

Hey Columbo!
I no seea the
land!

Pedal,
Pedal...

Thisa time, I
ainta gonna to
fall off!

1/17/73 E. Kentetch



9
10
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12

No 14 comes from Ruth Berman, 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis Minnesota 55417, for trade, letter of comment, or 25¢/issue. Contributors get the issue their material appears in and the following issue. No comes out irregularly three times a year. October 1973. If the placement of the covers seems a bit eccentric -- well, I really meant to have them go the other way around, but I forgot to specify how the margins should go, so....

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Brag Dept: Two of my poems, "Sinai Peninsula Photographed from a Gemini Flight," and "Smokestacks," appeared in the August issue of Jean's Journal (\$1/copy, Box 15, Kanona NY 14856); another poem, "Frog In Waiting," appeared in the Autumn issue of Poet Lore (\$1/copy, Box 688, Westport CT 06880).

Panning Pan

or, what to do when the Daily won't use the review it asked you to do because they don't like to print reviews that say this book isn't worth your attention in the first place.

by Ruth Berman

Ian Wallace's Pan Sagittarius (G. Putnam) is cute and clever. Those are its minor virtues and its major flaws. I can imagine a reader who would find that following Wallace's speculations about the nature of life was sufficiently amusing to make the book interesting as a whole. But I found the book irritating and dull.

Take, for instance, this interchange between Pan and the B-girl, Hertha ("Western, Adult"). Hertha has a self-destructive life-style, which it is Pan's duty to change. "In all the human search for love, there lurks the genetic urge to fuse totally with one's lover. When a man sinks into his woman, when she gratefully feels him sinking into her -- as they clasp each other, with the partial interpenetration standing for the total fusion, with the surging climax guaranteeing it, with the little death which follows consummating it -- just for that while they imagine that they have fused, that their individualities are no more. But then they awaken and gaze at each other -- and lo, they are unchanged, each is still himself alone, another. And sensing some kind of implacable frustration, some unexpressed denial of a forgotten birthright which was after all a long-lost legacy, they gaze at each other in unconfessed disappointment, sometimes even with hatred. But then they try again -- ' Reaching up to clutch my wrist, she pulled my hand down against her bare thigh, and she whispered: 'I won't hate. I am ready when you are ready for a bout of cosmic frustration'."

And lo, the argument (accompanied by the sexual illustration which -- incredibly -- these muddy abstractions have moved Hertha to request) convinces Hertha that sex can be fun. And loving. A short story can assume a sudden change in a person for the purpose of dramatizing what in life would be a longer process, but argumentation is hardly a useful symbol for the process of change.

It's odd that Wallace can take the same motifs he used so interestingly in Croyd -- time travel, teleportation, mind swapping, etc. -- and make such a dull bunch of stories out of them. Maybe part of the problem is just that he has used them before. Then, too, Croyd was not completely used to his psionic abilities; he explored them along with the reader. Pan takes it all for granted, and I do the same.

With attention turned away from the plot devices, Pan himself ought to be the focus of the book. Its frame story is Pan's learning how to live. He is first distracted from killing himself, then given something worthwhile to do with his life (helping others), and, in the course of the various stories, he learns to do his work without hubris. Unfortunately, Pan can't focus the book. He doesn't have any character. He is wise, witty, strong, handsome, and good in bed. He is so skillful at nudging (or noodging) people onto happier tracks that he fails only in the one case when his superiors would "predict failure on any track" ("The Bishop's Halo"). In short, he is a superman with no flaws to give him color, and scarcely any problems. He has some odd tricks of language which apparently are meant to make him sound distinctive, but the effect is that of ordinary speech with obtrusive affectations tacked on -- for instance, the noisy alliteration of "Pelleon lost languor and stiffened alert" ("Caerleon").

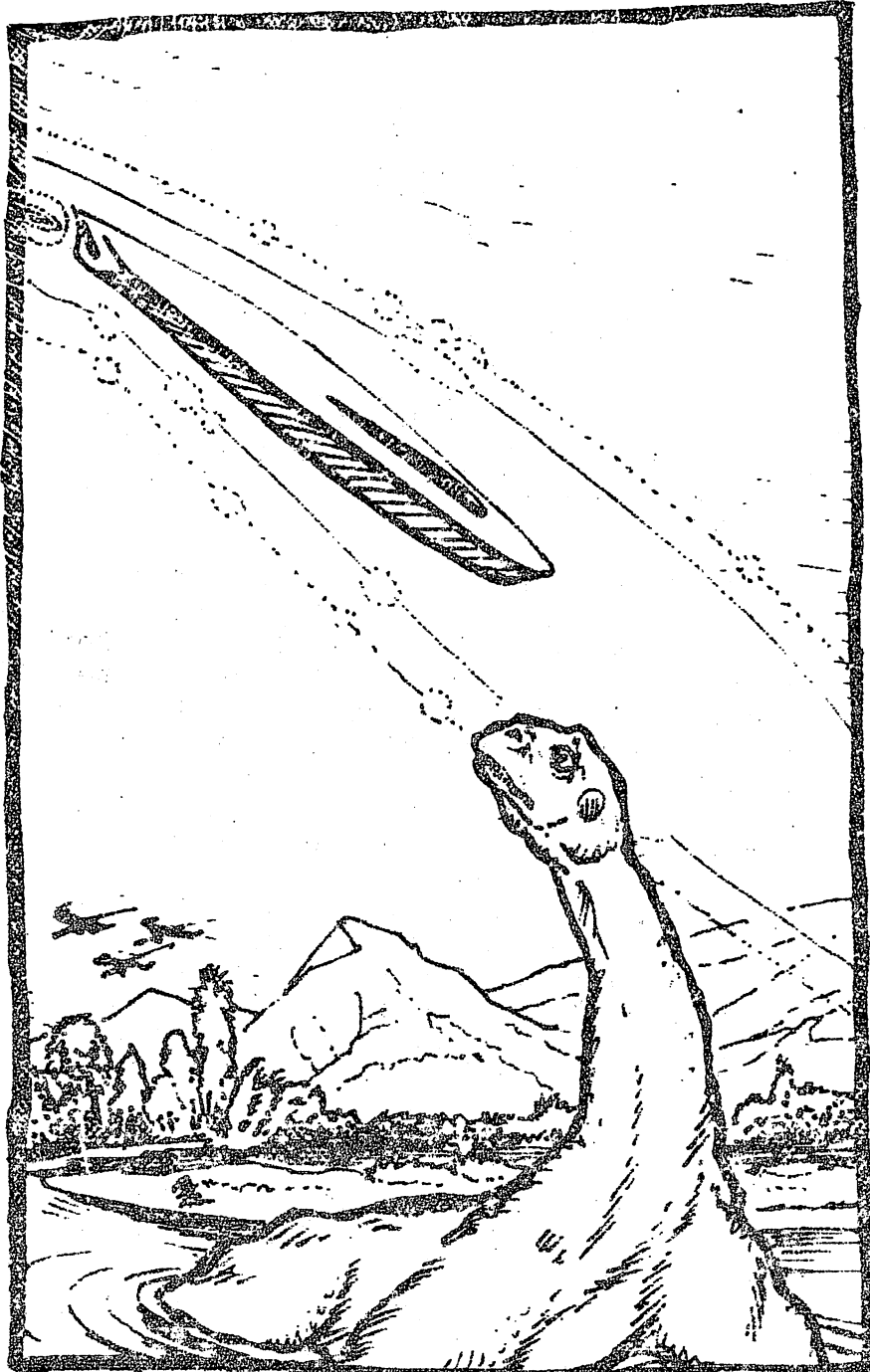
The characters inside the individual stories are for the most part better done than Pan, but they are not striking enough to carry the book. Probably the best of them is King Grayle ("Caerleon"), Pan's (probable) father, a skinny weakling who has strength from force of will and idealism ("My strength is as the strength of ten...." you might say). He is also an imitation of King Arthur.

The imitation of historical and mythical figures in the stories is confusing. It works out pretty well with King Grayle (= Grail), but otherwise I don't think it works. The stories are set on assorted other planets, most often "Erth," a planet which is similar to "Earth," but not quite the same. In this way Wallace evades the realist's or satirist's need to stick to fact, but he also evades the sf writer's need to provide a believable background for his worlds. He does not explain why Blacks, given a white minority, should be stupid enough to reproduce first slavery and then bigotry, nor why the Whites should then reproduce 20th century Black slang ("Willy the Villain"). He does not explain why not one, but two planets should reproduce World War II. Of course, it would be thematically confusing to have "Makrov" the Jew, torn among Judaism, Christianity, and atheism, opposing the Nazis on the same planet which produces an actual Messiah in the French resistance ("Von Eltz in Vimy") -- but, then, it's confusing to have two sets of Nazis on two planets in the first place.

