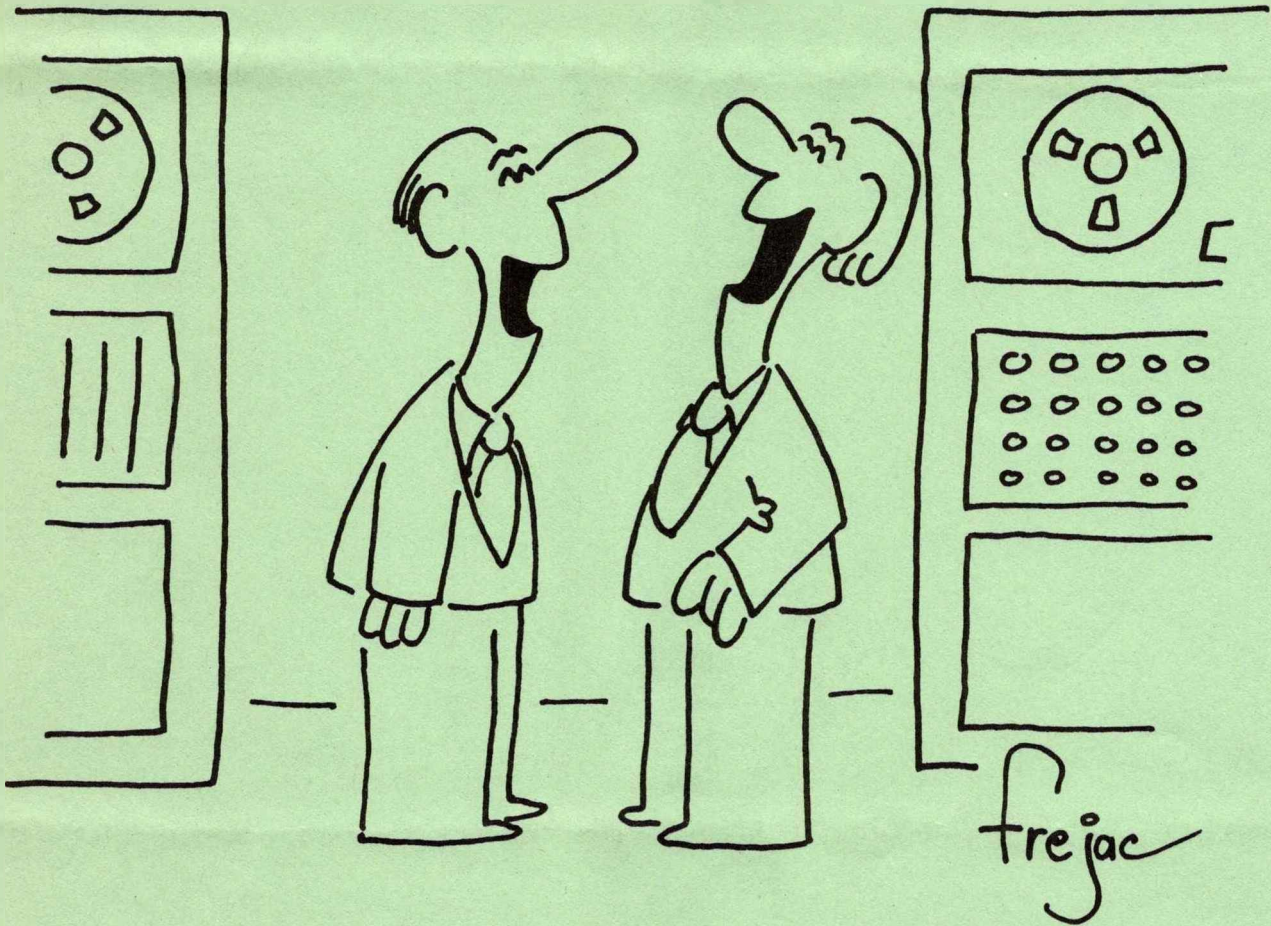


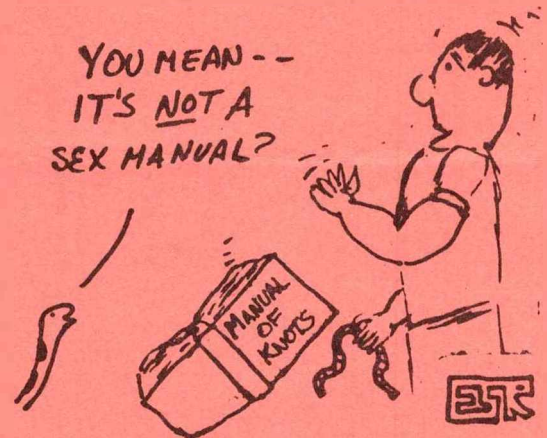
## LINES OF OCCURRENCE 2



" DATA... DATA... DATADATA, JING, JING, JING... "

# Lines of Occurrence

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## DESECLAVES REPORT

### SWING LOW, SWEET MARRIOTT

I'd passed this way, before WSFA had decided that they would hold a relaxacon every Friday the 29th of February (a schedule which should prevent people from getting too jaded with them), and thus Adrienne Fein & I had been invited to attend the world's first Datclave.

