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SCIENCE FICTION

Andrew M Stephenson, Editor

AMES Inc.,
HP10 0QJ,
UK/EEC-3.

Monday, 17 October, 1977

Dear Pat & Mike,

Got LURK-10 today, though I had to stop the secretary from putting it in the slushpile. Great issue, better than that other travesty of a fanzine you once planned to replace LURK with. However, apart from your hiking the price to £1.05 per ish, I have a serious gripe to make:

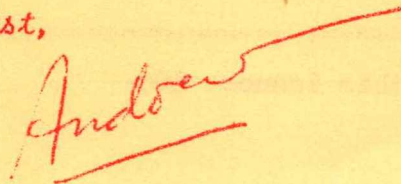
Dave Rowe remarks, rightly, that the reprinting of BLUNT-5 in its entirety in the Harrison/Aldiss YEAR'S BEST SF, No.8, was unfair. In particular, the artwork didn't come across nearly as it should have---after all, how can one expect the impact of colour to carry over into B&W? Anyhow, that's relatively minor compared with the effect the SeaCon75 report had on the WorldCon voting; I still maintain, and am most grateful for Dave's support in this even though he may be professionally biased in favour of this magazine's policies, that is was an unreasonable use of Influence. No doubt your readers will have their own opinions.

Back to LURK-10: I was amused to read Howie Rosenblum's suggestion for tobacco-powered cars, written, I must suppose, just after he swore off the Weed; if nothing else, it puts this long-standing debate in the right light, especially in view of the attitude adopted by the new government in Rhodesia---or, as they will insist on calling it (Ghu knows why, when no-one sober enough to talk can pronounce it!): N'ghkhamiyhymbgbm'hk.

Somehow, the idea of UK3 begins to sound workable, what with the success of Greg Pickersgill's POESY and, more recently, the two Petes' TAFF report, GABFEST A&B. Are we on the verge of a new Golden Age, as Eric Bentcliffe suggested in LURK-9? Perhaps Britain can pull off the best WorldCon yet!

Incidentally, how come I got half a packet of crisps in with my copy? (And they weren't my favourite flavour, either!)

Best,



AMS/jd'k

LURK

SEVENTH (AND FINAL) ISSUE

APRIL 1975

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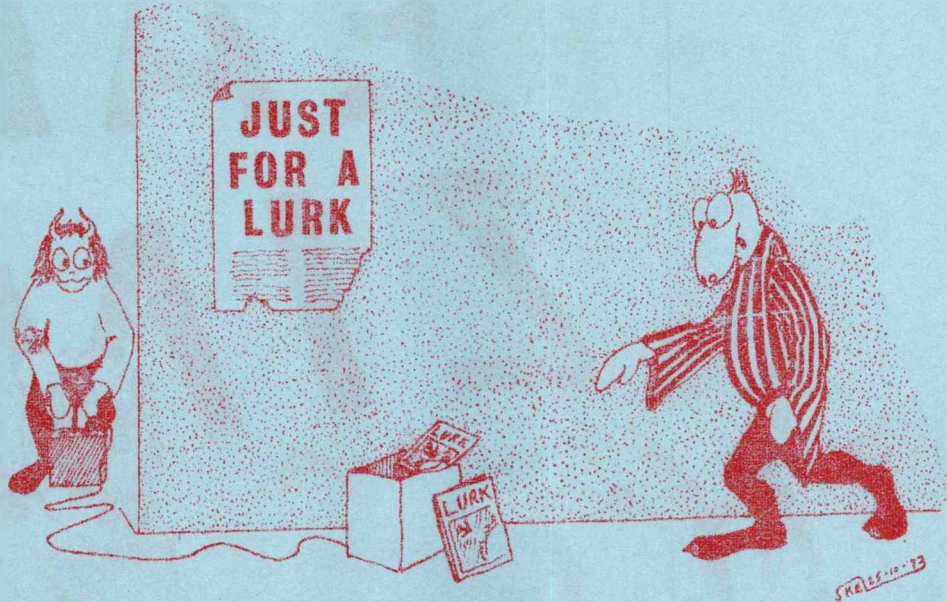
Art on pp. 3, 4, 6, 22 and 29 by Skel. Art on pl3 by Dave Piper and Pat.

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AND IN CONCLUSION, I SHOULD LIKE TO SAY...

...that this is not the end. Polecat Publications lives on, in a new incarnation, to wit, a personalzine, called KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE. This will be quarterly, and the first issue will be out at the beginning of July (1975, of course). It will go, as a matter of course, to all who respond in some way to this final issue of LURK. Letters of a general nature arising from the contents of this issue are welcomed, and may be published in the firstish of KNOCKERS, if suitable. KNOCKERS will be all editor-written, but short humorous items of any description are needed as interlunations and fillers.

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Now you've done it, you flatterers. Prodded me into finally producing the last issue of LURK, that's what you've done. Come to think of it, maybe all those people at the con who asked when the final ish was due weren't just being nice after all. Maybe they were just checking to see how much time they had left. Bastards!! Well, here it is anyway.

No, actually, what really got me interested in publishing again was (or were) the events before, during and after Season, which made up one of the most enjoyable weeks I've spent since I can't remember when. On the Thursday before the con, Fred Hemmings, Chris Bursey and Gerald Lawrence arrived in Fred's amazing Heap (a monument to what British engineering used to be like) en route from Brum, where they'd spent a fortune in Rog Peyton's bookshop and purchased six months' supply of groceries, all of which they'd arranged to offload in my garage for the duration of the con. A pleasant evening (and part of the following morning) was had by all (except Gerald, who sloped off to bed early, feeling ill. Well, that garlic sausage was a bit strong - even Fred looked askance at it, and he'll eat anything). I was hoping and praying that Fred wouldn't do his Human Alarm Clock bit; Pat and I like to sleep late, especially after a Night Before, but Fred takes a sadistic delight in bursting in about half past seven, ripping off one's bedclothes and shouting "Rise and shine!" or some other such inanity. No respecter of persons, that Fred. However, my fears were groundless. He seemed to have mellowed somewhat since I'd last seen him.

Around about 10 a.m. on the Friday we managed to get ourselves organised and headed Coventry-wards, whither we arrived about noon. The con itself was about average - not particularly memorable. We saw even less of the programme than usual - not even one of the films, most of which we'd seen before - and attended rather more room parties. We overspent, but that's normal. The

THE

GREAT

FANZINE



EXTRAPOLATOR

by Roger Waddington.

The clock had whirred its soggy way round, helped by half a pint of beer in its innards, almost to the witching hour; and the monthly meeting of the BEMs, or what was otherwise known as the Chalton and District Science Fiction Reading, Writing and Aardvark-Baiting Circle (if they could have wrapped their tongues round it) was as soggily drawing to a close. Now the only thing that kept them upright was resting their feet on the indeterminate body under the table which moaned every now and then as a foot found a tender spot, until the door burst open and a blast of cold night air hit them, closely followed by the blast of hot air that was 'Boots', their erstwhile leader.

A hail of curses, comments on his parentage, bread crusts and beer cans flew at him, one of the latter of which he caught, snapped open and chug-a-lugged all the way down. "Hey, I didn't know we had a full one left!" grimaced Dave, as he saw his chance of total stupor vanishing away.

"Never mind that," Boots shouted. "Are you going to lie there while the greatest thing yet to hit Fandom is unveiled?"

"Yes!" they all shouted back.

"Oh well, it'll be here in the morning whether you like it or not, so listen!"

Thoroughly cowed by the mad gleam in his eye they even hauled up the body from under the table, propping it up against the radiator, only to wish they hadn't when a smell of charring wool began to assail their senses.

"You all know the way fanzines have come," began Boots (oh Ghu, another sermon, they muttered). "From that first messy hectograph, through the Roncoed masses, to the delights of web offset." Another hail of cans reached him with cries of "British through and through!", "Death to rich Americans!" and a chorus of "There'll always be an England..." together with "You know only the BSFA is rich enough to afford luxuries!"

"And so would we be, if you didn't have those drunken orgies!" he retorted.

"Give over, they're only drunken once a month..." someone answered.

"But putting that aside," he muttered distastefully, "My uncle, being one of the cogs in the great Xerox machine, and without whom we couldn't bombard an unsuspecting British fandom with our zinc of zines, Total Crud," (a chorus of "It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it" greeted this); "Well, he's just got the very latest in repro machines to test, and it'll be on your doorstep tomorrow morning - so goodnight!"

The door slammed, the cuckoo fell out of the clock, hiccuping gently all the way down, and the fug rolled in again, only disturbed by the snores breaking through....

Only to be disturbed again as the bright light of morning tried to struggle through it with bare hands and a blunt knife, and the door came under attack. Peering through the mass of dark hair that obscured his vision - Ghu, what exactly was it that we ended up drinking last night? he muttered - and pushing the rabbit away, Dave crawled to the door.

"Sign here please, sir or madam," the delivery man said from behind the protection of an enormous packing case. "Or better still, just make your mark, Conan!"

Instinctively Dave scabbled to get at him, only to be stopped by the case which was now blocking the doorway, and the delivery man beat a hasty retreat, scratching himself.

"Damn uppity foreigners, bach," he scowled and started to drag the case inside. Soon, wood shavings littered the floor and a grey cabinet rose from them like Venus from the waves, and they wandered round it looking for somewhere to plug in. Just then Boots arrived.

"Fanzine party, forward! Gather up shavings, put in hopper, two-three...BEGIN!!"

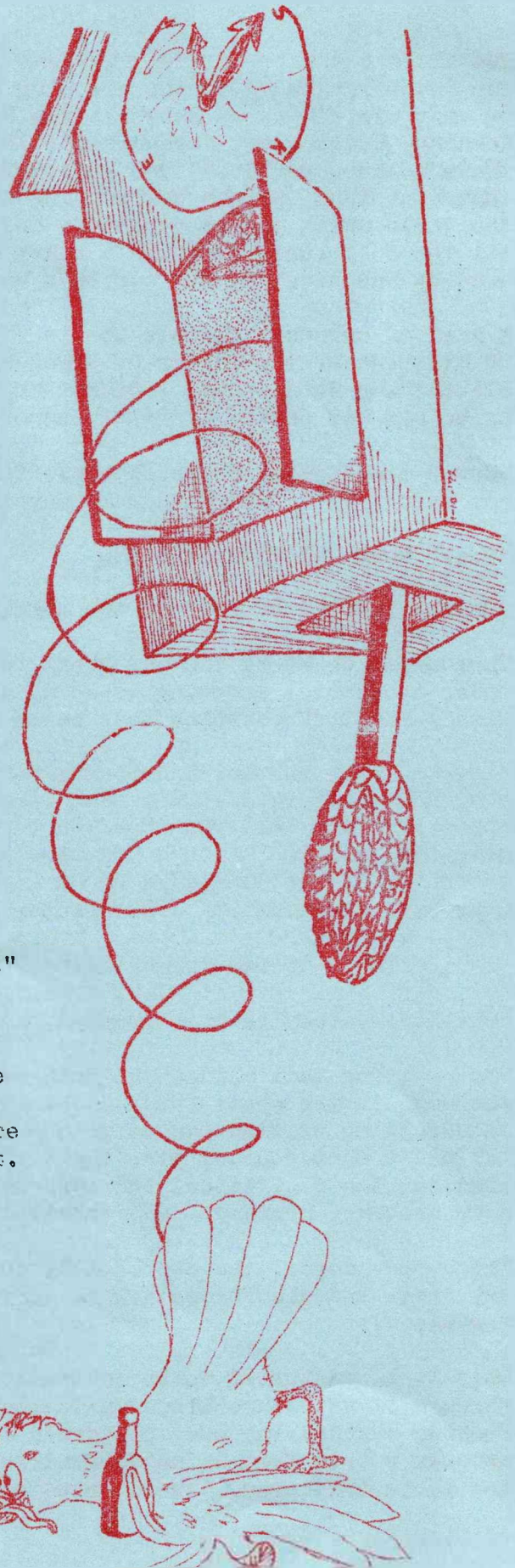
So surprised were they, that they actually did as he said and watched in amazement as the machine gulped the shavings up with a happy burping sound.

