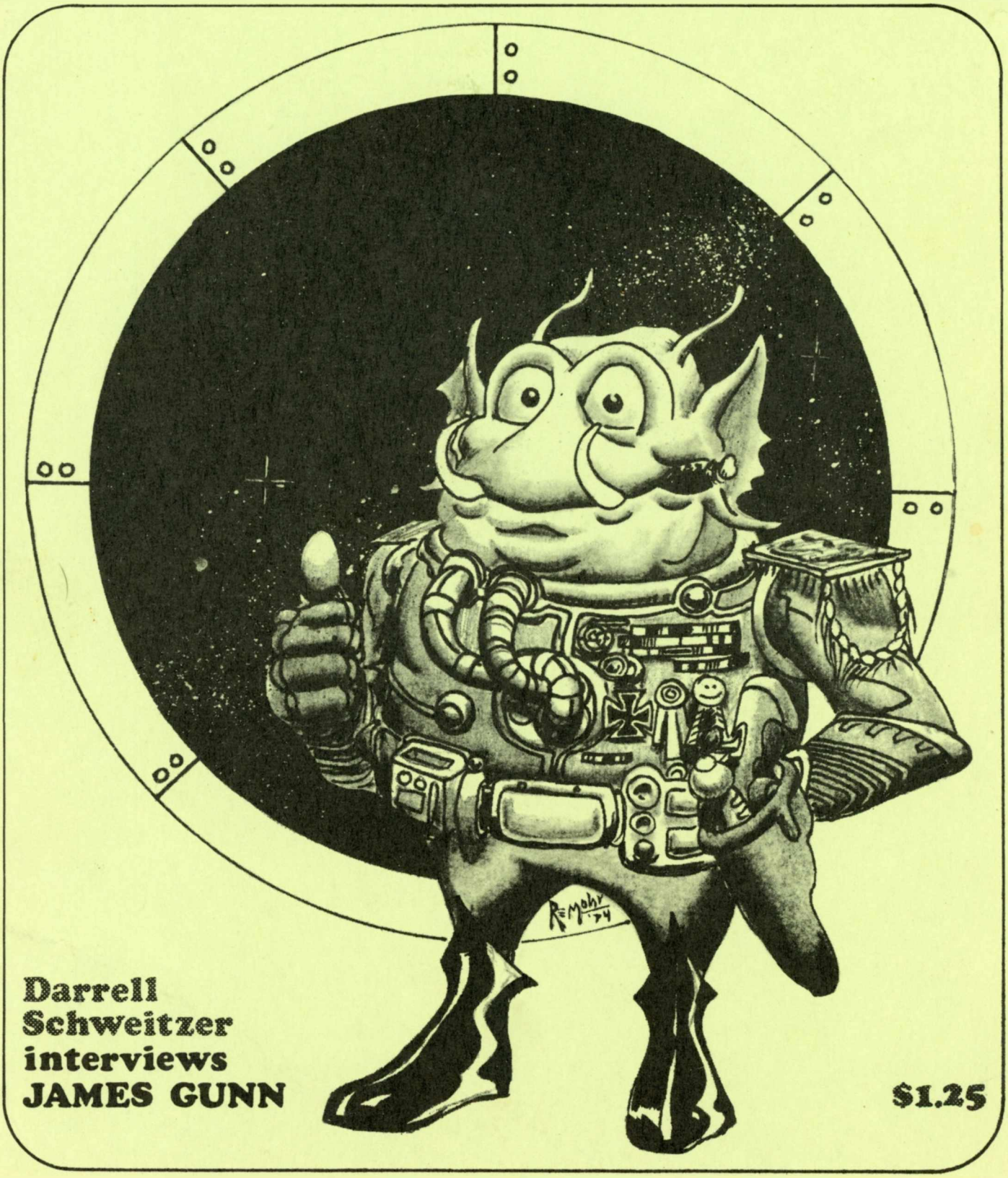
OUTWORLDS

26

POUL ANDERSON □ DAVID GERROLD □ TED WHITE



Darrell Schweitzer interviews JAMES GUNN

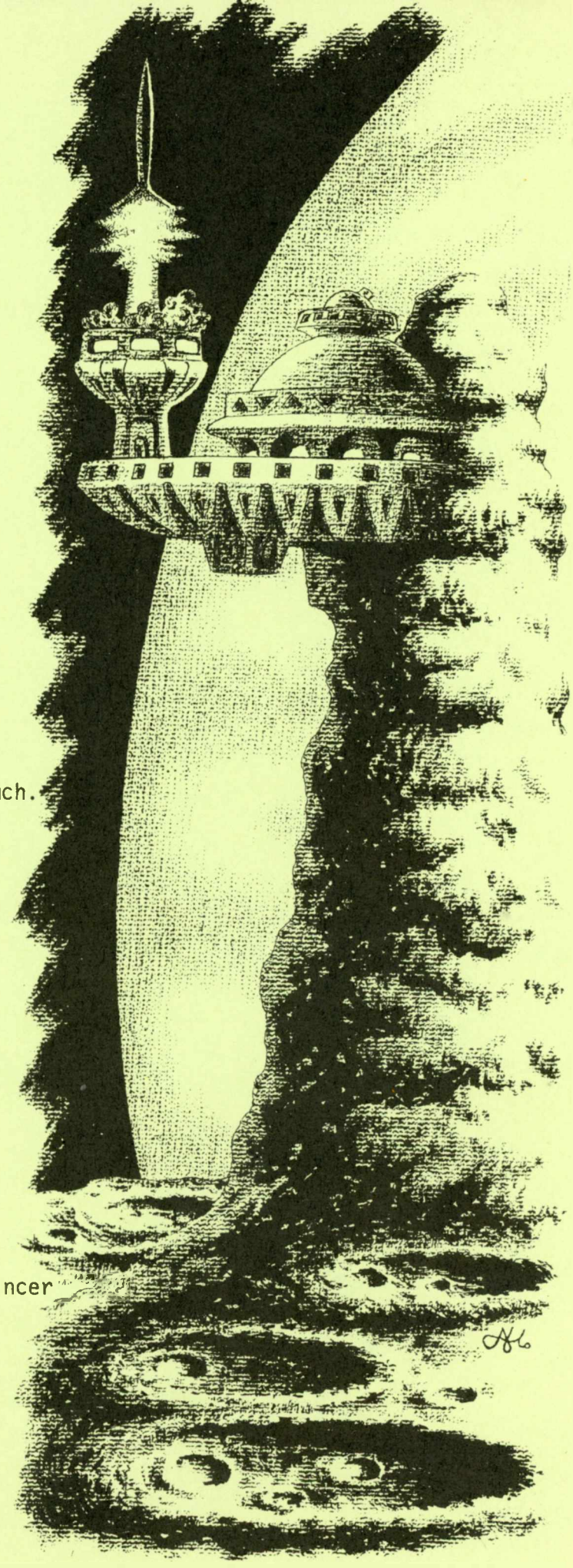
$1.25

Why We Read It

What a relief at last
To meet in green bulk and girth
The terrors cloaked inside,
Yesterday released only on the analytic couch.
Shaped in strange mud,
Violent forms, chittering
With frantic energy beneath
Pale yellow, quilted skies.

A blister on the mind,
This need for darkness.
Lanced
By voyages to the comfortably distant,
The conventionally weird. But with acrid pincer
The twisted thing cuts quick
To bones unsuspected.

Gregory Benford



OUTW(2)RLDS

FOURTH QUARTER: 1975 ISSUE #26 VOLUME VI, NUMBER THREE

WILLIAM L. BOWERS : P.O. Box 2521 : NORTH CANTON : OHIO : 44720

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OUTWORLDS -- the Eclectic Fanzine; published Quarterly. It is available for printed contributions of art or written material (no fiction or poetry, please); limited trades -- and a printed letter of comment will add one issue to your credit. Payment in contributor's copies only. * 36 pages.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: This issue $1.25; next issue $1.50. Subscriptions are: 4 issues for $4.00, until Jan. 31, 1976. As of that date, 4 issue subscriptions will be $5.00. [Renewals will remain 4/$4.00 for those who renew *prior to the publication of the last issue on their current sub.*; it is your responsibility to check your mailing label for your sub. status.]

AUSTRALIA: 4 issues for $A3.00, from DENNIS STOCKS, POBox 235, Albion, Brisbane 4010, Queensland.
UNITED KINGDOM: 5 issues for 2 pounds, from TERRY JEEVES, 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield S11 9FE.

