it a social club--talk about science and show a film related to the discussion. Which bought us to SF, fantasy and horror films. So he would know what I had, I finally put together a list of the films with comments. Just in that category alone I have 84 videos, most of them commercial tapes. (I haven't counted the other ones we have, like the Shirley Temple, Marx Brothers, Avengers, musicals, etc. videos.)

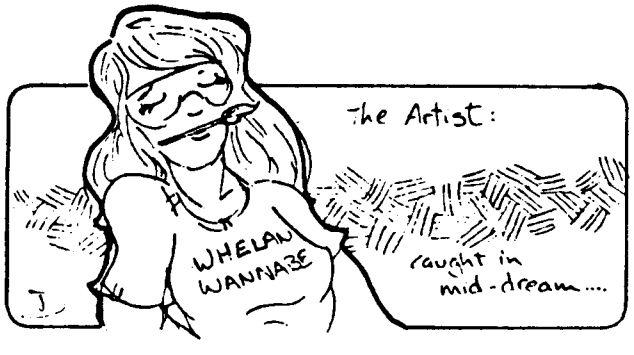
I was surprised to have that many, but then I have been looking for certain classics I remember seeing when I was much younger, and for some of the so-bad-it's-good films, and I remember a lot of them. I have some I consider to be classics: Forbidden Planet, The Day the Earth Stood Still, Them, The Time Machine, This Island Earth, and Journey to the Center of the Earth. Then I have some fun ones like the Indiana Jones films and Star Trek. If you want a hilarious evening with a few somewhat famous people making fools of themselves, try Amazon Women on the Moon.

WORLDCON

This convention was a lot better organized than NOLACON could ever have hoped to imagine. In some ways it felt small, since the functions were spread throughout the Hines convention center, the attached Sheraton, and the Hilton (across the street from the Sheraton). Because of faculty meetings on Wednesday and Thursday before Labor Day, Maia and I did not fly out to Boston until Friday noon--figuring that we would have plenty of time to get from the airport to the hotel, register there and at the convention, and still have a few minutes for me to get to my panel at 4 PM. The plane left an hour late, coming in from Indianapolis 40 minutes late because of rain. The trip to the hotel from the airport took a lot longer than anticipated, and we registered and dropped off luggage in the room (23rd floor--great view!). Then we ran to the Hines Convention Center, registered with the convention, and Maia headed to the Green Room to let them know I had arrived, and I walked into my panel 15 minutes late. And I was the moderator!

It wasn't too bad. Bernadette Bosky and A.J. Budrys were also on the panel, so I knew things were well in hand. I "took over" and guided the discussion with flair and a light-handed touch. The panel talked about reviews and critiques, their likes and differences, whether different attitudes/aptitudes are needed to write them, and to whom each is directed. We got off on a tangent about short versus long reviews, some ideas of which I used in my Monday panel with Charlie Brown (moderator and Locus editor) and Don D'Ammassa (book reviewer for SF Chronicle) on "Editing Reviews."

The third panel I was on I also moderated:



"Nerds in Fandom". I was the only male among 4 females. The discussion was real interesting--I eventually ended up telling about how nerdy I was when I got into fandom, and how fandom helped me establish healthy relationships with women. Janice Eisen came up with the best quote of the convention: "Fandom tolerates the socially challenged."

The high point was NOT winning the Hugo. I really wish I had won, but I lost to Mike Glyer and his File:770 by 4 votes. I was heartened by the knowledge that I had gotten the most nominations in that category. The concom was good at getting out the stats on the voting and I picked up a copy. The surprising winners were Mike Resnik for "Kirinyaga" in Short Story, and in Novelette George Alec Effinger for "Schroedinger's Kitten." I was not disappointed that C.J. Cherryh won for Novel, Cyteen, but I was hoping for Lois McMaster Bujold to win. Connie Willis snared the Novella for "Last of the Winnebagos." I didn't think she deserved it, but the other voters disagreed. Who Framed Roger Rabbit? won for the Best Dramatic Presentation in the first round of voting (garnering 560 of the 900+ votes in this category). David Langford won for Best Fan Writer.

There were some disappointments. Michael Whelan won as Best Artist, though Don Maitz lost to him by 6 votes. I don't recall seeing anything new from Whelan last year. I think he's coasting on past work. Samuel Delaney's book of essays, The Motion of Light in Water, won for Best Non-Fiction, beating out Don Maitz's First Maitz by 14 votes. Don got 11 more nominations than Chip Delaney. And Gardner Dozois won again for editor. Although he has published some writers new to IASFM, he continues NOT to publish new, first-time writers. By doing this, Dozois is not expanding the SF field; he is merely maintain it.

In the Fan Artist there was a tie: Brad Foster and Diana Gallagher-Wu. Several people were upset by this, myself included. Foster, it seems, has not produced any new work in the past year that has seen print in the fanzines, and Gallagher-Wu has not had ANYTHING published in fanzines. Her stuff is more known through art shows where she sells a lot. Does this qualify her for amatuer status in the fan category? I also have not seen any new art from Stu Shiffman, who came in third. Teddy Harvia, on the other hand, has become prolific in the last two years and well deserved the nomination and I thought he was the best of the nominees. Teddy also had the most nominations for this category.

As for the rest of the convention and the time sepnt there, it was fun. I spent time with friends, dropped in on filking, encountered some people I had not seen before but knew through correpsondence, and met Andre Norton. I also met the editors of SF CON NEWS, Claude Warren and Linda Nelson, who were in the fanzine area of The Concourse. And

shared meals with a number of fans including Teddy Harvia and Peggy Ranson.

I picked up a couple of books I was looking for, and two new filk tapes: Kathy Mar's Plus C'est La Meme Chose and Larry Warner's Through My Eyes (see my reviews this issue). Larry Warner is a baritone and songwriter from the West coast whose strong voice I've admired since the first time I heard it. I was extremely interested when I heard that he was putting out a tape. With Thor records producing the tape and arranging the music, it is well worth the money paid.

RAMBLINGS 32.4: SCHOOL BEGINS

We had faculty meetings on the Wednesday and Thursday before Worldcon. Like a lot of meetings, most of the information received could have been dispensed via memos. However, two important items couldn't. First, the film about AIDS, which showed how some workplaces have been sued for discrimination in AIDS cases, and how some people are handling their own crises. Second, the sign up for dorm duty at Kingswood. I worked on the schedule before Worldcon and got most of it done then. Afterward, I did a final check of the schedule, ran it off, and made sure everyone got a copy.

I did Dorm Duty the first weekend we had school, a traditional one for me. One advantage of being the person who put the schedule together is that I scheduled myself for those weekends coming up that I would have to be here anyway. So far, no one seems to have caught on to this. On the other hand, no one else wants to take on the burden of putting the schedule together. I don't find it too difficult, so I continue to do it.

On registration day, Wednesday September 5, I got stuck taking ID pictures. Thursday we started classes.

Prior to the first day of classes, when people asked if I were ready to start, I said no. I tried not to think about it. I avoided doing anything in terms of class preparation and school work until about a week before Labor Day. Deliberately so. To be truthful I was not looking forward to teaching, although I hoped that when the time came, I would really be ready and enjoy the kids, my classes, and the school year.

My hopes were realized. As I told Dr. Layne, my psychotherapist, I was psychologically ready to step in front of the kids on Thursday, September 7, and everything seemed bright and fresh. The students were eager, and I was anxious to work with them. I only hope now that this feeling will continue.

We went to see Les Miserables on September 14. I thought about looking for the music for this one before seeing it. I think it has a complex set of songs that may take several listenings for understanding. At CONTRAPTION Julia Ecklar and another fan, named Julie, did selections from Les Miz with the Julie's friend Dave accompanying them on the piano. It was marvelous. So I was eager to see the show, and was not disappointed. On the drive home I mentioned to Maia that we had to get the album, and she presented it to me, wrapped, when we returned to the apartment. I told her I would wait to unwrap it on Sunday when the family came over.

So, that Sunday, the 17th of September, we celebrated my Dad's 70th birthday, parents' 48th wedding anniversary, and my birthday. The immediate family came over and we all had a good time. The weather even cooperated and it was a pleasant day.

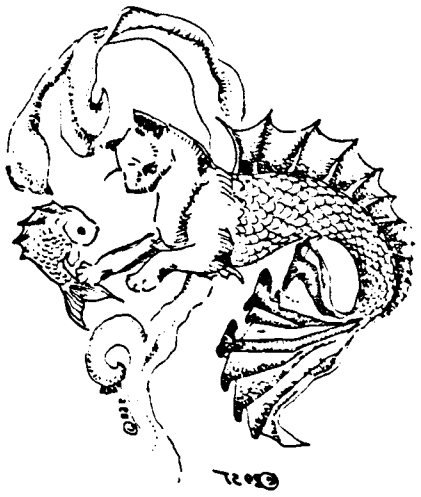
CONTACT

CONTACT is a small relaxacon in Evansville, Indiana. Tony Ubelhor, editor of the fanzine Pulsar, asked me at NOLACON last year to be the fan GoH. When I agreed, and I talked to Julia Davis, the conchairman at MIDWESTCON, we set flight arrangements up so that I would arrive on Thursday night. I would make arrangements at school for my students to have the day off, or my classes to be covered. Because of past abuses by the faculty, the administration did not want my classes merely dismissed; I had to get them covered. Working with my department chairman we managed to get someone to sit and proctor a test or quiz that I arranged to be given. So I was free to leave Thursday evening, although there were lots of other things I had to do both before and after that weekend. Still, I planned to enjoy myself and do the worrying before and after the con, not during.

And enjoy myself I did. The flight there was noisy--I sat in the back (by the tail engine) of a Northwest DC-9 to Memphis, Tennessee, and near the wing of a turbo-prop Airlink connector to Evansville. Fortunately I had my cassette player and listened to music and read a couple of issues of Analog on the flight.

The concom was there on Thursday night, most of them in the consuite (next to the pool) or in the hot tub. I stayed up talking with a lot of different people until about 3 AM, read for a while and slept until around 9:30. When I got up, I swam about 2/3 of a mile, and checked the actual length of the pool by asking a maintenance man, who promptly pulled out his tape measure and measured it: 65 feet, 10 feet short of standard. After having a small breakfast of fruit from the basket left in the room my the concom, I did some reading, and watched as people arrived. I knew a few--Steve and Sue Francis, Timothy Lane, Ken Moore (who was there Thursday night), John Hollis, and a few others.

Opening Ceremonies were short, and I was interviewed by Tony Ubelhor afterwards. There were two problems: Tim lane kept interrupting my commentary



with his remarks (although he did come through with some information when I needed it), and there was a big band playing in the pavilion outside the function rooms (and next to the pool). The first problem was annoying but tolerable; the second was distracting, because I enjoy listening to that style of music. I wish that Maia had been there to hear the Tommy Dorsey Band conducted by Buddy Morrow. Some of the con members were upset by the situation too, but by the end, many agreed that the music was good, though not like a rock concert.

Andy Offutt was the pro GoH, and had a reading scheduled right after my interview. Since I didn't stay to listen, I'm not sure if he read at 9 PM or waited until midnight when the band was finished.

Of necessity, the pool was closed for three hours, 8-11, and in compensation the hotel didn't hassle anyone about being in the pool or hot tub until about 3 or 4 in the morning.

Saturday I was busy almost every other hour. I had panels on fanzines, the Hugo awards, apazines, and "How to Get Published" for which I was the moderator between Arlan Andrews and Andy. Then in the evening was the banquet and speeches.

After that I just had a good time talking to people, partaking of the Captain Morgan Spiced Rum (with the Don Maitz art on the label) which the concom had supplied me, and floundering in the hot tub and pool. I talked to Corlis Robes for about three hours. She is a math TA at Vanderbilt, and working towards her PhD in Math. A gave her a back massage too. I gave a couple of other people back and leg massages.

The next morning Corlis' husband Gary (an expert (doctorate working in industry) in adhesive chemistry) said she wanted to talk to me. "I didn't expect you to leave bruises, " she said when I caught up with her. "You said you wanted it hard," I countered, to which she nodded, smiling. For the rest of my stay there we would make some comment about me leaving bruises on her back, which caused some interesting glances from people overhearing them.

Sunday afternoon, Jody Offutt, Ginger Bicket, Tony, Gary and Corlis and I went to the very small Evansville Museum. There was an exhibit of British art and portraiture which was very good. There was also a display of furniture called "Please Be Seated," in which all the seats ironically had placards around them saying "Do NOT Sit in Chairs"!!!

From there Tony and Ginger took me to the airport. I had a little trouble with reservations: my Airlink to Memphis was making an additional stop along the way, and would get me into the airport with ten minutes to get to my connection on the other side of the terminal. So they booked me on a Delta flight out of Cincinnati, with a Comair turboprop shuttle to get me there. I left Evansville later (25 minutes), but would have gotten back to Detroit earlier but the Detroit Metro Airport control tower got flooded with noxious fumes and was evacuated. Eventually I got to Detroit and home, after midnight.

It was a good weekend. I made some new friends and strengthened some older bonds. I knew I was facing 3 sets of tests and 2 sets of quizzes Monday morning, and writing comments on students doing poorly so far, and Dorm Duty facing me Tuesday night, and a Galactic Cartographers meeting Wednesday night, Special Driving Duty on Thursday night, and the Association of Independent Michigan Schools (AIMS) Conference on Friday, as well as Dorm Duty on Friday and Sunday, (and the MISHAP deadline) but it was worth it.

RAMBLINGS 32.5

After CONTACT, life was going to be rather hectic. The weekends were split between conventions and some school obligation or another. The chronological sequence was this: CONTACT (Sept 29-Oct 1), Association of Independent Michigan Schools) AIMS Conference and weekend duty (Oct. 6-8), CONCLAVE (Oct. 13-15), Parents' Weekend and Dorm Duty (Oct. 20-22), OVFF (Oct. 27-29), and WINDYCON (Nov 3-5), Giftorama at school (Nov 10-12), then Mothers' visiting day on Thursday (Nov 16), with Friday, November 17, the last day of classes before Thanksgiving break.

Naturally, in between these weekends were classes, giving and correcting tests, weekly dorm duty nights, and some other commitments. We saw a play at a local University theatre, Diary of a Scoundrel, which was hilarious. This was one of 6 that we would be seeing throughout the school year. Maia and I decided that we needed to get away from the apartment more often, and NOT go to school functions or out with other fans--just the two of us. (Of course, we found out that one of our fannish friends, Lynn Granville, is running the lights at these plays, but that didn't count.)

After CONTACT, I was on duty for a three-day

weekend. There was an all-faculty conference for the Association of Independent Michigan Schools on Friday morning and afternoon, so the students were free from classes that day. I got out of the afternoon session because I had dorm driving to take care of. To complicate matters, while I was on duty Friday night, Chiara, a student who just got her brand new car that day, had an accident and totaled it, and almost totaled her two passengers and herself. There is a winding road that connects the two campuses, and there is a steep drop-off on one side of it. Chiara was going about 30-35 mph, and was trying to adjust the radio when she lost control, hit a tree and slid sideways down the embankment. No drinking or drugs were involved. Amanda, who was in the back seat was thrown into the front windshield. Monee, in the front seat, apparently had her seatbelt on. Chiara we found out had a bruised heart, apparently from hitting the steering wheel. We were all glad that no one was killed. Amanda was in the hospital for about a week and needed plastic surgery; she sliced her cheek up pretty badly. Monee went home with her parents; she was shaken and was cut on the forehead, but was all right. Chiara's parents flew in from New York late Saturday (they're with the Ambassador staff from Italy, and the President of Italy came in Friday night and they had to be there for that--otherwise they would have come immediately). She had more than the physical injuries to think about; she was feeling very guilty. I think this experience is going to have a very profound effect on her.

CONCLAVE

I had a good time at CONCLAVE, though there were a lot of problems in running the convention. People who knew nothing about the behind-the-scenes troubles asked me if they were imagining things or if there really was something going on. When the attendees senses that, something is seriously wrong.

Still, there was a good film program, a nice art show, some confusion about the panels but they went off fine too. The filk was good, and the Blood Drive was extremely successful, topping last year's record in donations. Christopher Stasheff was an excellent GoH, and his father won the Pun Contest with no trouble at all. My panels went off well; Judy Laub and I handled the Teachers in Fandom panel alone, even though there were supposed to have been two others with us. Mike Kube-McDowell and I gave a "Prescription of Wonder" for everyone, telling them what recent books to buy, what to avoid.

Fan GoH Janice Morningstar and myself talked about regional fandoms, the similarities and differences among the East Coast, West Coast, Midwest and Southern fandoms, and what we knew about international fandoms. That was interesting, and I learned quite a bit from Janice about it.

CHRISTOPHER STASHEFF

Some high points included talking for hours with Gail Tang and Ann Moore; talking with Don Wentzl, Kathleen Conat and Joanne Radelt; spending time with Nate Bucklin; talking with Halina Harding; talking with Barb Bennett. I wish I could have seen more of Jean and Marshall.

I had Monday off from school and drove Nate to Howard DeVore's garage to get some books. From there I took him to the airport for his trip home to Minneapolis.

That week we got a call from Mary Kestenbaum who was staying in the area on job-related business (she should tell you about this in her zine). The three of us got together for dinner and had a wonderful evening of food and conversation.

RAMBLINGS 32.6: Parents'Weekend

The next weekend, October 20-22, was Parents' Weekend. I was also on duty then. On Saturday morning we had mini-classes (15 minutes long) so the parents could meet their kids' teachers. I was forthright and honest with the parents about their kids, and marvelled at the support I got. Usually the parents make all sorts of excuses for their child's behavior or lack of cooperation. I spent most of the afternoon in the dorm office, and chaperoned the dance for two hours in the evening. I don't recall what we did on the 22nd. I think I rested.

The week of the 23rd of October was fairly quiet. I had duty on Wednesday, and saw several of my students for extra help either during or after school. I also started to prepare for writing comments on everybody, and giving the last tests of the quarter.

OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST

OVFF was very good. I wish we could have stayed until Sunday afternoon, but I had to be at my parents' house about 2 in the afternoon for my mother's 69th birthday party, and a surprise 40th birthday party for my brother-in-law Jim. I didn't get a chance to say goodbye to a lot of people whom

I hadn't seen since as long ago as NOLACON. There was a lot of great singing, and I dearly want to attend again next year. But the concom will have a problem finding an appropriate date among the other cons next fall.

Barry and Sally Childs-Helton premiered their new tape at the convention. Paradox sold very well; I helped them stuff cassettes tapes and J-cards into plastic cases as I had done two years earlier when their first tape came out. Cynthia McQuillon had a new tape out as well: Moon Shadows.

Among the notables were most of the famous Midwest filkers, and several from the West coast: Tera Mitchell, Kathy Mar, Chrys Thorsen, Cynthia McQuillon, and others whose names I don't recall. The singing ranged from good to magnificent. Naomi Pardue unveiled a couple new songs which she had written, partly for her concert set at OVFF, partly in preparation for her stint as GoH at CHAMBANACON the following month. Mark Bernstein had commissioned a four part harmony arrangement of his melody to "The Green Hills of Earth" which had many fans teary-eyed when it was performed.

When I arrived, I changed into my bathing suit and wandered through the hotel looking for the pool. The convention had advertised that the hotel had one; in fact they did--outdoors, and it was closed for the season. The inside pool had been closed up, buried, and turned into a food-function area. So I walked into the function room and was immediately hustled on stage as part of the costume contest...and won for best legs. (Joey Shoji still has the best knees!)

Other notable happenings at the convention: talking with several people in the consuite about education; talking with Mike Stein about the music he was going to play for the upcoming holidays (one concert unfortunately conflicted with CHAMBANACON so he would not be there); talking with Chrys Thorsen and Tera Mitchell and Cynthia McQuillon and Bob Laurent about upcoming tape projects. Renee Alper was there, and seemed to be surviving quite well after her auto accident in the spring. She asks that those who can please visit her; or at least call to talk. She needs contact with other fans to take her mind off the pain she endures because of her illness.

Finally, a new filker entered the fold, and got a standing ovation with her first song. On Saturday night Folly broke into the group and said that she heard the only way to get heard at the midwest chaotic filk is to jump in; so she was doing that. She sang one of her own songs, "Peter Pan," and she received the same reactions that people had when Julia Ecklar and the Childs-Heltons began. Afterwards since this was her first convention and first filk, Mark Bernstein, Moonwulf and Murray Porath initiated Folly into the fold with Flanders & Swann's "Have Some M'Diera."

RAMBLINGS 32.7: Hell Week

The week between OVFF and WINDYCON was Hell Week for me. Since I went to OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST, I didn't want to give a test on Friday I left. So Monday I had tests in all classes, which I had to correct and grade for the marking period. Since the end of the first quarter was Wednesday (November 1), and I had to turn in grades and write comments on all my students, and I was going to WINDYCON in Chicago on November 3-5, I had to get everything done prior to leaving. Well, I could have waited to finish writing comments until I got back from Chicago, but with predicted snow we weren't sure when we would get back. (It turned out that the weather was nice and there were only minimal delays with the aircraft.) Besides, if felt nice to have it all done early, and I felt rather smug telling some of my colleagues that I had them done well before the weekend (Thursday night I had all of them filed in the students' folders). Most everyone waited until the weekend to start writing them.

That week I was also on duty Tuesday (Holloween) in the dorm, and on Wednesday night was a meeting of the local SF club. I also had to babysit study hall during seventh period that week, which cut into my other planning and relaxing time. Since I ate too much at OVFF, I also had to get to Vic Tanny to exercise at least twice during the week. And I had an appointment with Dr. Layne, my psychotherapist.

FANOMENON

DIANA STEIN

WINDYCON

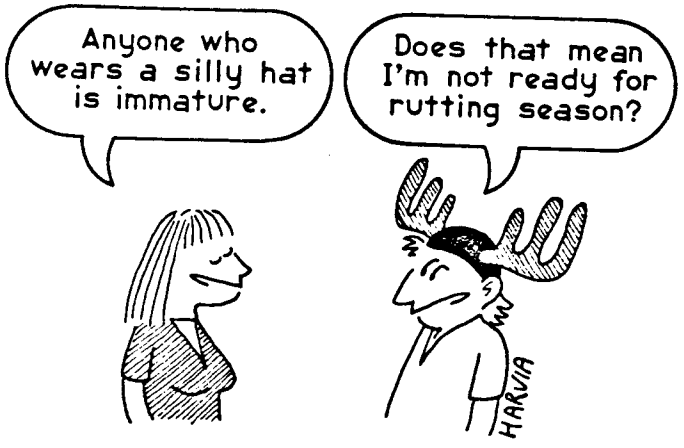
We flew out to Chicago for the convention, and I had a good time talking with friends I had not seen for quite a while. I talked for a long time with Lynn Margosian, my friend from West St. Paul, Minnesota. She was having a rough weekend. Outside of breaking up with her boyfriend (whom she had met at WINDYCON last year), several other things did not go as planned. In addition, the concommittee decided that instead of 8 hours work giving a gopher reimbursement on the membership, it took 12 hours. So she was out of circulation for more time than usual. Still, we had several good talks throughout the con.

I also had a good time on my panels, although with the "Welcome Sailor..." intro to neos, Maia managed to do most of the talking (I wonder how that happened...). I did manage to jump in with a few practical suggestions.

While sitting at one of the "autograph" tables (after all the authors were finished) and hoping to catch Lynn walk by and ask her if she wanted to go out to dinner on Saturday evening, Rebecca Meluch sat down and we had a wonderful conversation about her, her writing, and other things.

She sent me her latest novel, War Birds, for review. I loved it, and told her that it is on my Hugo Nominations list for 1990. I also recommended the novel to Michael Kube-McDowell, who is on the Nebula Jury for the Science Fiction Writers of America. Rebecca is a neat person, and I am looking forward to reading her next novel to be released in the middle of next year. Meanwhile, I asked if she could send me 700 War Birds bookmarks to be included in this Lantern, and the same number of her next novel Chicago Red which will be out in the spring, which I can include in a future LL. Rebecca smiled gratefully when she said yes. I also found out that she is engaged to be married--to a nice Polish boy. They will be in England next September; since they are planning a month over there, they might be able to include a stop in Holland at the Worldcon.

The masquerade was okay this year at the con. I saw better costumes at other cons, and some of the hall costumes (people who just wore them in the hallways but did not enter the competition) were better than the entries. There were a couple of nice Green Lanterns; Julius Schwartz who was there enjoyed seeing them.



TJ and Mitchell Burnside-Clapp were also at the convention. They came in on Saturday and didn't do much until late in the evening. I talked to TJ for a while outside the filk room and got caught up on what had been going on with the two of them.