"This is the ultimate in fanzine repro," beamed Boots. "Not only does it create its own paper from waste material, it will actually write your contribs for you and collate the result; it'll leave you free to read more fanzines - drink more beer, someone muttered - read more sf - more time for orgies, came a shout.

"Don't you think of anything else?"

"What else is there to think of?"

Defeated, he carried on: "Not only will it write your material, but it'll write it in whatever mode you like." He pointed to the big dial that covered most of the front of it. "I've taken the liberty of



programming the selector with names like SPECULATION, MAYA, EGG, CYNIC, FOULER etc. So go on, try it!"

Dave tentatively set the dial to SPECULATION, pressed the big red button and watched in horror as sheet after sheet spilled out all over the floor. "You forgot to press the collating button as well," Boots reminded him, "but just look at this!"

He picked up one of the sheets. "It must have gone wrong. There's nothing but gobbledygook on this!"

"No, that's the whole idea. Just jam this lot inside a SPECULATION cover and nobody will know the difference. Just the name will be enough, for who reads it before they LoC it? There are a few legible words, such as Heinlein, Rottensteiner, Blish, Lord of Light etc., to keep them happy and give them something to LoC; they don't need any more!"

They almost fell silent as the various possibilities unrolled before them. "We could put out zines without their editors' knowing anything about them! Peter Rabbit, Ian Maule, Gray Boak.....when they get LoCs on zines they haven't pubbed, they'll have breakdowns just thinking about it..."

"I'm not sure that half of them aren't that way already..."

"Hell, we can take over Fandom completely; we can certainly take over the BSFA in about five minutes, if all we have to do is bring out one issue of VECTOR a year. Any more issues, and they'll get suspicious..."

"It would be as easy to take over OMPA, what with the small mailings they've been putting out..."

They rushed around the room pulling out boxes of mouldering fanzines. "What's that, the Fanzine Foundation? Well, pile them in, we won't need those any more." And all that morning and afternoon the old zines went into the crushing maw of the machine and new zines came spilling out and grew in piles, the EGGS smelling a bit off, the CYPHERS groaning under the weight of WADEZINES smothering them, ZIMRIs battling for floor space with MALFUNCTIONS, until finally the only way to the door was over the still-active machine, and since its feed-hopper was open, it wasn't advisable.

At last the final load was fed in, the dial set to the final zine, FOULER. As soon as it had digested this information its grey sides began to shake, blue smoke began to pour out of its hopper and the whole machine rumbled ominously.

"Everybody down!!" shouted Boots, and as they all ducked behind the various piles of zines, vast quantities of brown stuff began to spew out, hurtling soggily over their heads and leaving ominous stains on the wallpaper; everything came regurgitating out of the hopper and all the lights on the board lit up, turning a brilliant green; and then it fell over on its back, wheezing and clanking. They gradually came out of hiding and stood around it, surveying the damage. "Well, with the dial fused in that position, I suppose we could sell it to some farmer for making instant manure..." "It's absolutely ruined!" sobbed Boots, on his knees. "It'll have to go back to my uncle, and I just don't know

Q = Cy Chauvin

A = John J. Pierce

Q. When did you first decide to organize a campaign to combat what you felt were some of the more extreme statements of the so-called "New Wave"? In other words, what was "the straw that broke the camel's back"?

A. Well, I had been considering action since about the time of the Tricon in 1966, as I was irritated by the "New Wave" propaganda of Harlan Ellison and Judith Merrill. But I didn't make a definite decision until the Nycon of 1967, where the Old Wave vs. New Wave debate came to a head...I simply got sick and tired of the continual misrepresentations of Ellison, Spinrad, Moorcock, Merrill and various hangers-on. Lester del Rey seemed to be the only voice of dissent from the "Establishment" of pro-New Wave author-critics. I decided he needed some vocal support.

Q. Did you - or do you now - have any "goal" in mind? Some point where you could say your counter-movement had really "succeeded", and then quit with the verbiage?

A. My "goal" is for science fiction to reassert its independence and integrity as a genre, with standards of its own. This doesn't mean to reject "literary quality" or anything like that; it does mean that science fiction must serve its own ends, not just be used as a "vehicle" or "vocabulary" for something else - which seems to be the dominant view of critics and editors nowadays.

Q. People have used the terms "Old Wave" and "New Wave" so often and so casually that both seem to have become terribly vague and almost meaningless - everyone seems to have their own personal definition of what the words mean. Could you please tell me what your definition of both terms is?

A. Well, I use the definitions originally applied by the New Wavicles themselves, although they have since attempted to change their position. It was the supporters of the "New Wave" who declared J. G. Ballard, Harlan Ellison, Kurt Vonnegut, William S. Burroughs and Thomas Disch to be their heroes...I looked for a common denominator in their works, and the only common denominator was nihilism - science is evil, man is evil, life is meaningless and insignificant and the universe is a nightmare. These were the explicit messages in their stories.

In contrast, as writers like Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov and Lester del Rey have pointed out, traditional science fiction has at least been positivistic about the possibilities of mankind. This has been taken by some "New Wave" critics to mean that all sf before the "New Wave" was gooey Pollyanna and preached "what is, is right." This simply isn't true. But it did believe in man's capacity for good as well as evil, and in a universe which man could understand and one in which he could make a better future for himself through his best efforts*.

* Damon Knight says much the same thing in his introduction to A CENTURY OF SCIENCE FICTION: "Science fiction is distinguished by its implicit assumption that man can change himself and his environment."

Q. But what about the critics who have said that "stylistic innovation" has been the hallmark of the "New Wave"? That would explain why Delany and Zelazny were first classified as part of it!

A. Yes, that may be true, but the "New Wave" was really only superficially to do with style - its basis is philosophical. This is shown by the fact that Zelazny is now being rejected by pro-New Wave critics like Franz Rottensteiner. Why? Because his view of life and things in general doesn't conform to the "New Wave" standards. Delany has begun to suffer the same sort of rejection. But the critics are just as much for Ballard, Disch, Ellison and William S. Burroughs as they ever were. Why? Because they agree with their messages. As for style in general, it is only a means to an end, and can be judged only by how well it serves that end. Some "experimental" styles were first developed by mainstream writers expressly for the purpose of giving a pessimistic world view, so naturally they are appropriate to "New Wave" fiction. On the other hand, Lester del Rey once tried to rewrite some of E. E. Smith's stories - and found he couldn't do it. The style everyone had denounced really was the most appropriate for the purpose. In any case, ideas come first in science fiction - writers should have original ideas first, then develop or use appropriate styles*. I've yet to see a single original idea in a "New Wave" story, so naturally they have to concentrate on style.

Q. What would you say of such new writers as Neil Shapiro, Robert Chilson and Gordon Eklund, all of whom, I think, have made rather impressive debuts during 1970? Do you think they herald good times to come in science fiction, or what?

A. I'm afraid I can't recall any of the authors you mention besides Eklund. Eklund seems to be a post-"New Wave" writer, and I can't say that I quarrel with his ideas, but...well, "Dear Aunt Annie" had what seemed to me such a silly format for the idea it expressed. And his novel, ECLIPSE OF DAWN, seemed to borrow the atmosphere of Ward Moore's ERING THE JUBILEE, even though this didn't fit. On the other hand, I'd say that James Tiptree is a writer to watch.

Q. Do you believe that "New Wave" science fiction is merely one type of "bad" science fiction, or do you think it is some type of general fiction mislabelled as sf?

A. In philosophy, I would say that the "New Wave" is a sort of "anti-science-fiction" - its standards for content seem to be chosen, consciously or not, as those for an antithesis for "traditional" sf. Most of it respects scientific truth no more than what is usually called "science fantasy", so I can't call the "New Wave" a form of science fiction.

Q. Well, then, if much "New Wave" fiction is not, as you say, true sf at all, perhaps the barrage of criticism levelled at the more "traditional" science fiction by pro-"New Wave" critics is akin to someone running down a western writer for not turning out good mysteries. In other words, would you say that certain people are judging science fiction by standards that do not apply to it?

* Strangely enough, J. G. Ballard arrives at the same conclusion - see the interview conducted with him in CYPHER 3 (1).

A. Yes, this is certainly true to a great extent, on a couple of counts. First, the critics define "moral content" as an anti-science fiction message - so "socially significant" sf, ironically, has to be anti-science fiction in their eyes. Second, "literary quality" means anything in the schools of social realism or the post-social realist "nightmare" schools - storytelling is taboo. So "real" sf they define as either 1930s-type ashcan school novels about Joe Blow being victimised by the Establishment, or "symbolic" allegories about the "human condition", whatever that is, or a mixture of the two.

Q. What do you think of STAND ON ZANZIBAR? - is it "Old" or "New" Wave? P. Schuyler Miller, in one of his Analog columns last year*, said that "it has far more in common with the great plot-weaving Victorians than the hapless, hopeless introspective fiction of today."

A. STAND ON ZANZIBAR is really a mishmash of the two - a rather old-fashioned type of extrapolation tricked out in such "new" clothing as the techniques of John DosPassos, and cliches from Marshall McLuhan. The critics, by and large, have been taken in by the "New Wave" trimmings, and praise the book for that reason. But if you look at the technology and psychosociology, you will notice that Brunner has not advanced at all beyond what Heinlein and others were doing in the 1940s, apart from a few obvious references to pot etc. For instance, compare his tv shows to the "Daily Data" in the newsboxes of Heinlein's METHUSELAH'S CHILDREN.

Q. It has been said that you are against so-called "pessimistic" fiction - or, in other words, you judge a story by its "message". Could you please explain this?

A. My position on "message" stories is this: a story can carry a message, but a message can't carry a story. I enjoy a lot of fiction with messages I disagree with - for instance, fantasy writers like Tolkein, Morris and even Austin Tappan Wright tend to be pastoral-medievalists, but they're good writers nevertheless. I think C. S. Lewis's religion is baloney, but I enjoy his writing. I like a lot of H. G. Wells, in spite of not being a socialist. A good story has to be a good story first; if I happen to agree with the message, no doubt I'll like it more than otherwise. But "New Wave" critics tend only to criticise the messages - of course, they may say the stuff they like "reveals the truth", but isn't that a matter of opinion? For instance, Franz Rottensteiner, as I mentioned earlier, recently condemned Zelazny for not being a social realist and not having the "true" vision of Disch. Even Barry Malzberg can get better reviews now by imitating Ballard.

Q. But previously you said that the only common denominator of "New Wave" fiction is its nihilism. That nihilism is the "explicit message" in "New Wave" stories. Then you go on to compare it with "traditional" sf, saying that it has at least been "positivistic about the possibilities of mankind". Now, while I may agree with your "traditional" sf philosophy more, I can't help but feel that you are making a value judgement here...That you are indeed saying one viewpoint is "better" than the other, and judging the merits of a story by the philosophy or "message" it contains.

A. Well, I would argue that, like any genre, sf rests on a certain set of

* The February 1970 column. (2)

assumptions. Detective stories, for example, presuppose that murder is nearly always a crime, that there are certain rules of evidence to be used in determining "who done it", that there is a system of justice to bring the criminal to book, etc. In the same way that a detective story, by its very nature, has to reflect the values of criminal justice in whole or part, science fiction has to reflect the values of science.* There can be sf stories about evil science or scientists, like, for instance, Leiber's GATHER, DARKNESS! But these cannot become the rule, any more than could detective stories in which murder always turns out to be justified or the murderer never caught.

Q. I think I'm beginning to see now what you mean when you say "science fiction has to reflect the values of science", although I wish you would explain yourself a little more clearly...What, for example, are the "values of science"? What makes the "New Wave"'s nihilistic approach worse than the more "traditional" science fiction approach?