It was held in the Crystal City Marriott and Adrienne & I had ridden Anthrax down to Washington, then traveled thru the Deathstar (or, as it is called by the mundanes who run it, the Metro) to Crystal City. I'd felt a bit of a shudder--a feeling of Enemy Territory--as we'd passed a stop labeled PENTAGON, but then we were there, amongst our friends.

On Friday, I had the pleasure of meeting Alexis Gilliland for the first time. I'd known him, of course; in fact, I'd known 2 of him--the deranged genius who does those cartoons and a loc writer who was quiet, mild-mannered, nice, and--dare I say it?--almost normal. Upon meeting him, I discovered that he is the loc writer most of the time, but every so often the Mad Genius takes over the reality studio to make a comment. I guess it's better that way. (By the way, I think this will get to people in time for me to urge you to vote for Alexis for the Fan Artist Hugo. The fact that he has not yet won one of these is a disgrace.)

On Saturday, we wandered the Crystal Underground, or as Adrienne called it, the mundane huckster room. We were most impres-

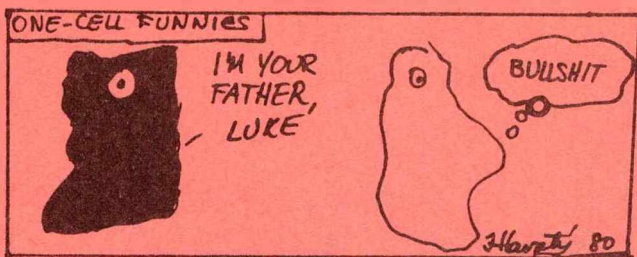
sed. The Enemy Territory feeling recurred only when I saw a zine for government employees, which described the Peanut's effort to bring back Selective Slavery as a wondrous source of job opportunities.

Nevertheless, we decided to stay over another night, whereupon I fell back into one of my old vices--bridge. I'd been something of a degenerate bridge fiend in college, but opportunities to play had not presented themselves, and so I'd played very little for 10 years or so. I knew that this particular perversion was practiced in fandom, largely from hearing Avedon Carol & Tony Parker, each describing the unnameable horror of playing with the other.

It was Avedon who lured me back into my old sinful ways. We sat down at a table by the swimming pool, and dealt out the cards. I discovered that I remembered most of the game, or as Joe Schultz used to say when instructing his baseball teams in the art of bunting, "It's like jacking off; once you learn how, you never forget."

In fact, my team won. That evening, I returned to the bridge table. Tony Parker & his new fiancée, Judy Bemis, were looking for a fourth, and I eagerly joined in. This was the first time I'd gotten to talk much with Judy, tho we'd been on the fringes of each other's perceptions at cons & such before, and I was confirmed in my belief that Tony is a gentleman of intelligence & taste even if he is comparable to me in bridge skills.





### THE MOTEL OF CROSSED DESTINIES

And now, Adrienne & I were returning to Crystal City for the real thing--Disclave. The con would not be held at the Marriott, but at a nearby establishment with the cheery name of Hospitality House Motor Inn. Eva Chalker Whitley had invited us to appear on a panel on Sex & Fandom, which sounded like fun. There was one small cloud on the horizon. Disclave is one of the few cons which lack the minimal civility to send out hotel registration cards to those who register for the con. By the time I got around to calling the motel, they'd sold out of rooms for Friday night, so we had to take rooms in our old spot, the Marriott.

Again, we made the trip down to Washington, and past the Five-Faced Funny Farm to Crystal City. We had no trouble checking in at the Marriott. We headed down to Crystal City to look for a meal. The multiethnic Crystal Diner, where we'd eaten at Datclave, was closed, so we wandered the subterranean complex until we found the Black Crystal cafeteria. There we took our meals & looked for a place to pay for them. We didn't find any, so we assumed that we'd pay on the way out. We ate & exited & still couldn't find a place to pay. As near as I can figure out, we'd blundered into a private dinner for some sort of group, tho I saw no sign for one. Anyway, it was better than one would expect of a free meal.

After dinner, we found Hospitality House & discovered dark, crowded, uncooled hallways. It began to occur to us that this might not be an ideal place for a con.

Still, we ran into a small but depraved group of old friends & brought them over to the Marriott for a bit of substance abuse. The Marriott was hosting a Shriner's group, and so we found ourselves in an elevator full of middle-aged women in fezes. After they left, one of our number made a smart-ass remark, but I suggested that we should not be nasty now that we've finally found a group that looks weirder than we do.

The next morning Adrienne & I awoke, had an early lunch, & checked out of the Marriott. And then we ran into the horror.