RAMBLINGS 32.8: More Activities

Monday, November 6, found me in good shape for classes. I met with my 7 advisees (only 6 showed up) on Tuesday, had dorm duty on Wednesday, grade review meeting on Thursday, and Friday was career day for Juniors and Seniors--those not helping out with the freshmen setting up Kingswood for Giftorama, or the sophmores with the Drug & Alcohol seminars. Come Friday afternoon, I finally sat down to work on the Lantern. Saturday afternoon I realized that the D'APA deadline was a week away, so I dropped everything else to get that done.

The next week I had a SF Club meeting in Ypsilanti (less than an hour's drive) on Monday evening. Tuesday was a special Thanksgiving assembly during school, and in the evening we had tickets to see The Boys Next Door (instead of having a Thanksgiving dinner in the dorm). The "Up With People" program happened on Wednesday, and the students' mothers came to visit classes on Thursday. On Friday, we all left for Thanksgiving vacation. That's when I sort of got to rest. I began baking my holiday breads then, and worked on issue #32 of the Lantern getting pages 3-104 done. I had other obligations: my nephew's birthday on Sunday (Nov 19); Tuesday I had an appointment for a complete physical, Wednesday, a former student returned home and although we wanted to get together, it turned out Jill got in too late to contact us. And with Thursday as the usual turkey dinner with family, and Friday morning we were leaving for CHAMBANACON where I was Toastmaster this year, we never did get together. Maybe at Christmas.

For Thanksgiving we went to my older sister's place with most of the rest of my immediate family (parents, brother, one other sister and her family; my third sister went to her in-laws for dinner).

CHAMBANACON

Friday morning Maia and I got up early and drove to Champaign, Illinois, for CHAMBANACON. It took about 7 hours to get there, and we saw Tim and Anna Zahn, Andy Offutt, new author Paula Robinson, and a lot of other friends. I was toastmaster for the banquet, and lifeguard for the late-night swims on

Friday and Saturday nights.

I did manage to hear quite a bit of the filk, although the 11-1 late hours of guarding the pool cut out some prime-time performances. Naomi was wonderful as fan GoH. She gave a short speech and sang two songs: the first was the first one she had ever done--about Irwin Allen and his TV shows; the second was "A Thousand of My Closest Friends," which left several people with wet eyes.

My introduction of Andy Offutt related the story of how he ended up with his hand down the front of my bathing suit a few years ago. The story had everyone laughing. Andy's GoH speech talked about 1989 as an "interesting year", the most interesting of his entire life. Seeing the changes that have happened politically world-wide, one wonders what might be in store in the last month of 1989, and next year.

At our traditional lasagna dinner with Tim and Anna Zahn, we found out about his latest novel. Last year Tim was worried about Warhorse bcause things didn't seem to be coming together as they should. He finished it, and several months after turning it in he got the galleys. Since he had not seen the manuscript in that time, and had been working on several other projects, he came to the story fresh, and surprised himself at how well it turned out. He showed us the cover, and was excited about its release in March of 1990. I was anxious to read it. We found out when we got home that Toni Weisskopf from Baen books had sent us a copy of the manuscript for review. *Picture me smiling in anticipation!*

RAMBLINGS 32.9: Other Things

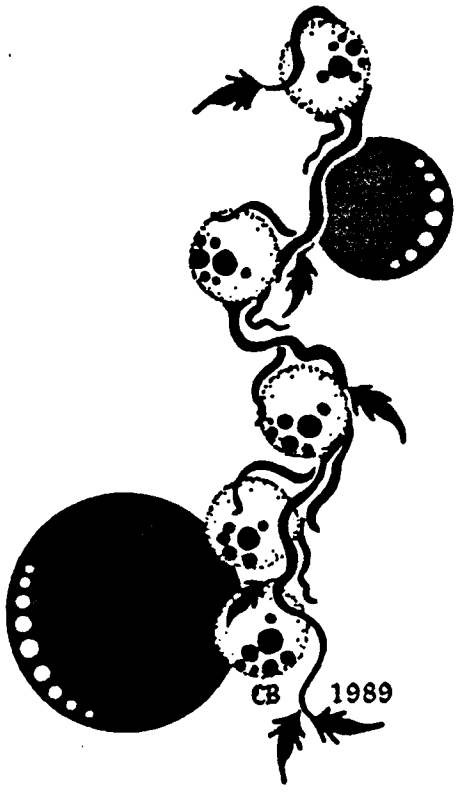
Classes are going much better this year than last. Most of them are pretty good, but not all have the same cohesiveness that I had in my eighth period class last year. But the potential is there. What's helping this year is NOT teaching any B sections. My 3rd period geometry class has about the closest camraderie, and they are taking to working in pairs quite well. I have one real quiet person in the class, and three others who are struggling very hard, but everyone is doing at least C- work. In my two Algebra II classes I have no one failing, and only one in the D range; the rest are C- or better.

As the calendar year comes to a close, and vacation is upon us, I find that I am dealing very well with everything that has come along. My sessions with Dr. Layne have helped tremendously. My only disappointments are the slow speed with which I am losing weight (but Dr. Goldman says that slower is better; she says that it makes it easier to keep it off that way), and the slow progress I am making in finishing up LL #32. I want to get working on the Special issues, so this Christmas vacation will be spent working on that.

"Did the Earth move for you, darling?"

William F. Temple

1914 - 1989



Just three days ago (July 13) I received a letter from Bill Temple that he had started to write on June 14, and completed with great difficulty, over a considerable period, with several different pens. A note from his wife Joan reported that he was back in the hospital yet again.

Because the letter had taken two weeks to reach me, and Bill's condition appeared serious, I phoned immediately. How glad I am now: to my delight, Bill was back home, and I was able to have a brief but cheerful conversation with him. I guessed it might be our last, but did not suspect how soon this would be the case.

The fascinating thing about Bill's final letter was that, apart from its sombre content, he sounded like the same crotchetty character I knew more than fifty years ago. For example: "...in the Intensive Care Heart Unit, having been rushed there at 90 mph by ambulance (my third time since Xmas). Must have been in a bad state--Mrs Thatcher doesn't permit just anyone lightly to enter her hospitals--she'd rather the beds were kept empty." I'm happy to say that I was able to cheer Bill and Joan with Norman Cousins' endorsement of this same principle: "A hospital is no place for sick people." They thoroughly agreed, and I feel sure that Bill's last wish was never to make that ambulance journey again. It was fulfilled; he died peacefully, sitting in his chair--at home, on July 15.

In that last conversation, I was touched to receive the best --if not the only-- compliment Bill ever paid me. He had just received my "science-fictional autobiography," Astounding Days, which contains a chapter devoted to the famous "Flat" we shared (with Maurice Hampton, and later, Joan Temple) at 88 Gray's Inn Road, in the years immediately before the War. "When I'd finished it," he said, "I went back to the beginning and read it again." I have never received a tribute I shall value more highly.

This is not the place to speak of Bill's contributions (as Editor of its Bulletin) to the early days of the British Interplanetary Society, or of his literary career, truncated by War, illness and sheer bad luck. But I can recall that in the 1937-8 period most of us aspiring young writers looked up at him and his advanced years (he was already a mature 24!) with something like awe. And when he sold his novel, The Four-Sided Triangle, to the movies, our admiration (and envy) knew no bounds.

Bill was the sort of friend every man needs, especially if --as in my case-- he has occasional delusions of significance. I send my deepest sympathy to his devoted wife Joan, and to their children and grandchildren, who seem to have achieved much of the success which eluded Bill. I am indeed sorry that, by just a few weeks, the family missed the opportunity of celebrating a Golden Wedding Anniversary.

--Arthur C. Clarke
Colombo, Sri Lanka
16 July 1989

I'm really irked with myself for not having made time to write a piece for the Bill Temple special. Procrastination is one of my worst failings. I keep telling myself there is plenty of time in hand for every proposed project, and then something--like dear Bill's death--intervenes to show that I'm wrong.

When I moved to London to work in 1952 it was my first long spell away from home and I was hellishly lonely. Bill recognized that fact and he and Joan used to invite me to their home for dinner, or sometimes for an entire Sunday. One afternoon Bill and I were out for a walk in nearby Harrow, building up our thirsts for a pint or two, when we got caught in a real cloudburst. We were soaked within seconds and forced to take refuge in the porch of an old house. We kept as quiet as possible, but the

old lady who owned the place heard us and came out to see what was going on. When she saw the state we were in she brought us in for hot tea and scones, and we spent a pleasant hour there. A year or so later Bill wrote and told me that he had subsequently become friendly with the woman, and had learned that her house was where Charles Kingsley has lived when he was writing The Water Babies. Considering our half-drowned condition when we first entered the place, the book's title seemed uncannily appropriate, and thereafter when Bill and I were exchanging letters we signed ourselves as members of the Harrow Water Babies.

He was one of the best people I ever knew, and I could cry every time I remember that he has gone.

--Bob Shaw

As one fortunate to be a friend of William F. Temple for almost fifty years, may I express my deep appreciation of your celebratory edition.

This successfully (and for me emotionally) brought to life the wide culture and the great humor and humanity of the man. The late British author, J.B. Priestly, was one of Bill's heroes, and Bill himself was cast in very much the same mould -- in fact, I would say he was a friendlier version!

Bill did not, however, receive in his home country the recognition he deserved, and he was dogged by incompetent publishers and agents. Yet nothing could weaken the warmth and humor of his personality. He is a sad loss to the world of science fiction and to the cultural community generally.

Thankfully your special edition arrived in time to provide Bill with some consolation in his last months, and it will continue to serve as a literary memorial for his wide circle of friends.

--Douglas Morgan

A Tribute to William F. Temple

My father was a man ahead of his time. A man of books and music, cinema and science fiction. He was also a perfectionist, who hated injustice, loved animals, and relished having his own little pocket of time and space.

He will also be affectionately remembered by his family for never missing an opportunity to grumble about what he termed Temple Timing. Throughout his life he enjoyed grumbling that he was always the man who would walk two miles to the library only to find it was closed. He'd queue for 20 minutes to buy stamps at a Post Office window which dealt only with pensions. And he would inadvertantly set the timer on his video-recorder to tape a favourite film in the early hours of a Thursday morning when the rest of Britain had enjoyed it on the Wednesday evening.

Yet if he's been looking down on us this past week he'll have been astonished at the flood of tributes to him and his writings; he'll also be sure they were really meant for someone else. And if he could read them, half of him would be deeply touched by the esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries, while the other half would spontaneously be scouring the tributes for a split infinitive, or a punctuation error.

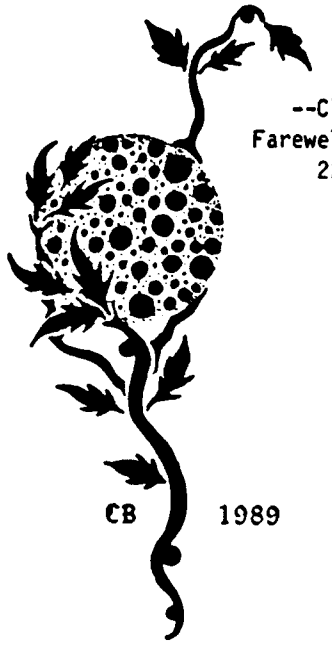
The greatest comfort to the family, especially to my Mother, Joan, who gave him half a century of unfaltering devotion, was that the end, when it came, was so peaceful, and at home.

And even William F. Temple, the prophet of tomorrow, could not have guessed that his final years of ill health would be so dramatically lightened by modern technology, particularly the videotape. It meant that he was able to enjoy reviewing his long, full life through his meticulously catalogued collection of his favourite Fred Astaire dance routines, newsreels, documentaries and Hollywood musicals.

From his armchair, he could rewind the years at the touch of a button and once more become the wide-eyed schoolboy in the Eltham picture palaces of the 1920s, so inspired by the films of Douglas Fairbanks and Buster Keaton.

One of his favourite silent films, made in 1925 when he was 11, was Lon Chaney's Phantom of the Opera. And, appropriately, his last ever journey outside East Kent, more than 60 years later, was to see the West End musical based on that story.

As we listen now to Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Music of the Night" from that show, we'll always remember the man who used to mutter: "When I'm gone, just tell them -- he meant well."



--Cliff Temple
Farewell Services
22 July 1989

fannish news

Thomas A. Easton has sold his novel Sparrowhawk to Ace. The novel was first serialized in Analog last year. Another novel, in the same "organic future" technology, but set a few decades later, is making the rounds of editorial offices now.

* * * * *

Laura Todd is extremely interested in recycling projects to cut down the amount of trash we produce, and efforts to save our forests from complete stripping to produce paper.

"In the past, one of the objections to recycling has been that 'there's no market for recycled products.' Here's our chance to show them they're wrong. We as SF fans are people who care about the future, right? We also use hundreds of reams of paper to produce fanzines, apas, stories, novels, etc. I'd like to encourage anyone who pursues the above activities to consider using recycled paper to write to:

Earth Care Paper Co.
PO Box 3335
Madison, WI 53704

and ask for their catalog. And consider this: 'Using recycled paper instead of virgin paper for one print run of the Sunday Edition of the the New York Times would save 75,000 trees.' (Earth Care Catalog, p. 11)"

The catalog also offers greeting cards, stationery, and other recycled paper products along with office-quality paper by the ream, including #20 bond suitable for manuscripts.

"I hope you won't consider this a commercial. I'm not making any money out of it. Just consider it a public service announcement on behalf of our planet."

* * * * *

Chris Drumm Books is going into mail-order wholesaleing for books. For a $10 annual fee, Chris will send paperback books with a bill for a 30%-40% discount on cost plus exact postage. He cannot give a discount on all hardcover books yet (he's working on it), and most limited edition/deluxe/signed/boxed editions will only be 10%.

"These discounts apply of all books listed as NEW in my catalogs, not the "as new" or used books. I can special order or backorder in-print books not listed. Non-discount books may be included in the order--I will charge postage only on the weight of the new books. Visa/Mastercard orders are welcomed, but 4% must be added to the discounted amount of wholesale purchases.

"So join the club and save money on new books! When you buy one $20 new book for $12, you've practically recouped your $10 membership fee already."

If you are interested, or want more information, write:

Chris Drumm Books
PO Box 445
202 East Van Dorn
Polk City, IA 50226

or phone him at (515) 984-6749.

* * * * *

Verna Trestrail, Doc Smith's daughter is having some trouble with Harmony Gold U.S.A., Inc. and Eternity Publishing. This movie company and comic book publisher are infringing on the copyrighted material of Doc Smith's Lensman series. Verna holds the copyright, and she had not been contacted about securing the rights when Eternity Publishing sent out releases about their new Lensman series. She checked with her agents Virginia Kidd and James Allen, and they had heard nothing about it. Legal wheels have been set in motion regarding this copyright infringement. Needless to say, Verna, her husband Albert, Dave Kyle (who has been working on the further adventures of the Lensmen with Berkeley and Verna's endorsement), and many of their friends are extremely upset about this. I wish them luck and speed in the proceedings.

* * * * *

Howard Devore wrote to let me know that Marshall Tymn, professor of English at Easter Michigan University, member of the SFRA, and cataloguer of many critical and research works of SF, was in a car accident in October. Marshall spent almost three weeks in a coma. He is at home now, recovering slowly.

Meg MacDonald, editor of Pandora, is soliciting material for a special Children's edition of the magazine. The closing date for submissions is May 1, 1990. The magazine is a showcase for both new and established writers, poets, and artists. As a quarterly, small-press publication, emphasizing the human element in both SF and fantasy backgrounds. The magazine is run on a shoe-string budget, and is also currently looking for donations and grants to help in its publication. For subscriptions, gift or otherwise ($15/6 issues; $20/6 issues Canadian; $25 for other foreign subscriptions), for sending donations, or more information, write:

Pandora
2844 Grayson
Ferndale, MI 48220

* * * * *

Colleen Doran, who was supposed to have supplied some fliers for inclusion in this mailing, sent me art (some of which is in this issue) and an interesting letter.

"I had Donning print up several thousand fliers so that I could send them to zines and conventions. Not a bad idea, right? Well, immediately after the fliers were printed, Donning signed a deal with another publisher to take over the distribution/sales of Donning books, thereby making all the pertinent information on the fliers totally useless. IF anyone wants to know, they can get the volumes directly from me. Two volumes are available, full process color; the first, A Distant Soil: Immigrant Song, is $6.95, and the second, Knights of the Angel, is $12.95. They are 64 and 120 pages respectively, and are generally referred to as "graphic novels" which is to say they are trade paperback/8-1/2 x 11" format comic books, but since some people are embarrassed to admit they might actually read comic books, the trade paperback/8-1/2 x 11" nom de guerre is more effective from a marketing standpoint. Egads! I let the ghastly secret out!

"Future volumes will not be coming from Donning, however."

Write Colleen at:

Colleen Doran
Magnolia Blues Productions
PO Box 296
Seaford, VA 23696

Post Scriptings

Alan Dean Foster
Thranx, Inc.
4001 Pleasant Valley Dr.
Prescott, AZ 86301-8767

Roy Hill: Eric Frank Russell was and still is my favorite SF writer. He was also John W. Campbell's. I was delighted when Judy-Lynn del Rey allowed me the opportunity to do the introduction to the Best of Eric Frank Russell in the old Del Rey "Best of" series. But I found Russell, during our brief correspondence, to fluctuate wildly between cordial and amusing on the one hand and paranoid belligerent on the other.

Campbell told me in 1968 that he thought this attitude and Russell's abrupt halt to writing both had to do with the marriage of Russell's daughter to an Australian fan, a marriage he heartily disapproved of. Can you shed any light on this?

(PS: Thanks for the kind words regarding To The Vanishing Point. But is was not my first horror novel. That was Into the Out Of, also from Warner books. There was also a horror-suspense novel from Berkeley several years back titled Slipt.)

[[I read Into the Out Of, and thought it was more supernatural/fantasy than horror. And I thought I had reviewed it in LL, but in looking through past issues, I found that I had not, although I recall mentioning to you directly that I had enjoyed it very much.]]

Jim Harris
3596 Walker #6
Memphis, TN 38111

Your special issues on Arthur C. Clarke, William F. Temple, and Lester del Rey were both very interesting, but hard to comment on. Did William F. Temple get to see his special before he died? I read Arthur C. Clarke's appreciation for him in the August Locus, and was reminded of your special fanzines for them.

Clarke and Temple remind me of the type of people I've read about in literary biographies. Writers usually have interesting lives which, if written about, make for good reading. Over time, the lives of some literary figures become more interesting than their own writing. Your special issues show tiny tidbits of information about these people that make me think I would like to read definitive biographies about them.

I especially appreciate such long detailed articles like "Science Fiction Romantic: Lester del Rey," by Dennis Fischer. I wish I had an eiditic memory so I could keep up with such information.

[[I have a lot of letters from fans commenting on the last few issues of Lan's Lantern, which is going to push the page count way up. I've tried editing them down as much as I could, while still trying to retain significant comments along with variety. As usual, my comments are in the double square brackets (like this is).]] --Lan

LL #30 was a very solid issue. You have a good mixture of features, reviews and letters, and LL is improving overall with each issue. [[Thanks, I keep trying.]]

L. Sprague de Camp
3453 Hearst Castle Way
Plano, TX 75025

Thanks for #30 and special thanks to Messrs Sadler and Brandt for all those kind remarks. It's nice to know that some don't regard me as something that crawled out from under a flat rock.

Re Buck Coulson's remark on dealing with intrusive haranguers: Aristotle had a waspish sense of humor; he could have been played to perfection by the late Clifton Webb. Once a notorious bore cornered him in the Agora and flooded him with talk. At last the man said: "Oh, I hope I haven't bored you with my gabble!" Aristotle replied: "No indeed, for I haven't been listening."

Re Ruth Berman about Oz: In the 1930s I knew the late Ruth Plumly Thompson; my friend John Clark visited her a couple of times in her home in West Philadelphia. She was an attractive woman but hard to talk to because of advanced deafness. Clark and I suggested that the later Oz volumes ought to have end-paper maps, as the first four did, but brought up to date to show places mentioned in the later stories. Miss Thompson was enthusiastic. So Clark and our lifelong friend Jack Hatcher worked up a fine map. But the publishers nixed the idea on grounds of expense. I still have copies of the map.

[[Any chance of the map being produced today with the current crop, or next editions, of the Oz books?]]

Robert Sabella
2 Natalie Drive
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

#28: Of course this was a fine issue, paying deserving tribute to Arthur C. Clarke. There is not much I can add to the issue, having never met him or even seen him in person. I just wish that some of your contributors had not felt obligated to comment negatively on Clarke's weaknesses at characterization. No writer is perfect and every single one has flaws. Clarke's brand of philosophical speculation is fine just as it is and does not require characterization to make it successful. Nobody ever seems to feel obligated to lambast LeGuin or Sturgeon for not being strong

enough in sense of wonder or scientific plausibility. So why pick on Clarke for the niche he has chosen (and fills so well)?

#29: I do have a few personal memories of Lester del Rey. I was at the St Louiscon panel when he admitted to adding 10,000 words to a short story to fill out an issue of a prozine he edited. I recall it was Alexei Panshin having a tantrum, not Harlan Ellison, but in either case I agree with their anger. No editor should interfere with an author's output without the author's prior approval. And yet I can understand Lester's point of view in the matter. He was doing what he believed best for his magazine. To him science fiction is more important than the feelings of any single author and as long as he follows that belief (which I think he does) he is an honorable man. We don't have to agree with somebody totally to respect them.

#30: My favorite article was James Wallace Harris' "Searching for the Classics of Science Fiction." I guess that's not surprising since I'm a statistics freak myself. In fact, Harris' article became the springboard for some statistics of my own.

Harris' final list of 69 recommended books, while a good one, is a bit large to be presented to fledgling science fiction readers as the definitive list of the best SF books ever. So I spent some time trying to decide how to winnow the list down to a more manageable size. Finally I picked out all the books which havemade every "Best" list they were eligible for (of the 9 Harris used for his article). Books published prior to 1952 needed to make all 9 lists while those published since needed to make all except whichever Analog surveys were taken before their publication.

I ended up with a list of 9 science fiction books which truly deserve to be touted as the best SF books ever:

The Foundation Trilogy by Isaac Asimov
The Demolished Man by Alfred Bester
The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury
Stand on Zanzibar by John Brunner
Childhood's End by Arthur C. Clarke
Dune by Frank Herbert
The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. Leguin
A Canticle for Leibowitz by Walter M. Miller, Jr.
More Than Human by Theodore Sturgeon

Please don't win a multi-million dollar lottery so that you can retire from teaching and turn Lan's Lantern into a weekly. 100+ pages a week will turn us all into blithering idiots!

Terry Jeeves
56 Red Scar Drive
Scarborough YO12 5RQ
UNITED KINGDOM

Both Lanterns were as good as ever, and although I haven't yet had time to read them fully, I'm eager to do so, as Clarke has been one of my favorite authors, and del Rey another. Having said that, I must admit to being slightly off-put by Clarke's recent Imperial Earth, and even more so by his collaboration with Gentry Lee on Cradle. Not that I disliked either story, but they seemed to lack the Clarke magic.

I can confirm that he is a nice man, as I actually got replies to a few letters and fanzines I have sent him from time to time. Incidentally, he lays claim to having "invented" the comsat; I lay claim to having invented the "supermagnet." Ages ago I wrote a spoof article, "Thermomagnetism" on creating super magnets by cooling the molten material in a crucible surrounded by a high powered induction coil. The idea was all the little magnetic moments would line up fully and be there when the gunge set hard. I gather this system is now used to create super magnets. Now why didn't I patent that one?

I still have grave doubts about the angular mechanics used in the ground-to-orbit lift/cable of Fountains of Paradise. Ground velocity is around 1000 mph, whilst in orbit it is many times that for the satellite to stay above Ceylon. Cars going up must be accerlerated sideways to match this velocity, those coming down must be retarded. A total n--no, not unless cars carry side thrusters to make such adjustments.

He also had a clanger (which he admitted in a letter) in Rendezvous with Rama...inasmuch as that when his spaceman was flying along the zero-G of Rama's axis, a slight deviation from this line would NOT put him into the artificial gravity caused by Rama's spin...until any rotating air pressure had begun to accelerate him to turn with Rama and thus create his own centrifugal G. Such air spin, as and near the axis, would be so minimal as to have no effect unless he made a wide deviation for a longish period.

Nit-picking, as he still tells an excellent yarn.

Maureen O'Brien
3801 Lujon Drive
Beavercreek, OH 45431

Issues 28 and 29 were fairly humbling to me. I am used to knowing more about SF than most people I know, probably because most people my age have read no SF from before 1970 except Dune and the Foundation books. It rather shocked me, then, to realize how many good

stories, books, and writers I had never even heard of, much less read! I only knew Lester del Rey as an editor and as the "author" (I know now) of The Runaway Robot. The articles on William F. Temple have me adding his name to the "check all libraries" list in my mind. No luck yet, though. Incidentally, I saw on Entertainment Tonight (don't laugh, it gives me STTNG news) that the Phantom of the Opera movie set has been reassembled and put on the Universal Studios tour! tour! Ask and ye shall receive, Mr. Temple--a few years late.