A. The "values of science" have to do with using our brains - understanding the universe and the natural laws governing it and using the knowledge gained thereby to try to solve our problems. Despite the rantings of certain people, problems like war and pollution are the product of irrational behavior, not rational behavior. "Intuition" and even "love" won't save us - only knowledge and understanding and the will to apply it can. Ecology is, after all, a science requiring as much "linear" thought as physics. So science fiction, not only to be true to its own nature, but to be of any service to humanity, still has to communicate the values of science - even if these are regarded as unfashionable in our own time. The "New Wave", or all its "concern", has done nothing to aid mankind - only honest science fiction has, can or will.

Q. If you had to judge which were Harlan Ellison's, J. G. Ballard's and Michael Moorcock's best pieces of science fiction or fantasy, which of their works would you choose - and why?

A. Well, Ellison wouldn't like it, but I'd pick the television version of his "Soldier". He had a real idea there, and either he edited himself, or was so edited as not to mickey-mouse it into a parody of itself. I suppose Ballard's VERMILION SANDS pieces are most interesting, for their psychology, although they are really surreal fantasy rather than sf. I don't think Ballard has written any true sf. Moorcock? Has to be the novella version of BEHOLD THE MAN by process of elimination. All his other stuff is abominable, style and content alike.

Q. What is your reaction to Judy Merrill's idea that "the New Wave is in many ways surrealism in writing...?"

A. I think a lot of "New Wave" tries to be surreal - that's what they call it, anyway. But to me, it rarely seems very evocative - I can tell the writer's having a bad dream, and that's about it. But maybe that's all he wants to tell me.

* Harry Harrison seems to have some similar or at least related feelings on the subject, for he says in the introduction to his anthology THE YEAR 2000: "If science fiction has an impact to make upon society, and I think it does, it is in its attitude toward science, not in any one-to-one description of things to come." (3)

Q. There has been some confusion lately regarding what, basically, this whole "New/Old Wave" argument is about: some people believe it is simply "a matter of preference"; others think that you would like to "control" what kind of science fiction is published; and still others believe that it is all a matter of "literary criticism" - the standards by which science fiction is judged "good" or "bad". What are some of your thoughts on the subject?

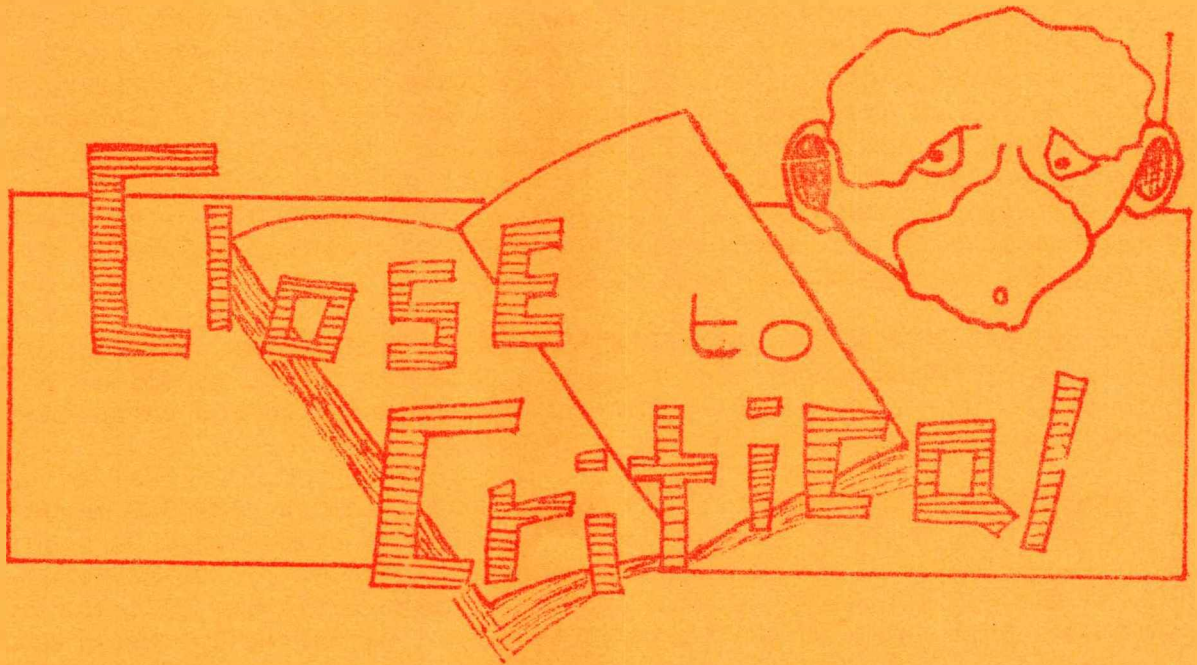
A. Well, obviously, everything is a matter of preference to some extent. But I think the New Wavicles are more influenced by mere preference than I am. For example, everyone says I prefer "optimistic" stories. Which is true enough. Yet I have given bad reviews to some "optimistic" stuff. But I have never once seen a pro-"New Wave" critic give a bad review to a pessimistic story, nor concede that any "optimistic" story had "insight" or "literary" merit. My purpose, as I have said before, is to encourage science fiction to maintain the integrity of its own standards, rather than imitate other fields' fashions in order to win ephemeral "prestige". When the New Wavicles refer to the "big, real world", what they really refer to is currently fashionable interpretations of the world. Actually, good literature ought to stand back from the present - and presently accepted attitudes - and judge from a viewpoint embracing our knowledge of all time and space. The nihilistic standards of the "New Wave" have been adopted from those of the contemporary mainstream, as much because of the prestige they carry as because the writers really believe in them. The anti-science element also comes from the mainstream; it simply happens that science is the "villain" these days.

Q. I wonder why that is so - why do people fault science and technology for most of our present-day problems, when they are actually only the tools of mankind? If any harm has been caused by runaway technology, it is the men behind the machines and technology that are at fault - not the technology itself.

A. There's an old saying, "A shoddy workman blames his tools". People like to have a high opinion of themselves, and blame their failings on something or someone else - besides, it doesn't sound spiritual enough to say that our failings are mainly the fault of simple stupidity instead of some sort of metaphysical evil. Of course, the anti-science people are sort of reverse-Utopians, too - Lewis Mumford really believes that the Middle Ages, before all that nasty technology, were a kind of Paradise. Maybe he should live in Haiti - that's about as close to the Middle Ages as you can get nowadays! And has anyone noticed that Aldous Huxley's Utopua in ISLAND is just as regimented and conformist as his anti-Utopia in BRAVE NEW WORLD? The only difference is the absence of technology. I think the real fear of science has not to do with pollution or "dehumanisation", but with change. You'll notice that the single common denominator of all Utopias is the stasis - the security of knowing that nothing will change.

Q. Do you think you have changed your viewpoints much since you first began your countermovement?

A. No, I haven't changed them very much, although I've come to admire some writers I didn't know about when I first began in 1968, such as Ursula LeGuin. But I think I understand my own ideas better. In my original manifesto, I relied on viewpoints of various sf and mainstream authors I generally agreed



related book reviews by Pat

M. John Harrison's *THE COMMITTED MEN* (Panther 03775; 139pp; 35p) is an "after the bomb" story. Society has collapsed and mounting radiation levels have brought about widespread mutation, especially in children. A small group of people journey through a Britain whose population is divided into small tribal communities to take a mutant baby, one of the new "humans", to its own kind.

I found this book pointless. There are many after-disaster stories with people journeying around for some good reason. I would have hoped a new one on these lines should either be excellently told or have something new to say. This book disappointed me on both counts; similar stories have been told better many times before, and I felt I'd wasted the day I spent reading this book.

Rama is a giant hollow metal cylinder, the first product of an alien technology to be encountered by Man. Arthur C. Clarke's *RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA* (Pan 24024; 252pp; 50p) tells of its arrival in our solar system, of its exploration and finally of its departure. I found it very readable; Rama is a "real" place. The story evoked that old sense of wonder which helps make sf what it is, for me. Not a great novel - Rama has more "character" than any of the people involved - but very enjoyable.

Piers Anthony's *RACE AGAINST TIME* (Sidgwick & Jackson 98152; 179pp; £1.50) is the story of six children, purebred racial types raised in their own ethnic environments in a world where all men are "standards". The "standards", who are the product of the interbreeding of races and who have stagnated because of it, have bred the children in an attempt to combat the stagnation of the human species.

This book is Anthony's first for "young adults", in view of which I found the conclusion the children reach in the book to be disturbing. They decide they must only breed within their own racial type, even if more suited personally to someone of a different race, in order to give the human race as a whole a chance of survival and development. Now that could be interpreted as racism, which is not something I'd particularly like to feed to children. True, the point of the book is that the children reach their decision logically, as being the best for all in the long run, rather than being swayed by the emotionally more satisfying but short-sighted alternative; but which way will the average reader look at it?

Joseph Green's CONSCIENCE INTERPLANETARY (Pan 24209; 219pp; 50p) tells of the adventures of "Conscience" Alan Odegard, a member of the practical philosopher corps, whose job it is to investigate the intelligence of newly-discovered species, and to decide their futures.

The situation and the "feel" of the individual episodes reminded me of Leinster's Med Ship stories; Odegard is a little more modern than Calhoun - he often thinks of sex (!) for example, although he's capable of refusing it for the good of the service. He's just an average cardboard sf hero. The book could have been quite an entertaining read on that level, but Green does again what he did in GOLD THE MAN; he complicates a simple but enjoyable adventure with symbolism. In this instance he introduces an "elemental", which we are told is/are forces beyond our knowledge, sometimes known as God. The story just isn't strong enough to support this complication and in the end falls, or rather collapses, between two stools; it doesn't mean much and isn't particularly enjoyable.

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JUST FOR A LURK - continued from p3.

hotel was a rip-off, as expected. When I'm paying that sort of money, I expect damn good quality in all departments.....but I digress. Various people, for various reasons mostly connected with money, thought my idea of a splintercon back at Derby on the Sunday night a good one, so we hosted Fred and Chris again, Bernie Peek and three-fifths of the Skeltribe. Speaking of fifths, Bernie was good enough to bring along four-fifths of a pint of Canadian Club, which went down rather well (and rather quickly).

After which, we went our separate ways: Fred, Chris and Bernie back to London, the Skeltens and ourselves to Stockport for a few days' recuperation and a slow winding down. All of which made me feel just what a great thing fandom was, and how great it would be to be publishing again. (A few muttered threats about artwork from Skel helped me make up my mind, too.) So, having returned home and spent a day recovering from the post-con blues, I set to work and typed nineteen stencils in two days, adding the rest gradually over the following week or so. And here it all is.

But LURK isn't what I want to do any more. The first four issues were fun, the final three less so. I decided some time ago that if I wanted to keep publishing, amongst all my other interests (and I do so want), then it would have to be something which could be done a bit at a time, in easy stages, with no problems of backlog to catch up on. In other words.....a personalzine. And that's the next thing you'll be seeing from this address.

Hypothesis:

A. E. van Vogt is a bad writer who uses high order complexities to confuse and confound the reader, to convince him of the existence of subtle interrelationships which are in no way substantiated in the novel as written.

Key Experiment:

Read THE DARKNESS ON DIAMONDIA. If the hypothesis is a valid real world analogue then the book will fail to satisfy because of the author's inability to comprehend the machineries of human motivation and human relationships.

Equipment:

For this experiment the experimenter requires a Sidwick and Jackson review copy of the book in question, pencil, paper, a cup of coffee, a large whisky, some chunks of cheese..... and a lot of gall.

Running Notes:

Page 8 and already the experiment is running into problems. How can any author describe a character as "...tense, intent, unwary..."? 'Tense' implies a wariness of one kind or another and yet already I'm asking myself whether van Vogt is really so hopeless or whether he is seeing a deeper reality than anyone else. This is symptomatic of the typical van Vogtian novel and indicates that the experiment may yield valid results.