ALL OTHERS (INCLUDING CANADIANS): U.S. RATES, MADE PAYABLE IN U.S. FUNDS.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: It now costs 25¢ (instead of 10¢) to have the postoffice tell me your new address...when you haven't. Subbers and contributors copies will be remailed; trades *will not*, unless they send 50¢.

A SPECIAL ISSUE---*Outworlds* #27.5---will be published in March or April. It will consist solely of letters of comment on Issues 25/26. It IS NOT included in standing subscriptions...and will be sent free only to libraries, people with letters included, and contributors commented upon. If you'd like a copy, it will cost 50¢ now; $1. after publication, if any left.

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MEMBER COSMEP

INWORLDS 16

...being a Column of news/reviews and whatnots...

[The typeset inserts on this page are taken from *Advertising Age*, the weekly newspaper of the ad industry. It is $15. a year, from 740 Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611. I think it's well worth it.]

My Sweet Embraceable Hugo

It can be yours. The most coveted award in the industry could be won by your TELEVISION COMMERCIAL! The Gold Hugo of the 11th Chicago International Film Festival. Prestige . . . recognition . . . Hugo is a symbol of the highest achievement in the creation of a television commercial.

Join the ranks of past Hugo winners such as Leo Burnett Co., Campbell-Mithun, Inc., Y&R, Post-Keyes-Gardner Inc., JWT, Needham, Harper & Steers, BBD & O, N.W. Ayer & Son, Grey Advertising, McCann-Erickson, N. Lee Lacy, Sedelmaier, Kurtz, & Friends, Sarra: the list is very special.

Enter your commercials today in our 25 separate categories. We accept 16mm, 35mm and 2-inch videotape. Our juries are made up of the "pros" in advertising. Your commercials will be in good hands. Deadline for entries has been extended to OCTOBER 10.

Return this coupon or phone (312) 644-3400 today

Send me a copy of the 1975 regulation poster of the 11th Chicago International Film Festival—415 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago 60610

Name_____
Firm_____
Address_____
City_____
State_____ Zip_____

WE ARE NOT ALONE !!!

Hipster strikes out with 'Hugo' tactics

To the Editor: Thinking myself hip to ad argot, and trying my liberated best to make a play for a simply gorgeous hunk of account exec, I simply said to the gentleman, "I bet you have a humdinger of a Hugo!" It was said with respect and wonder. The response I received was a puzzled nothingness. Dear Editor, where did I go wrong?

I have been seeing the "My Sweet Embraceable Hugo" ad in AA for weeks, and the implication sticks out like a sore . . . er . . . thumb.

I hope that the intra-industry controls on taste will not hold you back from printing my nomination. We seem so self-righteous sometimes in our criticism of others. Must we fondle the Hugo that supports us, too?

Lauren W. Deutsch.
Account Supervisor, Howard E. Morse Associates, New York.