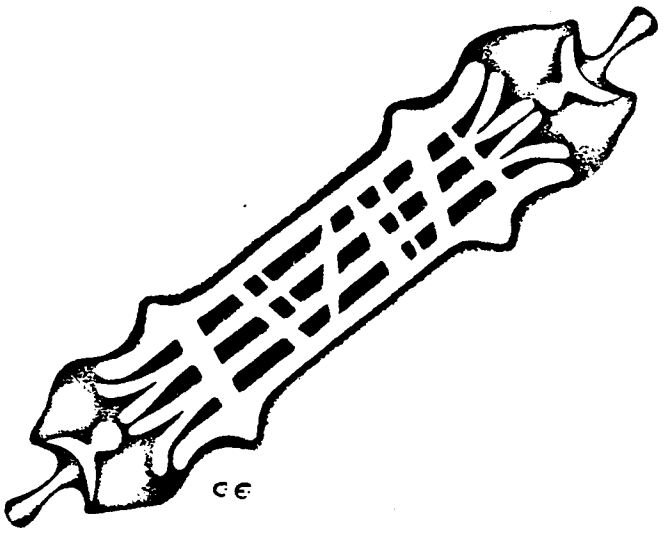
The issue that was really hard on the ego was the Arthur C. Clarke one. I'm going to have to start re-reading the things I've already found and look for the rest. I learned a lot from this issue. I also liked the reminiscences from fans. They made me feel a little clser to the older fans' viewpoint. It must have been great to have seen 2001 come out, to wonder whether Hollywood was going to screw up another good story or do it reasonably well this time. And then, to see it for the first time and realize slowly that this film wasn't just good, but great.... I envy that, I really do.

The high point of #30 for me was the interview with Lois McMaster Bujold. I knew she had to have read Dorothy L. Sayers! I was frankly stunned by the metamorphosis of Admiral Vorkosigan from Klingon to Vor. But it also gave me hope for the improvement of my own writing. The whole interview has, if possible, increased my appreciation of Bujold's works. Either she is a very good talker, or Bill Unger is a very good listener/editor.

I also appreciated the article on Madeleine L'Engle. I still can clearly recall picking up Wrinkle in fourth grade in Sister Mary Leonille's class. It was my first taste of SF/F, and I have loved her stuff ever since. Besides making me a fan, her books have also influenced my thinking in many areas of life. The most important area is that of my religious beliefs. If I had never read L'Engle and Lewis, I would not have the faith I do today. I can still remember my surprise when I found out that both were Anglican/Episcopal.

However, I violently disagree with the David M. Shea review of Dian Duane's wizard books. I can only assume that Solarbabies soured Mr. Shea's temper. First, I hope Mr. Shea realizes that the "adult" fantasies Door into Fire and Door into Shadow are being put on the KidLit shelves. Yes, I know the idea of little kids reading about bisexuals boggles the minds. Blame the ALA. Also I thought the Door books weren't nearly as good as the ST books and the wizard ones, but that's just my opinion.

Second, I fail to see why fighting entropy, or plain old evil, for that matter, is a simplistic concept. Anything is simplistic if that is. Figuring out what you can do personally to slwo the heat death of the universe seems like a heavy concept to me, and is not a bad basis for life.



Third, the True Speech has a heckuva lot in common with math! Duane constantly describes the "spells" as equations. Equations of what? Hmm. Could it be, say, creative physics a la The Wounded Sky? I rather think so. And don't forget the E. Nesbit quote from Sky to the effect that we have love and mathematics on our side, and those are the most powerful things in the universe. (Thanks to Mr. Shea for making this clear to me. Nothing is better than an argument for clarifying thought.)

Finally, the point of the wizard books is not that "wishing will make it so." Nita and Kit have to work very hard for whatever happy endings they receive, and there are always losses. The losses are worth it, and Duane has an afterlife in her books, but that does not make the horrors and evil and death any less real. Children who read the wizard books will be more inclined to think about the consequences of their actions, not less so. I whole heartedly disagree with Mr. Shea's review.

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In an earlier letter I had commented that a reader should be able to understand what they read sufficiently to know if it is SF or fantasy, regardless of any explicit label the material may bear. Since this is the only thing I said which even remotely deals with genre labelling, it must be the comment to which Buck Coulson is replying when he says, "Labelling for David Palter's convenience would be just that: it would not necessarily simplify matters for even one other person." One would think from this odd comment of Buck's that I had been complaining about the great difficulty I had been experiencing in being unable to identify works of SF due to a lack of labelling. In fact, what I said was that I could identify such writing even in the absence of labels or if even incorrect labels have been applied (as is sometimes the case). For the most part, works of SF and fantasy are clearly labelled as such--although hardly for the convenience

of David Palter. It is for the convenience of the general public, of which I constitute a negligibly minute fraction. The only thing which I ask book publishers to do specifically for my personally convenience, is to mail me free copies of all the SF they publish--a perfectly reasonable request, wouldn't you think? Yet no publisher has ever mailed me a free book--proving their disgraceful lack of respect for my awesome and magnificent self. Perhaps they are unaware of my stature as Supreme Letterhack.

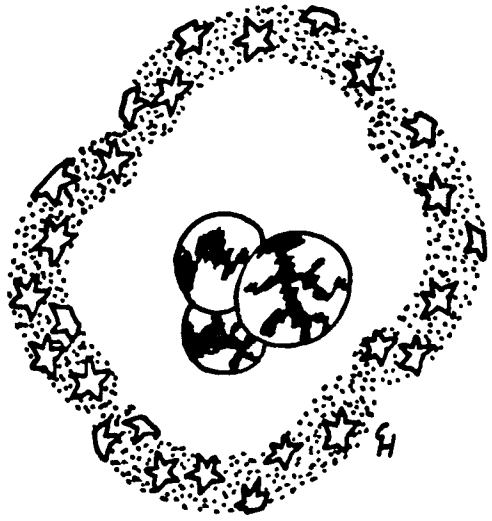
Buck discusses the fact that the identification of specific novels as being science fiction or fantasy presents serious problems in that such classification is often highly debatable. Depending upon whether one believes such devices as time machines and FTL drives to be possible or impossible, the novels containing these wondrous machines then are regarded as science fiction or fantasy. Personally I like Judith Merrill's elegant solution, which is to amalgamate the two genres under the overall category of "speculative fiction" (SF). When I talk about SF I usually mean speculative fiction, not science fiction.

Even without resorting to this merging of genres, it is still possible to label books as science fiction or fantasy! Amazing, but true! After all, we need not delve, merely for the purpose of applying a label on a book, into the ultimate and perhaps unreachable philosophical underpinnings of philosophical literary theory. It is sufficient that such things as time machines and FTL spaceships are generally considered to be science fiction, and such things as magic, swords and unicorns are generally considered to be fantasy, for publishers to be able to label their products accordingly. Book labels are primarily a matter of marketing, not deep literary analysis. So the labelling difficulties which Buck points out do not actually exist--aside from the fact that I wasn't asking for more labelling anyway, and frankly would not care if nothing were labelled as to genre, leaving the reader to figure it out. In fact, in most cases it is blatantly obvious, for any number of reasons, what genre a book belongs to, and labels are superfluous. And even if, in some weird case, it was not apparent what genre a book belongs to, this too is of little concern. I have a great fondness for SF and read a lot of it, but I do read other types of books as well, and as long as a book is good, genre is a distinctly secondary concern.

Of course, publishers are always eager to label their books as being good. But here is a case where one really cannot trust labels. There are many ways of guessing at or estimating the quality of a book before actually reading it, but the process is always a bit tricky. The most reliable (but still fallible) guide is familiarity with an author's previous work. A previously unpublished author is always a bit of a gamble, but one takes such gambles as well, particularly when guided by a trusted editor or reviewer.

I was a bit disconcerted by Ann Green's review of The Fire Worm by Ian Watson. I have read some half a dozen novels by Ian Watson (The Martian Inca, etc.) and they have invariably been subtle, sensitive, imaginative works. Even without having read The Fire Worm, I somehow find it difficult to believe that this fine author has abruptly degenerated to the extent asserted in this review. Of course, only by reading the book (which Ann Green has so strenuously warned me not to) can I really be certain.

David Shea makes a rather interesting point in his review of Diane Duane's recent juvenile fantasies, which is that although the books are excellent fantasy, there is still some question as to whether they may be inculcating young readers with the fallacious doctrine that "wishing will make it so." Of course, the whole concept of magic invariably rests upon the premise that will or intention (often ritually formalized) can in itself control the real world, and so virtually all fantasy literature is susceptible to this concern. I believe that it is a significant concern, because despite the fact that we live in a scientifically advanced age in which human understanding of the universe has made astonishing strides, it is still true that a bizarre assortment of superstitious and irrational beliefs remain, widely held by the majority of the world's population. Fantasy literature could easily contribute to a tendency by some readers to believe that magic, one way or another, is real and at large in the world. I would hardly wish to prevent or dissuade people from reading for this reason, however. It is still possible to read fantasy in full understanding of its fictitious nature, and to derive great value from it. The necessary precaution is simply to take pains to educate chil-



dren in a rational understanding of reality (admittedly, this is often not done--but those who do not achieve such an understanding will inevitably have peculiar and non-functional beliefs, whether they read fantasy literature or not).

Some books, however, play a bit too closely to prevalent forms of irrationality. Reading Mark Bernstein's review of Many Waters by Madeleine L'Engle, I had to agree--yes, I loved A Wrinkle in Time, and I admire Madeleine L'Engle's writing--but when I discover that in this more recent novel, people travel back in time and find themselves in the midst of Noah's preparations for the Biblical flood, I cannot help but suspect that this novel will contribute to the appalling current vogue of interpreting the Bible literally. Time machines, I believe, should take one to a real past, not a Biblical fantasy. But again, I haven't read the novel, and I might find the effect to be more successful that I expect.

I have been tremendously impressed with Lois McMaster Bujold's fiction, and so I naturally enjoyed seeing Bill Unger's interview of her. The fact that Star Trek was the primary inspiration that led to her present writing career was startling, but now, in retrospect, makes sense in a way. Certainly, it demonstrates, as persuasively as anything else that I know about Star Trek, that the series was (for all its frequent lapses into extreme silliness) of profound importance to the SF world. Some elitist fans have liked to sneer at Star Trek, but that will be much harder to do, knowing that it proved to be so important a contributing factor to the development of one of our truly great writers.

It is true, as Clifton Amsbury states that in World War II Hitler was the aggressor and Stalin acted in self-defense. However, self-defense in this case easily led to expansion of the Soviet empire, which is today still in control of Eastern Europe, 44 years after the demise of the Third Reich and the end of the German threat to Russian security. Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and East Germany may not perceive Stalin's actions to have been wholly defensive in nature. Stalin was surely one of the most vicious mass-murders of all history, and if his crimes were not as monstrous as those of Hitler, this still does not constitute a high level of praise. He may have been only the second most evil person in all human history.

I enjoyed Colin Lamb's "Time to Spare." A nice concept, deftly executed.

Alan David Laska's "Data-base of Odds and Ends" is indeed a highly miscellaneous collection of SF-nal data, but nicely done--I am impressed by the detailed, careful replies to the assorted questions. I would prefer, in future columns, that you give the name of the person asking the question. It seems very ambitious for Alan to offer to answer any question on SF, fantasy, science, fandom, movies, etc., but his performance so far is good. I would guess that he has a well-stocked reference library and is familiar with it.

[[I will print the names of those who asked the questions if Alan would provide them; in this case he did not.]]

James Wallace Harris has produced a very credible list of the classics of science fiction. A question he does not address is: what are the classics of fantasy? (Although, personally, I would merge the two lists, forming the classics of speculative fiction.) I'll propose a brief list:

J.R.R. Tolkien:	Lord of the Rings
Stephen R. Donaldson:	The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant (all six volumes)
Greg Bear:	The Infinity Concerto
	The Serpent Mage
Tim Powers:	The Drawing of the Dark
	The Anubis Gates
Barbara Hambly:	The Ladies of Mandrigyn
	Dragonsbane
Poul Anderson:	The Broken Sword
Tanith Lee:	Volhavaar

This is my own opinion, but is certainly based on very wide reading. It does not constitute the kind of consensus that the SF list does, but it is at least a beginning. It does seem unfair to leave fantasy out completely, particularly since the classics of fantasy are of comparable value to the classics of SF, novel for novel (although I do think that there are more great SF novels than great fantasy novels, as the brevity of my fantasy list will suggest.)

In LL #31, Jet Thomas's letter discusses my comments on altering the Earth's rotation, but ascribes the comments to David Palmer. In any event, it is an excellent point that one should be able to extract energy from the Earth's rotation, as long as one is slowing it down for the purpose of creating a day whose length will lend itself to simpler

systems of time measurement.This makes the proposal much more attractive. As for the point of possible effects on circadian rhythms, I have every confidence that I could adapt to a longer day. All my life I have had a continual tendency to stay up very late and then sleep very late; clearly I am already tending toward a day of more than 24 hours (in fact, I have sometimes cycled all the way through, staying up later each night until I first went to sleep in the day and finally back to a regular night-time hour). Since circadian rhythms have to be flexible, given the fact that the period of daylight has seasonal variations anyway, I expect that this would not prove to be much of a problem.

I suppose that most trufen would agree with Martin Morse Wooster that the writers discovered by Donald A. Wollheim (LeGuin, Disch & Delany) are more important than the del Rey discovered writers (Donaldson, Chalker, Eddings & Hambly). But in terms of general popularity (as measured by sales figures) we would have to say that the del Rey authors are considerably more important. Personally I do include Stephen R. Donaldson and Barbara Hambly among the authors of the first rank. They are terrifically good fantasists. Consequently I do believe that Lester del Rey's contributions as an editor are comparable to those of Donald A. Wollheim. Both have tremendously enriched the field by developing wonderful new writers and publishing great fiction.

It is good to see the two interviews with Stanley Schmidt, and I hope that you will continue the tradition of interviewing him once a decade, and will publish yet another interview of him in 1999, at the millennium's close. Make a not of it on your long-term appointment calendar.

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The best item in LL 30 was the piece by James Wallace Harris comparing science fiction surveys from the past. Aside from problems with the basic methodology (putting together fan surveys with Neil Barron and David Pringle's personal favorites is rather like mixing together oranges, apples, and kumquats) what I wish Harris would have explored is the question of what books have been taken off the classics list. For example, the Astounding readers of 1952 though that Doc Smith's Gray Lensman was one of the all-time classics; they also thought Olaf Stapledon was important. Both writers today are largely unread, although Stapledon certainly should be. It's as important to see how tastes change as how the remain the same.

Harris's oddest suggestion is to set up a new standard for "youth classics." When I was 16, I thought Lin Carter was the greatest writer who ever lived; I also admired Gordon Dickson intensely. I now rarely read either writer. My guess is that if you had a list of "great" classics read by young people today, you would enshrine a great many terrible books by Robery Lynn Asprin and Piers Anthony. Why salute mediocrity?

Sally Syrjala has convinced me that I will never understand media fandom. I'm unable to figure out why anyone would pay $19 for any fanzine, much less one devoted to sequels from minor movies. Science fiction writers are now developing "sharecroppings" (i.e., "Arthur C. Clarke" novels written by Paul Preuss); media fanzines have been "sharecropping" for years. I'd much rather see mediafans developing their own visions rather than cutting their ideas to fit someone else's prefabricated world. (And what, in Ghu's name, is the "Fan Q" award? Why is it important? Is is any relation to Don Q, Son of Zorro?)

I'm not sure why Ben Indick's "Theatre Beat" is in a science fiction fanzine, but Indick is a pleasant critic who I always enjoy reading. I'm glad he liked The Coconuts; that was a very well done reconstruction, and I wish Arena Stage had prepared a cast album. I thought the best parts were those not involving the Marx Brothers. There are a lot of wonderful songs (by Irving Berlin) and jokes in the play, and what impressed me about the production was that it was clearly a musical with the Marx Brothers in it, not a "Marx Brothers play." The film kept all the routines the Marx Brothers did, and threw everything else away, including quite a lot of enjoyable material. The best part of the musical was the final scene, where all the characters dressed in splendidly bright costumes; it was definitely a feast for the eyes (and the imagination).

[[Ben Indick's "Theatre Beat" is included because Ben is a fan who goes to the theatre often, sees plays that may be of fannish interest, and I happen to like his reviews.]]

I thought having Mike Resnick annotate Mark Leeper's trip report was a especially good idea, since Resnick and Leeper are two different types of travelers. [[It was Mike's idea, and Mark agreed to it.]]

Resnick, if his diaries are any indication of it, likes to travel first class wherever he goes (I can't picture him staying at a Motel 6 when he's on the road). His reports are fascinating, well-written, and thoughtful accounts of an Africa most of

us can't afford to see. Leeper, on the other hand, shows why travelers should avoid package tours whenever possible. From everything I've read, Egypt and Kenya are pretty well-run countries; it should be possible to see them without traveling in a tourist pack. (Tanzania is more debatable.) The problem with package tours, of course, is first that they are designed for the "average tourist," a person no one should aspire to, and second, they are designed to insulate the tourist as much as possible from the countries he is visiting. Being accosted by souvenir sellers is an unfortunate occurence, but traveling in packs increases the chances that they are going to attack you. After all, to them you are a walking bag of gold embroidered with neon dollar signs.

I thought Resnick's critique was sound, except for a few points where he was too harsh. I look forward to reading future Leeper diaries--and hope that he avoids packagers next time!

Kathleen Gallagher's article was entertaining, but she failed to mention one of the worst kind of roommates--snorers. I used to share a room with three people at BALTICON, but unfortunately, all of them snore. One night, I tried to go to bed at 3 AM but their snoring kept me awake until around five. Then one of the three got up at six to go swimming. Trying to function on one hour;s sleep is not fun, and I switched roommates at the next year's convention.

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Alan David Laska's comments on the WW II Star Trek episode reminded me of the marginal SF movie Fail Safe. It contained the most flagrant misuse of stock footage I've ever seen. A squadron of four jet aircraft is dispatched to shoot down bombers before they can reach Russia. The squadron is shown four times, a different type of aircraft each time. The stress of metamorphosing must have tired them out because they crashed far short of their targets.

I saw a very similar fillo to Peggy Ranson's space scene on page 12 in the New Orleans SF & F Festival program book credited to Alexine Legier. Who's plagiarizing who here? Or should I ask who's kidding whom? [[David, maybe Peggy has multiple names too.]]

One question about Diana Stein's fillo on page 125. What fan editor in his right mind fools around with correction fluid anymore?

[[Those who still use stencils and mimeo machines, those who can't afford a word processor yet, and those who are left handed, are in their right minds.]]

I have no idea what Terry Jeeves' cartoon creative on page 76 is referring to, but I have to laugh just looking at it.

And conspicuous in its absence is Phil Tortorici's art. Even with stuff in my file, I too left him out of my last issue. He must be thinking there's a conspiracy. That should inspire him to do some real manic illos.

After 10 years of teaching in the same area, Mary Jane is constantly running into former students. She doesn't remember all the hundreds of names but does the faces. Surprisingly, even those she failed smile and are friendly, probably because they are as glad as she that the experience is over.

Being a cartoonist, I know that intentional non sequiturs are often a great source of humor. Listening to individuals such as your former student, however, who spew forth and unconscious stream of non sequiturs, can be annoying. I myself don't mind as long as they don't follow me around.

Since it took 11 months to see my last letter in print, I thought about putting an experation date on this one (you know, "Best if used before Jan 1, 2001") but then thought better of it, realizing there are limits to friendship, even when it comes to humor. Ha, ha, ha! What are you doing with that correction fluid? No, no---aaaaiiieeee!

Re: #31. With my experience at cons in the last year, I couldn't help but smirk at Kathleen Gallagher's article "How to Survive a Con Weekend with Roommates." Expectations are never what you expect.

Among the art in the issue, I enjoyed Tom Dow's seductive mermaid, Peggy Ranson's epmemeral fairy, and Darlene Coltrain's sprite. I have a soft spot in my heart for two-dimensional women.

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Ha, ha, very funny. Just how many little fannish elves have you got churning out LL these days? Take care or you'll burn 'em out!

Lan's Lantern 30: A very cute cover by Giovanna of a guinea pig Diogenes with a firefly lantern. Simple, humorous, well done.

Whew, you sounded rather depressed in your editorial about today's children and what they'll do to the world. I sincerely hope that the better elements win out with the guidance of teachers like you and others who practice similar attitudes (responsibility, caring about others, etc.). HA! about the Teddy Harviatoon ("Look, Alicia! 4900 pages of Lan's Lantern to read and comment on.") Yes, that should hold them until the next supply ship in 12 years. And then they'll be 12 years behind! ACK!

I enjoyed reading Susan Shwartz's RoVaCON speech. I can only envy her having someone OK the reading of her first SF book. No one in my family was interested, and I was teased for watching Star Trek. (Even gentle teasing bugged me about a show I was passionately involved with.) I loved Susan's vision of the SF community as an actual town that surfaces at each convention like Brigadoon. She described the physical and emotional elements so vividly, I feel as though I've seen a statue of Heinlein in a town square (or was it a hotel lobby?). I'm sure she received a standing ovation for her fairly-realistic, positive image of fandom.

[[Filkers Barry and Sally Childs-Helton wrote a song called "Flying Island Farewell" about cons being a flying island that sets down each weekend at a convention. // A new statue just went up -- William F. Temple died July 15.]]

Thanks to Mark Bernstein, for writing about Madeleine L'Engle. I hadn't realized that she'd carried on the action for the Murray family members in other books.

WHEW! That's a lot of fanzine reviews! Thanks for the nice one of Rune. I hope my editorials continue to be interesting.

"Time to Spare" wasn't particularly great, but I think Colin can continue to improve. Being able to buy time is certainly an interesting subject. ("Hey mister, can you spare a quarter...of an hour?" or John's version: "You got a minute?")

"The Most Forgettable Character I Have Ever Known" -- ah, folks, Terry Jeeves proves with this story about his father that tall tales are still being told. The surprise ending lost a lot by being accidentally repeated, however.

[[Yes, and I just saw that. I can figure out HOW it happened, but I can't justify WHY. Dumb mistake on my part.]]

As always, I enjoyed reading your conreports and ramblings. (Ain't ego boo great?) Cedar Point in Sandusky: Yep, I remember that from when I lived (so to speak) in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. I went once with a friend from high school. It was fun. It was the first time I'd seen a great lake--my sense of wonder went BOINNNGGG. We went on the river ride with the Wild West dummies having shoot-outs and Indians popping up from bushes by the river. I never quite got up the nerve to go on the big roller coaster, but I think we went on a big Ferris wheel. I got some great salt-water taffy, watching through a window as it was being made by a machine. I suffered terribly from thirst: I couldn't find drinking fountains, and pop and popsicles only made it worse. We sat down to supper, and I soon found myself staring at an empty pint milk carton--I'd downed it in about three swallows. Went right back for more. Yum. It improved my mood considerably.

What exactly was the "Tour of the Universe" at the CN Tower in Toronto? Was it a real tour (costing $) or something done by fans (worth every penny--or Penney, if Lloyd did it)? The Illo on this page (52) "Nobody gives a sucker an even break" is true--have YOU ever tried to break a sucker evenly?

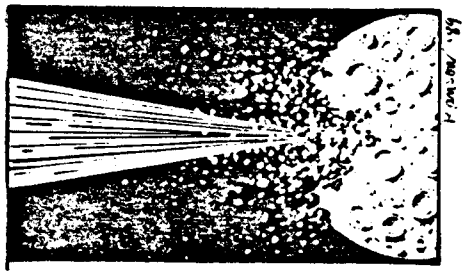
[[The "Tour of the Universe" is a simulation of a rocket ride out to Jupiter. Yes, it costs, but worth it -- once. I would think that the second ride would be far less exciting.]]