The dialogue so far is unbelievable. A four-year-old might conceivably believe that twelve-year-olds talk like this but nobody would accept it as realistic adult intercourse..... yet, there is a hint that maybe this is deliberate. I need either a stronger indicator or more whisky. (Note: Another three fluid ounces of alcoholic malt liquor were added to the experiment at this point.) There is this strange dichotomy. One the one hand there is what van Vogt seems to think he's saying and on the other hand there's what I think he's saying. I am filled with an unwary tenseness.

Chapter 9, and again dichotomy..... "Morton came to peacefully, and within the space of a few seconds, he grew aware of about eight things." So bizarre, this vagueness juxtaposed with precision in such a hamfisted way. "A few seconds...", "...about..." and then "...eight things...". 'A few things' perhaps, or 'a couple of things' or 'several things', but "...about eight things."? Never! Especially not when the time limit is so vague as "...a few seconds...", and on the very next page.....

Page 69, line 16 through line 25:- "He began not to like what he was doing. That pure reaction was first, about four years ago. He had been sort of peacefully celibate for half a year when the second thing began to happen.

Yes folks, fasten your sanity belts because you are about to be hurled into the realms of fantasy via the latest Wild Bill Annable adventure!

Actually, it's the only Wild Bill Annable adventure. It all happened many years ago when I was working in Arthur Dimm's Amazing Travelling Circus as a human cannonball. They used to bill me as "Annable the Human Cannonball", which you must admit has got a nice ring to it (which is more than the circus had). Those of you who disagree should try saying it over and over again: "Annable the Human Cannonball, Annable the Human Cannonball" etc. It may not change your mind, but it will at least keep you occupied while I carry on with the rest of the story.

Anyway, we were giving a show one afternoon, just outside Wopping Forest, and everything so far had gone very well; the Fabulous Flying Fobworths had done their bit on the old trapeze; the incredible Angus McButtock has completed his famous trick of tossing a caber in the air and catching it in his teeth; the clowns had managed to shower a large portion of the audience with something rather unpleasant, and all in all, everyone was having a really good time. Then it came to my turn.

At this point I ought to explain exactly what my act involved. I would be loaded into the cannon, wearing crash helmet, suit of armour and flippers. The cannon would be fired and I would fly through a flaming effigy of Billy Smart, crash straight through a brick wall and land on a double bed being carried around the ring on the back of a camel. Already ensconced therein (the bed, not the camel) would be the amazing Big Mama Riglands, circus strip-artiste, who would assist me in the completion of the act....if you see what I mean. Anyway, I'll leave your no doubt excellent imaginations to fill in the details.

So anyway, getting back to the story; I was loaded into the barrel of the cannon, clad in armour etc. Now Boris Cod, who doubled as aardvark trainer and cannon-aimer and firer, must on this occasion have been blind drunk, since not only was the firing charge much too large, but the cannon was also aimed far too high. As a result I flew straight over flaming Billy Smart, setting fire to my flippers in the process, missed the brick wall by a good thirty feet and tore right through the roof of the Big Top, which in turn was set alight by the flippers. I flew on (a nice experience, though short-lived), finally landing rather uncomfortably about sixty feet up a tree in the heart of Wopping Forest.

So, there I was, stuck up this bloody great tree (a Japanese larch I think it was) in the middle of nowhere. Also, I had missed the grand...er...climax, so to speak, with Big Mama, which all in all put me in a pretty foul mood I can tell you. And to make matters even worse, as the hours went by with not a soul in sight, another little problem began to make itself felt. You see, when I said I was loaded into the cannon, I was loaded in more ways than one. That is, in order to summon up the nerve to go through with my act, before every performance I'd down a few jars of the old amber fluid - sometimes more than just a few. So, as the long hot day wore on, I became more and more uncomfortable, until at last I could hold it in no longer, and with a groan of relief I allowed the floodgates to open (which is one way of saying I had one almighty pec.) On and on it went, and since the armour proved to be fairly watertight, I thought at one stage that I might be in danger of drowning - what a strange

and horrible death that would have been! However, the magnificent outpouring ceased with the water-level about chest-high, and a slight trickling noise from below revealed that the noxious fluid was slowly draining away through chinks in the armour, much to my relief.

After what seemed like only a few minutes, I heard a chattering and trompling sort of noise, and a troop of girl-guides came into view. They'd got to within about twenty feet of my tree when one of them looked up and saw me. "Oo look!" she said, "what's that up that tree?" (which isn't the sort of dazzling dialogue you'd get in the movies, but this is a true story don't forget). The whole troop stood and stared up at me in speculative silence for a few seconds, then a quavery voice said "I - I think - it's a SPACEMAN!!" at which they all turned and ran off screaming into the forest, ignoring my unspacemanlike pleadings and screams of reassurance.

I became very depressed. Nobody loves me, I thought. I began to wonder whether to wait for a slow death by thirst and starvation, or whether to end it all quickly by thrashing about in the tree until I plummeted sixty feet to the earth below. I had just got around to a few experimental, half-hearted wriggles when I was surprised to see some of the guides returning with a reluctant-looking policeman. The sun was getting low in the sky by this time, and I suppose I must have looked quite an awe-inspiring sight, perched up there with the sunlight glinting off my armour. However, the worthy guardian of the law plucked up enough courage to approach within hailing distance of my tree. If I'd had my ray-gun I could have reduced him to ashes on the spot.

"H-e-l-l-o, c-a-n y-o-u s-p-e-a-k-E-n-g-l-i-s-h?" he shouted.

"Of course I can speak bloody English" I replied rather peevisly. "I am English!"

The poor chap seemed rather relieved by this, and proceeded to approach my tree until he was standing more or less directly underneath me. This was a mistake. Almost immediately he noticed he was being dripped on.

"What's this stuff?" he called up to me suspiciously, obviously still unconvinced of my terrestrial origins, and suspecting some strange alien gore.

"Well...er...it's rather difficult to explain, with all these young ladies present" I replied. I could see he didn't follow that at all. "Don't taste it!!" I shouted urgently, for I could see he was thinking of doing just that. My instinctive movement to prevent this unpleasant experience finally dislodged me from my already precarious position, and I began to descend, rapidly. Fortunately for me, the policeman hadn't the wit to get out of the way. All I remember of those few moments is the sight of his amazed and horrified face getting larger and larger, then.....nothing.

I had to piece together the rest of the story after I woke up in hospital two days later. Apparently the impact had been quite spectacular, flattening the policeman, shattering the armour and scattering the remains of its liquid content over a wide area, amid a hail of falling leaves and branches. I also discovered that the Big Top had been burned to the ground due to my setting it on fire with my flippers. Most of the equipment had been lost, and so Arthur Dimm had disbanded the circus. In all the confusion I had been totally forgotten, and not even Big Mama Riglands had missed me, because she married Boris Cod the day after my exit from the ring, which explains a lot of things really.

So, having eventually recovered from my exploits, I decided to try and find Boris and Big Mama to settle one or two points. But I never did.

or

MY BRAIN 'URTS, DUNNIT?

a tone poem with no redeeming social value, or significance.

It's amazing! Downright amazing. Also fantastic, astounding and ~~science fic-~~
~~tion fic~~. The things of which, and the quantity at which, my brain thinks.
Like today, this morning. Now, I dunno about you (in fact, to be honest and
truthful and soul-searching here.....I don't even know about me!) but my brain
thinks. Without apparent conscious motivation. It seems to lead a life of its
own. It may never come up with anything particularly profound...if it did I'd
probably try and sell it or dry it up with drugs...but think it does. All the
time. Like this morning:-

I saw a billboard advertising the umpteenth re-run of DOCTOR ZHIVAGO
and immediately me brain started thinking of when I saw the film
(before I packed up going to the pictures on account of we got
married and somehow the back row lost all its magic.) I quite
liked the little tune in it. Y'know the one, doncha? Yeah...
I quite liked it the first time, and liked it the second
and third time they played it, but after the 423rd. var-
iation of that bleedin' tune I was pissed off with
it. I got to the stage of expecting Wilson,
Keppel and Betty (now, that dates me
dunnit, I remember seeing them
down the Metropolitan in
Edgeware Road years ago)
to come across a snow-
covered horizon and do
their sand dance (diff-
icult in snow I guess!)
to Lara's theme
played by a
Cossack on
a comb
and
paper.

I'm probably one of the great thinkers of the Western World. Well, the Western
Avenue anyways. I put it down to the fact that I have a very boring job. I try
and make the job a little more interesting by considering it as a humorous
interlude between kissing the kids goodbye in the morning and chasing Cath round
the bed at night. My main worry, apart from catching a cold from the kids, is
that one of these days/nights Cath might let me catch her...and I'm at that
difficult stage (between my teddy bear and me pension book) when I can't remem-
ber for sure why I chase her around the bed anyway. But I digress. I have a
mind-numbing job. But, with my capabilities any job I had would be mind-numbing.
I doubt I'd be capable of holding down a job (now that's a thought...I wouldn't
only like to hold down this job, I'd like to put the boot in and strangle it!)
which required a minimal amount of intellectual ability and therefore, I guess,

any job I could hold down is likely to be ditto. E.g. putting left hand handles on left hand cups; cleaning out the elephant-house; collecting tickets at a blue film gaff; holding up idiot cards for Tony Blackburn; Cawd! the possibilities are endless. Endless!! Be that as it may (whatever that means) me brain seems to have developed a Defense Mechanism for dealing with this and as it can't physically do anything, not even play with itself (but we can, can't we gang?) it thinks. Like this morning:-

I saw a film on TV the other night and me brain was thinking about it this morning. Was called A THOUSAND CLOWNS and in it the middle-aged drop-out has a lovely line. Well, one amongst many actually...I thought it was a lovely film. He's telling his brother about how he sat on a train going to work one morning and decided there had to be something more in life for him. Life, at that time, seemed to him to be one long dental appointment with short periods in the waiting room. I really identified with that guy
I guess.

From the moment my innocent blue eyes open in the morning (well, no, actually what happens is that my eyelids shoot up into me head as if standing to attention when the alarm goes off at half past six) me brain switches on and starts thinking. Like for instance:-

A fella on my section was bemoaning his lack of luck with pulling the birds. I made the (friendly) point that if he'd only stop using a straw when drinking his half-pints then he might find his image improved no end. And he might click.

Thinking about anything. Everything. Fast. I go through the motions of normal (well, normal for me) 'getting ready for work' and it's at it all the time. I fall outa bed, keep me pyjama top on, put on me Y-fronts, jeans and socks and stagger out for a pee. Put the immersion on, stagger downstairs, put the kettles on, kick the cat and then give him a saucer of milk. Put the tea in the pot, get the cups ready (2 big 'uns for me and Cath, and 2 little 'uns for Clare and Sara), go into the back room, switch on radio 4 and sit there waiting for the kettles to boil. Look out at the garden, miserably. Kick the cat again, make the tea, have a smoke and me first cuppa tea. Have another cuppa tea, grunt at the kids when they come legging it down all merry and bright (they'll find out! they'll find out!), take the other kettle upstairs, have me wash and shave and clean me teeth. Get half-dressed, shirt and tie, then come downstairs again for a cuppa coffee and another smoke and listen to the radio. Then get fully dressed, kiss everything in sight (excluding the cat) and go to work. And all the time, all the time, me brain's working. Thinking. Like for instance:-

Do you know what the Maoris call the rest of humanity?
Pakeha. That's what they call em.
Means non-Maori
I think.

By the time I get to work, about an hour, one Guardian, one Turkish bath in the tube, three umbrellas up me arse later, it (me brain) has been thinking for about two solid hours and it ain't even 9 o'clock!

And it bleedin' 'urts, dunnit?

Dave Piper
19 Oct 73
(Ruislip & The Haymarket)

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AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN J. PIERCE (continued from p12)

with; now I'm able to distinguish my exact views from theirs with more precision. I think I have figured out a theoretical basis for eschatological romanticism that can stand by itself, instead of the set of borrowed general principles I had before.