OK, so much for melodrama. Would you believe third-rate fukkup? There were immense lines waiting to check in at the motel and we heard tales of rooms double-booked the previous night, and people with paid reservations turned away. It seems the Republican National Committee had been having a con of its own there, and that had complicated things.

But we finally checked in, and then we began running into old friends again. There was the Wandering Bear (Neil Belsky). After we'd seen him at Mindcon, he'd been in Phoenix & then LA, and now was back in NY (we'd seen him a couple of times there) preparatory to returning to Minneapolis. (Are you paying attention? There will be a quiz.) There were Tony & Judy. We saw Avedon, who immediately asked if she could be on the Sex Panel, a request we were glad to grant. There was Rita Winston, whom I'd met at NYU-SFS the previous week. (She has just moved to New York, or at least is staying there until the company she works for thinks of an interesting place to send her.) Among the familiar faces from New York were Brian Burley, Donna Camp, & Marc Glasser, all of whom had shown an interest in being on the panel. (I was beginning to wonder if the panel wouldn't be bigger than the audience.)

And that afternoon we did the things one does at cons, from visiting the huckster room (to purchase copies of TWO TO CONQUER and badges elegantly calligraphed by Nancy Lebovitz) to hearing the Great Legend of Buzzard Fandom (the sort of combination of lewdness & putridity that characterizes fandom at its best (or perhaps worst)).

At dinner time, the rain was coming down something fierce, which meant the Ultimate Horrible Fate at many cons--having to eat at the hotel. Considering the way Hossmiss House had been treating us, we expected little from its restaurant, and it lived down to our expectations, or as I said after we ordered (considerably after we ordered), "Some say that many years ago in this land there was a breed known as Waiters, and some of the elders among us may even have a dim memory of what they looked like." But eventually we were served, and the food was edible. After dinner, four of us went upstairs to practice a ritual of Buzzard Fandom.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sunday morning: The Beach Boys were singing about "four on the floor" and other esoterica. Adrienne & I had gone over to the Marriott for their Champagne Brunch, and we ate delicacies & sipped champagne & listened to a DJ doing a 60s nostalgia show featuring the Beach Boys--Little Surfer Girl, 409, and Fun, Fun, Fun, which is my all-time favorite car song, partly because it is perhaps the only song in the genre which recognizes pleasures beyond automotive ones. (Unless of course you count Muddy Waters's "I'll put a Tiger in Your Tank," which is not the same thing at all.) Alas, the champagne clouded my mind to the point where I left my bookbag somewhere & never did remember where, but you can't win them all.

That afternoon, I sank back into my old evil ways for the first time since Datclave. Again it was Avedon who led me astray. (You don't suppose she's a spy for the International Bridge Conspiracy?) And then it was almost time for the panel.

## WHAT I MIGHT HAVE SAID

Welcome to the panel on Sex in Fandom. There was a time when such a panel might have been considered ridiculous, even self-contradictory. Of course, there was a time when sex in science fiction was also considered self-contradictory. It is generally said that there was no sex in sf until Philip Jose Farmer's *THE LOVERS*, in the 50s. I'm sure that's an oversimplification, but in those days, sf had as little sex in it as the mainstream fiction of the time, and that's saying something. Incidentally, if *THE LOVERS* was the first sf novel to have a noticeable amount of sex in it, the second was Fredric Brown's *MARTIANS, GO HOME*, a smart-ass tale in which an actual act of copulation takes place. (Between chapters, of course, but even that was pretty daring in those days.) Supposedly everyone discovers sf by reading either Andre Norton or Heinlein juveniles. The book that turned me on to sf was *MARTIANS, GO HOME*.

One reason there was no sex in fandom was that there were no women in fandom, a situation which certainly limits one's options. That too is an oversimplification, but at around the time of *THE LOVERS*, a fan named Lee Hoffman was doing zines. When this person attended a con & was discovered to be \*gasp\* female, all fandom went into shock.

That's one aspect of the Good Old Days that I don't miss at all. There are several reasons for the increasing influx of women into fandom. One is *STAR TREK*. ((Wait for boots to die down.)) Another is feminists challenging old idiocies like the idea that girls couldn't possibly be interested in anything with "science" in the title.

There is something else happening in fandom, as Ed Zdrojewski has pointed out. Part of the traditional image of the fan was that he (sic) was totally unpopular & rejected by the mundane world until he found fandom, which then represented his only alternative.

Today, however, many fans know from experience that fandom is not the only counterculture. I myself had been somewhat involved in a variety of nonmundane groups, from the political Left to the San Francisco hippie scene, before I'd even heard of fandom.