Advertising Age, November 3, 1975

GOOD STUFF: Finally it's out--THE MIMEO MAN (the fannish version of guess what) by Moshe Feder, Debbie Notkin & Eli Cohen, which has been performed at two conventions, and which contains songs such as *Goodnight Femmefannes, I Want to Publish, LoC Island, The Sadder But Wiser Fan, Seventy-six Genzines...* Containing over sixty pages, some very nice illustrations, various appendixes--it is more than a simple parody, and very entertaining in its own right. By mail, $1.35 from MOSHE FEDER, 142-34 Booth Memorial Ave., Flushing, NY 11355. (Moshe only published 200 copies, and an incredible amount went at PgHLANGE, so if you want to get it, it might be wise to do so now.) Highly recommended. ¶¶¶ HOWARD DEVORE (4705 Weddel St., Dearborn, MI 48125) has just reissued A HISTORY OF THE HUGO, NEBULA, AND INTERNATIONAL FANTASY AWARDS (which he co-authored with Donald Franson)--complete through the Aussiecon Hugos, this year. Approximately 100 pgs, typeset, this will give you a short history of the awards, the winners, those nominated, etc. ($1.60). ¶¶¶ Also out (the third, revised issue of this): PETER ROBERTS' LITTLE GEM GUIDE to sf fanzines. Peter says that it's "aimed entirely at the newcomer to fandom", but I think he's being a bit modest. An introduction to the what/why/kinds of fanzines, a listing of 154 different fanzines from all over, a listing of fanzine awards (modesty prevents me...), followed by Peter's recommendations. Excellently done. Available from Peter (6 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2) for 25p; available in the U.S. from LINDA BUSHYAGER (1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076), for 50¢. ¶¶¶ Linda, who I take to task in my editorial, publishes *Karass* (3/$1.00)--which is *the* fannish newszine, and the one you should be getting in addition to *Locus*... ¶¶¶ My Man in England, TERRY JEEVES, publishes *ERG Quarterly*, one of the longest-running fanzines still going on a regular schedule. It is small, but neatly done, and one of the last homes of hand-stenciled art. Terry has been running a series of "making a fanzine" articles of his own; the one in the latest issue (#52) is on "Patching In" (the subject Ted passes on in this issue of OW). Available from Terry (see contents page) for 3 issues for 50p, or 3/$1. (He prefers you send dollar bills, which he uses for Stateside subs.) ¶¶¶ JoeD SICLARI (880 West 181st St., #4D, New York, NY 10033) and GARY FARBER have produced a non-issue of *Fanhistorica*, which will be concentrating on fan history. Among other things, they will be reprinting Jerry Kaufman's article on *Odd* from OW5 (and JoeD's address is also Kaufman's new one). I don't know about the availability of this trial issue (write and ask), but #1--out in October they say, but I haven't seen it yet--can be had for 50¢. We've decided that while we(Siclari/Farber & I) have generally the same interests, it's not too likely we'll end up reprinting the same things; I'll be concentrating more on the technical/production phases, and current-day fanzines. (I do hope they will take a bit more time/care in doing the regular issues, but that is my only quibble.) ¶¶¶ Sharon Ferraro gave me a copy of the STAR TREK PRIMER: A Child's Garden of Space ("written, staged & directed by Paula Smith; Choreography & costumes: Philip Foglio")--which is one of the funniest things I've ever seen. I'm not quite sure which is the more amusing: the words, or Phil's fantastic illustrations. Call it a draw. 65¢ from: boojums Press, 1309 1/2 S. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008. ¶¶¶ and, finally, two fanzines most of you probably haven't heard about... I'm mentioning them not because they're another *Algol*, SFR, OW, or whatever, but simply because each new issue is light-years ahead of the previous one, and because the two young men (even tho I've never told them) remind me ever so much of what I was like when I was in my late teens, and had *my* hopes/dreams/fears; I don't write to them, but I bleed a little each time they do and I cheer a little each time they make another stride. The two fanzines in question are: Mike Bracken's *Knights 13* (see the flyer enclosed), and *Starfire 6* from BILL BREIDING (151 Arkansas St., San Francisco, CA 94107); 75¢.

Outworlds BACK ISSUES: #19/75¢; #20/75¢; #21/22/$1.25; #23/$1.25; #24/$1.; 25/$1.

Outworlds NOTES: Beginning next issue, *Grafanedica* will return as a regular part of the zine. If you have material for it, or if you have direct questions on fanzine production/design/whatever,let me know, and I'll *try* to give or get you an answer. I also need information on cheap & reliable places to get supplies, as well as fans who are willing/capable of performing services (such as mimeoing, making electrostencils, etc.) for other fans at a reasonable price. (Dave Locke is conducting a "symposium" of fan writers at the moment, and I am in the process of working up one for fan artists; see what Gorra started!) ¶¶¶ I am totally behind in answering letters, returning art, etc. If you need a immediate response, a postcard or s.s.a.e., will help. I'll get caught up...yes I will!