The book opens and closes with sections of prose so obstinately obscure that it is tempting to suppose that the book is a joke. For instance: "Infinite psychospace is not exactly a plenum but more inexactly an infinitum of small random spontaneous happenings. Each happening, insofar as one can be distinguished from its neighbors (and they are far less self-distin-

guished than bubbles in brew), follows a lambent unimaginaive thrust-lure pattern: it is born inhaling, and exhaling it perishes."

And I am Marie of Roumania.



JBY & Ken Fitch
5/1/72

CARVING IN MARBLE:

Paula Marmor's Poems

and Their Illustrations in Mythril

by J.R. Christopher

I don't know that my title's correct: marble (marmor in Latin) is too classical a substance for Paula's poems. She carves them in greenwood, perhaps. E.G., "Lines on the Death of Robin Hood" (Mythril, I;1 Fall 1971, p. 8). Five stanzas of eight lines each, beginning:

The silver horn of Huntingdon
thrice through yestereven's hush
haunted Sherwood's hawthorn dusk
and set the hazels shuddering

(The hawthorns and hazels are the first of eleven types of trees mentioned in the poem.) This quatrain is typical enough of her style. Hush and dusk give the off-rhyme to the middle lines of this quatrain, and the short u of these "rhymes" is also picked up in the next-to-last stress of the first and fourth lines: "Huntingdon" and "shuddering," giving almost an effect of dactylic feminine rhymes to those two lines. The alliteration is also noticeable in this quatrain -- two h's in the first line, one in the second, two in the third, and one more in the fourth; the first stresses of line one and four -- sil- and set -- alliterate on s, and there are two sh's (bringing the two patterns together) in the last two lines.

Paula's picture for this poem, indicating at least four types of trees and balanced with a black (night) sky above the black tree trunks and silhouettes of the Merry Men below, may not be her best drawing, but it is effective enough. (By the way, her awareness of poetic tone is indicated also in the obvious point that she nowhere refers to the Merry Men in this poem about death; they become "The order clad in Lincoln green.")

Paula's other poem in the first issue is "Willowwind" (p. 10), sans illustration. The title may echo D.G. Rossetti's "Willowwood" sonnets, but the tone is not of his despair.

Soft, the whisper of the rills
wafted on the willowwind
sighs, and splashing washes, spills,
swirls among the vesper leaves
follows down the Evenstar
to settle in the western sea

Night may be coming, but (in the fourth stanza) it is a night with "the sea/silvered in the sinking moonlight," not the black night of despair. Indeed, spring comes in the third stanza.



Since wind (via the old Greek pun on pneumos) means also spirit, the "many-masted schooner" of the final stanza may well be a symbol of death's journey, and the willowwind which will fill its sails be the spirit of death, but not (like the Bellman, I say it thrice) a death of despair. (The echo of Tennyson in the last stanza is nicely subordinated to Paula's own imagery.)

The second issue of Mythrill contained three of Paula's poems (pp. 12-13), all illustrated. Perhaps the simplest of these poems is "The Song of the Swallow," which I take to be an invitation to her world of imagination. Perhaps to a book someday (like Robert Frost's "Pasture"), and it perhaps titled Evenstar. (The richness as contrasted with Frost's assumed pastoral simplicity is appropriate for the dream content.) The illustration is not up to the poem this time: too dark, too overhung with willows, too much a journey into death. The Romantics -- Shelley and the early Tennyson -- like these drifting boats, and this illustrates perhaps "The Lady of Shalott" or (despite the wrong trees) "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" more than Paula's Swallow Song. I say this in spite of the evening in her first stanza, the night in the middle three, and the unwanted dawn in the fifth.

"The Piper" (a poem ultimately about the role of the poet perhaps) is at the clearest level a poem about the changing of the seasons: the protagonist -- "the darkside dancer," "a shadowlord," "the piper" -- comes to Summerhold (a castle in the drawing), where "the barren gardens blue with snow/ wait grave-cold for their truant guard"; he brings spring, as he dies:

Through barren woods new-turned to bowers
proud boughs born of blossom-pearls
the piper poured his life to earth
passed to the world his ebbing powers

His reward? The weirds of the chorus (whom I take to be ultimately the Muses, if more directly the witches of the castle who sleep through the winter) -- "the weird will come weave garland crowns/ to grace his brow and grant him peace." The illustration, being a snow scene, is much more white spaces than most of hers: the castle in the background, a barren tree in the middle distance, and the piper in the foreground. The light (the heat of spring, perhaps, symbolized by the yet unseen sun) is behind the piper. His front is in shadow, with a shadow stretching away in front -- he faces death as he drives out the cold.

"Heatherfields" (the third poem of this issue) is interesting in its feminine point of view: the first person -- "me" -- is introduced in the fourth stanza, and identified as feminine by the dress in the next stanza -- "the dead and desert air/ stirred my skirts." The poem is at the change of autumn to winter; it begins:

The last warm breath of autumn lost
blew brown and gusting through the fells
with dusty smells of heatherfields
and folded hills of feathered grass,
of dry rills rusty in the dells
and musty birch burned gold and brass

(Note the mostly internal off-rhyme of fells, smells, hills, rills, and dells.) It is the end of autumn. The dead air which stirs the speaker's skirts is the prelude of winter. This is one of those mood pieces like Tennyson's "Mariana," where the mood is that of frustrated (or missed) love. In Paula's poem it is the gypsy prince of the third stanza who has left without the speaker; the change to winter in the last stanza emphasizes the frustration by the death of nature; so does the coming of night in the fourth stanza. The illustration, of a tall blonde looking towards the west, is satisfactory, although I would take the gypsy's road to be a river if it were not for the poem.

In the third issue Paula had a story, "Richard," but fiction is not my concern here.

The fourth issue, for Summer, contained the latest poem of hers to appear in Mythril, "The Scarecrow" (p. 5). The illustration here, an elaborate frame for the poem, seems of less value in interpreting the poem than most, for it comes close to being a Halloween drawing, with the pumpkinhead scarecrow in silhouette (are those crows across the page?). The poem itself is more a dramatic monologue than usual with Paula; the speaker is a woman who has battled the witch who brought the scarecrow to life:

I stand before thee, fool unmanned,
my body strewn and ruby signs,
the witchlines jeweled in
 living blood
the bruises livid on my breast,
the tuneless graveyard wind
 my breath,
my tresses charred and grey
 with mud.

Since the speaker says that they were "all losers" in the battle (second stanza), I assume the witch was defeated, perhaps killed, as



certainly died the speaker's "once proud lord" (third stanza). But this poem does not end in the frustration of "Heatherfields": the speaker accepts the dwindled world left after great battle, accepts the scarecrow as companion and (I assume) love, if they do not die by the edge of the sea:

bleached by sun,
we'll seek an end where brine-waves run,
or mend, perhaps, in the way of things.

The simple diction of the last line indicates the dwindled world.

Mythril is, of course, a publication of a society interested in myth, in legends, in the Romantic tradition running through Victorian England (Rossetti, William Morris, George MacDonald) to the Inklings of mid-Twentieth Century.* Perhaps Paula's poems elsewhere use other imagery, but I doubt there is an essential difference. She is obviously in the tradition of Tennyson, Rossetti, and Hopkins. There are a few women in this tradition; Christina Rossetti is the obvious example. Paula may at moments sound like "Goblin Market," but not like Christina's more Christian verses. Paula is essentially pagan, not in the defiant, Swinburnean sense, but in the tradition of Robert Graves. (Read The White Goddess and learn the alphabet of trees: it will spell Paula's name, and all else beside.)

Can she sustain the role? I cannot even guess. Most male poets are stimulated by glandular energy at puberty and write until they are thirty, unless they are true poets. And even then their verse may undergo a seachange at that age: Pope from his fantasies to Horatian epistles, Wordsworth from his visions to his dullness, Tennyson from his Keatsian romanticism to his Vergilian polish. (It was about the age of thirty that Jesus began his ministry.) But there is not enough evidence to argue patterns for women who are poets. I am not at all certain that parallels work. Of course, women who bear children often give up verbal creation for that other birthing. But Paula, born under the sign of Virgo, may be able to return to the logoi if she (who knows?) decides to play the other role. And will her verse suffer a seachange? A plainness like that of Graves? A change, "perhaps, in the way of things"? Again, no answer.

But Vergil spoke of the white froth of the sea -- marmor infidum -- and it was Aphrodite, not Diana, who was born of the sea.