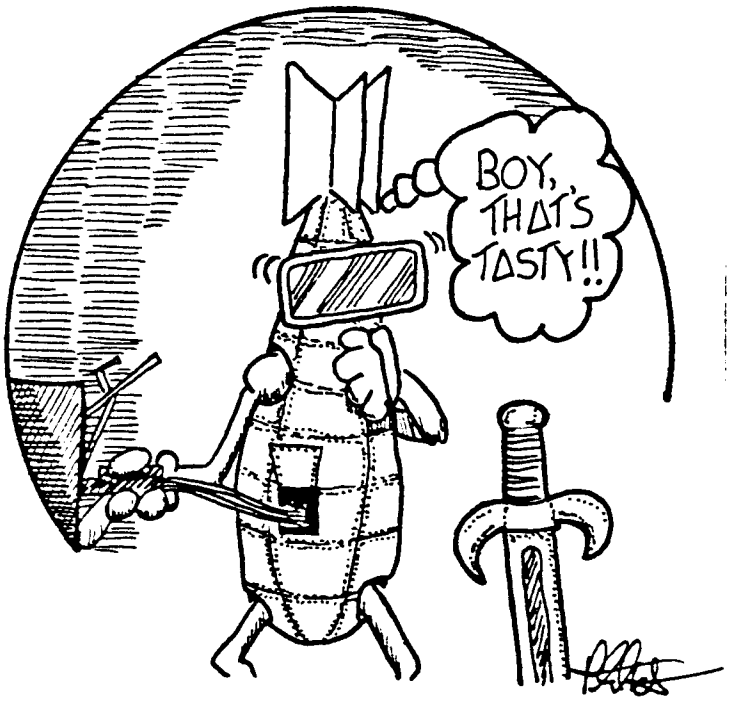
Ouch. Just reading about a sunburn is painful, especially one so bad that it took a week and a half for the pain to subside. I recently went canoeing for three hours in the middle of the day on a river--without using sunblock. I got off pretty easy, though the tops of my feet were scarlet. They didn't peel, but itched after the color faded. Strange.

Nola's cartoon ("The Adventures of Lan & Nola") was very amusing. I chuckled at the little jab (a note indicating a "5,000 page Lan's Lantern--not to be confused with the Los Angeles phone directory").

While in Niagra Falls, did Maia try to uncover your secret identity (like Lois did in one of the Superman movies)? [[No, she knows all my secret identities already.]]

So you make good cinnamon bread? Care to send the recipe? John and I like the cinnamon bread with a punch, and the only worthy stuff we've found is made at a convent outside of Dubuque, Iowa. I keep





meaning to request THEIR recipe. They use a slightly sweet, white-bread base with a lot of strong cinnamon swirled through. I've made a recipe using Watkins cinnamon, but just can't get the same effect.

[[Recipe is on its way. Good luck.]]

I like Robert Sabella's critique of the critics (movie and book reviewers for LL). He gives good advice and praise as well as criticism.

I was confused when writers referred to 1200 stuffed animals without mentioning the article they were discussing. Yes, Gerri and Herman found a large house in St. Paul for themselves and their family--now over 1500. David Cummer had his Second Annual Hugathon to rasie money for AIDS victims. He encouraged people to bring more stuffed animals, and hugged every one of them (as well as a fan or two) to raise $600+. YEA! Another local fan, Walt Pattinson/Wilde Phogge, takes his hand puppets nearly everywhere. He gets a kick out of people's faces when he whips out a raccoon or some other furry thing. He's very good--his creatures have personalities!

I'm sorry I haven't done justice to all of the art that appeared throughout this 146-pager; thanks to the artists! Long may their pens create!

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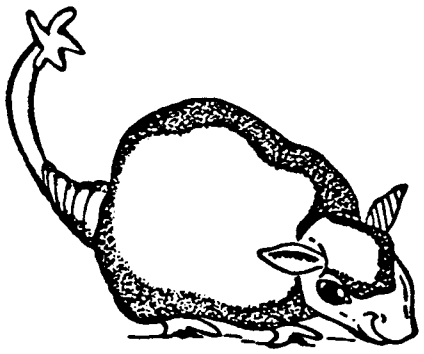
The Lantern is getting out of hand, you know. A few more issues that size, and and you'll give up, or start over with another title, or go into an apa. Basically, I agree with Susan's article, though in one or two places she may be overreacting. She says that foreign language study has declined, and she has better statistical sources than I do, but I wonder if the decline is in numbers or percentage. Not that either is good, but with a lot more students in college now, the actual numbers of language students could go up while percentage goes down. I doubt very much if the percentage of people who can't identify historical dates or geographical data has declined much since I was in school in the 1930s and 1940s. Certainly the published newspaper articles about it don't show any particular decline; it was always this bad. It's no better in England, either, according to their newspaper polls. (Which doesn't mean that it isn't serious, but does mean that we need to look at school defects in general rather than try to find out why they've declined. And it probably means that science fiction fans aren't the best people to study the problem; fans generally like to read, and we need to find out why other people don't. On the other hand, we're probably an improvement over the people who have studied the problem, if the suggestions I've read are typical.) There's no basis for judgement over a decline in literacy; most blacks didn't get counted at all, in the good old days. The problems are long-term, not recent.

I read Lois' talk/interview while I was still at INCONJUNCTION, so you can tell it was my major interest. I've re-read Shards of Honor more than once, but I never spotted the Star Trek roots; she's quite right about that.

Harris had an interesting idea. I'd have never thought of it, because I'm arrogant. Asked to supply a list of StF classics, I'd make up a list and forget about it--as, I suspect, would most fans. He even gets a pretty good list out of his research, although I would...oh, never mind. My recent list-making has been for my customers at cons, some of whom ask what books I would recommend. This, of course, means the list is constrained by why I have at hand to sell them; no point in recommending The Green Hills of Earth if they're going to go off and buy a copy from someone else.

Lambe was very entertaining. Never had that happen. Kari, the coonhound who adopted us some years back, would go out and kill coons on her own, but then she was 70 to 80 pounds depending on how many coons and gound hogs she'd eaten lately, and never seemed to get chewed up. Severian, the current miniature Labrador, stays on a chain because (a) he has no sense about traffic, and (b) local sheep farmers have strenuous objections to loose dogs. He's made do with 4 groundhog kills so far this summer. (We can count them because he brings them into the yard as trophies. He gets them in our barn, except for one he ran down and killed while I was walking him with a leash. That was exciting for a while.)

Lambe seems to think that David Dvorkin has had two novels, Budspy (which I never heard of before) and The Seekers. He's also written The Children of



Shiny Mountain (1977), which I quit on page 69 after reading "All of these people bore the marks of a robust and outdoor life--men and women were equally healthy." (Score an F in biology.) He also did The Green God (1979), which I didn't start.

I did read Randle and Cornett's Remember the Alamo! and liked it very much, which is why I was terribly disappointed in Remember Gettysburg! Also, the development of the alternate world didn't follow logically from the result of the battle, which it more or less did in the earlier book.

Wolansky might be reminded that if we and the British seriously considered making WW II landing craft for the Normandy invasion out of ice--and the historical consensus seems to be that it might have been better if we'd done it that way--there seems little reason why an advanced civilization couldn't make spaceships out of it.

I'm glad to see Judith Tarr objecting to the idea that cutting one novel into three pieces makes it a trilogy. I'm ready to give up to the illiterate; maybe she can take over.

Duane Elms is right, but he's talking to the wrong people. It's the publishers who are asking for trilogies, not the authors who insist on writing them. And Juanita's agent recently told her that while publishers are publishing trilogies, they're buying open-ended series, which will be the next science-fictional fad. Be grateful for the few single books that still appear.

Fans including Amsbury tend to underrate the amount of fantasy present in the Good Old Days. Amsbury specifically omits: Fantastic Adventures, Fantastic Novels, Famous Fantastic Mysteries, Fantastic, A. Merrit's Fantasy, Strange Tales, Beyond, Science Fantasy, Fantastic Story Magazine, Coven 13, Avon Fantasy Reader, Fantasy Fiction, and a few others. Plus Fantastic Universe, which like F&SF printed both fantasy and SF (and articles on flying saucers as well).

No comments on the travel articles in #31. (Do I hear a faint cheer?) I got a jolt out of the Stan Schmidt interview because I didn't read your little paragraph about doing it in 1978, and when I came to the comment about George Scithers coming in every two days for Asimov's, I came up for air in a hurry. Lord knows I'm not able to read all the science fiction that's being published, but the only novel I know about that has two alien races and no human characters is Robert Asprin's The Bug Wars. (Of course, I have a special in that one.) Schmidt's editorial objecting to, among other things, Adam and Eve stories inspired me to write one (of course, what else would you expect of me?). Sold it, too--to Amazing, as it happened.

I'm alwyas willing to talk about science fiction at cons; Jet can look me up at Birmingham next February. Of course, my memory isn't what it used to be. Not so much because I'm getting old and feeble as because my opinions of recent books and magazines go into my eyeballs and more or less immediately back out onto paper, and once my reviews are written down, I don't need to remember them any more. If I need the information I can look it up--which doesn't help at a convention. Not that many current books are all that memorable--I did better in the early days when it was all new and wonderful.

On the other hand, filkers had something like 20 or 25 years of hunting for "any quiet spot", and it generally sisn't work out too well. Which doesn't mean they wouldn't come to a con with no fringe activities like a filk room--but they'd bitch about it. Most filkers are fans first and filkers second (though a few of the newer ones aren't) but the "second" has become more important.

I haven't been to school lately, so I'm not much of a judge, but how many of those kids who feel that learning is a waste of time would even have been in school 40 years ago? And if they had been, it might well have been under protest then. I went to school with a lot of kids who thought school was a waste of time and were waiting anxiously for their 16th birthday so they could drop out. (It was a closely guarded secret at the time that they could legally quit one day after their 15th birthday; none of the students knew that, and I doubt if most of the teachers did.)

Hugging in fandom isn't restricted to conventions; I got a big hug from the matron of honor at a recent wedding, as I went down the line of principal characters, relatives, and the like. (And I didn't object a bit....) Of course, that may have been commiseration over the fact that I'd been asked if I'd perform the wedding if necessary, as the minister was late--I like a bit more than 10 minutes advance notice on this sort of thing, and worried a lot until the minister showed up.

Wooster seems to forget about Anne McCaffrey, who started with Del Rey. Plus Tim Powers' first major book, Marion Zimmer Bradley's best ones, etc. And why not Robert Moore Williams? He novels may not be great literature, but Healy and McComas (who were better judges of science fiction than Wooster is) liked one of his short stories well enough to put it in the first major anthology of science fiction stories.

[[Robert Moore Williams may have been a hack writer, but he was a good story-teller. His short story, "Robot's Return," which Healy and McComas included in Famous Science Fiction Stories: Adventures in Time and Space, was good, but I think his story, "The Red Death of Mars," is better (and according to our files, has been anthologized more).]]

Joe Napolitano
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I share your views about Reagan. I too have criticized his activities in several other fanzines. Usually, however, someone somewhere will take the opposite viewpoint and argue against my opinions. I certainly hope there aren't too many on your mailing list like that. It seems true that a sizeable segment of the population finds Mr. Reagan's behavior acceptable. There seems to be a lot of hypocrisy in some circles. People say one thing and do something else. This seems to be a noticeable characteristic in the upper levels of society. But since Reagan represents the "elite" of our society his behavior seems to fit right in. Fortunately he was caught. Maybe future presidents will learn from his example? [[I doubt it.]]

Your statements about athletes who are crude and illiterate is very apt. The list, for example, of football players who have committed crimes is extremely long. Yet many of them are allowed to continue playing supposedly for the "good" of the team or school. There should be higher standards. The Pete Rose situation shows that many "great" athletes regard themselves to be above the common standards that govern the "average" people.

Mike Glicksohn
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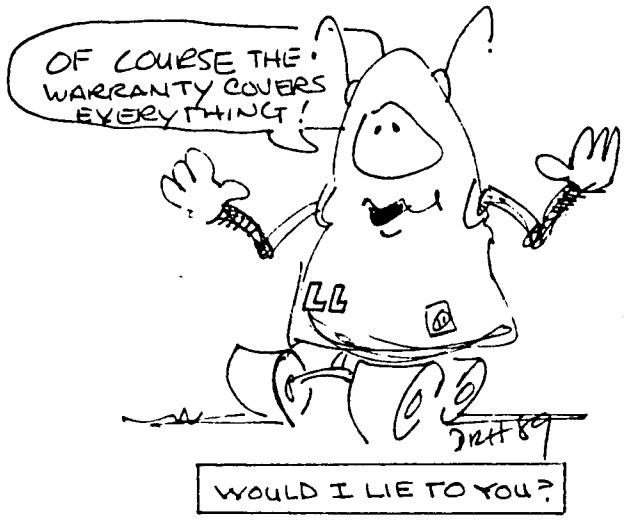
While I share your general distaste for Reagan and his administration I seriously doubt he is responsible for any increase in the moral weakness of America. I've long held the cynical belief that the vast majority of people do not act decently because it's their innate nature but out of fear of getting caught. Reagan may exemplify an offensive attitude of buck-passing and responsibility-shirking but he certainly didn't originate it. Politicians have been acting as Ronnie did since the very first election and I don't expect they'll ever change. It may be a sad commentary on our society and our species but it's hard to deny its validity.

Good solid speech by Susan Shwartz. Not exactly original but valid points need to be reiterated every now and that so we don't lose sight of the truths they express. I was down at Bakka, the SF bookshop, this morning to, among other things, look for books by Susan and Esther Friesner whose letters I've enjoyed so much in Fosfax. They had Esther's new book but nothing by Susan so I still haven't read any of her fiction. She writes good letters, though, and gives good speech so I hope she retains her current level of enthusiasm for the community for a goodly number of years.

The Alan Laska column was quite fascinating and I assume that his answers are factual. Should be interesting to see what readers send in for future installments. (I fondly remember a BC comic strip with several panels showing two cavemen sitting on a hillside while spaceship after spaceship zoomed past in the background. In the last panel one of them says, "The swamp gas is really active tonight."

I'd never heard of Madeleine L'Engle until Mark's article (but then he's a book reviewer so is apt to know somewhat obscure writers better than some readers.) My basic problem, of course, is time. I still buy the new books of the writers I know as friends and books by writers I know I can rely on for a good solid reading experience and with so many new writers appearing all the time it just isn't possible to read everyone. I still haven't read anything by Lawrence Watt-Evans, for example, despite exchanging several long letters with him as a result of our interaction in fanzines. So I'm afraid I'll have to let Ms L'Engle go for the nonce. Besides, I hate to have to pay to read a book after I've acquired it and Mark says that "All tolled" he's read a dozen of her books. Hell, once they put a toll on reading I'll have to sell the house since I won't be able to afford the mortgage and a reading surcharge.

This issue of LL seems directed at showing up my lack of awareness of the field I claim to be a fan of. I've certainly heard of Bujold but again I've



never read any of her work. I did read her own words on writing, though, and thoroughly enjoyed them. If I ever get my six feet of unread books read I'll definitely seek out her novels. Anyone who met her husband at a convention is okay in my book!

The funniest part of Sabella's look at the world of SF ten (actually now it's eleven) years ago was the announcement of the publication of Last Dangerous Visions. Oddly enough, the book has recently been announced as due for publication in 1991. And has a publisher ever lied to us before?

I skimmed your fanzine reviews, primarily to see what percentage of your collection also came this way. Ignoring some catalogues I find I receive 37 titles that you get and don't see another 58. Since I can barely keep up with my reading and letter-writing responsibilities as it is I'm rather glad I don't get everything you do!

It's been years since I've been to a BOSKONE, in part because of the size they reached and the tendency for them to run as three-ring circuses. Laurie's description of last year's edition made it sound like a much more enjoyable gathering and I'm glad she was able to transform it into something more like what I think a con should be. Of course, nowadays I can't afford to get there so it won't make a difference to me personally but the new incarnation sounds like a much more pleasant convention to attend and to run.

Your dedication to your students is remarkable, George, and I commend you. This year we were on a new time-table, with three fifty-minute periods each morning and afternoon instead of two forty minute periods plus a seventy minute period we'd been using for the past several years. As a consequence I found I couldn't cover even the core material in my courses and had absolutely no class time for review. All I could do was hand out prepared review sheets and tell the students to come see me on their own time with any problems they needed help with. You can probably guess how many of them took advantage of that offer, a number well reflected by the very high failure rate among my Grade 11 students on their final exam. Oh well, we can but be there if they care enough to use us, right?

I always enjoy reading about your activities, even though it tires me out! There are certainly a lot more non-convention fan activities in your area that there are in Toronto; it's surprising you find the time to work on LL and do all the reading you do.

I've had a few confrontations with parents similar to the one you describe (although not on religious grounds) and while it can be frustrating to have your professionalism called into question I've learned to roll with the punches. Half the time I get my way and the administration backs me up and half to time I have to reschedule something because of political pressure but if you let that infrequent annoyance get to you, you'll quit teaching and that would be a loss both for you and your students. If I only encounter one asshole parent a year I figure I'm doing pretty well.

I've been to two cons this year (three if you count MIKECON) and I won't even make MIDWESTCON for a second straight year since I have to be in school for promotion meetings up until about 3 PM on the Friday of the con. Bummer. I envy you your long lists of cons attended: there are definite advantages to not being possessed by of a Canadian mortgage!

You seemed in pretty good spirits over this year's AD ASTRA so I assume that the doldrums you were going through regarding school have proven temporary. I think I've been very lucky indeed in my teaching career: in eighteen years I've had the occasional bad day and some problems with individual students but I seem largely to have missed any feeling of burnout. I can't recall ever seriously thinking about quitting teaching, and I've certainly never had any prolonged periods of depression about my work. In fact, when things have been going badly in my personal life work has helped me get through those times. If I win the lottery I'll quit working but since that isn't ever going to happen I'm glad I can still enjoy each day I work as much as I do. Hoping you are once again feeling the same! [[Yes, I am.]]

It is not so much depressing that I've not read the vast majority of the books reviewed in this Lantern (that does allow me to skip a few pages and after three hours that's a blessing!) but that I haven't even heard of most of the people writing them. Where do all these hot-shot new writers come from? And how can any one individual possibly keep abreast of the current SF scene? If I did nothing all summer except read SF I might possibly work through my backlog but that's a completely unfeasible scenario. Maybe it's time for a monthly pulp-sized digest magazine aimed at supermarket check-outs and carrying one paragraph plot summaries of

all recent SF books so those of us without the time to actually read all the new writers can fake it at room parties and at least give the appearance of still being SF readers. [[Read Lan's Lantern.]]

I read Nighteyes in bound galley form and agree with your assessment that it's a good solid SF novel with overtones of the horror genre. Imagine my surprise when later on I found out it had been written by Gar Stevens, who I remember as a teenage fan who helped us run TORCON 2 back in 1973! Gar kindly had me invited to Doubelday's book-launching party for Nighteyes which was held down at the CN Tower. And since the "Tour of the Universe" ride had been booked for two hours and was free to those at the party I finally got to go on it. I've since read a couple of other of Stevens' horror books and find him a most enjoyable writer indeed. You just never know where these Blasts From The Past are going to resurface.

What are these sic letters doing in the Lantern instead of in Fosfax where blood-letting and wild swinging attacks are the norm? Is this the start of a newer, less-kind and less-gentle Lantern? Nah, that would be Bush-league, wouldn't it?

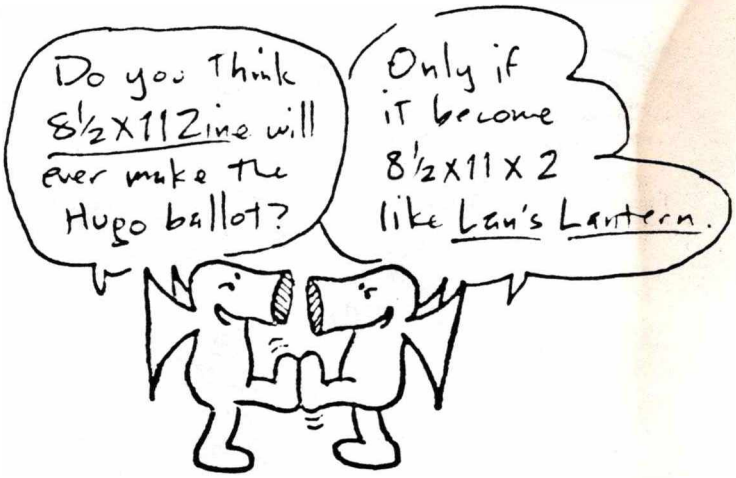
Very erudite letter by Ms Tarr. Accurate though she undoubtedly is, I doubt her comments will influence enough people to turn back the trend toward sloppy usage. Still, one does what one can and educates when the opportunity arises: on those two or three time a year when I need to use a word like "medieval" I'll try to consider whether or not I'm using it correctly. (My problem would be not having a more accurate term to use instead, since I've never studied history in much detail. It's this sort of intellectual laziness which has resulted in the popular use of "trilogy" in so many inappropriate ways. Then again, maybe not. It's hard to know what to replace "medieval" with but "series" ought to be within the grasp of even a Horseclans fan.)

I get the feeling I'd like Sally Syrjala. I also get the feeling that if I ever met her I'd feel an overpowering urge to sidle up behind her and whisper "Bill Buckner" in her ear just to hear her scream and see her run hysterically from the room.

From his perceptive comments on the interface between fandom and the "real world", Duane Elms is neither a geek nor a psuedo-fan but someone it would be interesting to sit down and talk to. Hmmm ...perhaps nowadays that could make him a "pseudo-fan" since more and more of the people calling themselves fans aren't people it appears to have an interesting conversation with. (See the BOSKONE article if you think I'm exaggerating!)

You know you're becoming a BNF when famous fan artists do cartoons about you!

I wonder if Harry Andruschak has checked out local school boards for ditto supplies? Even though 90% of my school duplicating requirements are now handled by super high-tech photocopiers we still



have ditto machines around and I can get coloured ditto paper and coloured ditto masters if I need them. It wouldn't surprise me to find that school boards have large supplies of ditto materials that aren't being used and would be available at extremely low prices to the astute fan who located them.

Despite his comments I'm pretty sure John Purcell doesn't subscribe to the idea that a convention committee is duty-bound to cater to every fringe group in and around science fiction fandom. The committees that do seem to feel this way (other than the worldcon committee which is a differert ballgame entirely) seem to be motivated, as John observes, by a desire to maximize their profits (and even BOSKONE has apparently seen the folly of that direction, as evidenced by the article earlier this issue). John is aware of small, single-focus conventions such as CORFLU, DITTO and MIDWESTCON which run successfully and make a profit without succumbing to the "Bigger must be better" syndrome that can he traces back to BIG MAC and other of a similar ilk. Any regional convention can be run according to the desires of the people doing the work on it as long as they make the nature of their convention clear to potential attendees. Personally I'd welcome a return to the smaller, literary-oriented cons I knew when I first became a fan. That more cons aren't run that way is indicative of the people who are willing to work on the committees (if the majority are media fans you're going to get a media con and who could blame them?) and of their desire for fame, glory and M*O*N*E*Y. But it doesn't have to be that way.

While I'm not much on costumes and masquerades I certainly don't mind if other people want to spend time at a con dressed up in hall costumes. Just as long as they don't intrude on my space while they are doing so. And that's the key issue to me. It's also the main reason I'm in favor of banning weapons at SF cons except for during the masquerade. Too many weapon-toting juveniles abuse the privilege, thus spoiling it for the costumers who know how to use a weapon merely as an effective part of

an overall presentation. But wasn't it interesting that at when the AD ASTRA hotel was looking for a way to put pressure on a convention they were apparently having second thoughts about accepting, the one thing they fixed on was weaponry, to the extent of threatening to close down the whole con if any weapons were found anywhere in the hotel after a two hour grace period? If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck and smells like a duck then I wouldn't stand underneath it as it flew overhead.

(If that sounds elitist, so be it. In my defense I can only say I know of no convention that ever had hotel problems because of a statistics seminar being held at the con!)

Yesterday I locced a fanzine in which Britfan Rob Hanson was baffled by PED XING signs in San Francisco and now Miranda tells us they are common in US Southwest and yet I still believe I recall them from my own childhood in Britain thirty years ago. I certainly haven't sent time in the US areas where they are apparently prevalent but I definitely recognized the joke in Max Headroom when the chief Chinese industrialist was named Ped Xing. Perhaps the Chinese population of Britain increased after I left in 1957 and was upset enough by the PED XING signs (for obscure Oriental etymological reasons) that they were all torn down and shipped to oddball parts of the US so that Hansen and Langford never saw them in their native environment but fans like Teddy grew up familiar with them. That theory certainly makes as much sense as the suggestion that I really don't know what I'm talking about and have seemingly performed the miracle of cross-connecting the only three synapses I retain.

So, did you and David Palter get to meet at MIKECON or were you too busy grilling burgers and chicken, you Good Guest you!?