Q. One final question: I gather, from what you have said previously in this interview and elsewhere, that while you don't like "New Wave" stories, it isn't the fiction you object to so much as the polemics of the pro-"New Wave" critics, who seemingly call their stuff "all good" and constantly downgrade the more "traditional" kind of science fiction. Is this true?

A. Let me put it this way: I wouldn't like the "New Wave" fiction very much in any case. But had it not been for the polemics of the "New Wave" partisans, who seemed determined to stamp out "traditional" sf, I would never have bothered to launch my counter-movement.

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THE GREAT FANZINE EXTRAPOLATOR (continued from p 7)

what he'll say. Where will British fandom go now?"

"Back into its old comfortable rut," someone murmured.

A month later, they were just settling down to another meeting of the club, subject for discussion the finer points of Broon (Broon Bess, that was, their favourite barmaid) when Boots walked in, waving a piece of paper. "Not all's been lost!" he proclaimed.

"Too much damn drinking time has been, that's for sure," muttered Dave.

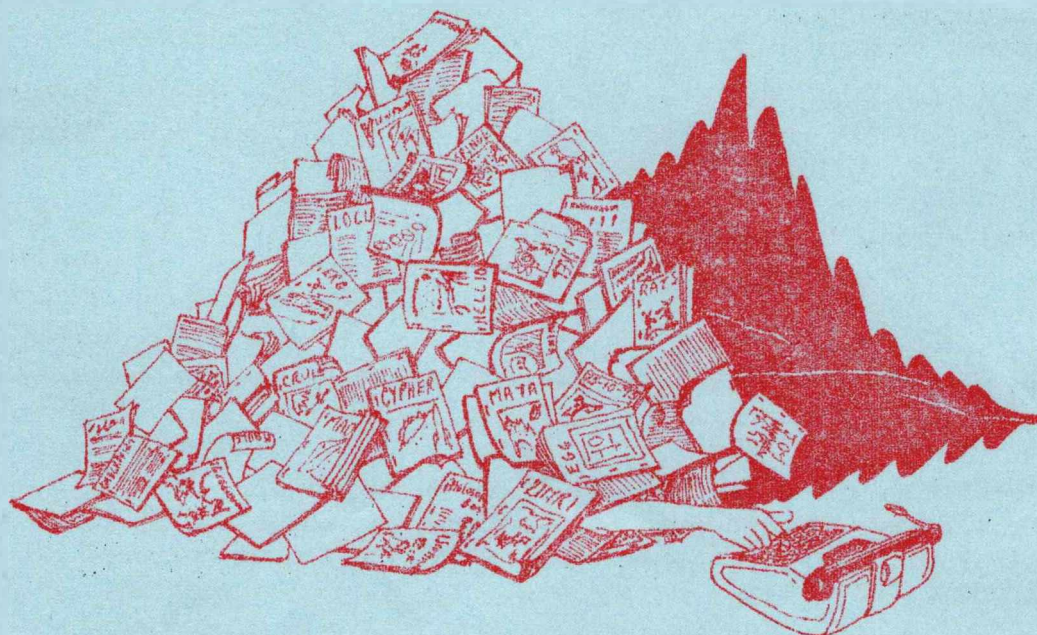
"The machine's actually gone catatonic," Boots went on, ignoring him, "and it'll never print anything sensible again. But my uncle's made a profit on it!"

"How come?" they all chorused.

"Well, what's the only other organisation that could possibly use such a mad machine?" "You mean...?"

"Yes, he sold it to British Rail, to print their timetables!!"

SEEN
ON THE
ZINE
SCENE



During the ten months or so since the last issue saw the light of day, quite a number of zines have piled up (though the stream has decreased to a trickle in recent months) until now I can just get them into a Johnny Walker case (empty, of course) purloined from the local Augustus Barnett's. Most of the zines came direct to me, but a few came second- and third-hand via Paul Skelton and others. Since these appeared in the interval between the last issue and this one, I'm sure their editors would welcome a further bite at the response-cherry. So here goes....

THE ALIEN CRITIC 7 (76pp); 8 (50pp); 9 (52pp); 10 (56pp) and 11 (76pp) all from Richard E. Geis, P. O. Box 11408, Portland, Oregon 97211.

Dick Geis's excellent sf/fantasy journal. Numbers 7 and 11 are litho, fold-stapled; the others are mimeo. Circulation is around 3000 now, and he's going back to mimeo again for number 12! Must be a masochist or something. Rumour has it that he's changing the title again to Science Fiction Review (oh, the nostalgia) and in number 11 he announces the reappearance of RICHARD E. GEIS as a personalzine, available on subscription only. Wow!

ARK 1 (46pp) and 2 (40pp) from Sue & Ron Clarke, 2/159 Herring Road, North Ryde, NSW 2113, Australia. Available for 75¢ per copy or the usual. The best Clarkezine yet, now that Sue has added her talents. Of interest here are Vol Molesworth's Australian Fan History, a monumental review of Dickson's DORSAI series, plus a column by Bertram Chandler.

AWAY FROM IT ALL 1 (12pp) from Kevin J. Dillon, Box K471, Haymarket, NSW 2000, Australia. Available for 20¢ plus post or the usual.

AWRY 7 (52pp) and 8 (56pp) from Dave Locke, 819 Edie Drive, Duarte, California 91010, USA. Available for \$1 per copy, or "at the whim of the editor". Strikes me as being a little Cagle-ish, which can't be bad. Number 7 was a bit daunting, with its small print and occasional heavy subject matter, but both issues very definitely enjoyably above average.

BATON-PILOTE 1 (2pp) from Darroll Pardoe, 24 Othello Close, Hartford, Huntingdon PE18 7SU, England. Available for review copies, 3p or IRC. Fanzine reviewzine, presumably has been incorporated into CHECKPOINT.

BIG SCAB 3 (12pp) from John Brosnan, Flat 1, 62 Elsham Road, London W.14, U.K. Not as ingroupish as some ratpubs, and the better for it. Great stuff, especially the bit about the SeaCon play - a classic. The letters were a bit of a letdown, though.

BREAKTHROUGH 2 (20pp); 3 (26pp) and 4 (32pp) all from Henry Bitman, Box 968, Azusa, California 91702, USA. 35¢ or 3 for \$.

Neatly produced but uninteresting (to me) sercon zine, with fiction etc.

CYNIC 6 (24pp) and 7 (24pp) both from Gray Boak, 2 Cecil Court, Cecil Street, Lytham, Lytham St. Annes, Lancs. FY8 5NN, England. For the usual (?) Somewhat of a gap between the two issues, but then, who am I to complain? I wish this would appear more often. It's competent, and comfortable, and coherent. After INFERNO, probably my favourite UK zine.

CYPHER 11 (48pp) and 12 (48pp) both from James Goddard, Plovers Barrow, School Road, Nomansland, Salisbury, Wilts., UK. 25p per issue.

Now litho and fold-stapled, like TAC sometimes is, it lacks that aura of professionalism which TAC has. All the usual sercon features, my favourite bit being the regular pro-interview. For book reviews etc. I'd rather read TAC.

DEAF EYES (14pp) from Fiasco Publications, 31 Belle Vue Street, Filey, E. Yorkshire, England. Free, plus postage.

A collection of poems by Andrew Darlington.

DURFTED 1 (26pp) from Kevin Williams, 9 Whitton Place, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland. Probably available for the usual.

This man is an incredible raconteur, for those of you who haven't had the pleasure of meeting him yet. This fanzine illustrates his sense of humour pretty well, though he reworks old ideas rather than providing any original ones. Still, there's many a laugh and hysterical giggle to be gleaned herein. Get a copy and respond to it. That way, he might produce another issue.

DYNATRON 56 (8pp); 57 (22pp); 58 (8pp); 59 (16pp) and 60 (20pp) all from Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, N.M. 87107, USA.

Available for 25¢ or a show of interest.

Long-running zine of modest proportions, now in its fifteenth year. Rather old-fashioned and APA-ish in appearance, nevertheless there's good stuff herein. Some issues are largely editor-written, some have lots of contribs, others are mainly letters. It varies. Enjoyable.

EGG 8 (18pp) from Peter Roberts, Flat 4, 6 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2.

Available for the usual, but not money.

A zine that's excellent in its own quiet way. It sort of sneaks into your life, so you hardly notice it. This one has superb Ellison-style faan-fiction by Gray Boak, plus John Brosnan's column.

FANZINDEX (22pp) from Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Road, Lancaster, England.

A first attempt at listing British fanzines. Deserves some praise for the effort involved, but the information given is sketchy and the layout and production are sloppy and careless.

FLAWOL 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 (all 4pp) from Arnie and Joyce Katz, 59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, USA. Available for news, trade or loc. Excellent fannish news and reviewzine.

FLATULETTE 2 (16pp) from Rob Jackson, 21 Lyndhurst Road, Benton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE12 9NT. Rompazine, maybe available outside if you ask nicely.

Mostly mailing comments, but well written with a touch of wit.

GANNETSCRAPBOOK 2 (24pp) from Harry and Irene Bell, 9 Lincoln Street, Low Fell, Gateshead NE8 4EE, U.K. Available for LoC or trade.

Nice handcut cover by Harry Bell. Contents all very fannish and therefore of interest to me, but what they'll say about it in twenty years or so, Ghu only knows. Both Williamses, Rob Jackson and Gray Boak contribute, the latter's "epic" poem not requiring the rather sheepish apology on the part of its author.

GEGENSCHEIN 13 (18pp); 14 (20pp); 15 (16pp); 16 (20pp); 17 (18pp) and 18 (20pp) all from Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Paulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Available for 20p, 40p or the usual.

Small but frequent zine with an odd mixture of sercon stuff, fannish stuff, odd flashes of humour. Quite entertaining, but doesn't seem to have much personality.

GLIMPSE 1 (15pp) from Paul Hudson, 102 Valley Road, Rickmansworth, Herts. Availability not stated, but 10p should get you a copy.

Single-sided litho zine, rather amateurish but quite promising for a firstish. Definitely sercon, with a feature on Edmund Cooper, the "Apes" saga, plus fiction.

GODLESS 8 (36pp) from Bruce D. Arthurs, 2401 W. Southern, B-136, Tempe, Arizona 85282, USA. Available for the usual or 75p per copy.

Fairly serious-minded zine, with an interview with Roger Elwood, something about astrology, reviews, a weak piece of fiction, and letters.

THE GRIMLING BOSCH 2 (4pp) from Harry Bell (address above). Probably available for a show of interest of some sort.

I didn't see the firstish, so this came as a pleasant surprise. Harry is a very good writer when discussing the Gannets and other things fannish, not quite so good on the more serious topics. All in all, very good. But surely the new postal charges will kill off such slim productions?

GWARL (7pp) from Mae Strelkov, Casilla de Correo 55, Jesus Maria, Cordoba, Argentina, South America. Probably available for a show of interest. Personalzine in a letter-like format. Reads like one, too. Warm and chatty and very interesting.

HAVERING 57 (10pp) and 58 (12pp) both from Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 6QL, England. 3 for 40p or £1.

Fanzine reviewzine. Always interesting, provided you bear the editor's bias always in mind.

INFERNNO 5 (32pp); 6 (48pp) and 7 (52pp), all from Paul and Cas Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, England. Available for LoC or agreed trade.

The best fannish zine in Britain today. Maybe that's not enough of a compliment, so I'll go further and say it's the zine I most look forward to receiving. Fannish and domestic happenings, entertainingly related; thoughtful comments on fanzines received; good locs with comments to match; not much art,

but what there is fits the style of the zine nicely; and the whole thing in a small-size, diary-like format. See if you can become one of the lucky seventy.

KARASS 5 (11pp); 9 (19pp) and 11 (15pp), all from Linda Bushyager, 1614 Evans Avenue, Prospect Park, Pa. 19076, USA. Available at 4/\$1, or for news or the usual.

Fannish and sf newszine. Number 11 is of particular interest as it discusses 1977 Worldcon bids. Recommended.