* Mythril is 75¢/one or \$2.25/four, from Mythopoeic Society, Box 24150, LA CA 90024. My apologies to No readers who may not find this article interesting through not being familiar with the poems discussed -- but it 's so rare for fanzine poetry to get any attention, that I thought I'd print it anyway.// "The Scarecrow" was probably inspired by Gene Wilder's moving portrayal of that role in Mackaye's Scarecrow on Public TV last year.// Another fanzine of interest to fantasy-enthusiasts is a new one, Fantasiae, a newsletter on fantasy generally, PO Box 24560 LA CA 90024, \$3/12. -- RB

Who Wants to Visit Old Cthulhu's Place Anyway? by Ben Indick

A reading of Andre Norton's Dread Companion inspired some rather uncomfortable musing on my part recently. It involved Lovecraft, and the Circle which has employed his Mythos: Merritt, in several of his novels; Robert W. Chambers, and dim Carcosa; Blackwood, and other writers, all the way back to Orpheus, I suppose. Any writer whose imagination has seized upon a tactic which would merge the morbid with the marvelous as an escape avenue.

In Fantasy, there are two ways of entering some extra-mundane world: the hero may blindly stumble into one, whether a different dimension or time; if this be the case, he will endure adventures, often discover beauty, and usually have a happy ending. On the other hand, the search for the other world may be purposeful, a discontented individual desiring personal gain of some sort through power he can exert on the beings of an extra-terrestrial world; in this search, the hapless hero usually discovers only ugliness, distasteful forms of life, and usually, a rather nasty doom. In the latter, when the author has granted his hero a taste of the ultramundane he wanted, we, as readers, are generally left wondering why he ever bothered, what sort of tourist agency he ever went to in the first place.

Consider Miss Norton's book. It commences as good, straight science fiction, in a distant future, using language which is neatly futurized yet clear. A young woman is hired as governess to two young children of aristocratic birth, the older of whom, a girl, obviously possesses some sort of extrasensory power. She escorts them to a distant planet. Here the three are transferred, by powers of the girl, into a different space-time continuum. Initially, it is vividly seen in geometric terms by the governess, but, after exposure to water of the new world, she sees it in rather mundane terms, trees, ground, hills, etc. Her wards, who eat freely of the shrubbery, soon become transformed into hairy, horned, hooped creatures. Most of the book is consumed in an interminable struggle by the young woman to get her somewhat bestialized wards away from this world and back into their own. The girl, however, fights desperately; this is her home, she insists. And its people, a hairy lot also, are implacably inimical to the governess. The author hints broadly that this is the home of a witch-type people, who were the prototypes for the fear, in a distant past on forgotten, fabled Terra, of demons, witches, devils, etc.; that such creatures were planted on Earth in order, occasionally, to steal away humans for various sacrificial purposes on their own unnamed world. The girl, they insist, is one of their own. The governess, with the aid of a semi-metamorphosized human who inadvertently stumbled onto the

devil-world, and a native plant which the native-folk fear (Norton never gets around to calling it garlic) eventually succeeds in getting herself and her charges back into their own universe, as the girl reluctantly proves more human than witch. All resume human forms, and, happily, the semi-human is revealed to be a personable and handsome space ranger.

When the story is good, one has hopes of a respectful pastiche on "The Turn of the Screw" or, at least, "Beauty and the Beast." However, since the major portion is on the inhospitable witch-world, this is not the case. Which is what caused my musing.

What hold, I had to wonder, could this ugly world have had for the child? It is rough, rugged terrain, with no appeal on intellectual or artistic levels whatever, and no evidence of civilization, although a mysterious queen-like woman who has influenced the child is obviously not a mere ninny. Life seems to exist in a semi-bestial state, and, perhaps, if one sought full kinship with nature, in a semi-sentient, animalistic, pantheistic sense, one could find it there. However, this child is a product of a highly cultured background, wilful, intelligent; is it enough that a wraith has implanted a notion of this world's being "home" in her young, impressionable mind? Since Norton does not really attempt to make us see it as the girl does, why should we empathize -- or believe?

And then I wonder, what did all those misguided souls who pored through the Necronomicron, or the book of the King in Yellow, hope to gain? Power? They are nearly all misanthropes, and goodness knows what they would do with such power. They seek to call up the most foul, ugly, and loathsome of creatures, who really have little to offer them except some petty revenge, or a vision of their own cities, cyclopean places which seem to resemble the downtown canyons of any big city. It seems there is little but personal hazard they can offer. Are these men actually indulging a death-wish? In Lovecraft's "Shadow Over Innsmouth," the hero, who does not seek out the non-humans, becomes embroiled with them, learns he is one of them, and finally floats happily out to sea to what he had once believed foul and now believes to be beauty. It is the happy damnation of Faust.

Chambers' Hyades offer only the "strange" and the terror of the King in his tatters. Merritt, in "Dwellers in the Mirage" and "Creep, Shadow!" calls upon Lovecraftian monsters, although the motives of his heroes are clearer; they desire certain immediate power with limited objectives. I suspect, however, that they could gratify their needs in less dangerous ways, with less dangerous hired hands. Blackwood's coven is no less than an entire town willingly abasing itself, in utter self-degradation,

to worship life-destroying forces, in "Ancient Sorceries." What is the charm in bestiality, degradation, misery, and death?

Why do these authors choose such protagonists, pursuing inhospitable worlds? Are we convinced of the verity of their vision, when they achieve those goals, or, as is usually the case, fail dismally, but succeed in presenting a glimpse which leaves us all satisfied to remain in suburbia? Are the worlds of the all-powerful supernatural extra-terrestrials nothing more than cosmic skyscrapers, or, on the other hand, uncivilized wildernesses?

Well, these are only, after all, musings, and not completely what I feel, either. "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" and the Merritt books are stories whose sense of wonder has gripped me over the years in delight. I was, however, never fooled for a moment by the surrender of Lovecraft's hero: it was just that, surrender, but told so exquisitely, that, like an unpleasant itch which feels so good to scratch, we enjoy the rapture of the language. And Merritt never allows the dread menace to overshadow his hero, or simply bury him in an italicized final paragraph. Lief, leaving the valley of the Mirage, feels the touch of cold Khalk-ru on his heart, but the void there is for dead Evalie, and beautiful, treacherous, beloved Lur. When the menace itself is the potent element, untempered by human motivations with which we can sympathize, it is merely grotesque, undesirable, and unbelievable, as is Miss Norton's lengthy hike through her no-human's-land.

quickreview

Cooking Out of This World, ed.
Anne McCaffrey, Ballantine.

Of no interest to people not interested in cooking. And probably of no interest to people who are interested in cooking. As Tom Disch says of one of his recipes, "It tasted terrible, but I'll probably try it again some day anyhow. It sounds like it should be delicious" -- but there aren't enough such side comments to make them sound interesting.

-- RB



BERRY'S BAEDEKER: The Italian Yob
by John Berry

One of the side-effects of the riotous situation in Northern Ireland is that the many hours overtime I have had to work have improved my previously precarious financial position. This enabled me to select a more adventurous site for my 1971 Summer Vacation. Since 1960 I have always just about managed to pay for the hire of a caravan for a week in a rather quiet place on the northern coast of Northern Ireland. This time, my wife and daughter and I spent three weeks on the Italian Adriatic Coast. I travelled the area extensively, and the only place I saw and heard any Americans was in Venice -- so I'd like to tell you all about it, in the hope that I can tempt some of you more perceptive readers to go there.

* * *

Our hotel was in Cattolica, one of the many resorts which stretch for miles along the eastern coast of Italy, between Venice and Ancona. The Tourist Industry is the only money-earning business in the town, and the period of commerce in it only lasts six months, during which the local populace have to earn enough to last for the remaining, unproductive six months. This tends to galvanize the Italians into some sort of action, which is entirely contrary to their natural inertia, and the import of the situation is clearly shown by the decisive way they've cut down their daily siesta to only five hours.

The hotel was only 50 metres from the beach, as the brochure had stated, but at first I was rather bewildered at the bare decor of the place, no carpets, whitewashed walls, etc, giving it the look of a "with-it" monastery, but the fifteen days of fantastic heat, both day and night, proved the necessity for this apparent austerity.