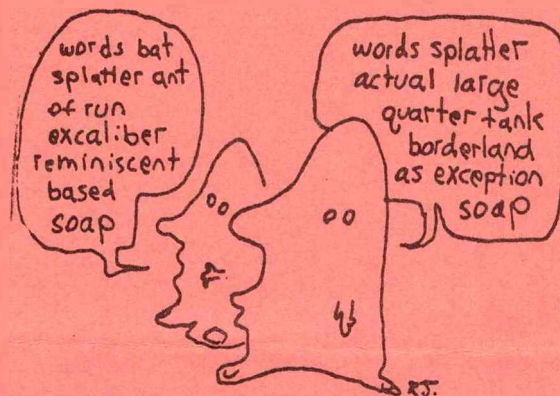
And today there are a variety of sexual countercultures. There is what is left of the 60s Sex Freedom Movement. There are feminism & gay liberation, "swinging" & group marriage, and the sexual elements of the Human Potential Movement. These groups are interacting with fandom, and we'd like to talk about some of those things today.

## WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

*"Yours was the biggest and longest"*  
--Eva Chalher Whitley, to me

Alas, I must admit she was talking about the panel. Whether it was the best is another question. It did not quite go as I might have wished.

## FUTURE DRUG FIENDS



## HIGH ON 'PiP'

In an act that shocked many of those who know me, I asked the people I'd selected for the panel to meet in the lobby 1/2 hour or so early, so that we could organize & plan, and do other such aneristic things. Nobody particularly wanted to do that, so we just talked for a while, as I made the final selection of panelists. Then we gathered in a circle and consciously or otherwise held an energy-raising ritual by singing the Hymn of the True Faith of the Sacred Cat Mota. This was, incidentally, the first time I'd heard the hymn sung with the new verse I wrote, dealing with the sin of Sloth. (Actually, all I wrote was the first part of it. ~~I never got around to finishing it!~~)

And we entered the program room, and sat ourselves at the table. Marc Glasser, Donna Camp, Avedon Carol, Adrienne, me, Judy Bemis, Brian Burley, and Rita Winston.

I had not written down the speech I showed you, or anything like it. I began by a fairly transparent effort at rabble rousing: "There was a time when Sex in Fandom would have been considered as much of a contradiction in terms as Hospitality House."

That briefly put the audience on my ide, but as I muddled through, I began to hear calls for a demonstration. I muttered something nasty about not realizing that there were so many people here in need of basic instruction, and went on to let the panel introduce themselves, which they did with great gusto, one particular high point being Judy's including in her credentials for being on such a panel, "him, him, him, ...and especially him." (pointing to Tony)

Our disorganization quickly showed. Another problem was that there was a large, or at least highly vocal, part of the audience to whom words like fuck and sex are so intrinsically funny that one who has been confronted with them can only giggle helplessly and certainly cannot think. Such reactions were obvious from many people who spoke up, and I will warm the hearts of stereotype lovers everywhere by pointing out that the worst of the lot was wearing a *STAR TREK LIVES* t shirt.



There were other distractions. Some-  
one passed around a card which read:

Interdigtation is Martian Sex.  
Smile if you agree;  
Laugh if you want more.

I laughed so hard I almost dropped Adri-  
enne's hand. And Judy's.

There was some interest in the subject  
of computerized Lust Lists & Langdon Charts.  
Perhaps that requires some explanations.  
The idea of the lust list is that fans are,  
as everyone knows, socially inept--too much  
so at times to make proper arrangements. In  
fact, it might turn out that 2 people  
faunched mightily after each other's flesh  
without either knowing of the other's inter-  
est. Thus the suggestion that each fan at  
a Worldcon could give a list of other fans  
lusted after, and this information  
would be fed into a computer, so that people  
who appeared on each other's lists could be  
notified.

The Langdon Chart (the derivation of  
this term is unknown to me) is a list of the  
sexual connections in fandom. Brian repor-  
ted that one version of the Chart had ex-  
ceeded the capacity of the Defense Dept.'s  
largest computer. It is a subject of fas-  
cination to me, and it gives me a good feel-  
ing to think that I am connected in one way  
or another to many of my friends in fandom  
(and trying to make even more connections).

I will point out that some of the people  
in the audience seemed particularly inspired  
by the mention of computers, as if we'd  
finally taken up an interesting topic. (I  
mention no names, but one became so aroused  
that the frog fell off his head.)

But the panel seemed to be floundering  
until Brian Burley whispered something in  
Rita's ear, and then asked for a show of  
hands as to how many people would be willing  
to show up at an Officially Scheduled Orgy  
at the Worldcon. Hands were raised. Brian  
then revealed that he had told Rita that the  
show of hands would be at least 80% male.  
In fact, it appeared to be 100% ~~except for~~  
~~a couple of undecided or no opinion.~~ That,  
Brian said, was the reason why a scheduled  
orgy would never be a success.

(There are other pitfalls, as well. I  
am reliably informed that, the previous night,  
a couple of men had stripped for what they  
had been told would be an orgy, only to wind  
up as naked defendants in a True Faith Heresy

CONFESS, MAX.  
MY PARTNER  
COMES ON IN  
HALF AN HOUR.  
AND SHE  
SMOKES  
TIPARILLOS.