KWALHIOQUA 9 (22pp) and 10 (22pp), both from Ed Cagle, Route 1, Leon, KS 67074, USA.

Now sadly defunct, a really great mixture of fannishness and humour. Come back Ed, we need you!

LES SPINGE 30 (12pp) and 31 (12pp), both from Darroll and Rosemary Pardoe, 24 Othello Close, Hartford, Huntingdon, PE18 7SU, England. Available for a show of interest, but not money.

Seems to have evolved into a modest personalzine, split roughly half-and-half between edichat and locs. Not world-shattering, but nice.

LITTLE GEM GUIDE (8pp) from Peter Roberts (address above). Available for 10p or two IRCs.

The second edition of Pete's invaluable guide to fanzines, useful both to rank neos and semi-gafiated old hands like me. Delves into the whys and wherefores of fanzines, and lists a great number of them, worldwide. It seems like he's going to keep updating it, which I suppose is essential if its usefulness is to be maintained.

LUDD'S MILL 9 (28pp) from 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8PB. 10p.

Poetry and fiction zine. Non-sf. Neatly produced, litho, and with a layout best described as experimental.

MADCAP 4 (54pp) from Pete Presford, 10 Dalkeith Road, South Reddish, Stockport, SK5 7EY, Cheshire, England. Probably available for loc, contribution, trade or money.

Probably best described as an artszine, with poetry, fiction, reviews etc. Not my cup of tea, but the standard of production is improving.

MAGIC PUDDING 1 (18pp) from Malcolm Edwards, 19 Ranmoor Gardens, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 1UQ, U.K. The usual, or 50p.

Promising personalzine which seems to have faded out.

MALFUNCTION 5 (14pp) and 6 (24pp), both from Pete Presford (address above). Available for the usual.

An indefinable aura of tattiness hangs over this zine, but it is all very fannish and enjoyable, as usual. Number 6 is all about Mancon 5.

MAYA 6 (44pp) and 7 (32pp), the latter from Rob Jackson (address above). Available for the usual, or 30p per copy.

Number 6 is the last of the Maule-edited issues, and shows signs of apathy. Although neatly produced, it contains a large number of locs, an interesting reprint, and little else of any consequence. With the change of editorship comes a change in format to the litho, fold-stapled style, and a more sercon approach. Bob Shaw's Tyneconrep is not to be missed. It will be interesting to see how this develops.

MAYBE 38 (20pp) from Irvin Koch, c/o 835 Chatt. Bk. Bg., Chattanooga, Tennessee, 37402, USA. Available for the usual, except trades.

Irv calls this an info edition. It's full of reviews of various sorts, plus fannish and sf news.

THE MENTOR 23 (31pp) backed with GIRL'S OWN FANZINE 3 (31pp), both from Ron and Sue Clarke (address above).

Two Clarkezines back-to-back, Ace-double style. THE MENTOR has a nice piece about Bunyips by Jack Wodhams. GOF is an all-education issue.

THE MERCATORIAL ANNUALS FOR 1974 and 1975 (each 2pp) from Archie & Beryl Mercer, 21 Trenethick Parc, HELston, Cornwall, TR13 8LH.

Typical pleasant Mercer humour.

MOEBIUS TRIP (LIBRARY) 18 (224pp); 19 (160pp); 20 (160pp) and 21 (144pp), all from Ed Connor, 1805 N. Gale, Peoria, IL 61604, USA. \$1 per copy, or the usual.

More evidence of Ed's dedication (or desperation); all these are paperback-size fanzines, with glued spines. The US postal service should be forever damned for putting Ed to this trouble, because the small size and patchy repro make it difficult to read. Some good stuff herein, some not so good.

MUIRGHEAL 3 (50pp) from Simon Joukes, Huize "De Oude Roos", Geleeg 7-8, B-2860 Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Waver, Belgium. For 20BF or the usual.

Multilanguage fanzine with 22pp in English. Has an Aldiss speech from Benc-luxcon 1.

PENULTIMATE BLIMP 3 (6pp) from Ron & Sue Clarke (address above). For the usual. Personalzine.

PHILOSOPHICAL GAS 27 (34pp) and 28 (20pp), both from John Bangsund, P.O. Box 357, Kingston, ACT 2604, Australia. Apazine. Chat, letters etc. Another Bertram Chandler column. Classy.

QWERTYUIOP 7 (40pp) and 8 (36pp), both from Sam Long, Box 4946, Patrick AFB, Fla 32925, USA. Available for the usual, but not for money. Ultrafannish in Sam's uniquely humorous way. Friendly, light and fun. One of my favourite zines.

RATAPLAN 14 (20pp); 15 (20pp) and 16 (18pp), all from Leigh Edmonds, P.O. Box 74, Balaclava, Victoria 3183, Australia. The usual or 4/\$1.60. Good quality personal-type zine, a regular and worthwhile feature being Ken Ford's Active Apathist Newsletter. Numbers 15 and 16 have nude young ladies on their covers, which, whilst not very well drawn, have a definite erotic quality about them.

REQUIEM 2 (24pp) from Norbert Spohner, 455 Saint-Jean Longueuil P.O. J4H 2Z3, Canada. \$1 per copy, or for trade. Well-produced litho zine, with photos etc., but it's all in French, which means with my limited linguistic ability it would need about a week of hard work to get through. Sorry!

RITBLAT/GRIM NEWS 1 (26pp) and 2 (30pp), both from Greg Pickersgill, Flat 1, 62 Elsham Road, London W.14, England.

A pity this folded after just the two issues. Good stuff in the usual Rat style. About time you started producing again, Greg.

SCAB 5 (2pp) from John Brosnan (address above).
News (?).

SELDON'S PLAN 35 (56pp) edited by Cy Chauvin at Wayne Third Foundation, Box 102 SCB, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202, USA. Available for 60¢ or the usual.

Fair quality sercon zine. Reprints the Blish speech from QUICKSILVER 2.

SFINK 9 (28pp) from Peter Jones, St. Peter's College, Oxford, England. 15p. Well-produced fiction zine.

SIDDHARTHA 3 (24pp); 4 (14pp) and 5 (7pp), all from Ian Williams, 6 Greta Terrace, Chester Road, Sunderland, SR4 7RD, Tyne & Wear, U.K. "The world's most personal fanzine". Introspective but interesting.

SIMON 1 (12pp) from Ron and Sue Clarke (address above). The usual. Pleasant personalzine.

SOMETHING ELSE 2 (48pp); 3 (24pp) and 4 (26pp), all from Shayne McCormack, 49 Orchard Road, Bass Hill, NSW 2197, Australia. For the usual. Informal zine, sometimes a bit heavy going. Number 3 is her Worldcon trip report, and is excellent.

SON OF THE WSFA JOURNAL 167 - 170 (44pp) from Don Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton, Maryland 20906, USA. 25¢ or 10/¢2. Must be the boringest-looking zine ever, but crammed full of sf news and reviews, and comprehensive fanzine coverage.

SPI 1 (20pp) and 2 (52pp), both from Graham Poole, 23 Russet Road, Cheltenham, Glos., GL51 7LN, England. Available for the usual.

Small-size litho personalzine, with a fresh, neo-ish quality about it. These issues deal mainly with the BSFA and the problems of forming local sf discussion groups. Promising.

STARLING 26 (36pp); 27 (44pp); 28 (44pp) and 29 (36pp), all from Hank & Leigh Luttrell, 525 W. Main, Madison, WI 53703, USA. 50¢ or the usual.

A mixture of just about everything, with a leaning towards films, comic-strips and music, plus lots of fannish and sercon stuff. Enjoyable but predictable.

STULTICIAE LAUS 1 (8pp) from Darroll Pardoe (address above). Not generally available.

Seemingly just a new title for the personalzine which LES SPINGE had become.

TABEBUIAN 15 (16pp); 16 (16pp); 17 (24pp) and 18 (24pp), all from Dave and Mardee Jenrette, Box 330374, Miami, Fla 33133, USA. The usual.

A crazy fanzine, apparently little to do with either sf or fandom, but still very entertaining.

TILL THE COWS COME HOME 1 (22pp); 2 (42pp) and 3 (42pp), all from Alan and Elke Stewart, 6 Frankfurt am Main 1, Eschenheimer Anlage 2, Fed. Rep. of Germany. For the usual.

In many ways this is an infuriating fanzine. The standard of production has improved dramatically over three issues (number three is printed and varityped) but the choice of material is puzzling. I get the impression they'd print almost anything, good or bad. Elke's writing has also improved and is now much more relaxed, and there is some nice backchat in the lettercol, but why waste a page on the Hugo winners? And there's too much fiction for my taste, though "Functional before Social" in number 3 by Anne Simons (a pseudonym for Alan, I bet) has a nice style. In short, leave out the contributions if you can't get good ones, and you'll have a slimmer but much better zine.

TITLE 29 (22pp) and 30 (22pp), both from Donn Brazier, 1455 Fawnvalley Drive, St. Louis, Mo 63131, USA. Probably available for the usual. Reminds me of DYNATRON in some ways. All sorts of interesting stuff in here, including Dave Rowe's column on the English fanscene, a study on SEX and the sf fan, etc., etc. Very readable.

TRIODE 19 (34pp) and 20 (38pp), both published by Terry Jeeves and edited by Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7NR, England. For the usual, or 3 for £1.

Well, here it is again after 14 years, but I defy you to see the join. A veritable coelacanth (is that right?) among fanzines, fine fannish stuff, but lacking a subtle something, I fancy. It's no use trying to bring back the Golden Age, I'm afraid. Number 20 has the sort of nostalgic locs you'd expect, from the fen you'd expect. Nice, but...

TRUE RAT 3 (14pp); 4 (1p) and 5 (14pp), all from Leroy Kettle, 74 Eleanor Road, London E.8, England. Probably for the usual.

At his best, I think he is the best of the Ratwriters. His stuff can have a bit of depth as well as being funny.

WARK 1 (12pp) from Rosemary Pardoe (address above). The usual, or 20p. Reviews, mainly of fantasy-orientated zines.

THE WEDDING (10pp) from Ron and Sue Clarke (address above). What it says. The story of their wedding.

THE WRINKLED SHREW 1 (42pp) and 3 (26pp), both from Pat and Graham Charnock, 70 Ledbury Road, London W.11, England. For the usual?

Their own writing is usually good, but the subject matter seems weak, and the fiction is dire. Chris Priest drivels interminably about Status Quo, and various other items seem like rejects from FOULER. This might be good when it finally gets itself sorted out.

YANDRO 225 (46pp) and 227 (34pp), both from Buck and Juanita Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, IN 47348, USA. 50¢, 20p or depends on the editors. An average American fanzine. The letters and book reviews are my favourite bits.

ZIMRI 6 (70pp) from Lisa Conesa, 54 Manley Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8HP, England. Available for the usual, or 20p per copy.

Beautifully produced, this, with a colour cover by Harry Turner, but with every issue there's less and less I feel like reading. I hate to accuse anybody of being pseudy, but that's the impression that comes across from most of this. The fanzine reviews and the letters I liked, but that's about all.

ZYMUR-WORM 20g (22pp) from Dick Patten, 2908 El Corto SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105 and Bob Vardeman, Box 11352, Albuquerque, NM 87112, USA. For the usual, or 50¢.

Most of this issue is devoted to a supplement entitled "Technological Forecasting of Extraterrestrial Civilisations". The rest of it is more like a fanzine, though.

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Christ, I'm glad that's done with. Hopefully, when the personalzine gets under way, I'll be able to deal with each zine as it comes, and at somewhat greater length. Apologies to anyone who thinks they've been slighted, maligned, libelled or just plain misunderstood.