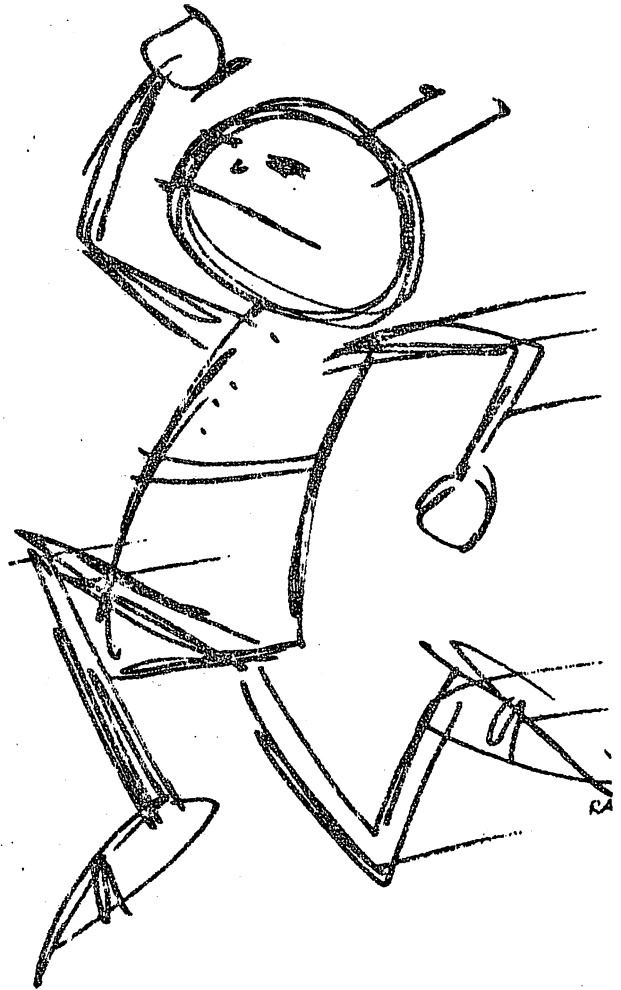
The gentleman in charge of the hotel had obviously been previously employed as a prison warder. The only time I saw a smile flicker across his face was when a guest accidentally broke something. He was pleased to call himself "The Direction," and he invariably spoke in the third person, i.e: "The Direction requests that you do not accidentally enter the maid's bedroom again." Many guests were under the impression that he could not understand English, and frequently attacked him with indelicate Anglo-Saxon swear-words when he triumphantly caught them in a compromising situation, but he carefully digested the expressions for future reference. One evening, when I had softened his reserve with liberal quantities of campari he became quite loquacious and held me enthralled for several hours regaling me with his experiences as an embalmer.

Cattolica is an attractive resort. The beach is thickly sanded, and rock barriers in the sea, about two hundred yards from the beach, absorb what little tidal activity there is, and this inner section of sea is usually calm, the water warm and seductive.

The streets are tree-lined, and the shopkeepers are permitted to extend their area of commerce to the very edge of the pavement; therefore, pedestrians must walk on the roadway. Italian motorists are very selfish, and like to drive as fast as possible. Italian pedestrians have very quick reflexes.

One phenomenon which totally absorbed me was the way in which each nationality was a complete cliché of what everyone else expected it to be. For example, Germans are usually described as having guttural accents, swaggering officiously about the place, demanding immediate and efficient service in restaurants, etc, and the ones in Cattolica did. The Germans, being big spenders, were tolerated locally, but privately every other race condemned their arrogant behaviour. Having spent some time in Germany, I know they are not like this at home; therefore, their affluence and natural bent for "living room" have obviously influenced their demeanour whilst visiting previously occupied territory.

Apropos the blatant characteristics of the individual races, the streets of Cattolica were haunted by dubious individuals who approached tourists in rather an intimate way with a subtle "psst." They then embarked on a diatribe concerning their activities in "black-market and contraband goods," and they unerringly spoke in the language of the person they accosted. With a conspiratorial look to left and right they craftily produced garish-looking watches of obviously cheap manufacture which they alleged were OMEGA watches. If you were polite and said, "Sorry, old chap, but I've got one already," they looked disappointed, but sidled away without any apparent animosity -- if you ignored



them, or attempted to brush them aside, they hurled invective, with eyes glaring and saliva dripping angrily from their mouths.

What intrigued me about these characters was that three or four times a day on the beach, in several languages, loudspeakers declared that it was an infringement of the "Italian Penal Code" to purchase these items from "pedlars and hawkers," and that the carabinieri were industriously engaged in tracking them down. Being a practising policeman myself, it seemed to me that the job of detecting these illegal operators presented a problem about as complicated as trying to track an elephant in the snow. But the same men accosted me every day in the same locations during my entire stay, on one occasion with a sun-glassed carabinieri blundering by whilst a pseudo-Omega timepiece was being dangled before my eyes.

Night clubs and street-side cafes were numerous in Cattolica, and young men were hired to flood the town during the day handing out small leaflets describing the amenities of the clubs, in different languages. I've retained several of these colourful documents specifically as souvenirs of the holiday, but also because of the quaint use of the English language:

"A characteristic club, friendly and gay of all the tourists."

"Price Gold Whath."

"Prize for the most charming cupple."

"We dance by any weather."

and my favourite:

Tonight we have a Big Evening For Are Foreigners. Jocks -- Attrattions.
--

I vehemently deny the current rumour that I prepared these advertisements.

Beggars are a not uncommon feature of the Cattolica scene. They are true professionals. For instance, one evening I saw a man with a really frightful case of Multiple Sclerosis. His whole body jerked and jangled in a most pathetic and heart-rending way. A small boy collected the coins dropped into his little plastic bucket. The following morning I was enjoying a lager and lime on the pavement outside a cafe when I heard the tuneful strains of a piano accordian played by a man with full possession of dextrous fingers. I looked round -- it was the cripple of the previous evening, smiling confidently and tinkling the ivories with abandon. He was standing straight and square. A small boy collected the coins dropped into his little plastic bucket.

The female beggars select a darkened kerbside, preferably in the shade of parked cars, and sit moaning, fingers jerking

spasmodically in the direction of a baby in their lap. The atmosphere is so charged that I personally could not bear to look at the child except for a fleeting glance, and it looked terrible. I turned my head away and staggered on. One day, I was in a hurry to catch a luxury 'bus for a tour, and I was confronted by a beautiful gipsy girl dressed in a white dress with little flowers embroidered all round the edge. She held a little golden object in her hand, and offered it to me. I was scared out of my wits, because I didn't know what the procedure was. I didn't know how much I should give her, and although she was extremely attractive in feature, there was a wicked look in her eyes, and her lips were pursed tightly. I took the coward's way out and backed away from her, gibbering inanely. I tripped on the pavement and dropped my bloody camera, smashing the front of it, and making it quite useless. At the time of writing, it is still in a camera shop, and a dedicated team of technicians are trying to repair it.

(to be continued)

A Letter to Philip Jose Farmer
by John Boardman

20 May 1973

Dear Mr. Farmer:

Upon reading your new book, Tarzan Alive!, I realized that I could provide some supplementary information on the family connections of the Duke of Greystoke. I have also done some research into the Holmes-Wimsey connection.* The possible connection of the Wimsey and Holmes families was first called to my attention about ten years ago by Randall Garrett. After reading Tarzan Alive I am of the opinion that the idea originated with you, and that Garrett was passing it off as his own. This is altogether consistent with his character; he also told me some gossip about you and your family which will bear neither repetition nor credence.

However, Garrett may himself be linked into the noble families of which you write, and have independent sources of information on this subject. I once checked his armigerous pretensions, and found that they were perfectly correct; he is related to three Lord Mayors of London. His arms are those which he attributes to Lord D'Arcy at the end of Too Many Magicians. And his physical appearance reminds one inevitably of Mycroft Holmes.

The additional light which I can throw on these matters comes from my correspondence with Edward Lessingham, Esq., of

* In my column, "Matter in Motion" in Ted Paul's fanzine Dipple, #105, 1 August 1966, and reprinted the following year by Ruth Berman in The Sherlock Holmes S-F Fanthology #1.



Digermulen Castle in the Lofoten Islands. As you probably know, Col. Lessingham has lived there since 1948, as a virtually independent sovereign. Owing to certain inhomogeneities in the time flow, I have reason to believe that he will die in about two months, so information from him will have to be obtained quickly if at all.

Permit me to review some of the major points of his life, as recounted in Mistress of Mistresses and A Fish-Dinner in Memison. He was born on 24 November 1882 (FDM, p. 4) in Cumberland, educated at Eton and Heidelberg, knocked around the world in the period 1900-1907, and then returned to England to court and marry Lady Mary Scarnside, daughter of the earl of Anmering. They were married in 1908.

However, I am concerned not with their marriage, which ended tragically in October 1923, when Lady Mary and their daughter were killed in a railroad accident in France. (FDM pp. 124, 272.) I have reason to believe that, in the unsettled period after the Russian

Revolution and the end of World War I, Lessingham was active in anti-Bolshevik intrigues under the name of Sidney George Reilly. You will find this man mentioned in several histories of the time, but his origins are nowhere recorded. (George Hill, Go Spy the Land; Boris Savinkov, Memoirs of a Terrorist; Bruce Lockhart, British Agent; Winston Churchill, Great Contemporaries; Pepita Reilly, Memoirs; Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, The Great Conspiracy; Lewis Chester, Stephen Fay, and Hugo Young, The Zinoviev Letter.)