Trial. This appears to be the sort of thing  
that could give orgies a bad name. I will  
give no further details, as I did not attend.  
Besides, I have a bit of difficulty coping  
with the concept of heresy trials. I am, as  
everyone knows, a Discordian, and the  
phrase "Discordian heretic" is redundant.)

In any event, Brian took off from this  
point to suggest that fandom is nowhere near  
as liberated as it thinks it is--that he  
knows allegedly mundane groups whose members  
were more widely experienced and open to a  
greater variety of sexual acts than most of  
fandom. At this point the discussion came  
to life. Adrienne & Avedon suggested that  
Brian might be offering an overly quanti-  
tative approach to sexual liberation. Avedon  
remarked that in fandom she felt free from  
both pressure not to fuck and pressure to  
fuck. The audience began to make interesting  
remarks. I particularly recall Eric Raymond  
& Jon Estren, but there were others as well.

And as the discussion was getting good,  
it came to an end, as Eva arrived to say that  
the room had to be cleared for the evening  
film show. As moderator, I had the last  
word. I pointed out that when Brian had  
asked for orgy volunteers, it was mostly the  
people who'd been making the dumb remarks  
who raised their hands, leading to the  
conclusion that a scheduled orgy would be  
mostly critics, and lousy critics at that.  
(Or, as I am told a 19th-century French  
writer said, "A literary critic is like  
the eunuch in a harem: He sees it done all  
the time; he knows exactly how it's done;  
but he can't do it, and it's driving him  
mad." Nevertheless, I will continue to  
review fiction.) I suggested that if we  
were to do this again, it might be an idea  
to keep out some of the worse critics by  
giving the panel some sort of Socioquack  
name like "Parameters of Transpersonal  
Interaction in Subcultural Convocations."  
The Terkkie opened his mouth one last time  
to ask why I would want to do a thing like  
that, and I replied, "To keep you away,"  
and the panel was over.

Like so many of us, the panel had great  
potentials it didn't live up to. Adrienne  
had some very good remarks she never had a  
chance to deliver, as did others. There  
may be other chances. I've heard talk of  
sex panels at other cons, and my arrogant  
claim that being OE of APA-69 makes me the  
Ex Officio Expert on Fannish Sex may get me  
on some of them. But the spirit of the  
panel manifested itself in another way. On  
Monday, we were leaving, and most of the  
panel gathered in the lobby, with a few  
other friends like Tony Parker & Rick Brown.  
It turned into a moderate but highly friendly  
group grope. If some of us were not next  
to our usual partners, or even \*fnord\* next  
to someone of the same sex, that was not  
necessarily a hindrance. It was so much  
fun, in fact, that it wasn't until later I  
thought it would have been even more fun to  
be doing it there as the Republicans were  
entering the motel.



# NEW WAVE RETROSPECTIVE: 1

I feel old already. It occurs to me that I'll have to begin by explaining that what I am talking about is a Sixties sf phenomenon, rather than a Seventies rock & roll phenomenon. Oh well, consider it explained.

In any art form, the term "new wave" (or "new thing" or whatever) tends to mean a whole bunch of different stuff lumped together because none of it resembles the old wave. For instance, at the same time as the sf New Wave, there was a phenomenon known as the New Journalism. This was a category made up of the nonfiction writing of Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, Jimmy Breslin, and Al Goldstein, among others. If anyone has figured out any positive trait this crew has in common, I have not been told about it, but that was the "New Journalism."

Given this vagueness, there was a certain amount of disagreement as to just what New Wave meant, and which works belonged to it. To opponents such as JJ Pierce (then) and Sam Konkin (now), New Wave was a literature which had swallowed whole the supposed Mainstream Lit assumptions of human evil, worthlessness, & insignificance, in opposition to the Old Wave's positive belief in Human Potential & Human Destiny. To New Wavers, the New represented a fully human vision as opposed to the sexism, racism, militarism, machismo, narrow-mindedness, and stereotyping of the Old.

This disagreement as to the nature of Old vs New predictably led to a disagreement as to the boundary lines between them. Indeed, both sides claimed Ursula K. Le Guin, to the point where she wrote to SFR to say that she was growing abit weary of being the center of a tug of war.

In one sense, the war ended 10 years ago with the end of the leading New Wave outlets; in another sense, it remains & always will remain, in the continuing disagreements over what sf is & should be. In any event, I'd like to look back from a vantage point of 10 years later at a couple of the leading "New Wave" institutions.

## I. NEW WORLDS

New Worlds was begun in the 50s by E. J. Carnell as a sort of British ASTOUNDING or AMAZING. In the mid-60s, it lost its original publisher, and Carnell was replaced as editor by Michael Moorcock. Moorcock, depending on which version you believe, either unchained the writers from the petty tabus of the sf marketplace of the time, or cut them loose to wallow in the bottomless pit of self-indulgence. Which version you believe (i.e., whether you think it is a Good Thing) can be debated endlessly, or nearly so, to a conclusion of "It depends." We stipulate then

that NEW WORLDS differed from its predecessors, and had its own distinctive approach, and let us look at the work this approach produced.