I got a problem. How best to use all these letters that've been gathering moths in my files for the last umpteen months? I don't want to junk 'em, but if I run 'em as they are, they'll be a bit meaningless since in ten months most of you (and most of me) will have forgotten that to which they refer. *s i g h*I know - how's about if I run briefly over the contents of LURK 6 (taking me boots off first, of course): first there was a 'loc' (of hair) by Dave Rowe; How to Edit a Golden Age Fanzine by Eric Bentcliffe; con-
reps on Torcon 2 by Vera Johnson, Malcolm Davies and Sheryl Birkhead; book reviews by Phil Payne; a column by Dave Piper; Them Letterhack Blues, a song by Don Allen; letters, and quotecards from Tynecon. There - that wasn't too painful, was it? Was it? I said.....hey!! Come back!

TERRY JEEVES,
230 Bannerdale Road,
Sheffield S11 9FE.

In your answer to Eric, you say the world is a foul and pestilent place. Chum, I'm sorry for you. The world is NCT NCT NOT any such thing. Parts of it may be so... chiefly in the cities, but the vast majority of its surface is sheer beauty. The nasty spots of this world are caused by people... and many of them are Protesters. Filthy looking slobs, whose sole aim in life in many cases, is to cause further chaos and mess.

((I'm afraid you misquoted me a little there, Terry. What I actually said was "...the world is a foul and pestilent place, almost anywhere you look, not of itself, but because of what we have done to it..." So you see, we agree in principle, if not in degree.))

ANDY DARLINGTON,
44 Spa Croft Road,
Teall St, Ossett,
West Yorkshire WF5 OHE.

Very depressed to hear that the Incredible String Band are now into L. Ron Hubbard's instant science-fiction religion, Scientology; that they have narrowed their breadth of vision to encompass such trivia -

the hangman's incredibly beautiful daughter - hanged. Investigated Scientology a number of years ago at their shop/temple/laboratory in London. Spent a most amusing, if unenlightening, time there, filling out charts, graphs and opaque questionnaires. Awareness of the spiritual/visionary potential of human beings (often interpreted into and degraded to shore up insipid religious establishments) is the most valuable faculty a poet/creator/individual can acquire, but to bog that perception down in dogma is mind-suicide, the spiritual prefrontal lobotomy. It's that faculty that is holy - the perception. If Scientology, or gurus or the Gospels are significant it's perception that makes them so, not black marks on paper.

((I share your disillusionment about the ISB. A lot of their stuff was beyond me, but what I could understand I liked very much, and a lot of it was very beautiful and had a sort of togetherness which was reassuring. I'm sure we've all heard and read horror stories about Scientologists and others, which is precisely the sort of thing that turns me off all organised religions. I am a religious person, in that I believe that Something or Someone set the whole Universe going, like a clockwork toy, but I remain unconvinced that Anyone Out There really cares what happens to us.))

PAMELA BOAL,
43 Hawthorne Crescent,
Grove, Wantage,
Oxon, OX12 7JD.

As for shouting and protesting, that does nothing but put those shouted at on the defensive, or it makes them equally aggressive. Youth's job is not to shout but to use their strength and enthusiasm (not to mention their greater amount of formal education) in learning about the true (not the superficially obvious) problems, and applying their minds to seeking lasting solutions. It is of course so much easier to shout about, say, housing conditions, than it is to go out and do repairs for an elderly couple, or to help a young couple faced with eviction through the bewildering problems of housing law or the frightening laws and people of officialdom. It is easier to feel superior to people who go to beauty spots and sit in their cars, than to try and understand why they do it. It is so British to zoom from A to B along a motorway and to grumble about the ruined scenery, when the journey could have been made along B- or even A-roads that still pass through some of the loveliest countryside in the world.

Oh dear, I have gone on a bit, haven't I? Sorry, but I feel strongly we are in danger of raising a generation of children who do not see the birds, not because the birds are no longer there but because the children's eyes have been constantly directed towards the rubbish heap. So please, while you are fighting the bad, do not forget to notice and love the good.

((You're right, of course. But isn't it better to shout and protest than to do nothing at all? And isn't the fact that so many young people take a destructive rather than constructive course of remedial action a symptom of the very problem we're talking about? Incidentally, I find it interesting to compare your and Terry's approaches to the same topic.))

ARCHIE MERCER,
21 Trenethick Parc,
Helston,
Cornwall TR13 8LH.

I am deeply ashamed. I was all heavily sarcastic concerning Harry Harrison's faux pas, so you printed my sarcasm, and, in order that it might the better be understood, you repeated the faux pas to go with it. And thus

it's at least partly my fault. I suppose Pickersgill will get a laugh out of it.

Various people have been nagging at Beryl and/or me to rejoin OMPA. We've been dragging our feet so far, but this of course clinches it. Beryl in particular would not want to share an apa with certain words in contexts in which she considers them uncalled for, and this is certainly one uncalled-for instance.

((Oh Archie, you really can be tiresome at times. Why you should choose to limit yourself and your sense of humour by your dogmatic rejection of "certain words" out of context, I really can't understand. And you may tell Beryl from me that I wouldn't wish to share an apa with someone with such a limited mind. Since our personalzine will very likely contain more of those "certain words" than LURK ever did, should the fancy take me to include them, possibly it would be better if we each did our thing separately from now on. I'm not even sure that its title wouldn't offend you.))

ELKE STEWART, "Them Letterhack Blues": what a shame I don't know the
6 Frankfurt am Main 1, tune. Must get the old recorder out and try to get it
Eschenheimer Anlage 2, together. The lyrics are fabulous, great etc! Espec-
Fed. Rep. of Germany. ially the end! (By the way, which 'Pete' are you re-
ferring to?) How about getting the well-known guitar-
ist and singer Mike Meara to do a taping of it and play it at the next con!

((Well, it'd be better than the BSFA AGM.....or would it? "Singer?" My Ghod Elke, you don't know what you're saying! Tell you what - you sing it, and I'll get my old buddy Stefan Grossman to record a backing track I can mime to.

Several people asked whether it was Peter Roberts or Peter Weston I was referring to. In fact it was neither, and with good reason. I mean, you could hardly call Pete Roberts saintly, what with his Guinness-drinking and card-playing, now could you? And as for Weston: not soon shall I forget the incident with the dead mouse and the packet of Rennies, I can tell you! No, it was just plain old boring religious-style Saint Pete I had in mind. Sorry.))

STEPHEN KEEN, I'm an artist (of sorts) and I feel some of my artwork
Rose Cottage, could be used in a fanzine. If you are interested I will
Scrubbs Lane, send you some examples.
Bledlow Ridge,
High Wycombe, ((Thanks for the offer, Steve, and I'm sorry it took me so
Bucks. HP14 4AF. long to get around to replying. Anyway, my printing this
might bring you some customers. As of now, the only sort of
art I'll want will be cartoons, or pieces to illustrate specific points in
the personalzine. I'll send you a copy anyway, and if you think you can help,
let me know.))

KEITH FREEMAN, Locs are not easy to me - I can read a fanzine and know
128 Fairford Road, that I've enjoyed it (or not as the case may be) but ac-
Tilehurst, tually pinpointing the reasons for liking and/or disliking
Reading RG3 6QP. a fanzine are difficult. Usually I end up writing reams
on one particular item and virtually ignoring the rest.
This is OK (or I think so) until something like LURK arrives - I enjoyed it
(must remember to say that whilst I think of it) but nothing in it really
grabbed me (or made me want to spit either).

Was your footnote to Sheryl Birkhead's Con report meant as a funny interjection or do you really not know about the habit in N. America that when you buy a meal the restaurant (or whatever) supplies a bag so that you can take anything you haven't eaten away (as the name implies, "for your dog"). In this country I've "smuggled" food out of restaurants (for various nefarious purposes) and felt guilty - even though I've bought the food dammit!

((I sympathise with your locing problem - it often happens to me that way too. Not that I've written all that many locs this past year - about three I think. But the sort of locs that I (and I think most faneds) prefer to receive are like you say - a lot about anything which grabs the writer, and virtually nothing on anything that doesn't. Better than the dutiful type "catalogue" loc, certainly from the reprinting point of view. My view on locs is that not only are they for the editor's personal benefit, but ideally they should be suitable for publishing, thereby hopefully playing their part in getting response to the next issue. And so on.

No, I didn't know about the "doggy bag" thing until you told me; my comment was really one of puzzlement. Isn't it amazing what useless bits of information one can go for years and years without picking up?))

MIKE GLICKSOHN,
141 High Park Avenue,
Toronto,
Ontario M6P 2S3,
Canada.

So far June has been a fairly quiet month for fanzines around here; only twenty eight so far. But of those twenty eight, at least five have announced their immediate or imminent folding. It's a positive epidemic! I'm glad to get at least one chance to see LURK before it drags itself off into the swamp. And I'm not even X'd, which is very nice of you. I wish I could respond to the request for a trade for whatever I'm publishing now, but whatever I'm publishing now is a small circulation fanzine with less than ninety copies for distribution and those are all accounted for, I'm afraid.

The loc from Rowe was a very neat touch. Even with a print run of just 100, that amounts to a fair amount of hair: did he join the army, or something? (In XENIUM, the whatever I'm publishing now, I put something like that in each issue. So far I've used wine and liquor labels from bottles I've consumed personally - I'm nothing if not dedicated to fanac - extra tickets to the 1973 Westercon banquet - a thousand were printed but only forty sold - and a collection of Toronto Transit Commission transfers. Next issue I'll probably use pieces of snake skin, but after that I'd nothing in mind. Maybe I'll adopt your idea....but that would mean getting a haircut, wouldn't it? There are some things man was not meant to do... I did have a fairly famous fannish haircut at a convention in Philadelphia in 1969. Had people like Bob Silverberg hacking away at my locks so I could set off hitchhiking towards Mexico: if only I'd kept that hair, I'd have enough to put a lock in each issue of the next ALIEN CRITIC... Sigh...

Mike writes a good editorial. It gives some interesting insights into English conventions and how they differ from U.S. cons. For instance, scarcely anyone goes to a con by train, there being very little good train service over here. All hotels tend to be overly air-conditioned, not over-heated. And the bidders for the upcoming cons have been known for years and have been trying to get your vote for at least months. From what you say, it sounds as if bid-

ders make up their minds at the con itself in England. Strange way of doing things; how well does it work? Some things do not change, though. I note with pleasure that you miss most of the programme by being in the bar, just as we do!

Eric Bentcliffe writes an excellent article (even if he does use OUTWORLDS as one of the fanzines in the title) almost all of which I agree with. Rather than give incidents to collaborate his good advice, I'd like to point out a couple of differences between what he did with TRIODE et al and what is usually done today. Of course, there aren't quite as many masterful hand-stencillers of artwork anymore, and fewer fanzines are even using hand-stencilled work at all. But I suspect that in many instances over here, it's the distance involved that cuts down on the amount of specific illustration being done. When I did NERG, there wasn't anyone within five hundred miles who could have hand-cut any illustrations for me. Instead, I'd send the occasional manuscript to an artist for drawings, then electrostencil the results. But with the distances involved, and the quality of the postal service, and the huge number of fanzines all depending on a relatively small number of artists, I mostly relied on the art file I had on hand.

I'm sorry I missed out on Vera's singing session, but Torcon wasn't exactly the most relaxed con I've ever been at. I'm hoping to see and enjoy a great deal more of DISCON 2 in a couple of months. We still don't have the rocket part of those Hugos, and since we're providing the rockets for DISCON, maybe they won't have them either! And the substantial sum left over as profit from Torcon after endowments of certain fannish groups is to be spent at a big free party at Discon. Seventeen hundred dollars will buy a lot of beer and pretzels...

I'm not quite sure what Malcolm Davies means by an open bar, but the Royal York had half a dozen bars he could have found filled with sf pros for most of the con. It's true that the convention itself did not run many bars, this being due to regulations in the hotel that made it too expensive to do.

Sheryl could have flown to Toronto via Rochester if she'd wanted to. Although why anyone would want to go to Rochester is completely beyond me. I'm glad to have finally met her at Torcon. She is without doubt one of the most charming, gracious and generous people I've ever met in fandom. And you may quote me on that.