Reilly was involved with the British Secret Service in 1914, neatly filling in this hiatus in Eddison's career which covers chapters 9-12 of FDM. He seems to have graduated from industrial to international espionage. We have, of course, no guarantee that the man using the name "Sidney George Reilly" in 1914 was the same who later was involved in British attempts to overthrow Lenin, and as I shall later show, some despection was practiced with his identity. I have not been able to consult Mrs. Reilly's

memoirs directly, and am relying on material in the last two above-mentioned books.

The persona given for Reilly was that of the son of an Irish sea captain and a Russian woman, born in Odessa. Lessingham's marvelous command of languages could cover this side of the deception. He was listed in Secret Service files as "I Esti," suggesting a kinship with the Este family. In early 1918 he became head of British operations in Russia. He had personally a bitter hatred for Bolshevism and all its works; this "Reilly" was certainly Lessingham, whatever incarnations the name may have had earlier.

Everything that comes out about the character of Reilly in the post-revolutionary period spells "Lessingham." He was a dauntless -- yea, reckless -- soldier of fortune. He was passionately dedicated to the restoration of the Tsar, and possibly to making himself a power following the counter-revolution. Towards this end he alternately used the name "Relinsky." The matter may also have involved Lady Mary's cousin Amabel, who was married to Prince Mitsmeshchinski. The Prince was killed by revolutionaries in Kiev during those years (FDM, p. 215). He was involved in the assassination of the Cheka chief Uritski, but the plot of which this blow was a part misfired. He had to flee Russia, urging a common front of Entente and Central Powers against the revolution.

The next year found Lessingham back in England, planning a vacation with Lady Mary, and talking idly about founding a kingdom in the South Pacific since his plans in Russia had gone astray (FDM, chapter 13). Naturally the French government thought well of him (FDM, p. 193); the French ambassador Noulens had been involved in the Russian plotting. "Where was it he issued stamps with his own head on them, and the Foreign Office recalled him for exceeding instructions?" (FDM, p. 196.) In Russia, of course; all kinds of mushroom sovereignties were being established in odd corners of Russia in those years. Lessingham is shown writing up his report for the Foreign Office on those Russian adventures (FDM, p. 209).

Chapters 14-16 of FDM take the story back to Zimiamvia, from which it emerges for Lady Mary's death in October 1923. And what of Lessingham-Reilly in the interval? In December 1922 he was back in Berlin where he met the musical comedy star Pepita Bobadilla, widow of the dramatist Haddon Chambers. Another British intelligence agent described Reilly to Mrs. Chambers in these terms -- terms applicable to Lessingham and probably to no other man in Europe:

He is the most mysterious man in Europe. And incidentally I should say he has a bigger price on his head than any man breathing. The Bolsheviks would

give a province for him dead or alive.... He's a man that lives on danger. He has been our eyes and ears in Russia on many an occasion, and, between ourselves, he alone is responsible for Bolshevism not being a bigger danger to Western civilization than it is at present.

Reilly and Mrs. Chambers were married in London on 18 May 1923. Since Lessingham was solidly faithful to Lady Mary as long as she lived, this marriage was plainly a cover for his espionage activities as "Reilly." What it may have become after Lady Mary's death five months later I could not speculate.

In 1924 Lessingham threw himself into his political activities as a solace for his wife's death; note that his only prolonged excursus on politics in FDM comes just after the news of her death arrives. But Savinkov, his terrorist comrade-in-arms, was captured while crossing into the Soviet Union in August, and he confessed everything. The Zinoviev Letter conspiracy came to fruition a little later. Lessingham was in the United States when the storm over that forgery broke; the Tories were finding him too much an embarrassment at home.

Lessingham and "Mrs. Reilly" returned to England on 6 August 1925. Six weeks later, he wrote to her from Viborg, Finland, telling her he had to go to Petrograd and Moscow. According to Soviet sources, he was killed while crossing the border on the night of 28-29 September 1925.

Either someone else was then using the "Reilly" identity, or the corpse was mistakenly identified, for we know that Lessingham was in Verona in 1933. (FDM, chapter 19; he must have found Fascist Italy much to his taste.) Someone then identified him as active against Bela Kun in Hungary in 1919; this was probably part of the "Reilly" business, or perhaps the activity had been moved from Russia to Hungary by our old friend Dame Rumor.

His next campaign that we know anything about was the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay, 1932-1938. (MM, p. 6, where the period "thirty-five years" must be counted backwards from 1973.) He tried his best to establish something in the way of a democracy in Paraguay, and seems to have been behind the decision of the dictator Higinio Morinigo to call back the exiled Natalicio Gonzalez and moderate his rule.

During World War II, he has informed me, he was with the British troops in northern Norway until they were defeated at Narvik. His familiarity with the country, dating from before World War I, led to his being placed in command of British liaison with the Norwegian underground movement. It was then that he decided to settle permanently in the Lofoten Islands, which he did in 1948.

Lessingham had no real sympathy with the Allied cause, despite the effectiveness of his work during the war. For one thing, it galled him sorely to be allied with the Soviet Union. For another, he was familiar with Vidkun Qvisling's anti-Communist writings and he regarded him as a basically sound man who had let his anti-Bolshevik passions drive him into alliance with Hitler. After the war he tried to get Qvisling's death sentence commuted; though he failed in this, he was able to get charges dismissed against another collaborator, the novelist Knut Hamsun. These views of his were known in Whitehall and Downing Street, and may have kept his name off Honours Lists.

The circumstances of Lessingham's death are told in the Overture to MM. He died in July of his ninetieth year, which is this summer. The tale tells of "this new government in Oslo" and their attempt to close out his private fief.

This probably has something to do with Norway's unexpected decision, last year, to stay out of the Common Market. Lessingham poured out money like water to sway the plebiscite against the Common Market, and it may be that this has changed the version of the future reported in MM. But there is a "new government" in Norway, since the old one resigned on the rejection of the plebiscite.

I have not found Col. Lessingham an easy man to correspond with. He is stuffy, reactionary, and too much the aristocrat. He is set in his ways, and seems to regard almost everything that has happened in the world since 1914 as a regrettable accident which points nowhere but in the general direction of human incompetence. He is right (FDM, passim); he would have been happier as a duke or a Viking chieftain sometime in the past.

Composing my letters to him is something of exercise in doublethink. Fortunately, his ideas were developed in an era when university professors came from the gentry and were supposed to have ideas that supported the Established Order. (I hesitate to guess his reaction if he learned that I am the grandson of a gandy-dancer.) Also, I have passed off my brother's Antarctic adventures as my own. This one-ups him, since the Antarctic is the only continent where he has never been.

I believe that Fritz Leiber may have come upon the secret of the Reilly-Lessingham identity. He gives a character in The Big Time the name of "Sydney Lessingham," as who should say, "I know who you've been!" Naturally, I have not dared to ask Lessingham anything about this Reilly business.

Incidentally, it may be possible to estimate the relative rate at which time flows here and in Zimiamvia. The "Letter of Introduction" in FDM states that $25\frac{1}{2}$ years here corresponds with

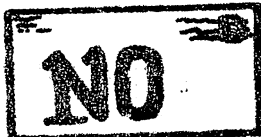
one month there, ending in October 1933 and on 25 July 775 AZC respectively. MM takes up on 22 April 777 AZC. If the relative rates of time flow are constant -- a thing which we are probably not justified in assuming -- the corresponding date here is something like 2468.

It would probably not be difficult to fit both the Lessinghams and the Scarnsides into the genealogical connections you have developed in Tarzan Alive. Both families come from the north of England, where the Viking strain runs strong. The Lessinghams are descended in the direct male line from the old Norwegian royal family -- clear back to Njörd and Frey, according to the Ynglinga Saga (FDM, p. 199; MM, p. 14). They may even have a distant claim on that throne, since according to most other records the male line of Harald Fairhair died out in the late 14th century.

In fact, a number of threads in this connection seem to run back to Norway. We should like to know what was the real purpose of Holmes' and Watson's trip to Norway, mentioned at the conclusion of "The Adventure of Black Peter." Since Norway had been the original destination of the absconding banker Neligan, perhaps something has been left out of the narrative as we have it.



Letters



and



Part I: comments on amateurs/professionals, mostly

from Harlan Ellison

The mention of my television script DEMON WITH A GLASS HAND from The Outer Limits by Dorothy Jones Heydt was interesting, but lacked several facts that your readers may find of interest. The script was originally written because I had it planned as a novel, but did not have the time to do the novel. However, I had been assigned an Outer Limits script, and so I decided to write a pruned-down version of the story as a sort of memo to myself -- for which I was paid \$5000. I originally wrote DEMON WITH A GLASS HAND as a cross-country chase a la Hitchcock's NORTH BY NORTHWEST. But when the time came to shoot the show, so many people had been stealing from the Outer Limits till, there was no money left to do the production the way I had originally intended. Because of the lack of money, we were forced to use ingenuity, and out of that crunch came some marvelously inventive ways of telling stories of fantasy. They wanted to do DEMON WITH A GLASS HAND but could not afford to do it as a cross-country chase; so I began thinking about it, and realized that a linear chase horizontally can also work as a linear chase vertically. Therefore, if we could put it in a single building, and through plot keep it enclosed, we could set up a tight little universe in which the suspense would work even better.