MATERIAL IN HAND: ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES: *THE DIFFERENCES THAT KNOWING HIM MADE--A Sprawling, Subjective Reminiscence of James Blish* ¶ JEFFREY HUDSON: *The Novel* (illustrated by Harry Bell) ¶ S.A. STRICKLEN, JR.: *My Writing Career; The Great Science Fiction Locked Room Murder Mystery* (it is; illustrated by Dan Steffan); plus several other Stricklen-things ¶ J.R. CHRISTOPHER: *Life in an Imploding Press* (on Brunner's poetry); plus poems ¶ GERARD HOUARNER: *The Witch's Brew* ¶ DAINIS BISENIEKS: *Through A Glass, Redly: American S.F. in Soviet Latvia* ¶ DARRELL SCHWEITZER: *Dully Grinning Delany Descends to Disaster* ¶ *SF AND MEDIA: a discussion between* GREG BENFORD & SIDNEY COLEMAN ¶ plus others, the Art...and things promised: *Westercon Comics* ¶ RO NAGEY: *The Real & True Secret Handgrip of Fandom* ¶ the Dean Koontz article ¶ Doc Lowndes on his Health Knowledge titles ¶ plus other things planned. It's looking good...but there's still room for more...for you, possibly? *Bill*

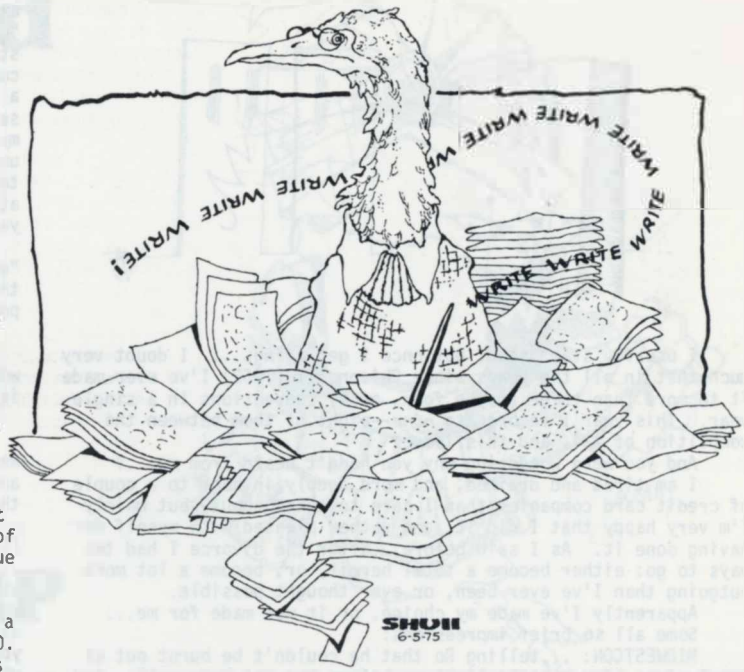
HIGH TIMES, positioned to the drug culture as *Playboy* was to the sexual revolution, has grown from a 25,000 circulation quarterly to an every-other-monthly with the September/October issue selling its entire 300,000 copies in about ten days' time. The next issue, out Sept. 29, will carry 38 ad pages among its 116 pages, a *High Times* record, according to publisher Andrew Kowal. A fall ad campaign by in-house Trans-High Advertising focuses on the lack of adequate newsstand distribution. "Ask your local dealer," read ads scheduled to run in periodicals including (*MORE*), *National Lampoon*, *New Times*, *Oui*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Rolling Stone* and *Village Voice*...

Advertising Age, September 29, 1975

...no--in spite of the fact that most of you will be getting this in the same envelope as OW #25--this is *not* another 21/22 type "double-issue". Roger and I completed running off OW 25 in late September...in time for me to feverishly collate a hundred copies to take along to Pghlange and Windycon. Since then I've been concentrating my energies (those few remaining after *this* summer!) on getting this issue done before Thanksgiving, managing thus far to get only six of the twenty-two page-stacks of 25 sorted, let alone collated. Guess what I'll be doing while this is at the print shop?

Hence, a double-mailing, if not a double issue. The postage/envelope savings, plus the ad in, and the multitude of flyers with, this issue--plus the overwhelming conviction that if I were faced with sorting/collating another thousand copies

from William's Pen
BILL BOWERS



of this so soon, you might never see it/me again (despite a fancier title I am at this moment in time a professional collater [of limited edition manuals; only 20 or 30 copies, but they can range up to 9" thick], and enough is enough!) -- all of these factors lead me to the conviction that although this issue will cost roughly twice what #25 did...in this case, the end does justify the cost...