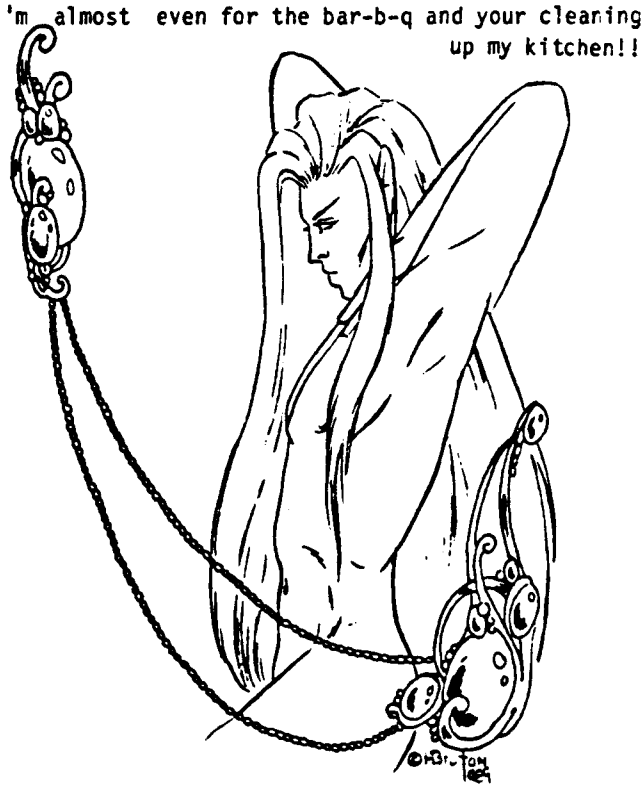
[[Yes, we met and talked on and off all weekend, even while I was barbequing, as reported in LL #31. Thanks for arranging to have MIKECON so that I could meet him there.]]

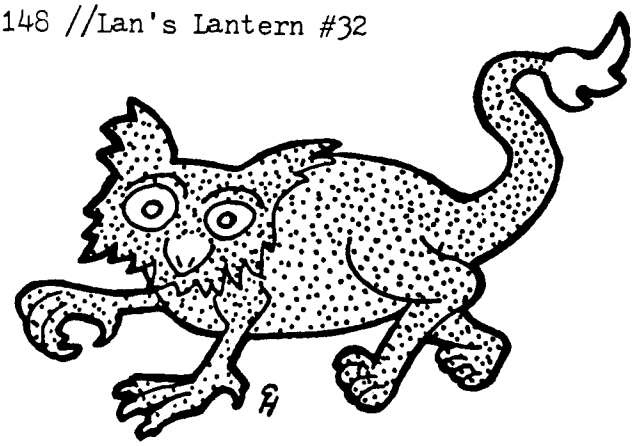
Sure, buying books can cost money but what are the alternatives? Stocking the fridge with food, getting new clothes just because some overpaid artiste says your old ones are passe, paying for haircuts, having and raising children??? I mean, is that any sort of choice to have to make? C'mon Lloyd, you guys don't have kids so if you're pooping out at cons at 10 PM let's be honest and acknowledge the real reason, eh? You're just all worn out from locing all those fanzines and trying to become the ~~Mike~~ Harry Warner, Jr of your generation!

Skel's got a point about making sure things are done right once you go to that great fanzine publishing warehouse in the sky. I'd like to think that my quite valuable collection of signed first editions would be disposed of properly and, more important, that my priceless collection of fanzines would be re-integrated into fannish fandom, but what mostly bothers me is whether or not they'll get my wake right. Will there be enough single malt scotch? Will they provide poker tables and poker chips for the memorial poker hands? Will the beer be Conner's Best Bitter, properly chilled in the keg? Will there be red and golden caviar for those who don't like black? Will the lox be sliced thin enough? It's nice that Skel provided the solution to my worries too: I'll appoint him to organize the do with the proviso that if it doesn't go according to the expected standards all my money goes to his son Nicholas so he can move back home with dear old Skeldad. Then I'd have nothing to worry about!

It seems to me that Jessica overstates the case about the changing nature of cons by implying (and I'm sure she never intended to) that her sort of SF fans and con-goers (who by and large are also my sort) lack the ability to select from out of a too-large convention those aspects that attract us to fandom and cons in the first place. Obviously this isn't so, and it is perfectly possible to attend a multi-media convention and set up a con-within-the-con that reflects your own interests. For that reason only I find articles that purport to tell me what's wrong with fandom off-putting. I may not enjoy all aspects of modern cons but nobody forces me to partake of them. If I can't find something at a con to enjoy then (by and large, knowing the cons I go to but acknowledging that others I stay away from may be different) the fault is probably with me, not with modern too-diffused fandom.

You've had me for six hours, George. I figure I'm almost even for the bar-b-q and your cleaning up my kitchen!!





Ruth Berman
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Re: Mark Bernstein's review of Madeleine L'Engle's Many Waters--I'm a bit surprised that the science fiction conventions haven't been trying harder to get hold of her as aspeaker. (Or maybe they have, and I just haven't noticed the announcements that she was scheduled to attend, or maybe they have but she couldn't make it.) She sounds like someone who would be very interesting to meet and hear. I wonder how many writers have used the story of Noah as their source. Because of the more obviously SFnal elements, I think Atlantis has been more popular as a source in SF (and in fantasy) writing--E. Nesbit's Story of the Amulet, Poul Anderson's The Dancer from Atlantis, Tolkien's adaptation of Atlantis to the story of Numenor, Larry Niven's "When the Magic Went Away" come to mind. I can't think of SFnal treatments of Noah off-hand (except in the more general sense of stories about the escape of a few people from disaster, such as McIntosh's One in Three Hundred, and the many stories of that type).

Ben Indick's review of Jerry Herman's "failure," The Grand Tour, makes it sound interesting. I don't think I'd heard of it before. I wonder if there is a cast album available of the music. From the description I suppose it must have been adapted from the play/movie Jakubovski and the Colonel or Me and the Colonel (Danny Kaye played Jakubovski in the movie, which I remember fondly).

Jean Lamb in the lettercolumn mentions having been introduced to the British SF TV show Blake's 7. I was recently introduced to it too, and have found it fascinating. It makes an interesting contrast to the kind of set-up typical of USA future politics, in that the Evil Empire is not an Empire but a Federation. I think perhaps "empire" still has positive connotations for a British audience that don't particularly apply in this country, and the other way around for the connotations of "federation." (Even in Doctor Who, which visits many more alien civilizations and needs a wider variety of them accordingly, although there's an evil empire or two, notably the Dalek empire, there isn't much in the way of Evil Emperors--just Dalek Supreme Commanders and the like. Blake also has an evil Supreme Commander. I don't know if there's a historical background to the choice of titlem or if it's coincidental.)

[[I know that one local convention tried to get Madeleine L'Engle as their GoH, but she was too busy. I'm sure they will try again. // Ben Bova used the Noah theme in his Orion. // My thinking about using "Supreme Commander" as the evil "heavy" as opposed to an Evil Emperor, is that the "evil" resides in an underling to the Emperor, rather than the Emperor himself. Thus you have the subtle idea that the Commander is acting independently of the Emperor. It could also be a slap at the military, that they are the ones who are "evil."]]

Mark L. Blackman
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That's a cute image Susan Shwartz conceives, the SF community as a small town. A group she doesn't mention is the small-minded folks who try to keep out new arrivals on the grounds that they're "different" (some of them dress funny or sing silly songs or play weird games), and. besides, they like the community small so they can talk with their freinds.

Re: Jessica Amanda Salmonson's Comments on David Shea's piece on fandom. Fandom--and therefore its conventions--has changed a lot in the 50 years since the first Worldcon, expanded from fanzine editors to include gamers, filkers, costumers, and media fans. Personally, I feel more confortable around First Fandomites than around many fans a few years younger than I. I can't understand, for instance, media enthusiasm at the expense of SF literature. I once surprised myself by using the term "these kids" to a fan about 30 years my senior; like him, my introduction to SF was through the written word, not media. (Strange to say, bookreading fans are becoming a fringe fandom. Fanzine fans are already one.) Nor am I a gamer or costumer. But cons are larger these days and I don't perceive these non-literary fans as interfering with my part of the con--they go to their tracks of programming and I go to mine. Getting SF fans to read more is the job of parents and schools, not concoms.

My, your artists certainly run you through the ringer--framed by Nola, nuclear winterized by Teddy Harvia. No wonder the issues are late! Shouldn't the "Lan Before Time" have a dinosaurskin cap? And I liked Diana Stein's comic strip. (Come fans name their kids the same way they name cats.)

By the way, I ran across the following term which might amuse you (and add a level of wordplay to your zine title):

> A lens lantern was a small one-unit light that did not require housing to protect it from the weather as did a regular Fresnel lens. The glass sides of the lantern served

the same function as the lens, refracting and magnifying the light from the lamp.

--Francis Ross Holland, Jr.,
America's Lighthouses: An Illustrated History
(Dover Publications)

Perhaps the most telling sentence in Laurie Mann's self-congratulatory piece on BOSKONE 25 is "During the early '80s, we were troubled by the 'invasion' of BOSKONE by people..." By admitting that she and Jim wanted to cut "[eri[heral" events (Consuite, filking, films, etc.) at the con from the first (Fall '86, months before BOSKONE 24 and its fire alarms), she is confessing that their tactlessly phrased "Dear BOSKONE 24 Member" letter (which blamed all planned bans and cutbacks on BOSKONE 24) was a lie from start to finish. In this missive, Jim and Laurie claimed they were trying to bring back "Classic BOSKONEs." Now, I went to "Classic BOSKONEs" 10 years ago (so did Jim and Laurie, so they know better)--filking and movies ran into the night. What they created was "Diet BOSKONE Fun-Free," as much fun as its original namesake in Doc Smith. (A variant of my phrase, "BOSKONE Light," has been unofficially adopted by BOSKONE's concom, an unfortunate mixing of Coke and Pepsi metaphors.) The "Jim and Laurie Mann Act" made it "illegal" to go to BOSKONE for the purpose of having fun, especially transporting a minor. Having worked concom one BOSKONE ('86, which had 3700 attendees and no fire alarms), I sympathize with them not wanting to be a "Winter Worldcon," but this was excessively draconic. They discarded what made BOSKONE nice when all that was needed was better badge-checking ("I went to the consuite and the first 8 people I saw didn't have badges." Did she ask to see them? Some people, especially in costume, don't always wear them in plain sight. If they were indeed crashers, did she, as a member of the concom, expel them? If not, why not?) and maybe a size limit. The irony of them allowing no one under 18 to be admitted without a parent or guardian is that if such a rule had been in force when they entered fandom, they wouldn't have been able to enter fandom. (Several if my contemporaries' first con was NYCON in 1967, which they attended unescorted at the age of 14.)

As for a virtual ban on hall costumes and a policy of no alcohol at open parties, what of bid parties which relied on theme drinks (Atlanta's peach Diaquiris, Holland's Heinekens--I found neither's parties to be, in Mann's elegant phrasing, "bashes for rowdy party animals to get smashed together") or costumes (New Orleans's Mardi Gras revelers or Boston's own "Alice" characters! Perhaps NESFA took the Queen of Hearts too much to, um, heart?)

Then there are reports that rules were bent for friends. No alcohol at open parties, no listings for closed parts on the party board--but an exception was made for Boxboro, whose party served alcohol yet was listed on the board. "We do not want people wearing hall costumes at BOSKONE" --except for friends in Regency garb. In her article, Laurie huffily defending her badge;swapping, states "there are times when spontaneous silliness is a good thing." Right, when she and her friends do it. Too bad she, Jim and NESFA couldn't extend this courtesy to those who would have liked to attend a "Classic BOSKONE." I'm glad she feels, "in her humble opinion," that she ran a wonderful convention. The 800 people fewer than BOSKONE 25's limit of 2000 might disagree (yes, I boycotted the con--and BOSKONE 26), as might the other people disinvited from it.

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The problem with the solution advocated in Susan Shwartz's GoH Speech from RoVaCon is the advocator. Who (aside from a few political fanatics and desperate would-be learners) would want to learn to read from bland, closely-edited Politically Correct texts which her proposed program would produce? Look at the Marlo Thomas-approved "Tales for Free Children." They are so meticulously and humourlessly devoid of any specific character gender identities that they end up being devoid of any character identities. Evidently persons are to be totally fungible; standard replacement parts. Being something as opposed to nothing means that there are some things that one cannot be, which (it would seem) leads to discrimination. Much better to potentially be everything by actually being nothing.

A small note on Sabell's "Ten Years Ago in Science Fiction:" It would be nice if it were possible to provide follow-ups on his items, but I realize that space is not that available. Thus, his comment on the "forthcoming" publication of The Last Dangerous Visions by Berkeley is poignant if you have read The Last Deadlost Visions, puzzling if you have had little or no contact with the field and do not know that LDV has still not come out. Similarly, Elizabeth Lynn may have produced the highly-regarded "Dancers of Arun" trilogy, but not much else --at least not much else that I have seen--since 1982. (And I do not see everything. Has Lynn produced more highly-regarded work since then?)

[[No. Lynn seems to have been a single-product author, producing this one set of novels and then dropping out of sight.]]

I would like it if Sally Syrjala or someone would provide us with a little more background. In her review of Flip of a Coin she tells us about the Fan Q award given out each Memorial Day Weekend in East Lansing, Michigan. If this award (or even the

report) is a joke, I do not have the background to be able to laugh at it. If this is a real award, I think we all should know more about it. ($19 for a single fanzine--that price I can believe.)

[[These are indeed serious awards, but I know little about them.]]

Whereas Terry Jeeves' "The Most Forgettable Character I Have Ever Known" was written well enough for me to tell that it was a joke even before I got to the final paragraphs. Even before I got to the final paragraphs.

Laurie Mann's article, "BOSKONE 25: From the Inside Out," was remarkable, as I have never heard before of a con staffer who had both the time to record observations on the con and the connections to publish them in a fanzine. Especially since NESFA is known (or at least ahs gained a reputation) for being closed-mouthed and arrogant. At least we understand now a little better the decision to move BOSKONE.

Something in "Ramblings" is ominous, though it does not seem to be so on the first reading. You say that "[several] filkers are taking voice and/or instrument lessons. This made me realize that many filkers are becoming increasingly serious about their singing."

What is so ominous about that? It would seem to imply that filking is getting serious. Consider costuming. Originally, costumes were improvisable; it was possible to make a respectable showing at a Masquerade without having invested a fair chunk of last year and last year's income in having made your costume. Nowadays, costumers are required to be technicians, actors, sound engineers, and so on. For the effort put into it, one could make a career --and it is not even fun!

Now (it would seem) filking is going the same way. Will we be reminiscing about the good (or bad) old days when just anyone who wanted to sing could sing in a filk? Or will people who once might have been aspiting filkers just become spectators reduced to admiration of the increasing number of instruments, background, and other musical impedimenta brought in by performers?

Clifton Amsbury says "'Hitler never even came close to matching Stalin's body count' is a misstatement even if you take the most inflated charges against Stalin and the worst understatement of the Nazi atrocities." [p.135] Well, let us see. The worst understatement of the Nazi atrocities is that put forth by the so-called "Holocaust Revisionists" like Butz and Rassinier--zero. A more plausible figure is 15 million (6 million Jews, 4 million Russian PoWs, 2 million Poles, 1 million Yugoslavs, and 2 million German and other civilians).

The most inflated charges against Stalin I have seen are in a savage little book titled The Time of Stalin: Portrait of a Tyranny by Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko. The author is the son of one of Stalin's typical victims; Vladimir Antonov-Avseyenko was the leader of the assault on the Winter Palace which brought down Kerensky's government, afterward head of the political directorate of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, ambassador of the Soviet Union to various countries, Peoples' Commisar of Justice, and a "Trotskyist terrorist, wrecker, and traitor." Anton himself was a typical victim: a student, a "terrorist and anti-Soviet agitator," a zek, and now is a historian while living on a disablilty pension (the camps left him legally blind).

Anton Antonov-Avseyenko made a study of the Soviet censuses and other records and came up with the following figures for Stalin's body count:

Collectivization:	22 million [p. 213]
Purges 1935-41:	19 million [p. 213]
World War II:	33 million [p. 279]
Post-War famine:	10 million [p. 288]
Total:	84 million

This is probably too high (but Solzhenitsyn, for example has made an estimate based on his research for all Soviet rule of 60 million excluding was casualties) but I do not have access to the original sources from which a more precise report could be made. Nonetheless, the original point remains valid: Hitler never even came close to matching Stalin's body count.

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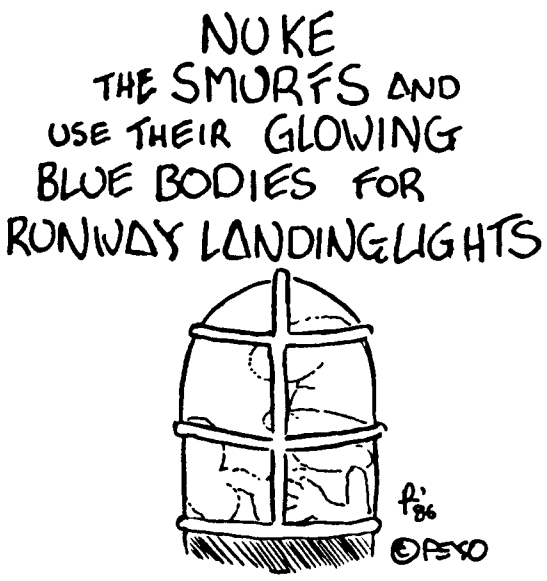
I can't agree with your opening editorial. Politicians are no worse today than they ever were and perhaps they're a little better. It's the average citizen who has gone downhill ethically, morally, and in obedience to the laws of the land. So everyone goes around raving about what this or that elected official is doing and isn't it terrible, in order to transform those politicians into whipping boys to whom their own guilt can magically be transferred. I'd estimate that Ronald Reagan did during his eight years in office fewer illegal and unethical things than the average citizen does in a typical week. Ten years from now, you'll begin to read in the same newspapers and magazines that have chanted their eight-year hymn of hate against Reagan the first of an increasing number of articles admitting that he was one of the best presidents of the 20th century. It's already happening to Richard M. Nixon.

I suspect that Alan David Laska is misleading in one of his answers. It's hard to conceive of the concept of Paramount Studios not having in its five or six decades of stock footage archives and its access to World War Two combat movies enough aerial



shots of airplanes to avoid the goof in that original Star Trek episode by showing the same type of plane in both long shot and medium shot. If truth serum could be administered, to whoever was responsible, I think they would admit that they grabbed a couple of airplane film clips almost at random because this was a television episode that would be shown once, possibly a second time in summer reruns, and never again, and besides, hardly anyone except kids would be watching, so who would notice? Nobody could have foreseen that those original Star Trek episodes would remain in active syndication for the next quarter-century and would be popular in the future in a device that didn't yet exist, the home VCR.

Bill Unger deserves a special Hugo for pioneering in this interview transcription method, eliminating the questions and turning the answers into a cohesive article that proceeds logically from one subject to the other. The fad of publishing interviews in question and answer form irritates me tremendously. Usually the questions are implicit in the answers and publishing them does nothing but make the interviewer feel as important as the subject of the interview. The question and answer format also always leaves me with the vague suspicion that the subject has committed a crime and this is a transcript of testimony given to the prosecuting attorney while on trial. So I'm prejudiced in favor of Lois McMaster Bujold before I've read a page of her writing, simply by the fact that she stars in this refreshing product of an interview, and I'll try to find some of her books at first opportunity.

One fact about ten years ago in science fiction that Robert Sabella might have added: most normal-sized paperbacks were priced around $1.95, give or take a few dimes. Today the central pricing point is just short of four bucks, or approximately a doubling of the cost in ten years, more inflation than most recreational costs have undergone in that period. Ten years ago name brand videotape blanks cost from two to three times as much as they do today and it was hard to find any pre-recorded movies on videotape for less than $70 or $80. Is it coincidence or cause and effect that so many young fans prefer science fiction in television form than in book form?

"Time to Spare" was quite well done. It has the same defect common to almost all fiction in fanzines, the impression that it's the summary of a story rather than the story itself, but I suppose that's caused mostly by the limited amount of space most fanzines are willing to grant to fiction.

Even though I've stopped going to cons, I found Laurie Mann's thorough description of her BOSKONE experiences as fascinating as if I were conhopping every weekend. The article is a good reminder that preserving talks and panels on tape isn't a completely adequate way to preserve the history of cons for the future; we need fanzine articles like this one to tell important things that happen outside the program rooms.

James Wallace Harris has an excellent idea in this tabulation of recommended books from this and that critic or fan. However, he can hardly get valid results by including lists made so long ago that omit recent decades or those provided by individuals who have read little or nothing published earlier than the past couple of decades. Moreover, "classics of science fiction" is the wrong way to go about it. "Classic" is a meaningless word today because of misuse. We have Classic Coca-Cola, any rock record released more than two or three years ago is merchandised as a "classic," Christmas tournaments for basketball teams from two or three counties are advertised as "invitational classics," so there's no telling what you'll get if you ask someone to list 50 of the most classic science fiction books: he might list his favorite books or the books that were most influential or the books that seem most likely to endure in new printings or something else. It would be better to compile a consensus by defining what should be listed--the best written or the best loved or whatever--and confine the survey to individuals of today who have a thorough knowledge of older books and keep up with current books.

"Conreports and Ramblings" is going to keep analysts busy some day a few decades in the future. I can foresee giant controversies in fanzines over the question of whether there ever was a Lan Laskowski who published Lan's Lantern, because of this column. The revisionists in fan history will contend that they have computer-generated evidence that the activities detailed in "Conreports and Ramblings" make it physically impossible for any one person to have done all those things and still have found time to publish enormous fanzines.

[[I sometimes wonder about this myself, how I accomplish so much in the time I have, while at the same time chiding myself for wasting time. I'm a strange person.]]

Obviously, it would require a younger person than I am to comment thoroughly on all the reviews. Let's just say that I enjoyed most of them, particularly the longer ones, and I was pleased to find a mixture of a few older books and movies included with recent released.

I recognize Sam Long's parody as a new version of a song about Solomon Levi. But I'm not sure if the Solomon ditty, a bit racist in theme, was the original or a parody of something else in its own right.

On #31:

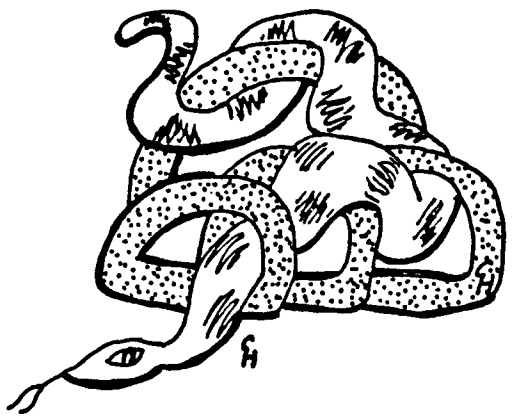
The mammoth trip accounts by Mike Resnick and Mark Leeper held my interest very well. It's strange that a person who rarely goes more than 75 miles from Hagerstown should enjoy reading travelogs, but this one does, particularly those in fanzines that contain lots of detailed information and the special kind of reactions that fans often have to new surroundings and mundane people don't seem to experience regularly. I don't think I would find much pleasure traveling in Africa which doesn't interest me as much as it obviously does these two writers. But some of the experiences they had could almost serve as substance for a science fiction story about adventures on another planet. No matter how much we read about how the U.S. of A. has Americanized the entire planet, there obviously are huge areas where conditions are utterly unlike anything we know in this nation and it's a good idea to be reminded of the contrast from time to time.

I do think it would have been better to put Mike's comments on Mark's diary at the end of it, keyed by footnote numbers, rather than running them at the bottom of the page under whatever caused the comment. After a while the reader starts to imagine he's at a meeting where a long-winded speaker is being constantly heckled by someone in the audience who is nitpicking at minor errors and opposing opinions. I know it was done in a friendly manner in this instance and I also know I could have simply skipped the interpolations until I'd finished the article and then leafed back through it and read the smaller type, but it was impossible to resist looking at the footnote while that page was before my eyes.

It was sad to find so many references to the threat of extermination for some of Africa's largest fauna, and it's hard to believe that only a half-century or so ago, everyone read with avid interest about big game hunters in jungle areas and didn't think they were doing anything wrong. I hope abortion will be viewed in a few more decades with the same loathing as the slaughter of helpless animals provokes today.

Pushy people seem not to have any one particular nationality. I rarely find it necessary to line up now that I'm retired and can avoid going to the supermarket when there is a rush business and I've stopped waiting in line for the biggest local used book sale to open for business each year. But when I stood an hour in that book sale line, I always saw the same dealer hover off to one side and finally sidle up and strike up a conversation with someone near the front of the line as the opening bell approached and when the line began to move he always inserted himself into about the fifth place, too late for protests to arise. So it isn't just Italians who do it at airports in Africa. My biggest gripe about pushy people who can't be avoided involves those who step into my path at the local mall. It seems to be a game or maybe an effort to assert dominance. These people stand in the doorway of a shop and don't step out until someone walking down the mall is upon them, or they swerve from the path they were pursuing straight at someone coming in the opposite direction. I used to step aside, but lately I've been continuing on my way and letting the jolts occur. So far, nothing has gotten broken in me.