I was then turned on to the Bradbury building in downtown Los Angeles. It is a very old building, which was, oddly enough, designed by Forrest J. Ackerman's grandfather. (I think the name Bradbury and Forry Ackerman's association with this building make it absolutely splendid for an SF production, apart from its visual perfection and oddness.)

I went down, checked out the building from sub-basement to rooftop water tank, then went back and wrote the script to fit the building. As anyone can tell from seeing the show -- which holds up well even now, six years later -- we could not have chosen a better building. Byron Haskins, the director, was the man who did many of George Pal's science fiction films and he was at his very best directing this show. Along with Robert Culp and Arlene Martel, for whom I specifically wrote the two principal roles, I was given a production that satisfies me even today. Though it has aged slightly because of the changing times, it is still one of the few television scripts of which I am inordinately proud.

In response to the letter from Jackie Franke, I would have to point out that once again we have a failure to perceive the obviousness of amateurism. Amateurism is a state of mind and has nothing to do with whether one is published or unpublished, paid or unpaid for what one writes. It is a kind of literary adolescence and has nothing to do with whether a writer is pushy or not. I know many writers who are not pushy who do very well indeed.

from Sheryl Birkhead, 23629 Woodfield Road Gaithersburg MD 20760

One note about Harlan's article -- I doubt that I'd ever really want to publish a fanzine which involved the possibility (probability?) of having to reject material -- no matter HOW poor. I'm too touchy about hurting other people's feelings. Guess I'm just not cut out to be an editor (thank heavens!).

from E.A. Arnason, 1130 Fernhill, Detroit MI 48203

Ellison's letter bothered me. Admittedly, I don't have his problems, since I'm not an editor or a writing teacher. I don't have to beat off bad writers with a stick. Most of the people I meet who write are too timid to go to Clarion or send stuff to magazines. It takes all their nerve to show a poem to a friend.

I think potential writers can be scared off, though proving that is like proving any negative. How would anyone have known that Milton could write, if he hadn't written? But it takes a hell of a lot of determination to keep doing something when you're not getting any approval, and it seems perfectly possible to me that a lot of people give up.

I don't know how this fits in, but I have a theory that writers are people who have trouble communicating, just as social workers are people who can't solve problems and psychiatrists are people who can't cope with emotions. So maybe the writers who keep on in spite of discouragement have no alternative. Maybe they can't communicate any other way. Somehow raps in bars

aren't enough for them. A cousin of mine once said to me, after listening to one of my monologs, "you know, Eleanor, maybe no one listened to you when you were a kid."

There are people who write who irritate me. There was a guy at that poetry workshop I go to, who read a poem in which he talked about spinning cloth. I pointed out to him that you spin thread. Cloth you weave. He answered spin was the word he wanted, and it was a question of who was the master, you or the word. (He didn't really quote Humpty Dumpty. I doubt that he was that literate.) I also get mad at people who refuse to believe me when I say there's something wrong with their meter. But the main problem isn't that these people can't write. It's that they can't take criticism, and they shouldn't be at a workshop, since they're not willing to listen to what the other people have to say. They are there to get praise, not help, and they are there to talk about themselves and their conception of the cosmic all. The workshop is a co-operative effort -- we are there to help one another -- but these clowns are there to feed their egos. They aren't taking the workshop seriously. They aren't taking the rest of us seriously. And they aren't taking poetry seriously.

When Ellison talks about bad writers at Clarion, they sound like the same people who bug the hell out of me at the poetry workshop. But what bugs me about them isn't the quality of the stuff they're writing. It's their egotism and obvious indifference to the group that bother me. They are creeps.

But how can Ellison tell these people by the stories they write, without meeting them? Are they the same people, even?

from Norm Hochberg, 89-07 209 Street Queens Village NY 11427

Your "That Only An Amateur" (what a title!) brings up a number of valid points, the most cogent of which is that the only way to tell the difference ((between potential professional and hopeless amateur)) is in retrospect. It is a far cry from that to "a new writer is an ex-amateur" (as you insinuate later). It is a fact that there are tone-deaf, rhythmless people. I've worked with people who, I felt, simply needed practice before developing a nice style, but I've also edited people who could not understand the lyrical difference between "He walked to the door and opened it" and "Walking to the door, he opened it."

from Harry Warner, 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown MD 21740

I don't think that refusal to write in conformity to present-day editorial requirements year after year automatically proves amateurism in Harlan's sense. It may mean that the writer is struggling to do something entirely different from what editors want. something that will be very good if he ever manages to do

what he's striving to do. "Scaring off those with talent...can't be done" is the kind of opinion that can't be disproved until we learn how to contact worlds of if. I think it can be done.

another from Norm Hochberg

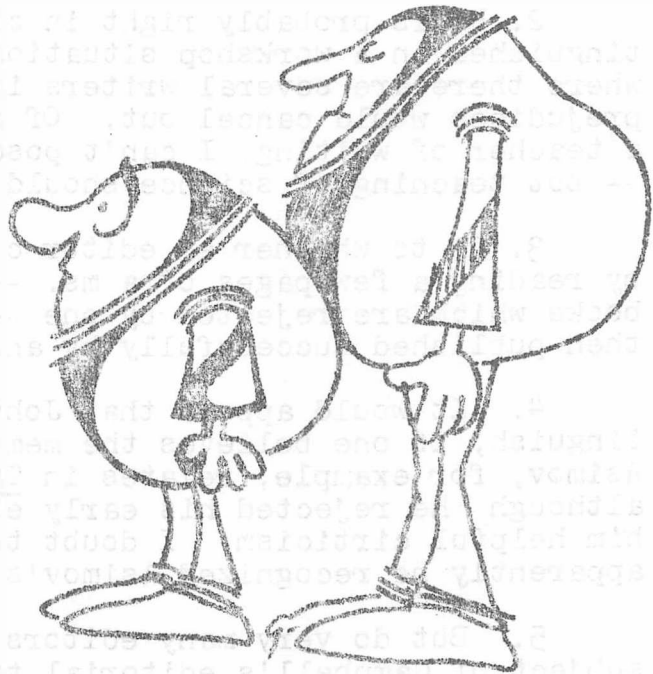
My dictionary has two definitions for "amateur" that might apply. One is "a person who engages in a study for pleasure rather than for financial benefits or professional reasons."

Another is "a superficial or unskillful worker, a dabbler." I think the second definition fits the situation best. The problem is to determine just what the definition means. Your comment that Emily Bronte didn't try to sell her works is as invalid as Harlan's point that professionals will always continue to try to sell. The definition of pro (and, therefore, of amateur) in a literary framework should not include sales. In a practical stand -- yes. But, literarily, no.

from Denis Quane, Box CC East Texas Station Commerce TX 75428

Harlan Ellison's letter/article started me thinking about a parallel situation. Teachers these days are expected to spend more time with the poorer students, who "need help more," rather than the more gifted ones, "who can develop on their own, at their own pace." I've always had my doubts about the theory, but then I enjoy working with bright motivated students, so perhaps my motives are suspect. Is there a real parallel with Harlan's feelings on the subject?

I don't know if I have any profound comments on the subject, but here goes anyway. 1. As Harlan says, it is likely that he and you are in closer agreement than is apparent on the surface -- there does appear to be one point of conflict, however: How easy is it to recognize the difference between the unknown with potential and the unknown who will never succeed as a writer? (I will avoid the term "amateur" since it is uncertain that it is the right word for the opposite of what Harlan means by professional -- it has too many conflicting meanings & connotations.)



2. He is probably right in claiming that the two can be distinguished in a workshop situation -- particularly at Clarion where there are several writers in-residence whose individual prejudices would cancel out. Of course, not being a writer, nor a teacher of writing, I can't pose as an expert on the subject -- but teaching of science should not be all that dissimilar.

3. As to whether an editor can distinguish the two simply by reading a few pages of a ms. -- How then can one account for books which are rejected by one -- or several -- publishers, and then published successfully by another?

4. It would appear that John Campbell, at least, could distinguish, if one believes the memoirs of several of "his" writers. Asimov, for example, relates in The Early Asimov, how Campbell, although he rejected his early efforts, encouraged him, and gave him helpful criticism. I doubt that he did this for everyone, so apparently he recognized Asimov's promise.