On a slight tangent: I do find it semi-discouraging that a thousand copies of this 36-page issue will cost me roughly $200. more than 3500 copies of the 48-page SFR 14 cost Geis. But, as Dick pointed out, in offset volume is everything, and were I to increase the print run considerably, and go to one of the big printing plants, I could bring the cost-per-copy down dramatically. Perhaps someday... At the moment, I am actively investigating alternatives: I could go with the method used on #25, but not with a print run larger than 500-750 (my limits; not the process); I could go newsprint again, and I'm not ruling it out...but I'd rather not.

What this leads to is that for the time being, *Outworlds* is simply not going to be able to compete with either *Algol* or SFR (both are running 5000 of their current issues) in terms of number of pages given per subscriber dollar invested. We thought you'd like to know...

In fact I'm not that sure that I'd run that number of copies even if I could come up with the initial investment, and have that kind of a "market" guaranteed. I am in no way involved in a circulation "race" with Andy and Dick. Perhaps...perhaps if I was to do OW only twice a year, or if I could in essence devote full time to it...maybe. But I don't choose the first, and I'm in no position to exercise the second option. Yet.

[For the curious and your amusement, here are the actual circulation figures (i.e., the number of copies distributed) for each of the offset OW's, as of 11/1/75: #19--1228; #20--1292; #21/22--1129; #23--826; #24--806. They go, but slowly after the initial mailing. And I simply don't have room for back issues...]

Where is OW going? ...and in what format? I promised an answer in #27. There may be some surprises, or it may remain business as ususal. The only thing I know is that it will be a bit more under my control than it has been recently!

Now then, about this issue---

There is some heavy stuff in here, he said candidly.

I offered Ken Keller rebuttal space for Midamericon (see Gerrold's *Stomp the Shadowman*), but he said they would handle that in their fanzine progress report. I tend to agree with a lot of what David says...but I think he over-reacted. As Buck Coulson said in OW 25, Fandom is *not* one big happy family.

...it just happens to be the closest thing to one big happy family that, I suspect, a lot of us will ever find.

Poul Anderson, once again, is going to upset a lot of people. The one's who will be most upset will be those who read it thru once, quickly. I know it upset me--at one time I intended a long response. But Neal Wilgus' LEAK news release (which came in at about the same time) seems to serve as a nice counterpoint.

If you feel strongly about what Poul discusses (and is there any other way to feel?), may I suggest you send a carbon of your response directly to Poul? I really don't know how much I will print on the subject--OW is *not* an activist political fanzine, and has no intention of becoming one. (Where is *Kipple* when we really need it?) As Denis Quane found out at Windycon (again, my apologies, Denis), that war is a very emotional subject for me, and one which I am still not equipped to handle rationally. I can listen with some respect, no matter what the viewpoint, to those who were Over There. By and large, others I tend to dismiss unheard. That's probably wrong. Sorry.

Briefly, while I can understand those who lost sons and relatives over there having to believe that they did not die (or were maimed/fucked-up) in vain--*I cannot* (and I've tried) find ANY justification whatsoever for that war--*the way it was conducted*. (To that extent, at least, I agree with Poul.) And I can not do less than to hold Nixon personally responsible for the senseless, needless death of 20,000+ young boys--*they* did die in vain--after I voted for him in '68 solely on the basis of his promise to end that war. Sure I feel betrayed. I hope he suffers a long, a very long time.

(My current Quest---apart from determining exactly how many fans HAVE finished DHALGREN--is to find someone who will *admit* to having voted for Nixon in '72...)

Has anyone noticed how very easy it is to be liberal when you're a Kennedy--or if you have nothing at all--and how much rougher it is to be liberal when you're somewhere in between?

I freely admit that I sweated Piers Anthony's column...even went so far as to show it to a lawyer--until Dean Koontz's response came in. Statement: I'm printing them because I felt that Dean has issued a challenge, and Piers had a right to respond to that challenge. Now that Dean has had the chance to rebut Piers' case, as far as I/OW are concerned, that is that. Thus draws to a close a series of "confrontations"/bad vibes, that stretches back directly to Piers' review of A,DV in OW 3.5, and which has involved far too many people and far too many of these pages. That was in late 1972. Three years of this is about all I can handle. (I'm sure you have Dick Geis' address?)