Moorcock himself was atypical in one respect: He turned out vast quantities of sword & sorcery, a form I would consider somewhere behind the old wave. Heroes named Corum, Elric, Dorian Hawkmoon, etc. plundered & killed & strove against evil. Some say that Moorcock introduced new psychological dimensions to goodole swords & sorcery; others say that he could not even meet the minimal demands of this simple genre. He has now woven most of the fantasies & a good deal of his sf together into a more or less consistent "multiverse" in which a single hero in many guises returns to fight Evil. Some say this introduces a new dimension to his work; others say it gives him an excuse to tell the same stories over & over. I have read too little of Moorcock's fantasy to takesides in these disputes.

While Moorcock was turning <sup>out</sup> this apparently formulaic Oldest Wave work, he was also writing his Jerry Cornelius books. If the sword & sorcery was too simplistic & too accessible, the Cornelius books represented the other end of the spectrum--a mixture of fragmented narration, experimental prose, & private reference that almost defied the reader to understand it. (And yet I wonder: Some find ILLUMINATUS! every bit as obscure & anti-reader as anything by Moorcock or Gene Wolfe. Obviously, I do not. I suspect that there is a subjective factor I am not yet prepared to define by which a particular reader decides to go along with a particular writer, thus finding that writer's works not difficult at all, while a reader less in tune feels that the writer is manipulating hir, withholding information for no good reason, & generally doing a number on hir. Anyway, Moorcock did not inspire me to follow him anywhere near effortlessly through the twistings & turnings of THE CORNELIUS CHRONICLES.) In any event, it always seemed to me that Moorcock had trouble finding a path between Low Fantasy & High Obscurity. Perhaps his DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME series came closest to the ideal.

J. G. Ballard was the star of the New Wave--the protagonist, the most controversial performer, the inimitable writer everyone else tried to write like, etc. In one sense, he was not New at all. The novels he published in the 60s (THE BURNING WORLD, THE DROWNED WORLD) were an old British subgenre, the End of the World book, made all too familiar by the likes of John Wyndham & John Christopher. I don't like End of the World books; they bore me & strike me as the very opposite of what science fiction is for. So I will mention only that Ballard created perhaps the prettiest example of the form in CRYSTAL WORLD, and pass along.



Ballard's main influence came from a series of stories beginning with "Terminal Beach." Perhaps even calling them stories is misleading. They were vignettes in which a character whose name began with T confronted a variety of people & images, generally dealing with sex and/or violence and/or technology. These were combined with a small group of even stranger word patterns, set in styles not unlike sociological treatises & given such appetizing titles as "Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan," the result being published in England as THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION and in the USA as LOVE AND NAPALM. I liked them. I despair of communicating this feeling to anyone who has much respect for conventional story values, but these constructs (especially taken one at a time) have a sort of fascination to them. Ballard was exploring the relationship of the media to questions of sex & violence, and attempted to transcend good taste whenever possible. I think he succeeded.

Since then, Ballard has returned to the novel, having taken his experimental form as far as it could go. These books strike me as less successful. I think it's fair to say that CRASH is a detailed presentation of automobile accidents as sexual stimuli. If that's what you want to read, have fun. That was followed by CONCRETE ISLAND, about a bunch of people marooned on a traffic island. (I am really & truly not making this up.) Then there was HIGHRISE, about a giant apartment building whose occupants revert to savagery. I find Ballard so strange & idiosyncratic that I have no idea whatsoever what he will do next & whether it will interest me.

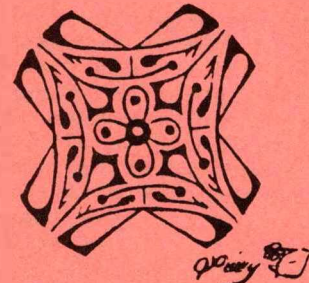
Another major writer NEW WORLDS produced, or at least nurtured, was Thomas M. Disch. I reviewed CAMP CONCENTRATION in DR 12. I will repeat that I think it is a masterpiece. Disch represents the ambivalence that NEW WORLDS writers traditionally have towards science fiction. They all seemed to feel that the genre as it existed was hopelessly corrupted, either by pulp standards, or by American imperialism, or something, but offered hope if they could but handle it right. In Disch, the ambivalence seems far stronger. He hates the stuff, yet keeps writing it. An essay characteristically entitled "The Embarrassments of Science Fiction" appears in Peter Nicholls' SCIENCE FICTION AT LARGE. It is an all-out attack on the field, in which he actually manages to be unfairly nasty to STARSHIP TROOPERS, something I had considered as difficult as being unfairly nasty to Richard Nixon. His latest book, ON WINGS OF SONG, is sf. It is quite good, but coldly so. He will write it, and we will read it, and it will be good, but neither he nor we will enjoy it if he can help it.