5. But do very many editors do this? From the way the subject of Campbell's editorial techniques are discussed, it would appear that he was unique -- is this one of the ways in which he was unique?
((I doubt it, although he may have spent more time than most in encouraging-the-promising. But most editors spend some time at it.))

6. But Campbell had the reputation (deserved or not, but that's another controversy) of only accepting a certain type of story. Presumably he might only have recognized the type of talent that could write such stories. Likewise, Harlan is associated with a particular type of story -- would he recognize talent that tended in other directions? This might explain point 3 above.

7. All this boils down to something on which writers who have succeeded, but only after some time collecting rejection slips, might testify. Do editors, in fact, give any sign that they recognize potential, even in early unpublishable efforts? Is this potential encouraged and directed?
((Early unpublishable efforts usually get no encouragement. Later most writers -- at least in the two groups I know best, SF and Little Magazines -- go through a stage of vague encouragement -- "try us again" type comment -- and then more specific criticism. The writer who either sells his first efforts or gets encouraged right from the start is rare.))
Part 2: other topics

from Mary Schaub, Box 218 c/o CS Schaub Apex NC 27502

Last night as I was rooting for something else, I came across Leacock on Swearword the Saxon, and thought you might not

have seen it. It makes a fine companion piece to the Olaf Loudsnore series: "A Compressed Old English Novel, SWEARWORD THE UNPRONOUNCEABLE, Chapter One and Only. 'Ods bodikins!' exclaimed Swearword the Saxon, wiping his mailed brow with his iron hand, 'a fair morn withal! Methinks twert lithlier to rest me in yon glade than to foray me forth in yon fray! Twert it not?'

"But there happened to be a real Anglo-Saxon standing by.

"'Where in Heaven's name,' he said in sudden passion, 'did you get that line of English?'

"'Churl!' said Swearword, 'it is Anglo-Saxon.'

"'You're a liar!' shouted the Saxon; 'it is not. It is Harvard College, Sophomore Year, Option No. 6.'

"Swearword, now in like fury, threw aside his hauberk, his baldrick, and his needlework on the grass.

"'Lay on!' said Swearword.

"'Have at you!' cried the Saxon.

"They laid on and had at one another.

"Swearword was killed.

"Thus luckily the whole story was cut off on the first page and ended."

91011

from H.L., Horace, Horace L. Gold, 4645 Lasheart, La Canada CA

Yes, I'm all of the above, and after 35 years of never knowing which one would appear in magazines, books, libraries and broadcasts, I decided last year to stick to Horace L. Gold. So what happens? So take a look at the new Ace Anthology, SCIENCE FICTION: THE GREAT YEARS, edited by Carol and Frederik Pohl, which contains "A Matter of Form," an elderly story of mine. I'm H.L. on the contents page, Horace in the introduction, and Horace L. under the title!

It all goes back to the first years of John Campbell's Astounding. I'd sold him "A Matter of Form" as Horace L. and that is how it was published. The next story, however, appeared as H.L., which John explained as having had to fit the byline to a tough layout. Not till I founded Galaxy did I question what he had done in altering a byline without the author's permission.

Anyhow, the consequence was that I found myself with three identities ever after, causing confusion to the readers and myself -- as I have no control of copy going into publicity, blurbs and editorial chitchat, so I have no control of my byline. All I can do is try to appear as Horace L. Gold, but I won't sue anyone -- Ellery Queen and Screen Gems, for example -- for leaving out the middle initial.

The L.E. Gold on "Trouble with Water" is a simple -- or simpleminded -- typo. Not having a copy of the English edition of From Unknown Worlds, I can only guess at the reason. The

English came out of Doubleyou Doubleyou Eye Eye with a shattered publishing industry. (I know because I sold them a lot of bookbinding machinery after I was discharged from the Army in 1946.) Consequently, they had to rely on foreign composition and even the printing itself, mostly on Holland. The typesetters didn't know English, which led to some beautiful bloopers, L.E. Gold among them. Check your copy and see if I'm not right.

Two incidentals:

I was kind of surprised that you didn't include "Trouble with Water" in your discussion of kosher sf. True, it's fantasy, but it's closer to sf than any other kind of literature. It couldn't have been written at all if the protagonist couldn't have been Jewish -- the importance of his special relationship with God, and the attitude toward charity, just wouldn't have been possible with anybody else.

The other incidental: I slaver over fanzines and would love to have their producers send them to me. I reply whenever a reply is called for.

from Kay Anderson, 2610 Trinity Place, Oxnard CA 93030



I visited the set of KUNG FU in March and met David Carradine. I must say he's the perfect person to play a man from an alien society. He has a perpetually bemused expression, as if he's translating everything he hears into Mandarin and back, or perhaps is watching everyone around him growing three green heads. He's the only person I ever met who was able to forget me while I was standing in front of him. He doesn't really seem stoned, just absent. I rather liked him.

from Jackie Franke, Box 51-A RR2 Beecher IL 60401

Dorothy's con report was readable, though she did neglect to name the con she was at. ((My fault -- forgot to include it as a sub-title: Filmcon I.))

Thanks for the taste of Digby -- wish he'd write for a wider audience. Who wants to read another spate of "Who the hell is Tom Digby?" when Hugo-voting time comes again?

What's the bacover refer to?
((A so-far unwritten children's book by the artist.))

from Norm Hochberg (again)

Connie's cover ((No 12)) was superb. I've seen a number of black & white mirror-image figures before and every one truly amazes me with its intricacy and (at the same time) simplicity. Is James Appelbaum (your nephew) at all related to Jeff Appelbaum (of Minneapa fame and notoriety)? ((Yes, but distantly.))

from Dennis Lien, 1102 East 24 Str Mpls MN 55404

An LoCof sorts (or perhaps out of sorts) on No 12 and 13. You must realize that I no longer write LoC's: (I also write them no shorter, I suppose), save to Yandro and Sandworm and The Sick Elephant. They Understand Me -- however, it's one thing to ignore an unsolicited fanzine from somewhere Out There, produced by someone I've never met. It's another thing to ignore one from someone I see every couple of weeks; that hurt expression deep in the back of your eyes finally got to me, & only the lingering suspicion that it was really astigmatism prevented an earlier letter.

No 12: that's a very "No"-like cover, & rather a haunting one. The plight of inter-racial Siamese twins who have only four breasts and five elbows to share between them has not previously been so graphically depicted; obviously, something or other marches on.

I find no pencil checks on the margins of Jean Berman's "Letters from England." I find no pencil checks on the margins of Jean Berman either, for that matter, & hence have no comments on either the lady who Is Not Ruth Berman's Sister Except Sort Of, or on her contribution here, except to ask in a stern tone, "BUT IS IT SCIENCE FICTION?" I do agree with those who said that your use of initials made things confusing; besides, while in England, one ought to receive a new assignment from M, and this she neglected to do.

I have fond memories of the one Westercon I attended (1970), but I'm on record elsewhere as saying that con reports cause cancer, so I'll pass over Doris Robin's. Olaf Loudsnore -- Aaarrggghhh, etc., etc. Protestant science fiction? Well, there's always Paradise Lost....

from Loren MacGregor, Box 636 Seattle WA 98111

"What's Opera, Doc?" has probably achieved more publicity, at least in the zines I get, than anything up to and including Star Trek. But then, Chuck Jones in animation, and Carl Barks in stills and scripting, probably deserve more recognition than anything, up to and surpassing, Star Trek. You know, they used to say that if you could do it in real life, it wasn't animation, and I think a lot of recent cartoons on tv and elsewhere show that the studios have forgotten that.

From the standpoint of someone who seldom attends conventions, I enjoyed the con report, and it's nice to hear someone say something nice about the hotel staff. Why would Richard Matheson want to create a giant rutabaga to sit on you, I wonder, Dorothy?

I shall never forgive Ned Brooks, do you hear? Never? Yes, never.

Tom Digby's Something Things were beautiful. Set me in mind of the time the city dug up the street near my home to install sewers, repaved it, dug it up to widen it, repaved it, dug up the sidewalk to put in underground wires, decided against said wires, repaved it, redug it up to fix the sewers which had been malfunctioning since the road widening, then dug up the sidewalk again to plant trees. This was all within the space of a year.

from Gerard Giannattasio, 1130 Park Blvd Massapequa Park NY 11762

The Olaf Loudsnore, Chapter DC by John Boardman, I did NOT get. I mean I sort of get the reference to the "Maid of Fife" ballad...well, must be the emperor's clothes hanging around here somewhere. "The Saga" in No 13 also. *grump*. Speaking of Olaf Loudsnore, I saw a bumper sticker on the road to JFK Int'l Airport the other day: "Take a Viking to Lunch: Leif Erickson Millenium 1001-2001." Then there was the Lundy Island commemorative about 10 years ago, celebrating the millennium of Eric Bloodaxe's failure to conquer England. (Didn't Farmer use this man in the Riverworld series?) ((Both chapters took off a fannish catchphrase: Fandom is a way of life/Fandom is just a ghod-damn hobby.))

from a fan who asks to be anonymous

Recently new programs have been announcing that the FDA has ruled that any vitamin over 90 millegrams must be gotten on a doctor's prescription. (Smaller amounts available without a prescription.) The ruling goes into effect October 1.