I like the way you use different coloured paper for each section, by the way. And the almost mystical manner in which each article ends precisely at the bottom of its allotted page. I'm not going to ask how that's done: the reply might shock the hell out of me...

I'm all in favour of experimenting to find the best available beers! In fact, I'm planning on carrying out some extensive personal investigations this summer. Naturally I'm also hoping to encounter some knowledgeable locals who can steer me onto potential winners. There is a damn fine American ale; or at least there was. Ballantines IPA was perhaps the best ale I've ever had, and that includes most imported European classics. The new owners are producing an inferior brew under the same name, but it's still better than nearly all the other US brands.

Thanks for LURK. I enjoyed it a lot.

((Thanks for your loc. I enjoyed it a lot. A pity you've no spare XENIUMs (XENIA?) - but if you ever do, please remember me.....(beg, sniffle, grovel).

Quite a lot of people were fascinated by the hair. Now that you've (presumably) met Dave at Seacon, you'll realise he's got plenty to spare, and is in no danger of going bald, as several people feared (or hoped?) I don't recommend the idea to you though, Mike - the memory of fiddling with a polythene bag full of tangled offcuts, with the short 'n' curly bits getting absolutely everywhere, trying to sort out a hundred decent pieces before Pat's hayfever snoozes blew the lot away, comes back to me as if it were yesterday, obscenely, like a rancid herring. I'd never give wine labels away, unless they were duplicates; I keep all the ones I get and stick 'em in a book, with comments on the quality of the wine. I'm curious about wine availability and prices over in the U.S. and Canada; what sort of imported wines do you get, and what do they cost? And what about the home-grown variety? Can you (or anybody) enlighten me?

The De Vere in Coventry was my first experience of a really air-conditioned hotel. To be honest, I'm not overenthusiastic about paying £5 a night for the privilege of getting static shocks from the stair-rails. One bloke showed me a burn he claimed he'd got from the static. The things people will do to impress! You probably saw the wrangles over the introduction of two-year bidding for cons. The answer to your question is, I suppose, that over here, cons are still small enough so that if a makeshift committee has to be formed actually at one con to bid for the next, then it will probably stand a fair chance of putting on a successful con. How long that situation will hold remains to be seen; we seem to be beginning a period of rapid expansion in attendance.

The title layout for Eric's piece was all my idea, so I must take the credit (some people liked it) and the blame. I'd no idea how difficult it would be to find sufficient reasonably well-known Golden Age titles to fit all the spaces; I pored through my collection for hours, looking at zines and reviews of zines, and even then I cocked up the layout - the title pages should have been facing instead of on opposite sides of the same sheet.

I'll let you in on the secret of that almost mystical manner; it's pure fluke, as you'll see when you study this issue. I don't do any dummyming - haven't the time, at my typing speed. And all my own stuff is done straight onto stencil. So I just trust to luck.

I don't drink all that much beer (and my diet will let me drink even less) but my favourites of the moment are Stella Artois and Carlsberg Special Brew. Come to think of it, when I've finished this stencil I think I'll blow a hundred calories or so on a bottle of the latter (left over from Christmas - now there's will-power for you!). Thanks again for your letter; it was great - and a surprise - to meet you and Sheryl at the con. I hope you both had a great time, and can make it over again if we get the '79 Worldcon - or even sooner!))

MAE STRELKOV,
Casilla de Correo 55,
Jesus Maria, Cordoba,
Argentina.

The May LURK just arrived, I opened it in the dentist's waiting-room (in Jesus Maria) and shut it furtively in haste, glancing around. Had they seen it? Nobody stared. So I opened anew with great caution, bypassing complet-

ely the page with the golden loc, but it stuck out at the bottom. (I hoped none noticed that, but it made me want to sneeze. Dog hair does too, just to see it floating around the house, and I assure you our golden collie's hair beats Dave's. Or was it Dave's? I imagined him with long black locks somehow. A hundred copies you say? A hundred golden locs in this Lurk? Incredible. Where did you get it all from? Who has that lovely GOLDEN SILKY HAIR? Must be a lovely gal not older than 19 has hair like that? I recall when our daughters were tiny and I still persisted in getting their hair regularly bobbed (they wear it longer now and wish it would grow longer still, but it never does!), the hairdresser in Jesus Maria used to cut it even shorter than necessary, and save each precious golden curling loc, I mean lock thereof (on a table, not the floor!), no doubt to sell somewhere, for artificial, pin-on curls. So think of the fortune you could have made on 100 golden locs like the sample sent me. And you threw it all away on mere fanzines, bah! (Next time, sell those locs, I mean locks, to the nearest hairdresser and finance pubbing future fanzines that way).

So.....WHOSE HAIR WAS IT? Come across. No fooling, please. I'm just that intrigued I can talk of no other thing, right now!

((OK, OK, I kid you not, 'twas Dave's genuinely, and I was having fun imagining (or rather, not being able to imagine) Dave's face on reading the above. Sorry Dave, but I couldn't resist it. Honestly Mae, he's a ghodd ghuy, but that hair is wasted on him - absolutely wasted.))

I sympathise with Paul Skelton's anxiety re overpopulation and the double standard that prevents Catholics from stopping the Pope from such pontificating. (What it's doing to Latin America right now is DISASTROUS. Contraceptives are "no-no"; four doctors must sign your request to a pharmacy for pills, these days here, and will they risk it? You bet not!) Ignorance, overcrowded areas, misery, hunger, hopelessness, vice, they go together, but suit overlords, who otherwise couldn't rule the masses through their fears of the vengeance of a Cruel God (and His Eternal Hell for those who fail to die "in-the-arms-of-the-Church", out here). I'm not saying people who want children shouldn't have them. Rather, those who don't want any shouldn't be forced to pup all the time, raising little beggars and thieves as is now the case. Poor kids!

((My sentiments entirely. There should be no pressure, neither from the Church, nor from society, which can be just as bad, as Darroll Pardoe points out in one of his recent zines. Four doctors? My Ghod! That'd be laughable if it weren't so damned stupid.

Sorry for chopping so savagely your lovely chatty letter, Mae. Offhand I can think of only two other fen who write this sort of letter, and they're also females: Sheryl Birkhead and Sue Clarke.))

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Don Allen is of course right about the "intelligence of fans" not being any higher than the average (and who really knows what intelligence is anyway?) - but I said fans were probably more literate/intellectual. Not that it's any big thing, and maybe I'm wrong there too....It's interesting what Don says about the other "fandoms" he mentions. My mother once got a

coupon-redeeming ((vendemning?)) fanzine (don't ask me to explain that!) I even remember reading the chit-chat about the lady editor taking a trip. Still....do they really have entire fanzines devoted just to faanishness, I wonder? And is there the same close relationship between fans and pros? If there is, maybe Fredric Wertham made a big mistake in concentrating on sf-comic zines in his book. (He did mention that some people call "fan magazines" of the movie variety "fanzines"; and it's been applied to some underground newspapers/mags. in the U.S.).

Eric's piece reminds me of a few things I've been meaning to say to someone. One is that it seems surprising how much time and space is devoted to telling people how to produce fmz, and what to put in them. It seems sort of incestuous - presumably people publish zines to tell others something, not just to talk about how to put out a fanzine. This constant discussion of the 'Golden Age' of fmz is disturbing for much the same reason - I'm sure no one was so self-conscious about zinpubbing that they devoted reams of space to it back then to this! It's about like the change-in-policy notices which seem to appear in each OUTWORLDS!

((Sorry about that uncertain word at the top of the page there, but your handwriting failed me for just a moment. All the other "fanzines" I've seen (mostly in the "arts" and pop-music fields) have seemed very sercon. I think that faanishness must be unique to our kind of fandom. I'm a bit puzzled by your reference to a close relationship between fans and pros; over here, I think I'm right in saying, there are a few sercon fans and creeps who may associate freely with pros, but the majority seem to prefer to stick with their own crowd. I hasten to add that some pros, like Ken Bulmer, are thought of more as fans than pros, but these are the exceptions. (Though at Seacon, I remember vaguely being involved in some sort of hum-and-sway thing with Harry Harrison, among others, and he seemed to be having a great time singing "Colonel Bogey" and "Lloyd George Knew My Father".))

I wouldn't presume to speculate on the myriad reasons why fen produce fanzines, but I think Eric's piece was only an excuse to exercise his funny-muscle. Maybe the discussion of the past indicates a feeling that something is lacking in present-day fandom and fanzines. Fandom and fanzines have changed with the years, that's all, tending as always to reflect the times and circumstances we live in. And of course, there's always the Good-Old-Days syndrome.))

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We were also very pleased to hear from:

DAVE ROWE, who criticised the fact that I didn't credit the source of the Torcon reps, nor included an explanation of the cover in terms of the Epsilon Bootis probe. Sorry Dave, you're absolutely right, but it's a bit late now, isn't it?

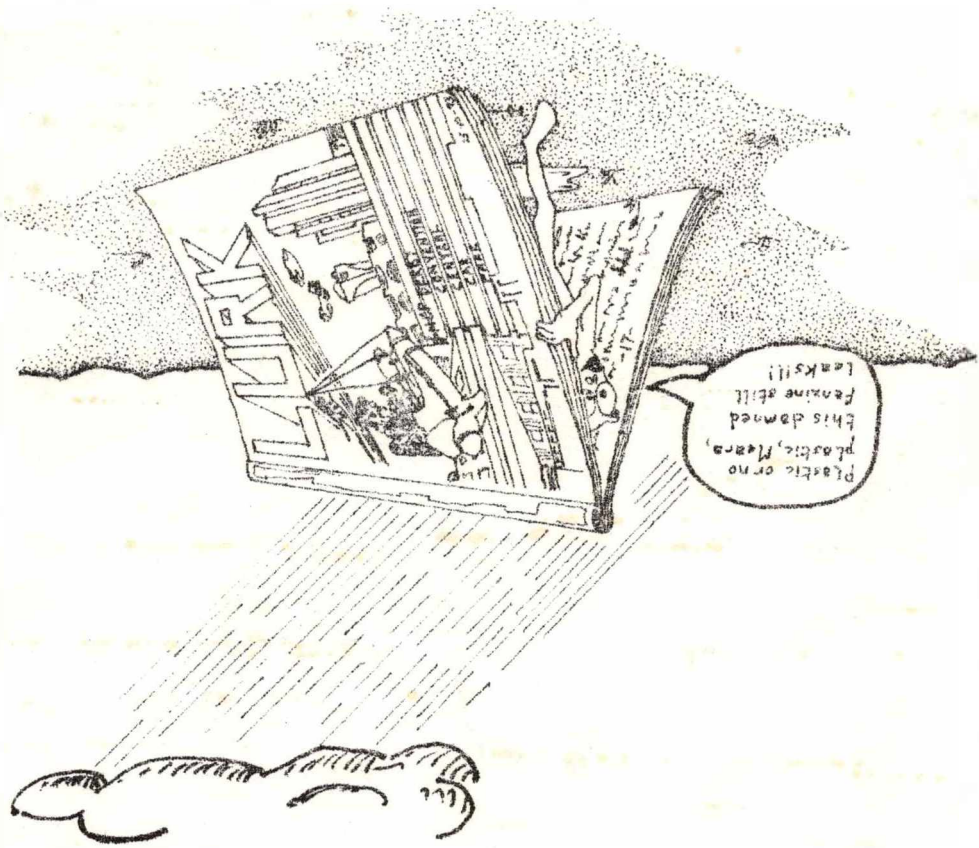
IAN BUTTERWORTH, who champions the cause of immaturity. (That doesn't sound how I meant it, but never mind.)

GRAY BOAK, who liked the conreps. I don't know whether the itinerary for the Malcolm Davies rep was genuine, Gray, but he quoted the place-names and I arranged the layout.

SHERYL BIRKHEAD, who wrote a nice but unlurky letter.

also, TOM ROBERTS, GRAHAM POOLE and PHIL STEVENSEN-PAYNE. Thank you, all.





Plastic or no
plastic, Meara,
Famine still
tanks!!!

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