John T. Sladek is perhaps my favorite of the NEW WORLDS writers. He turned out 2 hilariously funny sf novels, called MECHASM (also published as THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM) and THE MULLER-FOKKER EFFECT. These books strike me as being a lot closer to some of

the freakier mainstream writers, such as Thomas Pynchon & Tom Robbins, than to most sf, but they are unmistakably science-fictional in content, dealing respectively with a system of self-reproducing boxes which takes over the world and a means of encoding human minds on tape. I think the man is a genius & you really ought to buy the books. (MECHASM is about to be reprinted by Pocket Books.) There are also a couple of Sladek story collections, THE STEAM-DRIVEN BOY and KEEP THE GIRAFFE BURNING, which unfortunately have not been published in the USA.

The admirer of traditional sf, upon finding Barrington J. Bayley in the pages of NEW WORLDS, might well ask what a nice guy like him was doing in a place like that. Bayley never seemed to fit in with these literary rebels & stylists, being rather an avatar of the Kilgore Trout archetype, with little in the way of prose, characterization, etc., but as John Brunner said in a different context, Christ what an imagination he's got! Or as Charles Platt said, in a letter to SFR which inspired me to seek out Bayley's writings, "I think he is at least as original and inventive in his ideas as, say, Larry Niven--though his field is more metaphysics than astrophysics." Precisley. THE FALL OF CHRONOPOLIS has its failings, but it's a brilliantly new & mind-expanding vision of the nature of time. Other books, all from DAW (let me repeat that: DAW and NEW WORLDS!) include COLLISION COURSE, THE GRAND WHEEL, STAR WINDS, and THE GARMENTS OF CAEAN. (Some are probably out of print.) I recommend all for sense of wonder, none for literary merit. In addition, Schocken is publishing quality paperbacks of his early books (ANNIHILATION FACTOR, EMPIRE OF TWO WORLDS) and a new short-story collection, THE SEED OF EVIL. I do not like old halves of Ace doubles reprinted in a fancy format at \$5 apiece, but these are interesting books, too.

Thus the stars of NEW WORLDS. The zine itself folded in 1970 or so. The editors blamed poor distribution, which is what editors always say & sometimes it's true. It has been revived in various formats, and usually manages to come up with something interesting. I will continue this discussion, perhaps next issue, with the Ace Specials, & perhaps eventually come to some sort of conclusion.



## FREE PLUG:

THE  
DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIPTHE FANZINE FOR  
DISCRIMINATING DEGENERATES

The Golden Helix, by Theodore Sturgeon  
(Dell pb, \$1.95)

The people at Dell are doing a Good Thing. Every few months, they have packaged & released a book of old uncollected Theodore Sturgeon stories. First there was VISIONS AND VENTURERS, then THE STARS ARE THE STYX, and now THE GOLDEN HELIX. These are Sturgeon stories, which means that you probably will not like every bit of every one of them, but there are one or two (varying from person to person) that will fascinate you and every so often something will reach out of one of them & hit you upside the head, and you will say, "Hey! I never thought of that!" If, like me, you didn't read these, then you want to buy the book & read them. If you have read them, you want to buy the book & have them. I don't know if there are going to be any more books like this, but I hope so.

OK, that was the review, but while I've got you & him here, so to speak, there's something else I'd like to say. Last time I mentioned my dissatisfaction with Sturgeon's book reviews, on account of him being too nice in them. Well, I still think he was, but it occurs to me that this sort of thing has helped build a misleading image of Theodore Sturgeon. That & Harlan Ellison saying, "Ted knew almost nothing about hate, yet was completely conversant with love in all its manifestations," (a statement I believe Ellison has since recanted, or at least explained further) create the image of Sturgeon as a goody-goody or flower child. I don't know if it's possible to know everything about love and nothing about hate, but that ain't Sturgeon. In this collection, there is a story called "And Now the News..." It is about the love we are supposed to have for every other person in the world; it is about Donne's "No man is an island" and what it is like to believe that & live that way. It is not the work of a flower child.

## FROM SILENT TRISTERO'S EMPIRE

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There is a reason for reviews that are primarily positive. Some of us don't have unlimited money and reading time to waste on trash. We therefore tend to shy away from the crap. And if I don't have time to read crap, I certainly don't have time for reviewing it. As far as fanzines go, I have an easy solution too. If it's trash, I don't bother to loc. It has to be at least fairly good to merit response. And generally editors who do not receive replies soon drop one from their mailing lists, so the trash soon fades from memory. It saves making enemies of people who may someday either improve or grow up.