When Ben Indick wrote in FAPA about Paoli Soleri and other megacity proposals, I commented sort of skeptically and I haven't changed opinions in the months since. No matter how wonderful those "cities of tomorrow" which are self-contained living environments for millions may sound on paper, they seem to me to suffer from two inescapable built-in problems. One is the fact that residents of them would be subjected to more regimentation and restriction and control than any populace has ever suffered under the strictest dictatorships the world has ever known. Individuality would be impossible. It would be a human anthill or beehive. Otherwise, the megacity just could function as it's designed to operate. The other trouble is the difficulty of preventing such a city of the future from suffering in much greater degree the troubles that afflict today's biggest metropolitan areas. How do you prevent crime from increasing when so many people are to be jammed closer together than the situation in

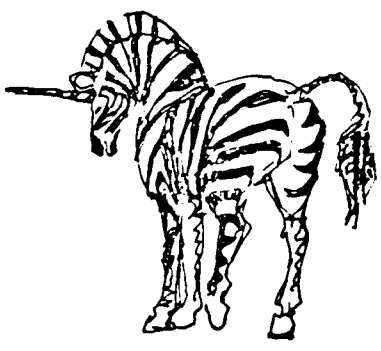


today's New York City? Where do you get enough water and what do you do with so much sewage? No such city could generate its own food supply; where do you grow it if all the areas between those cities are to be parks and forests? What sort of pollution would be created if enough factories to give work to everyone were situated within the cities, rather than scattered over the landscape, and how could mass transit ever cope with getting the residents to work and school and stores?

Various fans have been urging me to read Lois McMaster Bujold's books. If she writes fiction as well as she wrote that guest of honor speech, I must follow the suggestions at once. I doubt if many young people contribute to a story as she and many of us older folks did, but maybe some of today's youngsters follow the same procedure after they viewed a movie or television program and that accounts for the extreme enthusiasm with which they take up productions that aren't particularly good without some such sympathetic collaboration on the part of the viewer.

Your Ramblings alarmed me when I encountered the references to the psychotherapist visits. However, in the end I concluded that your problems couldn't have been too serious and that they should dwindle away to nothingness if you take her advice and don't let your school abligations interfere with the rest of your life. I'm sure I would need something stronger than a psychotherapist if I were forced to try to handle classes of today's kids so I've concluded that you've survived nicely. The little sketches of the principals at the cons by Tom Dow are a big help for an individual who hasn't met most of the people you wrote about.

Jet Thomas' idea of big fanzines on diskette scares me. I imagine a typical issue of Lan's Lantern would fill a computer monitor screen perhaps 300 to 400 times. My eyes just couldn't survive the strain of reading an issue that way, and a printout from the diskette would result in an unmanageably clumsy and expensive wad of computer paper. If publishing on paper becomes impossible for fanzines, microfiche strikes me as a better way to go. The rest of the loc section addened me, because Bill Temple didn't live long enough to read the nice things people wrote about him.



[[Bill did see the special issue before he died, and his wife Joan wrote to tell me he was working on a letter of thanks when he died. I too wish he could have seen the additional comments in last issue and this one, but I think he was sufficiently bouyed by the special tribute to have felt he did all right as a writer and a person.]]

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I've thoroughly enjoyed Mike Resnick's travel tales, and now Mark Leeper's as well. Both are not only fun, but highly useful in that they provide information to prospective travelers from two different viewpoints. And without wishing to prolong the mini-series, I thought you might be interested in a few brief comments-on-comments, as it were.

JoAnn and I were in Tanzania and Kenya in 1984 (mostly in Tanzania) as guests of a friend who was working for the Danish government (which supplies foreign aid all out of proportion to its GNP). He's one of the world's top rat catchers (i.e., rodent control experts) and he and his wife have spent most of their lives living in places most people wouldn't want to visit. They spent three years living in Tanzania, in a town called Morogoro, a goodly drive inland from Dar-es-Salaam. He's the one who should be writing this letter. In fact, he ought to write his own book, starting with how he got the rats out of General Zia's bedroom in Pakistan.

My own experiences in Tanzania are largely explored in the novel I did several years ago for Warner, Into the Out Of. Briefly, though....

Appropos of Mike's multiroom experience at the Heathrow Holiday Inn, we like the Sheraton. Extremely quiet rooms.

He is absolutely right about the top hotels in Nairobi, and for the reasons given.

He's also right about the scarcity of black mambas, and if anything overstates their numbers. In three years in Tanzania Bill never saw a mamba. A friend of his did, though, when they were out hunting up in the Maasai Mara. Heard a rustling and jumped. It was a green mamba and it bit the sole of his boot. Wish I had reactions like that.

Both Mike and Mark allude to the "Uganda student scam." I believe I was one of the first travelers to encounter this particular modus, which is delivered with all the skill of a London Shakespearean. Suckered me out of $150. At the time it was new even to the hotel employees, which in no way mitigated my embarrassment when I discovered how slickly I'd been bamboozled. It saddened me to see such considerable local talent misplaced.

What's funny is that by polishing their skills on tourists, these young men may end up running the country some day anyway.

I'm afraid Mike is absolutely right and Mark wrong about "plucky little Tanzania." The people we talked to along the roads and in the back country (where roads are hopeful lines on maps and a white face is a rarity) felt without exception that they were getting royally plucked by their government. Everything is taxed, down to the last family chicken, so nobody can grow more that they and their friends can eat. They respect Nyrere as a leader to independence but when it comes to his economic policies, the diversity of expression one encounters is positively droll.

The only decent vehicles in the whole country are the trucks which deliver the beer (stop the beer and you'd see a real revolution) and the nice shiny land cruisers which belong exclusively to the representatives of the national political party. Furthermore, there is an ANC camp at Morogoro. These hotshots stroll around with their AK-47's flopping from their shoulders, in their nice imported fatigues, and the local people, who can barely scrape by, are expected to feed these jokers. They hate their guts, as they do the government flunkies who rule over them.

Dar-es-Salaam is the most depressing major city I've ever been in. Djakarta is Palm Beach by comparison. Tanzania produces two products worthy of export: coffee, and ketchup. Meanwhile, all the really valuable small stuff like gold, tanzanite, and diamonds, is smuggled over the border into Kenya where it can sell for world market prices. That's why the tanzanites in Kenya are far better than the pitiful few for sale at the government shop in Arusha (though the meershaum is nice).

Mike is right when he says there are no cities in Tanzania worth seeing. But I think he's wrong about shopping in Arusha. That's where I found the finest example of Makonde wood-carving we encountered: the "Spirits of the Earth" which figure so prominently in Into the Out Of. It blew away the shopkeepers at the Intercontinental Hotel in Nairobi when I lugged it inside. You can also buy better Maasai jewelry in Tanzania...glass beads instead of plastic. Otherwise shopping is much better in Kenya.

Ngorngoro is certainly the premier place to see wildlife. We saw a bongo there during a night drive along the caldera rim...when the hyenas come right up to your car, anxious to see how you taste. Ruaha has a unique charm but is much less accessible.

Mike's comments about the scarcity of animals and the concurrent poaching at Lake Manyara National Park almost broke my heart. When we were there animals were everywhere: huge herds of wildebeest and hartebeest, zebra, hundreds of hippos lounging along the shore, and so many elephants we were held up for hours waiting for them to move off the track. One aged tusker had ivory that curved and crossed at the tips, like those of an incipient mammoth. I got him briefly on video before he lumbered tiredly off into the woods...and into my book. He had a sway back and skin wrinkled like a rhino's. It is my fiction that he died a natural death.

All that only five years ago. Scary.

Speaking of photographing military installations in third-world communist countries, JoAnn almost had her camera confiscated for photographing a bridge. Of course, the bridge was clearly marked on the map for anyone to see, but it's a military target, see? And we were probably South African spies, see? Naturally the South Africans would hire a bunch of white folks to go galavanting across the country in the only Subaru for a hundred miles around because that would obviously render them inconspicuous and thus better able to do their job, right? No use trying logic and reason, but we escaped camera-intact because of one simple reason. In Tanzania the poor cops only get bicycles to ride (the commissars have the land cruisers, remember?) and have no radios, so you simply drive away from them.

Enough, I'll have to tell the story of Kalalumbe the Greek Vampire and his hot chocolate water buffalo, the smuggled gold, the jeans thieves, the frisbee-throwing Maasai, the case of the groping game guide, the lions and the potato bug, the nine-year-old engineer, the leopard and the outhouse, and all the rest that didn't go with the book another time.

Ask me about chicken-fried warthog, but don't ask me about British Airways.

FANOMENON

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I'm writing this in reply to Taras Wolansky's review of Marching Through Georgia, sorry to leave it so late, but seeing you at AD ASTRA jogged my memory. Also, Georgia is being reissued this year, and the sequel, Under the Yoke is coming out concurrently, so it seemed appropriate.

First, on the issue of whether killing women damages a society's reproductive capacity: I think Mr. Wolansky misunderstood my argument. In a Western-style society (at least until very recently) successful reproduction requires a couple; other forms of childbearing exist (illegitimacy, orphans, etc.) but are not statistically significant. If young men are killed, a somewhat smaller but roughly similar number of women are effectively sterilized. The alternatives he mentions--taking up with men previcusly rejected, for example--simply shuffle the existing number of men around. Their impact on the number of couples is therefore marginal. The statistics on countries with heavy (male) wartime casualties are there for anyone to see--I mentioned some of them in footnotes to "The Woman Warrior."

Next, the objections to Georgia proper. First, about the racial prejudices of Draka society and their habit of enslaving whites. They do have racial prejudices; they arrived from the America south and the Caribbean, after all. The Citizen body is (officially) of pure European descent. However, even in biracial slave societies, the "blackness" of the slave class tended to become less important as time went on. If you read the newspapers of the 1850s from the South, you'll find dozens--hundreds--of ads for runaway slaves which use descriptions like "red hair and freckles," "blond and blue-eyed, will attempt to pass as a white man." Miscegenation was the favorite indoor sport, after all--and children followed the condition of the mother. The more advanced slaveholding intellectuals, like George Fitzhugh (who in the Georgia timeline migrated to the Domination) were theoretically in favour of nonracial slavery for all dependent laborers. So was Thomas Carlyle, another Draka guru.

Furthermore, the Domination conquered Africa from both ends; Egypt was overrun in 1800, and North Africa in 1810-1850, roughly. North Africans are mostly physically indistinguishable from southern Europeans; the Mediterranean is a cultural but not a genetic divide--the Saharah is the true transition area between Europoid and Negroid, and always has been. The Draka also conquered Crete, Cyprus and the Ionian Isles during the Napoleonic period. Accordingly, the racial basis of their society became ambiguous quite early; this accelerated with the "gelling" of their ideology (late 19th century) and the conquests in the Middle East.

As to the Tories being traditionalists--nnnnot

so, as Marx was wont to say. The fault-lines between Loyalist and Patriot in revolutionary America were extremely complex. To oversimplify somewhat, one could say they were religio-political in the upper classes, and predominantly religious in the lower. The colonial South was not a very devout area; the radical Protestantism we are familiar with there is largely a 19th century phenomenon. Until the first Great Awakening (1740s) the southern gentry were mostly Anglican, and increasingly indifferentist or Deist; the (white) lower orders were overwhelmingly unchurched, with some pious enclaves. In the Revolutionary period, the religious element--evangelical Protestants, particularly New-Light Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists--went overwhelmingly for the Patriot cause. The gentry split, in varying proportions, and rank-and-file Loyaylists were overwhelmingly unchurched, except for recent immigrants. Incidentally, the pre-Awakening south was an exceedingly raffish place, sort of like a rural Moll Flanders with slavery and violence. New Englanders tended to be extremely shocked by the utter indifference to middle-class Protestant morality.

As for the Draka military abilities, the proto-Draka did not have an easy row to hoe as Mr. Wolansky implies. If you study the history of Africa in the 19th century, you'd find the partition wars were prolonged, bloody and in some cases quite expensive. The Draka have superior weapons and organization; they are also thinly spread, and grossly outnumbered by brave and hardy opponents. Not to mention the transport and disease problems presents to invaders. Furthermore, they were fighting in North Africa for most of the early 19th century; this is an area that has been part of the Eurasian communicating zone for a long time. It had cities, states, navies, gunpowder, a literate elite. Granted that the Barbary states were in decay, they still presented France, the strongest European military power, with a major challenge--the French garrison in Algeria was usually in the 100,000 range.

Accordingly, the Draka had to fight quite hard for their gains, and to keep those gains against the threat of revolt; given their own scanty numbers, only an overwhelming (and highly efficient) concentration on things military would let them survive. Furthermore, they fought wars outside Africa--in the Crimea, in the American Civil War as

volunteers, and most importantly a major struggle against Russia in 1879-1882. These, and careful observation of other conflicts, gave them ample experience. Note also they played a major part in that timeline's version of WW I.

Granted that it is impossible to say how a single change-point in history would alter everything thereafter. I've assumed that events would have "inertia," which keeps them as close to what would have happened as possible. The changes made affect Africa and (to a lesser extent) America more than Europe--accordingly, they become noticeable there first. Possibly having Hitler and Stalin existing in the Draka timeline is excessive; my hypothesis was that the Caucasus and rural Austria wouldn't be that strongly affected. Note also that neither the Bolshevik revolution or the Nazi seizure of power followed the same course in this timeline as in ours. (They were both earlier and more radical.) Nobody born after about 1900 has a direct analogue in the Domination history.

As to the geopolitical background of the Eurasian War (WW II)... Hitler was a gambler. He took what the general staff considered crazy risks, and at first they mostly came off. This warped his judgment even more, and eventually he started doing things that couldn't possibly succeed. In this instance, in 1939-1940 there was a secret understanding between him and the Draka; he would let them have Italy and a free hand in the Far East, while he pinned down the Soviets by threatening their southern border. He managed to convince himself they would keep the bargain, partly for ideological reasons (the Nazis of this line were in part would-be Draka) and partly through sheer wishful thinking --he wanted it to be true, so it was. At least as credible as some of the decisions he made in our history, n'est-pas?

Moving to tactics: the Nazis do not capture or interrogate the villagers Eric releases because they vanish into the forests. The Caucasus range is a big place. The Germans are thinly spread and have other things to worry them. The Nazi tactics are somewhat blunt because they have no alternative except a head-on attack into a fortified position under extreme time constraints; the failure of their try at a flanking maneuver is due to sheer bad luck as well as Draka fighting ability.

With regard to the P.O.W. motivations, Mr. Wolansky also seems not to have noticed some of the timing here. The story takes pace in the spring of 1942; in this timeline, Russia collapsed essentially in the summer of 1941. The Russians have had a year or so of uncontested Nazi rule. Again, the Nazis were gamblers and improvisers; they had little patience. In our own history, they alienated tens of millions of potential Russian supporters by wanton massacre and oppression before they won--starting right after the jump-off to Operation Barbarossa. By 1942 in the Domination's line, it is clear that the Germans plan to physically exterminate a majority of the Russian and Ukranian nations. (Hitler's intent in our line as well.) The Draka are perfectly willing to commit genocide, but only if pushed--obedient populations are allowed to survive. This Russia is a charnel house; the P.O.W.s (who are guerrillas, not soldiers) have plenty of motivation to attack the Germans, both revenge and as their only hope of escape.

Valentina is indeed an insider with respect to information; she knows that Russia is on the way to becoming a depopulated wasteland. A swift Draka victory is the best possible guarantee of the physical survival of her people; they will be harshly oppressed, but that's nothing new in Russia, as she points out. Bad, but better than mass liquidation. (Or a prolonged war between Draka and German over Russia's corpse, which is why actually happens.) Liberation can come later.

O the issue of women's place in Draka society, I think I've answered Mr. Wolansky's objections in "The Woman Warrior." To amplify in the specific conditions of the Domination, the Draka are under intense pressure to employ women in non-traditional fields because of their limited population. This has little impact on the birth rate, because it is child rearing rather than child bearing which is time consuming; in Draka society, with plentiful servants, cheap housing, full employment at high wages, and free boarding-school education through the early 20s, children are no particular burden--you might say Citizen-caste women get "liberation" at the expense of the serfs. Military service does preclude pregnancy, but Draka follow the usual Wes-

FANOMENON **DIANA STEIN**

tern pattern (interrupted in England and America for a short period in the Victorian era) of relatively late marriage; spending the years between 18 and 21 in uniform is no problem. The Domination is not at war all the time, and most routine internal-security work is carried out by serf Janissaries commanded by Citizen officers. The army of Draka proper, the Citizen Force, is an elite, mobilized fully only in major conflicts, and even then it is a minority of the total armed forces. The overall demographic impact of female military service is therefore minor.

The purported technological drawbacks of a caste society are... well, overdrawn. Mr. Wolansky mentions that the 38 million Draka sould find it difficult to compete with the 178 million Americans technologically--quite true, but there are other mitigating factors. These are:

a) The Draka import scientists and technologies, using money and Citizen status as a lure. Their initial industrialization in the 1800-1830 period is financed by the landed gentry, the crude labor is provided by the serfs, and the entrepreneurs, engineers, technicians and some skilled labour are imported from Britain and Europe.

b) The Draka devote more effort, proportionally, to education and research; thus they make more of the available resources. For Citizens, education is absolutely free through post-graduate study (including generous living stipends), and science and mathematics are emphasized from primary school on.

c) Of the 179 million Americans, about 40 million are black, Hispanic or Asian--and this is the 1940s, remember. Effectively, they are disbarred from the "meritocratic" system. Down to 139 million. Of these, half are women--again, heavy discrimination, not impossible to overcome but very difficult. Now we're down to 69 million. At least a third of those are from the economic underclass--hillbillies, sharecroppers, Okies, from urban blue-collar ethnic enclaves. Not impossible for a talented kid to rise out of, but with very grave handicaps. Deduct another 20 million. This leaves us with 49 million potential scientists, etc.--against the Domination's 38 million. And the Domination will get some of the American ones; it can offer greater rewards for the truly rare genius-level types. Whereas in the Domination, within the Citizen body, there are truly no constraints of class or gender.

d) The serf population of the Domination is not completely disbarred from education. This is at least a quasi-industrialized society, after all, and Citizens are barely 6% of the total. Serfs can make it up to roughly the middle management level.

In conclusion, caste societies have become rare because of contingent historical factors--specifically the 19th century bourgeoisie triumphant disliked them. The Domination's timeline is one where other accidental factors enabled one such society, an offshoot of the South Atlantic slave-plantation system, to flourish in relative isolation until it was too strong to destroy. (This nearly happened with the Confederacy, on a smaller scale.) What I'm showing here is what such a society might have looked like if successfully modernized, without being forced into the mold of the middle-class West. Such a society would be rather distasteful from our viewpoint--something of a nightmare--but, I think, interesting.

I hope Mr. Wolansky enjoys... or at least reads ... the sequel, Under the Yoke Looking forward to your comments.

Taras Wolansky
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I will respond only to major issues raised by S.M. Stirling's eloquent and civilized letter.

What I consider Stirling's biggest mistake in setting up the historical background to his Draka has to do with their activities in World War I. Whereas our world's Hitler made sure of his flanks and rear before launching his attacks, Stirling's Hitler attacks Russia in spite of the enormous Draka empire to his south, his only security the slender reed of a "secret agreement". But remember that Stirling's chronology of WOlrd War I has the Draka invade and occupy part of Europe and part of the erstwhile Russian Empire, and stonewall postwar diplomatic efforts. Under these circumstances, Hitler's attack on Russia becomes much crazier than

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DIANA STEIN

anything our Hitler ever did. Of course, in real life people do crazy things; but I would say a piece of fiction that depends upon its characters' insanity to make the plot come out is seriously flawed.

There's another problem with the Draka WWI scenario. In our world, Hitler rose to power in large measure due to the German people's (entirely justified) fear of Communism. But once the Draka invade and occupy part of Europe, the threat from the East is supplanted by the threat from the South. Indeed, the Draka threat would expeditiously unite all factions in Western Europe: where many people might imagine they would be better off under Communism, everyone would be worse off under the Draka. And remember there is nothing in Draka ideology to attract the sort of "bodyguard of lies" Communism has enjoyed almost to the present, nothing to inspire loyalty in the young Don Wollheims and Fred Pohls of that world.

To make the scenario a little more plausible, Stirling should have kept the Draka out of Europe and the Russian Empire; or at any rate have had them give up their conquests and return to Africa, meek as lambs. This would help establish them a reputation for no interest in territorial aggrandizement outside of Africa.

On another historical issue, Stirling must have tongue cheek when he discusses the probability that Hitler and Stalin existed in the Draka timeline; obviously the issue is whether they would have attained the same power and played the same role in such a different history. I won't say any more about this, however: it is a convention of alternative history to have major figures of our history play important roles, without too much regard for plausibility.

Stirling is also being a tad playful in his numbers game to minimize the Draka disadvantage in number of educated citizens. By excluding women, minorities, and the economically disadvantaged, Stirling manages to cut down effective American manpower from 179 million to 49 million (compared to 38 million Draka). Rather than argue with his numbers, I will merely point out that they leave out one small fact: to whit, the entire rest of the world!

It is, I think, the terrific wastage of human resources that a caste society involves, that has made such societies obsolete. They can compete neither technologically nor militarily. Stirling, on the other hand, argues that such societies "have become rare because of contingent historical factors--specifically the 19th century bourgeoisie triumphant disliked them." This begs the question of why the "bourgeoisie"--the antithesis of the caste society--were "triumphant" in the first place, and why their likes and dislikes have become commandments for the entire world. (Recent developments in Eastern Europe only underline my point.)

In this area, the Draka's problems are particularly severe. Remember that, Stirling has told us, women's liberation came to the Draka because their society would fall apart without it. Add to that the Draka emphasis on militarism, and you form an image of a society that will have little time for scientific research. Nor will the Draka be able to import scientists that are unable to develop themselves: living under Draka rule is simply very dangerous, even for Draka. Remember what happens at the end of Marching through Georgia: the protagonist, a very upper class Draka, is about to be taken away by the Draka secret police. We're talking about a major police state here.

The behavior of the Russians in MTG is problematic, to say the least. It is all too obvious that the only way a small country survives is through a balance of power between its biggest neighbors; to aid either to total victory over the other is suicide for the weak country. If Stirling had the Russians aid the Draka with the intent of creating a stalemate between them and the Germans, I would not cavil. (Stalemate is another word for balance of power.) But he explicitly states the purpose is to guarantee "a swift Draka victory." Considering how much territory the Soviets still control at this point, considering what a Draka conquest would mean (no art, no literature, no science), considering how the Draka must look to a devout Marxist (an obscenity, a perversion of how history is supposed to work; Marxists have much more in common with the Nazis), I can't believe this for an instant.

Stirling's depiction of Draka women soldiers is beautifully done and very convincing (at least while you're reading it). And going back to his article on "The Woman Warrior" I find his idea, that killing a man has as much impact on population growth as killing a woman, is not quite as absurd as I thought. As we kill off young men, we eventually reach a point at which killing a young woman is less costly, reproduction-wise, than killing an additional young man. How soon a society reaches this break-even point depends on how manongamous it is. For example, a society that lives up to the Mohammedan limit of four wives per married man can lose half its young men without batting an eyelash. (Writers looking for a fnatastically aggressive society take note!) While I know of no human society as polygynous as that, all human societies are polygynous to some degree, if only because the male is fertile at least twice as long as the female.

What this boils down to ism if your society is highly mongamous and you're expecting heavy losses in the coming war, you can afford to use women as cannon fodder as well--thought not as much--as men. Why the Draka, having rejected the Judeo-Christian tradition, should still be manogamous is one question; why, suffering a population shortage, they should engage in an unnecessary war which they expect to cost them heavily in lives is another.

But wartime mortality is only one factor. The prime soldiering years are also the prime childbearing years; especially when we consider that the soldier-superwomen Stirling describes have got to have spent a lot more than "the years between 18 and 21 in uniform."

The "liberation" of Draka women, Stirling writes, "has little impact on the birth rate, because it is child rearing rather than child bearing which is time-consuming" and serfs do all of it. As far as this goes, the situation of Draka women is hardly unusual: from ancient times rich women have had the option to hand over their children to nursemaids. Did the women who did so have more children as a result? To the contrary, if anything. But the Draka women are not just rich women, they are rich career women: here the evidence, though of more recent vintage, is unmistakeable.