I've heard that drug companies have been buying up vitamin companies, and that the American Medical Association has

\$10 million worth of stock in drug companies in southern California alone. I suspect collusion. A prescription item costs more and makes a bigger profit than a non-prescription one.

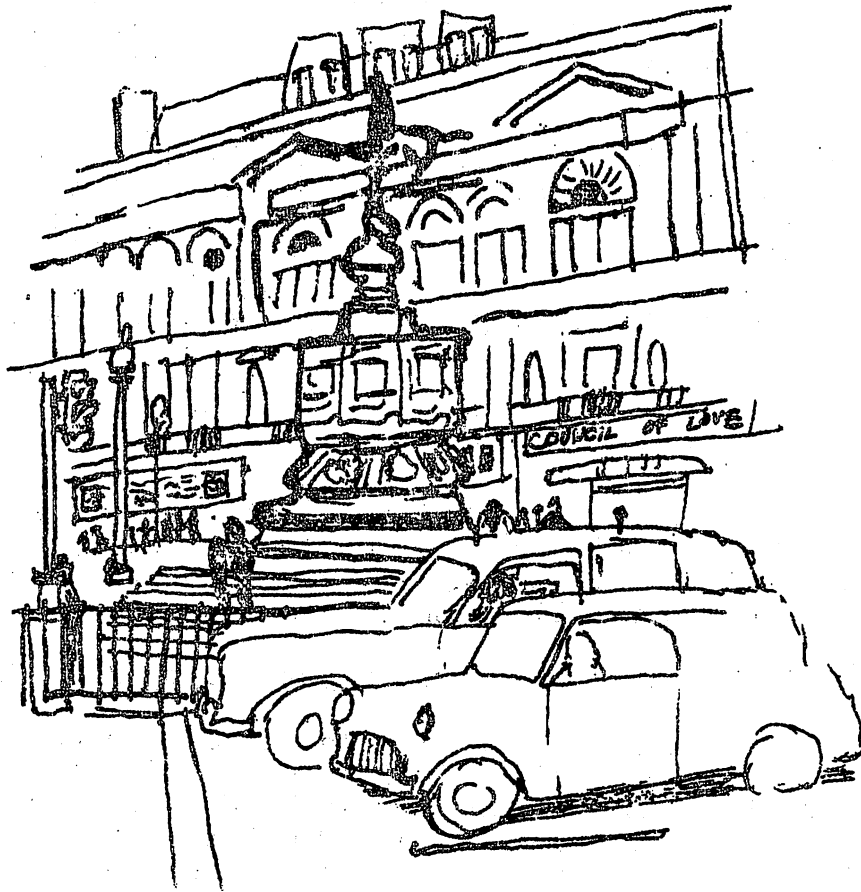
Vitamins are a food nutrient. We have a right to purchase them in the dosages now available. It is abridging our freedom of choice to make a ruling such as this. The FDA claims that some vitamins are toxic in large quantities, but surely 90 millegrams on every vitamin is an unreasonable limit. I'm writing my congressman to complain and suggest that others do likewise. (Any central library in a large city ought to have a list of congressmen, if you don't know yours offhand. Or try writing Ralph Nader, 1719 19 Str NW Washington DC 20004, or The Center for the Study of Responsive Law, Mr. Ted Jacobs, 1156 19 Str NW Washington DC 20036.)

Dr. Carlton Fredericks, a nutritionist, said in a speech he gave that one sweet potato has 5000 millegrams of vitamin A in it. If one sweet potato has that many millegrams of vitamin A, why the 90 millegrams limit? It doesn't make sense.

from David Hall, 202 Taylor Avenue, Crystal City MO 63019

I particularly enjoyed the articles on Jewish Science Fiction. By one of those little coincidences I had just become confronted with Isaac B. Singer. Isaac B. Singer is how he's captioned on the book at hand, SATAN IN GORAY, which winked and blinked at me from the book shelf during an insane all night poker game so that I eventually borrowed it to check it out. Interesting that the opening sentences evoke the same sort of imagery as Dunsany, though the story that develops is set in the real world and without a strong fantasy element. Are any of Singer's other books available in paperback?
((Most of them, I believe.))

I thought about Lin Carter as soon as I read the opening of SATAN IN GORAY, and I thought about him again while reading the article on Kenneth Grahame. I suppose maybe it -- or I -- may suffer from some sort of Malory syndrome; here we have a thumb-nail sketch which nevertheless takes the time to paint a portrait of domestic horrors. Carter in IMAGINARY WORLDS similarly gives some amorphous innuendoes about William Morris' family life, implying that he was so rended by his wife's "thing" for Rossetti that he could do little but father nine children on her and write fifty books. And everyone with a thing for music knows that Sigmund Freud did his shtick on Gustav Mahler and discovered the poor man to be suffering from "compulsive creativity."



a change of address: Jean Berman, 76B West End Lane, London NW6
 England. She'll be there a year, or maybe two, studying city
 planning.

Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle
 in the high aesthetic band,
 If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily
 in your mediaeval hand.

-- W.S.G.

Unknown & Niven & Myths
by Ruth Berman

Ballantine has just brought out The Flight of the Horse, a collection of Larry Niven's Svetz stories and some of his other fantasies. Normally, it's a put-down to say that someone's writing is dated, but in this case it's a compliment to say that Flight has a dated style, because the date is Campbell's Unknown. Niven's fantasy has the qualities which made Unknown so distinguished: the delight in a thorough-going game of "But What If" applied to the impossible, the urbane humor which... pardon me while I digress.

In many fantasies (and especially the kind called mythopoeic, the Tolkien/Williams/Lewis/Dunsany/Morris type typical of Ballantine's Adult Fantasy group), the story gets its power from imagining some kind of absolute Otherness impinging on life. The fantasy element is a symbol -- for one or more of quite a few things, e.g., mental illness, social alienation, sexual love, Nature, God; the kind of experience which is described by the term "transcendental" is impossible to describe directly, and one of the most useful techniques for describing such experiences indirectly is symbolic fantasy. But it works precisely because the impossibility of the symbol reflects the feeling in the real experience of something which is, literally, extraordinary. That's why occultists strike me as being so irritating -- they thrill to the "wonder" of the symbol while destroying much of the meaning of the symbol by taking away its unreality. A real ghost would be no more wonder-full than, say, the stars on a clear night. Which is plenty, of course -- but stars aren't always the best symbol for the feeling of looking at stars. Unknown-type fantasy takes an opposite approach: pretends that the impossible is real, and then plays with the reader's sense of shock at finding that if these figures of fantasy existed in our world, they would be mundane -- the Leviathan would need food, the unicorn would be immune to stun-guns and thus difficult to capture.... I suspect it may be inevitable for the "What If" game applied to fantasy to produce comedy, just because of that shock of finding that even myths (when real) have real problems. The only story in The Flight of the Horse which is not comic to some degree is "Flash Crowd," and it's also the only one which could be considered not to be a fantasy. (Matter transporters may be impossible and therefore fantasy by one definition -- but they have no "atmosphere" of fantasy in themselves.)

Some Assorted Notes

Philip Jose Farmer, 4106 Devon Lane, Peoria IL 61614, wants to write a book on the great French thief, Arsene Lupin, similar to his book on Tarzan. As a first step, he needs a complete bibliography of Leblanc's Lupin books, and would like to be sent checklists from collectors.

The residents of the Virginia State Penitentiary, 500 Spring Str Richmond VA 23219, publish a sort of fanzine called Facts You Should Know "to inform residents, staff, and interested persons of insitutional news and views." It's monthly, and they welcome subscriptions at \$2.50/year.

Donald Jackson, 1043 Vine Street, Adrian MI 49221, asked me to mention and give an opinion of his fanzine Finders Keepers, \$1/copy. No opinion, as most of it deals with "appreciative recognition for outstanding works in the media" of which I know little, and don't much care.

I had a pleasant time at Torcon, although most of it was in talking to people. There didn't seem to be much on the program that interested me. Thanks to Maureen Wilson, who organized a theater (or theatre) party, I saw three plays at Stratford Ontario before going to the con. Was so much impressed by the performance of Douglas Rain (otherwise known to sf fans as Hal 9000) as Iago that I wrote a poem about it, "For Douglas Rain in Ontario," and Toronto Life magazine accepted the poem for publication (probably in the November issue they said) -- so what with one thing and another the whole convention is a bit overshadowed in my memory by by Stratford.