I think that what bothered me about Sturgeon's reviews was not so much that they were all positive, as that he found positive things to say about so many books, many of which struck me as obvious losers. I myself find that it's easier & more fun to explain why a bad book is bad than why a good book is good. Other reviewers have said the same thing, but I suspect that some don't feel that way at all. As to how people can stand to read books that they review negatively, I guess there are several answers. In some cases, looking forward to the fun of ripping the book to shreds may propel the reviewer through the reading of it. Other books (like NEW ATOMS' BOMB-SHELL, for me) have enough good qualities to keep me interested while I recognize the flaws. And some books (like James Grazier's RUNTS OF 61 CYGNI C) are so magnificently Ghodawful that one keeps turning the pages to see what schmuckery the author will perpetrate next. What must be the hardest to review is the standard formula sf/adventure: not worth reading for its positive values, not horrible enough to be amusing, not original enough in its badness to be the basis for a really first-rate negative critique.

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About your comments on Golden Age sf, do you get this stuff from Aldiss et al., or have you ever read any? "Forgetfulness" and "Twilight" by Campbell (yes, that awful man), "First Contact" by Leinster, "The Man from Beyond" by Wyndham, Weinbaum's stories, "Old Faithful" by Gallun, "Wanted--an Enemy" by Leiber, "Beauty & the Beast" by Kuttner, "Quietus" by Rocklynne, "The Wings of Night" by del Rey, "Reunion on Ganymede" by Simak and umpteen others (even Wells's FIRST MEN IN THE MOON) put the lie to your comments.. Not to mention the numerous stories where Earthmen are enslaved, such as SINISTER BARRIER and "Exiles on Asperus" (in which the Earthmen lose, circa 1933!) Besides, we all know that modern SF is just sex and sadism and female bondage fantasies--look at those Gor books; that proves it!

I did say "usually"--well, anyway, a lot of it.

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I don't see much point to writing con reports. A good con (like Minicon) is as much of a second-by-second challenge as acid, and also intensely personal. Any attempt at writing about it trivializes. But I'd be interested in the next couple of LOs, to see how it develops.

## ART INDEX

Fred Jackson III-cover, 7  
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# LASTWORDS

## HEAVY-HANDED IRONY

There are things one should start out doing at an early age so as not to build up Great Expectations which will only be disappointed by the first time. Some include sex in this category; others would mention the use of various psychoactive substances. For me, Hugo voting has turned out to be such a thing.

I voted for TITAN as Best Novel, but without great enthusiasm, considering it at best 1/3 of a major novel, at worst the beginning of a Noble Experiment that failed. I bypassed the short fiction categories, on the grounds that I have read virtually none of the entrants. (I said I was a fan, didn't I? I do still read some sf in book form, but I never was much for reading the prozines.) I stayed out of another category out of a sense of false modesty, cast uninteresting ballots in a few others, and then came to the Gandalf Award & the name of Marion Zimmer Bradley.

In one sense I had no qualms about voting for her. Had Silverberg not returned, I might consider her the best sf writer in the world today. TWO TO CONQUER (DAW pb, \$2.25) reinforces that judgment. It is MZB at her best, showing her usual qualities of skilled plot construction & the presentation of villains who are real misguided human beings rather than abstract Agents of Evil. But this award is for the best fantasy writer. Is she one?

I've never read a totally convincing statement of the difference between fantasy & science fiction. Some base it on the reader's credulity: If one believes it's possible, it's science fiction. Others say that if there is an attempt to explain the story's nonmimetic elements in scientific-sounding terms, it's science fiction. I tend to think of it in terms of progress. If the story takes place in a reality where science has moved forward from today's, it's sf. Otherwise, it's fantasy. And I prefer sf.

By such definitions, the Darkover books are sf. The Terran Empire is in the background; the psi in the stories is treated like a science. So perhaps MZB should not win the Gandalf.

And then I thought: The fantasy fans insisted on bringing their awards into what has always been called a science-fiction con. They confused things by adding a second best-novel award (cast aside by the concom this year). Wouldn't it be too bad if their strategy caused a situation where their fantasy award was voted to a science-fiction writer by science-fiction readers? I voted for Bradley.

## WHY YOU GOT THIS

- You are in APA-nu, may Goddess have mercy on your soul. (Other reasons may apply as well; see me if you're curious.)
- X — You locced the previous issue. You've locced other zines of mine.
- You haven't locced, but you're invited to.
- We trade.
- I'd like to trade.
- I thought we traded. Why has everybody else gotten copies & not me?
- What makes you think I'm paranoid?
- You are mentioned in this issue.
- You are on my Lust List.
- Your artwork appears in this issue.
- Your artwork doesn't appear in this issue, but it has been in other zines of mine.
- You are invited to submit artwork.
- You are invited not to submit artwork.
- X — You are in one or more apae with me.
- X — You have been a Bad Influence on me.
- You have angered an old gypsy woman with Powers, and things like this are going to keep happening to you.
- Editorial whim. (Ask further at your own risk.)
- If I don't send you a copy, you will cry, and/or swear vengeance, and/or sic the Bulgarian Illiterati on me.
- You deserve something like this, he said ambiguously.
- You are a member of the Nut Cult.
- If you can figure out why I sent you this, please let me know.

Hail Eris,  
Arthur