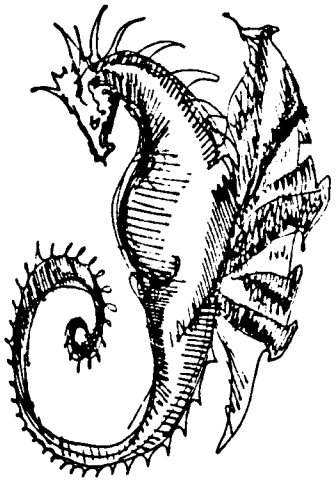
I think Stirling has it backwards: women who do not rear their children will have fewer children, not more. Women are willing to pay the price of the discomforts and inconveniences of pregnancy and childbirth because it buys them the fun of rearing their child. Mothers of small children who return to the workplace do so because they have to, not because they want to.

With some difficulty, I will hold myself to my original determination, to respond only to Mr. Stirling's major points. Let me just reiterate how pleased I am to encounter an author who responds to criticism in such a grown-up way.

* * * * *

Brief note on your editorial in #30: "high unemployment rate...increase in taxes"? Even people who hate Reagan don't deny unemployment is lower now than when he took office; they just deny him the credit for it. Nor do they deny his cuts left taxes at a lower level than they otherwise would have been; they just wish taxes were higher. Is this an editorial from a parallel world?

[[You don't itemize, do you. We tried, but didn't have enough deductions to make it work. Still, our taxes went up, in excess of our pay increases. Those friends of ours who do itemize told me that other federal taxes went up. There were no NEW taxes, but the existing taxes went up, except for people who had enough income and investments to take advantage of loopholes and tax breaks. // As for unemployment, those figures are based on those who draw unemployment. Once those benefits run out, the government does not know (and apparently doesn't care) about them anymore. Wait long enough and unemployment goes down. Just like Reagan--wait until the problem goes away.]]



Though I strongly doubt it was consciously intended to be misleading, the presentation of my letter responding to Michael Kube-McDowell has a lot to teach aspiring members of the Ministry of Truth. 1) Attack any vulnerable point in your opponent's discourse, no matter how trivial or irrelevant to the subject under discussion. 2) If possible, present opposing views in such a way as to make them difficult to read and understand. (With all the interruptions, I found my own letter difficult to follow.) This prepares the ground for -- 3) Give your own slanted version of what the other fellow really said. 4) Accuse your opponent of various and sundry crimes without producing any evidence. I'm of two minds about this one, While it has the advantage of making refutation of the charges impossible, it may be too blatantly unfair, even to readers predisposed to agree with you. ("Sentence first, trial afterward!)

Quoting passages from the "Trigon Disunity," I used sic to indicate the quotations were accurate, even where grammatical or spelling errors might lead the reader to think otherwise. After all, much of my argument depends upon those quotations. Not that my motives were entirely pure, however: I was also expressing my irritation at seeing that many errors in just a few random passages from a published work. (No need for anyone to leap to the author's defense: proofreading is obviously the publisher's responsibility. How they manage to let through spelling errors in this computerized age I don't know.)

Using sic implies you are reproducing a text exactly. It is both absurd and deceptive, for example, to flag debatable points of punctuation, when you are introducing gross errors and misspellings yourself. Also you had better be sure what you're marking as an error is really an error.

I would agree with the "Typist's" assessment of Kube-McDowell as being a good writer, especially of characters. The "Trigon Disunity" has a lot of good things in it (I didn't read it out of masochism), which I would have mentioned had I been writing a review instead of commenting on somebody else's.

Where we part company is on the notion that, being a good writer, Kube-McDowell can't write anything bad; and conversely that if I say he has written something badly, I am casting "slurs" upon his writing ability. I think it is possible, say, to think Heinlein was a great SF writer, yet look upon The Number of the Beast with a sort of incredulous horror; or for that matter to think Shakespeare was a genius, yet cringe at his treatment of Joan of Arc. Indeed, no one need defend "Janell Sujata" to me as a well-drawn and believable personality; it was her improbable rise to power and the fact that her beliefs don't hold water that I criticized.

As for "Harmack Wells", if one's mental map of the world includes crazed Pentagon generals drooling at the prospect of blowing up the world, one will find nothing wrong with this character.

As to the charge that I hate women, I can't say much, because no evidence is presented for me to challenge. Unless it is because I made fun of Patricia Schroeder: if I made fun of Dan Quayle, would that mean I hate men?

The all-travel issue of LL made interesting reading. It filled me with the desire to visit Egypt (but give the rest of Africa the go-by). Diana Stein's illos to Mike Resnick's Egypt report were cute. (Did Mike really look that way in 1988?)

As for Mark Leeper's odyssey, it was also of considerable interest. Also of considerable length --my God! It's 54 pages long (I've just discovered). "I can't beleive I read the whole thing!"

I really liked the format, the way you organized the data--text/annotation/rebuttal--to bring out any disagreements. It really helps the reader reach his own conclusions.

Imagine how this is normally done: 1) The article is published. 2) In the next issue, Mike Resnick critiques it. 3) And in the next issue after that, the Leepers respond. By this time, of course, not even the principals have a clear idea of who said what.

[[It was fun/interesting to put that together, but once every dozen issues or so is enough for me. I won't do that with Evelyn's report next time, nor with Laura Resnick's trip to Tunisia.]]

Richard Brandt
4140 N. Mesa #111
El Paso, TX 79912

The exchanges between Mike and Mark Leeper are entertaining--even though Mike has on his side the fact that he gives more useful travel advice and evokes a cleared picture of the place in his seven pages than Mark does in his 54. (And if Mark is going to insist on the "authenticity" of unbraced Land Rovers, he deserves what lumps he takes!) Keeping up with Mark paid off, though--as he got deeper into his story, Africa and its inhabitants and visitors all came more vividly to life. His elegaic ending puts the sad circumstances surrounding such an expedition into proper perspective. Both pieces stir up a desire to go check out the sites--"while it's still there," as my mother said of Europe.

To Martha Soukup's question--"how can a writer have the unmitigated gall to center a book about the Holocaust around a fantasy element?"--one might answer, "Look at Lisa Goldstein's The Red Magician; she did it quite a while earlier." Yolen's book sounds as if it might be a more impressive effort.

Bujold has a good point about the unsung collaborator. As Marshall McLuhan used to point out, books are hot stuff; the reader has to do an awful lot of the work. Oddly enough, I've never felt the need to extrapolate further adventures from the books or TV shows I've seen. Making up my own stories seemed diverting enough...I can't claim that was always the case. Star Trek never caught me the way it did Lois, but I can remember, at quite an early age, interpolating myself into the exploits of The Man from U.N.C.L.E....

Good Lord, Martin Morse Wooster is right: Where are the tributes to Robert Moore Williams? In Williams' defense, he wrote one absolutely marvelous 1938 story, "Robot's Return," which reads like something published 20 years later. His careful choice of every word to set the mood of dreaming and reverie is quite poetic and evocative. I have read that Ray Palmer tried to break Williams of all his high-falutin' literary habits so that he could grind out hackwork for Palmer;s Amazing in the Forties; maybe that's what became of him.

Terrific art this issue by Ruth Thompson and Darlene Coltrain--where did all these zebra people come from, though one might ask Arlie Adams?--and of course Diana Stein's illos for Resnick's article fit wonderfully, although that seems to be a puppy-dog masquerading as a baboon in one of them.

Janey Priour
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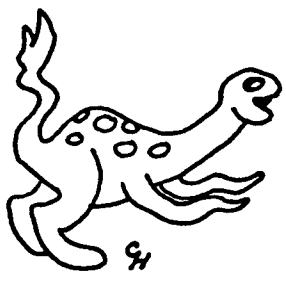
Kerrville, TX
78028

The travel stories by Mike Resnick and Mark Leeper with notes by Mike Resnick were great. As I have wanted to travel to Africa, the information from those travel diaries is going to be a big help. I would like to travel first class all the way as Resnick did. Unfortunately, teachers in Texas are not that well paid. But what I have learned will make my trip more enjoyable on less money.



Peggy Ranson
1420 Valmont
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Looks like I'll have to get to the board and do some more fillos for you. 13 illos; what an embarassment of riches for me! It all looks so good. Worth the wait!

Clifton Amsbury
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Richmond, CA 94805

I agree with most of the Jessica Salmonson letter you used as l'nvoi, and I disagree with at least one of the "classics" listed. Wolfe's The Fifth Head of Cerberus is not a classic, it's a mess. Having read that and some other Wolfeiana, I have not read The Book of the New Sun, but if 1980 is long enough ago to become a classic, what's wrong with 1983? C. J. Cherryh's Forty Thousand in Gehenna is a classic by any standard but a fifty-year perspective.

Bill Ware
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I can't say that I enjoyed issue 30, but I can say that I am enjoying it. It will take me a while to read it, so my comments now will be mainly about the visual content.

I am particularly taken by Peggy Ranson's art. She's the best new fanartist to come along in a long time. Her mermaids are absolutely mesmerizing.he's got a style that transcends its commercial art roots. The robocritics ought to be the banner graphic for the review section.

I've always enjoyed Diana Stein's cartoonery (she does a good mermaid, too). And for pure fan editorial cartoons (is that possible?) that evoke a chuckle, it's hard to beat Teddy Harvia. However, what did you tell Maia when you reduced the one on the editorial page of XXX, "Honey, I shrunk the quips!"?

All in all, the best thing about the art in LL is the variety. It encourages us to contribute.

[[One reason I do publish a variety of artists is that I want, aside from a variety of contributors, LL to be a forum for art talent. I do try, however to match the art with related words on that page if I possibly can. And I love Peggy Ranson's artwork, too!!!]]

John Thiel
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Lafayette, IN 47904

You certainly have something of a wizard in you. I'd expect after you won the Hugo for things to get rather sordid as you relaxed, but the Lantern keeps growing and changing. I like the new look the letter column has, and hope you keep it that way. And the addition of Ben Indick's column is a plus I hope you keep permanently--it's one of the best fan columns running.

James Harris' file work was valuable, although it reminds me quite a bit of Gil Gaier's project. But I always thought that should be carried on--you see, Gil, not unlike Gilgamesh, does not leave anything abandoned--it all endures.

[[Gil Gaier's "Project" was collecting data that fans sent him about books they read, what they liked and would recommend to other fans and readers of SF. He discontinued it about 1978 or so, not too long after I got into fandom, so I know very little about it.]]

Milton Stevens' letter says TV was impoverished for adult SF between Tales of Tomorrow and The Twilight Zone. He leaves out Science Fiction Theatre, a show hosted by Truman Bradley that had hard science every week in a half-hour presentation sometimes written by noted SF writers.

Radio's had some good SF, too. Our local station has just started broadcasting tapes of X-1, which featured stories by the top names in the field, the stories coming right out of Galaxy and Astounding, duly credited. I'm enjoying tuning this in--it wipes out nostalgia and comes through vividly.

That looked like Roscie on the cover. At least I know the cowl did not conceal a coonskin cap.

William Wilson Goodson, Jr
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An interesting theory was described in the July 89 Psychology Today about NERDS. According to a New York psychiatrist there is a specialized subspecies of humanity, one extremely adaptable to our modern technological society, which he calls Neuro Evolutionary Rostral Developer.

The nerds, or rather NERDS, have very poor perceptual-motor skills leading to their failure as athletes. Their failure at physical games may be responsible for their stereotype of being either fat or underdeveloped.

However, they have skills involving "conceptualization, abstraction, calculation, and integration." There is even some evidence that limbic system of the brain which helps people use emotions is underdeveloped in NERDS so they are genetically disposed to be social failures.

Cataloguing people is, of course, a risky business, but this idea certainly ties in with a number of Science Fiction stories. How many times have we been presented with a brilliant but adventurous hero who does not fit into a highly technological culture, and does not have the patience to work in the sciences? Is it possible the NERDs will take over and the jock athletes will be shut out?

Poul Anderson had a story, "In the Shadow," where he described the hero Danilo Rouvaratz as a big active man, a pilot, given to skiing and mountain climbing. Walker, the scientist whom he carries to a shadow sun is a man of few athletic achievements but has the unlimited ability to study

something he cannot even see--photons. Rouvaratz gets them in and out of danger that only Walker can fully understand. When it becomes necessary for the two to sway a group of people to reach their respective ends, Walker has the ability to explain clearly and logically what the benefits of extending a space voyage to humanity. Rouvaratz, however, has the charisma to manipulate them emotionally.

One might look at Van Bruan, Oberth, and the **Mercury** astronauts. Jocks and Nerds working together. After high school I doubted it could happen.

Steve Jackson
American Autoduel Association
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Austin, TX 78760

I supported Reagan, and then spent the last six years of his administration wishing for Divine Intervention. Embarrassing. And now we've got Quayle. I used to consider myself a Republican, and my change in self-identification is largely due to the crop of idiots the GOP has thrown to the top in the last few years.

Thanks for the Bujold write-up, too. She is beyond a doubt my favorite "new" author. So Aral started off as a Klingon? Hee,hee. So much for the contention that nothing good can come of Trekkie fiction.

Black Hole
Ian Creasey, Editor
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ENGLAND

Thanks for the copy of LL. You ticked the "Trade" box on the front page despite mentioning that you have a stack of fanzines 15 inches high to read...are you a glutton for punishment?

You couldn't have known, but it was somewhat cruel of you to send LL #27 to arrive just when I had taken over the editorship of Black Hole. I mean I had never produced a fanzine in my life before, had no idea how to go about it--and the first thing that thuds onto my desk is your massive, immaculate LL. It was enough to give me an inferiority complex ...how could I match LL?

Well, I did the best I could, and finally got BH #28 out. It may not be as large as LL, but at least it has a lot less typos!

Anyway, good luck with future issues of LL; and keep us on the mailing list if your finances can still stand it...we always like to get snapshots of the American scene.

Harry Andruschak
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Torrance, CA
90510-5309

Jessica A. Salmonson is right on target in her loc about conventions. I cannot speak for other groups, but the L-5 nerds do have our annual convention. OK, it is actually the National Space Society now, right. But there is a reason the annual National Space Society

convention is held on Memorial Weekend. We had, and still have, many SF writers in the membership, and they did not want the convention to conflict with Worldcon or WESTERCON. But no really important con takes up Memorial Day Weekend, right. (DISCLAVE is not really that important a convention as far as SF business is goes.)

[[There is MIKECON, Mike Glicksohn's and Michael Harper's annual birthday party (by invitation only), but you are right, not much SF business takes place there. We all do admire his collection of first edition SF books, though.]]

Not much I can add to your editorial except "sure enough." Right now the Post Office is fighting a rising tide of theft by Postal Workers. I know we have at least one thief in my old group back at Worldway. Nobody knows his name, but he did slice open a carton with a compact disk player and left the carton in the basement. Only a technician or mechanic could gain access to the basement where there are no viewing windows with Postal Inspectors behind them. *Sigh*

Laura Todd wants to know if there is a "Pro-Earth" society among fans. Not that I know of, but it really isn't needed. There are plenty of groups, societies, clubs, and other gatherings to join. Yes, I am a Life Member of The National Space Society. I am also a Life Member of the Sierra Club. I do not find memberships in these two organizations to be a contradiction.

After all, at age 44 I very much doubt that I will ever be able to walk on the moon as I once dreamed about. Actually, I probably will not even be able to make it into space as a tourist. I can,

however, thanks to the Sierra Club and its sister organizations, hike in Joshua Tree National Monument to lost Gold Mines.

Colleen Doran
Magnolia Blues Productions
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Seaford, VA 23696

It was sweet of you to mention my dad's promotion except that he was promoted to Inspector up from Captain not up from Sergeant. That would be quite an impressive promotion indeed since there are three full ranks between Sergeant and Inspector!

Duane Elms
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You are definitely well on the way toward producing the fannish version of the Michelin Guide. Most interesting African travel reports. I enjoy reading about Africa, but frankly I really don't want to visit there. The vicarious thrills provided by Mike, Mark and Ben are good enough for me, particularly since I am one of those whose idea of roughing it is no HBO or only one chocolate on the pillow at the Marriott.

It was good to read Mike Stein's report on the DISCON III hotel problems. This sort of thing seems to be a chronic con problem, particularly with cons that have to schedule far in advance. The vast majority of such problems seem to stem from turn-over in the hotel staff, generally in the middle to upper management, and inadequate communication and documentation in the hotel sales offices. I would suggest that it points up a need for con committees to stay in very close touch with the staff of their chosen hotels. That way they could be aware of and on top of any potential staff or other changes that could affect their facilities. I know they should not have to do this, but good planning includes covering contingencies. One last thought: I generally try not to attribute to malice that which can adequately be explained by stupidity, but does this not seem to happen rather more often with Sheratons?

By the way, I thought that I ought to mention that I like Heather Bruton's art. I think she has made immense progress over the last year or so. I was able to pick up a couple of her works at AD ASTRA this year and I am very pleased with them. If she continues to improve like she has recently and perhaps expands her subject matter a little, she is going to be devastatingly good.

And finally, just one or two quibbles. The better half of Michael Skeet is Lorna Toolis (with an l), and I thought the bumper sticker in front of the "face-hugger" at AD ASTRA said, "God gave it life, help us let it live."

R Laurraine Tutihasi
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I'd like to submit a question to "Data-base of Odds and Ends," if you are still running the column. I've asked this question of many others without any luck, but I might as well keep trying. A long time ago, probably in the late fifties, I read a novel, probably a juvenile or young adult, that took place on Mars. The protagonist was a young boy. He meets up with one of the native "coloured bears," bearlike creatures that change colours. He determines after making friends with this creature that it is intelligent. Mars, in this novel, was settled because it was thought there was no intelligent life there. Eventually he persuades the adults of the colony thatthe "bear" is intelligent. I'd like to know if anyone can supply the title and author of this novel.

The list of SF classics derived by James Wallace Harris is interesting and somewhatuseful. It's a good starting place anyway. I'll be making a copy of the list and adding it to my files. Art Cover and Lydia Marano, who own and run Dangerous Visions Bookstore, have come up with lists of their own based on their readings. I looked it over once when I was waiting there for a friend. Theirs was quite involved, being separated into a basic list and sublists for each category, such as horror.

I had one question about your "Conreports and Ramblings." You made a reference to "emergency driving," and I was wondering what that was.

[[All the faculty who live on the Cranbrook grounds are put on a list and on certain days during the year each one is designated as the "Emergency Driver." This means that on those days the person must be available to drive to hospital or the emergency room if one of the students gets injured, or needs emergency treatment. It's one of the joys of working in a boarding school.]]

Gil Gaier
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Torrance, CA 90501

I enjoy all the Lan's Lanterns you have sent me, and in #30 I liked Bob Sabella's letter on reviewing the reviewers. He had some very valid points to make.

Lisa Thomas
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Henderson, KY 42420

Somebody should report Mike Resnick to the authorities for his flagrant violations of the laws against selling addictive substances. His Stalking the Unicorn caused me to send off for this zine and will further compel me to buy Ivory if I see a copy. And let's not forget "Kirinyaga," or Santiago, since both of them are corrupting.

I don't know which category in Kathleen Gallagher's roommate article I belong in. Probably "The Disappearing Roommate." I suspect the only evidence of my presence would be the piles of books on my bed.

I can see I'm going to have to buy a Lois McMaster Bujold book. Nobody I've talked to has regretted buying them and her GoH speech was interesting. The more I hear about her, the more curious I get about her work. That's the problem about being curious and involved in fandom. You start hearing about all the interesting new books and authors and can only choose a few to read. Even if you have money, there's no way to get enough time.

Michael P. Kube-McDowell
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I enjoyed the "travel issue," and in particular the Leeper/Resnick debate on East Africa. The quarrels kept and otherwise looong account lively, and you did a good job (with the Incredible Shrinking Typefaces) of making it easy to read. (I confess that at a couple of the more contentious points, I got out my dissecting microscope expecting to find the tussle continuing in an infinite regression down to microdot size and beyond.) Mike Resnick was kind enough to review the sections of The Quiet Pools which are set in Kenya for accuracy. I think we'll be able to publish it without footnotes, thank goodness.

Speaking of The Quiet Pools, I want to clarify one little point about something you mentioned in Ramblings 31.5--before my editor hangs me, and every other writer wants to know How We Did It. Contrary to any misimpression I may have left you with, Russ and I did not pick any pockets or hold up the Ace armored car in connection with The Quiet Pools. We never asked for, and in fact weren't offered, any change in the terms--financial or otherwise--of the contract signed before the book was written.

We simply wanted the book published with the first-rank TLC we think it deserves, and so we let Ace know we were willing to fight--or take it elsewhere, if necessary--to get that. Happily, the people at Ace agreed with out (completely biased) opinion of the manuscript, and so the book is slated for publication as a Apring 1990 hardcover. But we didn't twist any arms. We really didn't have any to twist. You can lead a publisher to water, but...

(In the long run, the hardcover will mean a bit more money, but only because we're now dealing with two editions, not one--which is probably where the misunderstanding arose.)

Irwin Hirsh
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AUSTRALIA

I must admit that I am one of those people who despair at the overall quality of your fanzine. Every issue arrives and upon being read my main thought is along the lines of how much better it would be if it was less than half the size. And you'd probably publish more often as a result, given the amount of material you get, which would be a good thing. Some issues back I came to the conclusion I found very little of interest in your reviews section and tend to only scan it. Certainly, the strongest parts of Lantern are the articles and the letter-column. The writers of the articles write with some theme in mind, a factor which is lacking in the reviews. I find the reviews to be much too short for my liking, often not getting above plot summary.

Dennis Fischer's article on R. L. Fanthorpe is, I suspect, unfair. While I've not read anything by Fanthorpe everything I've read about him suggests that he is nothing more than a hack writer, both in the way he sees himself and the way his publishers see him. Sure he is bad, but he isn't trying to be anything above a hack writer. I think the title, "The Worst Science Fiction Writer" should be reserved for someone who aims to be Good, thinks they are saying Something Important or Profound, and consistently fails. I'm thinking about the distinction between two films: the 1970 Lost Horizon and The Attack of the Killer Tomatoes. Both are bad films, but the first was made to be a serious film; with those aims it fell flat on its face. By contrast, the second film was meant to be bad. And because it was bad it is also a successful film, seeing as how it perfectly met its producer's and director's aims. To classify the two films as Bad does a disservice to the aims of the latter's production team.

Flicking through the letter-column of issue #26, I noted Martin Morse Wooster's comment on the publication of the transcript of Bob Shaw's speech "Campus Fugit." Martin, and some of your other readers, may be interested in the news that there is another publication collecting transcripts of Shaw's speeches. It is called Serious Science and contains "Beyond Cosmos," "Conning Your Way," and "Ten Years, But Not Decayed," which were presented at the 1982, 1983, and 1984 British EASTERCONS, and is illustrated by Jim Barker. 24 pages, printed offset. In my guise as GUFF administrator I've got quite a few copies for sale, at $5 each (seamail postage included). ($5 may seem a bit steep for a 24 page booklet, but the money goes to a good fannish cause.) I'm happy to accept US money, but only

if it is cash and not a cheque. The first person to get their money to me can get a signed copy, at no extra charge. (I suspect, however, that insigned copies are rarer.) End of advert.

[[As I've said before, I offer a lot of different things for different fannish tastes. Others in their comments this time say they like the reviews, don't like them, prefer JUST a taste to see if they want to get the book, want an in-depth analysis, etc. One previous suggestion is to put the reviews as a separate zine. I've considered it, and am still thinking about it.

[[The Shaw booklet sounds interesting. I KNOW it will be good reading. I hope you get some interested fans.]]

Lloyd Penney
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Alas, my only contact with Arthur C. Clarke is through reading and movies. I've never had the opportunity to meet him; I don't think he attends conventions at all these days, nor have I had a chance to hear him speak. Over the last couple of years, I've heard that he's had some health problems, and that for a while he had to flee Sri Lanka because of civil uprisings.

I've just read 2061: Odyssey Three and found myself a little disappointed...the warning from the monolith, not to attempt any landings on Europa, changes from a dire command to a toothless pleas to not walk on the grass. An Excellent novel, nonetheless, with further adventures of Heywood Floyd and family. The jump to 3001 was somewhat of a surprise, and if there is to be a fourth Odyssey, or perhaps the long-promised 20,001: The Final Odyssey, I sincerely hope that Clarke can put a stunning cap to the Odyssey saga.

Now for #30, another of your patented monsterzines. AD ASTRA 8 was not one of our best conventions. New people promised a stupendous consuite, and failed miserably to deliver, giving the suite the look of a mess hall rather than a comfortable suite. Heather Ashby and crew came back this year to produce a great suite and comfortable party room. NOLACON II was a good time in spite of all the problems. The Worldconcom sets the stage; I feel it's up to me to have the good time I want. If I don't I have only myself to blame. The concom's not there to hold my hand and entertain me personally. NOREASCON 3 had a snafu or two, but generally the con was very well run and very personable.

[[Yes, the concom "sets the stage" and it depends on you to have the good time. The problems occur when the stage props aren't organized properly, and they get in the way. Program changes without warning, especially if you are on those program items, does not help one have a good time. And that happened too often in such a short time.

[[Yes, AD ASTRA 9 was much better run, except for the other groups in the hotel with the fans. I'm looking forward to an even better-run AD ASTRA 10.]]

Laura Todd's complaints about those who would ban hall costumes are valid. I used to wear hall costumes and when I wore them, I got many positive reactions. So did Yvonne, who wore them and created them. This is just another example of narrow fans who want to ban something they don't like or don't try to understand. Fandom offers the chance to partake of all avenues of creativity.

Jean Lamb
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I really liked the Susan Shwartz. As a person who grew up with family approval in reading SF and fantasy, I know where she's coming from. (My dad also met with disapproval when he read SF and fantasy, to the extent that his father burned his collection in the late 1930s.) The prediction of the creation of an underclass of illiterates can also be seen in Heinlein's novel I Will Fear No Evil, where they work at all the scut jobs in a disintegrating economy. I completely agree with the SF community being open to the world at large. As Mel Brooks once said, "May the Shwartz be with you!"

The information presented in Laska's "Data-Base" was helpful. One notes that the unit "parsec" was likely deliberately misused in Star Wars: A New Hope, given the look of "What Bogus Wookiedrek" on the face of Obi-Wan Kenobi when Solo makes the remark.

As a collector of anything Bujold has ever written, including stray grocery lists, I definitely liked this interview. I would have dearly loved to have met a kindred soul in high school the way Bujold did. I understand the sort of pressure that led to writing SF, since the same sort of pressure

of having small children and no job led to the writing of my novel The Rivals. I find it fascinating that she sees The Warrior's Apprentice as a subtle take-off on Pournelle, since after reading it I wondered out loud to my husband as to the possible result of a collaboration between the two authors. So it wasn't that subtle, ok? I may never write fan material in Bujold's universe, but one is tempted to write a filk which would be a somewhat newer version of "The Mighty Quinn." And if one's standards are as loose as mine, the phrase "of course he can" could be construed to rhyme with "Vorkosigan". Just thought I'd warn everybody.

The cover of LL #30 was reminiscent of a Tarot card, perhaps of The Hermit, though with a twist all it's own. Giovanna Fregni is apparently not only familiar with the Taro deck, but also has a sense of humor.

The Teddy Harvia cartoon in juxtaposition to the editorial explaining why this zine is not even longer than it already is worked very well. I've noticed a lot of thought going into exactly where most of this kind of art is placed, and it is appreciated. [[Thanks.]]

Reviews, I love reviews. Alternities by Michael P. Kube-McDowell, however, was more interesting to me than reviewer. Granted, the different parallels could have been tied together better (as Frederik Pohl did in Coming of the Quantum Cats), but I enjoyed it quite a bit. Sen. Endicott's presence and political power set up a very ethical problem, the nuances of which I felt were handled well.

If Evelyn Leeper is interested in use of Mayan mythology, she ought to read Lewis Shiner's Deserted Cities of the Heart, with mystic mercenaries, bloodthirsty revolutionaries, and the second coming of Kulkulcan. Other mythologies currently in use include medieval Russian (Cherryh's Rusalka), Chinese (M. Lucie's The Fairy of Ku-She), assorted samurai epics by Salmonson and Lustbader, Chalker seems to be using Cambodian themes in his Changewinds trilogy, while Resnick and Charles Saunders heavily on African themes.

Letters--I agree with Duane Elms. It isn't necessary to leave cliffhangers (though they are fun if one is sadistic) or chop stories up unnecessarily. From his mouth to the publishers' ears! But the author often doesn't have much choice in the matter, especially if they're rather new to the field. But when a series is connected, say by a continuing character, it would be nice if the author made that above and beyond effort to work out the proper timeline and remember what any continuing characters look like. (Most authors try, but some don't care.)

Of course the number one fear in the US is the fear of public speaking. It clearly has a genetic basis in that the bearers of bad news often do not survive to reproduce, which makes you wonder just how long Calvin (in Calvin and Hobbes) is going to survive.

Anthony D. Blokzyl
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Your special issues are commendable. After having caught up with the 50th anniversary writers, could you catch up with some old debts, long owed by Fandom? I'd like to see issues on such writers as Kornbluth and Weinbaum, especially while some of their comtemporaries are still around to tell us stories! And there are the all-but-forgotten names, Hamilton and Kuttner and Leinster and the Binders, and on and on.... Even Wollheim is going the way of Carr and Campbell: "You mean he's a writer? Nawww!! !" Del Rey's probably next.

Colin Lamb's "Time to Spare" was a good idea, elaborated in a sort of brief outline; I would like to see it rewritten into an actual piece of fiction. (Proofreading quibble: on page 36, did Laghr invest two hours, or three? Unless I missed something, then either the time of 2:15 or the two hours was incorrect.) The Bill Ware graphic is quite nice.

Laurie Mann's inside review of BOSKONE 25 is an eye-opener and I am very happy to have stumbled onto it.

The only big local event, MINICON, is growing beyond the capacity of its organizers (the Minnesota Science Fiction Society, aka Minn-StF), at 3,000+ and climbing. It's fun, still, but being run as if it were a small con and not a huge regional event.

To add to the fun, plans are in the works by the club to bid for a Worldcon (never mind that the convention facilities in Minneapolis are lousy, unfinished, and/or overpriced, and that a MINICON has never been held in ony of the hotels that would be used...).

I'm glad that some cons are having the guts to limit expansion of attendance, programming, art shows, hucksters, etc., and I am speaking as both a programming fanatic and a huckster. The rule is simple: If ya don't like it, have your own con! The day there's such a thing as too many conventions ...! Mann's report will serve as a guide for some of us.

James Wallace Harris' listing of "classic" SF is nice, and sure to be a fine way to begin a discussion/argument, but (and I may have missed the explanation) what do the little hexathorpes (*) attached to many of the titles signify? Also, on page 47, Harris refers to the Analog '66 readers placing 23 of 26 books: these are, in fact, the Locus '75 figures in the supra chart. Which is incorrect, and where? [[I don't know; maybe James can enlighten us!]]

Massa Lan, you sahib you, while your reports on the cycle of life are entertaining, I must take issue with your comments on Gardner Dozois on page 55. Dozois does, in fact, publish first-time writers...as long as they've graduated Clarion (has anyone ever failed?). Yes, indeedy, you are right, as I've been mooing in certain quarters, the "professional" market is more and more becoming the "professionals only" market.

As an addict of pulps of the 1950s and '60s, I think the days are fast fading when someone can write and sell one incredible story, and then slip quietly back into obscurity--nowadays, you save $2,500 or so (tuition, lodging, food, incidentals) for a Clarion and then hire an agent just to get one story in print! Hardly an option for the few of us who don't have well-paid parents or spouses. I am amused to hear that the Dozois marketing strategy is apparently losing readers.

[[If there has been a new, first-time writer published by Dozois, let me know who that is. Since I do the cataloguing now for our collection, I check out any name I do not recognize. Even Clarion graduates have had stories published elsewhere FIRST, before being pubbed in Asimov's magazine. It is sad that he really is not bringing new people into the field. // In a recent Locus report, Charlie Brown shows that IASFM has increased circulation now; seems to tie in with the increased readability of the stories he is now publishing.]]

Sally Syrjala needs to critique her own writing for linearity and relevance. Firstly, many of her reviews could lose fully half the verbiage without sacrificing content, and greatly improving the communication of ideas. Beyond that, I must also potshot some of the content.

For instance, I would like Lan to lead faandom in declaring a Joseph Campbell moratorium! I have coursework in the anthropology of culture and symbols, and I resent the sudden popularity of Campbell among SF fans, just because he in his dotage happened to take Star Wars as an example of modern culture. Faans probably have him confused with John Campbell...

A further perversion was the "StarWarsian" interpretation of the movie The Blob, but what got me here was that after all the pseudo-scholastic fireworks and bargain-counter symbolism, Syrjala ends with a flat statement that the movie was entertaining!!! I, for one, would be totally drained after such a deeply meaningful experience. I hope (!) that this review was a put-on, and my infinitesimal sense of humor has missed the real point of this ghastly travesty, as it's not a review but a term-paper searching for a home. Unless, Lan, you want to start seeing my Freudian, Jungian, or Neo-Marxian interpretations...? [[Aahhh...no.]]

I guess it's more than that review. Most of Syrjala's reviews, at least the ones in #30, are tottering dangerously near the Vale of Pretentious Nonsense. For example, I rather get the idea that Veterans Park would be a good book, but the description dissolves into stickiness about its deep meaning.

...and Heartbreak Hotel which I thought was a fun, if slightly trite, bit of fantasy, is actually an "enlightening" tale of mankind's continual search for Self and Truth and Meaning.

...and a book about an actual tornado cluster (Tornado Watch #211) is really a chilling Nature versus Mankind ecodisaster parable.

...and Dirty Harry is a failed knight. Well, I agree with this one, though the explication is overdone.

My point in the huge rant above [[edited for space reasons]] is this: Poppa Freud once pointed out that, "Sometimes, a cigar is just a cigar." As demonstrated in LL, there is a difference between reviewing and analysing. I read these reviews to see if a movie, book, etc., is possibly worth the price. At the very least, I will have one opinion on how badly it may stink. If I want Deep Symbolism, I'll go back to reading my old college textbooks. Sally Syrjala may or may not be capable of profound insight, but I regardless question its place in a fanzine's review column--save it for the journals.

Final point: a book cannot be a "novelization" if it is not drawn directly from a screenplay or teleplay. As I have not seen The Three-Minute Universe "Star Trek" tale on release for either the large or small screens, I declare the term "abused" here.

In the previous tirade, I speak from having supported myself for the most of four years as an editor. I also wrote a bit.

Gregory W. Litchfield
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Hanson, MA 02341-2002

I'm curious as to why you misspelled my last name in LL #30 (Lichtfield) twice, when on the address label of that very same issue was spelled correctly (Litchfield). Also, in the contents section on page one, you spelled the two main characters names of "The

Lost Resort" as single names, when they have two names each: Ruel Astarr and Leoan Klest. I can understand the mistake (especially if you copied their names from the title page of "The Lost Resort"), so don't think I'm not grateful for your publishing Dean's and my comics story. By the way, there are still copies left of Ruel and Leoan's first comics zine, Spaced Outlaws #1, which can be had for just two 25¢ stamps sent to the above address.

[[Well, I apologize for the spelling mix-up. There is another fan on my mailing list whose name is Robert Lichtman, and keep forgetting where to put the "t" -- before or after the "ch". And I did copy the names for Ruel and Leoan from the title page of the story.]]

I'd like to commend Alan David Laska for his (hopefully) regular column "Data-Base of Odds and Ends." David has an exceptional memory for the trivia, and he must have an extensive reference library to boot! However, his column would be best served by avoiding answerig questions of opinion with further opinions; such as the 2001: A Space Odyssey vs. Return of the Jedi question, with his "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast answer. Regardless, I stil ook forward to further trivial tidbits from "Data-Base of Odds and Ends."

Even with the many semi-prozines and fanzines that I read in a year, I still only end up reading about a half-dozen really informative interviews with SF writers. Bill Unger's interview with Lois McMaster Bujold was the best of those half-dozen so far. Despite the fact that I've yet to read any of Ms. Bujold's novels (although this is due more to lack of time on my part rather than lack of interest), I found myself thoroughly immersed in this interview's first-person style narrative. I'm always interested in what a writer's influences are; it was much more interesting to discover Ms. Bujold's early interests in the film Lawrence of Arabia and the TV series Star Trek, than a meager list of her favorite books of youth. Her detaied description of how her first published novel, Shards of Honor, developed from a "Star Trek related story" to a full-fledged, original-concept novel, should give hope to fan fiction writers everywhere! Ms. Bujold's explanation of her reasoning behind writing Falling Free to prove "yes, I can write hard science fiction, but I'm not writing space opera because it's an inferior form", was reassuring to space opera fans such as myself that she is not abandoning that so-called lesser SF subgenre, in favor of that more respected subgenre hard SF. Not only has Bill Unger's in-depth interview of Lois McMaster Bujold served the purpose of informing the reader about this fascinating writer and person, But has also inspired this reader to seek out her novels to read!

By far the most important article (fan historically speaking) in LL #30 was Laurie Mann's "BOSKONE 25: From the Inside Out." To start, although I agree with many of the "facts" as reported by Laurie Mann, I disagree with many of her conclusions derived from these "facts." My wife and I were among the "early 80s" "invasion of BOSKONE by people, many of whom were young, unchaperoned, and disinterested in written SF," when we attended our first BOSKONE in 1983. Perhaps we were the exception, but we were hardly young enough at the time to qualify as "unchaperoned" (I was 24, and my wife 22), and I was hardly "disinterested in written SF," as I spent most of my time there attending panels on that very topic! It could be that I was so busy attending panels, and purusing the hucksters room, that during BOSKONEs 19-23 I didn't notice these young roving bands of SF illiterates. I think the trouble only really started (and seemingly ended) at BOSKONE 24, as the numbers doubled from BOSKONE's 2100 attending, to 4200 attending members for BOSKONE 24. For the first time, I recall during BOSKONE 24 there not being enough room in the halls to easily rush from the end of one panel so as not to be late for the beginning of another. What caused this sudden increase in wandering members I'll leave for those better informed to postulate, but I will say it did detract somewhat from my enjoyment of BOSKONE 24. However, I still feel that a Boston BOSKONE with a 3000+ attending membership could be done if NESFA wanted to (yes, I am aware of the so-called Boston hotel boycott of BOSKONE). Unfortunately, as described by Laurie Mann's article, NESFA seems pleased to have isolated themselves in Springfield from the undesirables of BOSKONE's past. Having attended both BOSKONE 25 and BOSKONE 26 I'll say they were just as well-programmed (provided you really are interested in written SF--which thankfully I most certainly am), but that due to the many detractions of using two smaller hotels (just one of which is a walk of several minutes from one hotel to another), and also the added extra two hours to an already 45 minute drive to the new hotel, I much preferred the Boston-based BOSKONE. I myself cannot afford the $300.00 overall costs to stay at the hotel (as compared to the $75 overall cost of driving from home daily to the convention), which is just the last of several reasons why I will not be attending BOSKONE 27. For all of Laurie Mann's writing of "1250 warm, happy bodies, no security hassles, and Springfield hotels pleased enough to sign contracts for '89 and '90", this is one fan who will not be among them. On the bright side, there is now the accessible and enjoyable Lowell-based READERCON to attend, and the upcoming Boston-based ARISTA.

As usual, I enjoyed Diana Stein's excellent cartoons, but being the owner of six cats myself, I particularly got a chuckle out of her "Fanomenon" strips on pages 122 and 131!

All of Peggy Ranson's illustrations show she has a great degree of knowledge of the technical aspects of anatomy, perspective, and lighting, but she is also an artist with a wide range of creative diversity, as demonstrated most noticeably in her "Starship" illo on page 15, her "Witch" on page 78, and her "Mermaid" on page 96. Her pen & ink rendering technique is also quite accomplished.

I don't know how Teddy Harvia gets all his wild ideas for cartoons, but his "Lost Weekend" gag on page 133 was particularly hitting, as it reminded me of many of the partying fen that I avoid at conventions. While we're on the subject, why is it some professionals must bring alcoholic beverages with them to a panel that they're speaking on? Personally, I find it very "unprofessional."

[[Peggy was a fashion illustrator for several department stores, and thus that experience shows in her work. // Speakers on panels, myself included, like to have something to drink, to keep the mouth from drying out. I like Coca Cola, or even water; others prefer something stronger. Unless they are mixing the drinks in front of everyone, I see little wrong with it. On the other hand, if the person is already DWI (debating while intoxicated), it IS unprofessional.]]

In #31, David Stein's "How to Judge a Con by Its Cover" (avoid vertical itile layouts if possible, as they're a trifle confusing) was amusing and informative. David's comment on gaming conventions was right on target, as I once fell victim to one, and being a non-RPGamer I was ready to climb the walls after only a few hours there!

The highlight of LL #31 was your "then & now" interview with Stanley Schmidt, Lan. It's always interesting to read how an editor goes about selecting publishable manuscripts, and I think Mr. Schmidt's method of dividing his manuscripts into a "pro pile and a slush pile" are perfectly justifiable given the vast numbers of manuscripts he reads. I think Stanley Schmidt deserves more credit than he has received from fandom at large for continuing the grand tradition of editing that John Campbell started many years ago.

[[I've been somewhat stuck in sticking the titles of articles at the top, so tried the vertical approach with David's article. Not too many people found it confusing. // I agree that Stan has been underrated as an editor; other fans do not agree with us, though.]]

Tom Jackson
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Your interview with Stanley Schmidt was well done and interesting, although Schmidt is a mediocre editor who puts out a tedious magazine (I know you vehemently disagree). I thought the most revealing part of the interview was when Schmidt lists the writers he discovered, Timothy Zahn, David Palmer, Arlan Andrews, Harry Turtledove, Joe Delaney, Elizabeth Moon and Marc Steigler, "just to name a few," a Schmidt puts it. I like Zahn and Turtledove and I'm sure some of the others Schmidt lists are pretty good, but let's be honest: Few of these writers would appear in anyone's short list of top young writers. Let's put it another way: Who are the best young SF writers? William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Lucius Shepard, Kim Stanley Robinson and John Kessel are some of the obvious names, and what do they have in common? You never see their bylines in Analog!

A friend of mine and I had the same reaction after reading "Peaches for Mad Molly" -- we couldn't believe such a good story was published in Analog! I talked with a writer (whom I won't name) at a convention a couple of years ago, and we talked about a minor story of the writer's which had recently been published in Analog. The writer commented that Analog was an appropriate place to publish one of his poorer stories, since he didn't like the other stories the magazine publishes.

I don't think one should hold it against Schmidt that few Analog stories win major awards--after all, the best stories often don't win--but what I think is striking is that few Analog stories are

even nominated. The short fiction awards have basically become a contest between Asimov's, F&SF, and Omni. In your 1988 interview, Schmidt says, "When there are dry spells in the shorter lengths, we can run a serial--better to run a good serial than a mediocre short story or novelette. We're doing that less often than we used to." The irony is that the serialization of Lois McMaster Bujold's Nebula Award-winning Falling Free (which she apparently submitted to Analog out of a dewy-eyed sense of nostalgia for the magazine's better days) is the only recent event which has kept Analog from being shut out of the awards in recent years.

Ah well, to each his own. I love to argue about science fiction, but on the other hand I have mixed feelings about trampling on someone else's pleasures. I was completely mystifies by your comments in a recent Lantern about what a poor editor Gardner Dozois is. I never liked his early stories, but when I read his terrific reprint anthology, A Day in the Life, years ago, I decided he must be a great editor; when he was named editor of Asimov's I thought it was wonderful news. I noticed that Dozois walked off with another Hugo, so I guess it's up to you, Lan, to carry the flickering torch for the beleaguered band of faithful Analog fans.

I thought it was quite a coup on your part, getting that excellent review of Jane Yolen's The Devil's Arithmetic from that hot new writer, Martha Soukup. You showed good judgement in running it as a separate article, rather than burying it in a mass of reviews.

[[Maybe many of the new writers whom Stan Schmidt has discovered might not be listed among the top best in the field today, but NONE that Dozois has discovered are--mainly because he has none. Dozois doesn't look for new, previously-unpublished writers. Every new writer that appears in Asimov's has been published before, even Clarion graduates. Those you list among the top short fiction writers were discovered/first published by other editors. I feel that a magazine editor's job is to bring in new blood, not just push established writers to do better. Dozois is not doing his job; he's just maintaining the field, not expanding it. That's why I say he's a poor editor. If he were just putting together anthologies, I'd say he'd be doing a great job. But he isn't.

[[I stopped reading Asimov's soon after Dozois took over, mainly because he stopped publishing science fiction and fantasy stories. He published some very nice writing, but much was not SF, some was barely fantasy, and a lot weren't even stories. There was maybe one good story per issue, and I had more important things to do with my time than wade through another Kessel, KS Robinson, Shepard or Swanwick non-story to find a decent piece of fiction. I have very broad reading interests, but as soon as I find that a Shepard writing is about Central America ...again, I skip to the next one. In the last couple of years, however, Maia told me that Dozois had improved; most of the writing at least had plots. So I read a recent issue in its entirety. This is what I found in the July 1989 issue of Asimov's:

[[The cover story, "In the Arctic, Out of Time" by Duncan Lunan was quite boring most of the way through. I wanted to stop after the first dozen pages, but forced myself to read to the end for the purpose of this reply. It was under average.

[["Encore," by John Kennedy, was the best of the stories in this magazine. The protagonist tries to alter recurring events to break out of a time loop.

[["Boobs" by Suzy McKee Charnas is a delightful and enjoyable story, but not very deep. It is more a female teenager's wish fulfillment than anything else, though there is a change in character at the end, unlike so many of the male "coming of age" stories that have proliferated the market (like KS Robinson's The Wild Shore).

[["Bangkok" by M. Shayne Bell, and "Skin Deep" by Kathe Koja are uninteresting, near stream-of-consciousness writing that lost me early on. The former had little focus, and the background was difficult to piece together from the story approach. The latter was more of a sexual fantasy than SF.

[["Martin's Feast" by Phillip C. Jennings had the makings of a good SF story, but the handling of the themes and characters was very poor, in spite of the authors efforts. Dozois should have pushed harder on this one.

[[Connie Willis presented "another of her wonderful SF comdeies," as Dozois writes. It was okay, plodding, not funny, except for one line which would not make sense out of context. IF this were performed, I realized close to the end, THEN it might have been a lot better. As a script it had potential; as a story, it fell flat.

[[Overall, not a good issue.

[[To be totally fair, I don't like everything Schmidt publishes in Analog, but the chances are better that I will like what is there than what is in Asimov's. I prefer F&SF to Asimov's.

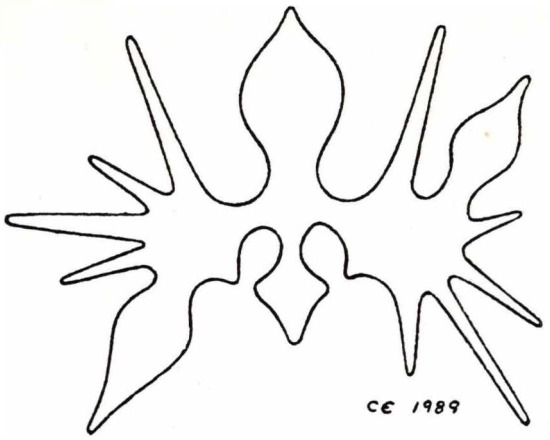
[[That writers don't submit their best stories to Analog is poor judgement on their part. Why are these writers editing themselves? Why are they thinking that Schmidt is going to reject them in advance of his looking at their stories? If they think they are that good at predicting the future, they should try horse-racing and stock investments, not writing; the pay would be much better.

[[As for Bujold's submitting Falling Free to Analog, it was not that much out of nostalgia but

more a challenge to see if a hard-science story she wrote COULD sell to Analog. Schmidt wants a good story, good characters, and some science that makes sense in the story, not just a hard SF problem-solving type story. He is open for submissions; but they have to be sent to him, and not let the writers make his editorial decisions for him.

[[As I did with some of the longer reviews in this issue, I would have printed Martha Soukup's review of Yolen's The Devil's Arithmetic separately. However, it did fit in with the "theme" of LL #31.]]

[[Thanks for writing.]]



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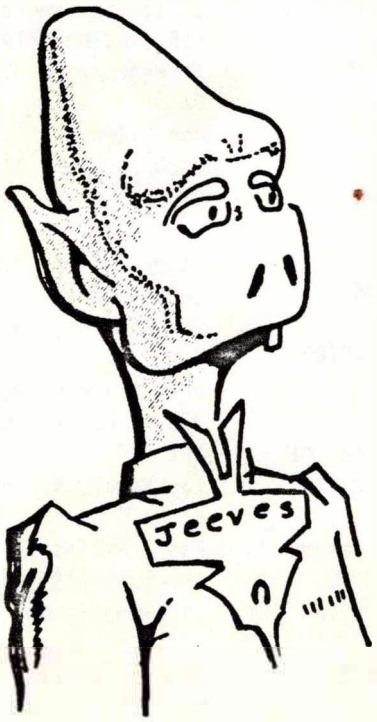

I also heard from the following people -- at cons, over the phone, quick notes and postcards, letters not published, etc. And I've probably missed a few people too. My apologies.

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