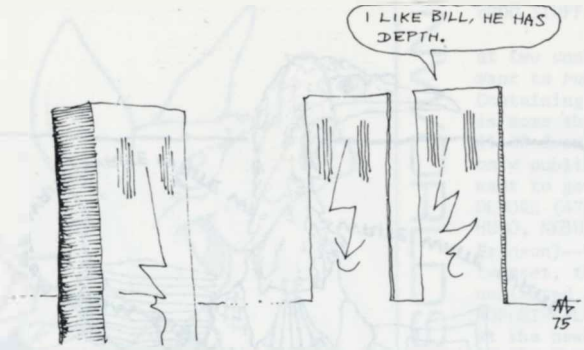
I'm not outlawing controversy by any means--there are valid issues and differences of opinion that I believe should be aired; I am intensely interested in the world of publishing and the creation-process by which that which is published, or not published, is arrived at--and I will not be censoring the ideas of those columnists on my masthead any more than in the past. Nothing would be more bland than a mutual back-slapping self-appreciation society.

Undoubtedly I'll blow it from time to time--I'm only human, despite what Glicksohn says--but it is my firm intention to do everything in my power to confine future "discussions" to the *issues* rather than the *personalities*. To do so, I'll need your help and your restraint--the readers as well as the contributors.

You will note that the Anthony/Koontz contributions are not billed on the cover of this issue; neither are they used in my advertising to promote the sale of this issue. Piers told me this summer that, in essence, I need this type of material, or my readers will desert me. We'll soon see.

You all are free to speculate on why I reprinted Garrett...

What I Did on My Summer Vacation(s):



I usually start slow; but once I get going...! I doubt very much that in all the years since Chicon III (1962) I've ever made it to more than three (maybe four, once) conventions in a single year. This year I've been to *nine*--eight of them between the complition of #24, and this issue.

And you were wondering why you hadn't heard from me...?

I am tired and drained, and more deeply in hock to a couple of credit card companies than I care to think about--but mainly I'm very happy that I did it, and rather pleased with myself for having done it. As I said before...after the divorce I had two ways to go: either become a total hermit, or, become a lot more outgoing than I've ever been, or ever thought possible.

Apparently I've made my choice, or it was made for me...

Some all **so** brief impressions:

MIDWESTCON: ...telling Ro that he couldn't be burnt out at twenty-two: "You have to light up before you can burn out". And getting the FAAN awards (Randy Bathurst: you do fantastic work!) ..."I don't give speeches; I just print them." Tucker reading off the Committee members afterwards. Alphabetically. Thanks, Bob!

WESTERCON: my consolation for missing Aussiecon (and the only one planned between Midwestcon and Windycon). Seven days... spending a whole morning in a bus looking for Charlie & Dena's house; most milage I ever got for a quarter. The delightful hospitality of Dave Haugh and his wife. Having Dan Goodman tell me I'm supposed to be short and scowling... Eating supper in a Vietnamese-French resturant with Chris Sherman (the only genuine Bill-Bowers-Approved-Burnt-Out-Seventeen-Year-Old-Neofan) and Loren MacGregor: Chris tells a joke...pause...Loren: "I've heard that somewhere..."...pause...Bill: "I think I have, too..." A longer pause, and finally the light: it was one of Canfield's in OW23...only 3 months before! ...offering Roy Tackett a TAFF ballot, and telling him to vote early and often... Seeing again people I haven't seen since '64. Being personally harrassed by Roger Elwood. Meeting many, many new people. But mainly, at last getting to meet the Wolfenbarger's: Bill, Loretta, and Sara Dawn...who is a delight! Too little time together, but someday.

BYOBCON: ...swore I'd never go to Kansas City again, after having been stationed there two years, but... Went by way of Ann Arbor. Central Illinois...a very strange gas station boy/ attendent at 3 a.m., followed by the world's biggest storm... (That was going; coming back there was a hot air balloon hanging over Chanute AFB...strange.) Having Harlan come up to me in the lobby and say, for no reason at all, "Bowers, you're a trouble maker." Being on my first fanzine panel. Having someone turn to Sheryl and say, "Is that Glicksohn? I recognize him from the cartoons in *Outworlds 24*." Meeting Midge and other delightful people. Staying up all night and the following day to celebrate my birthday--and at my advanced age! Harlan telling us at breakfast about Bodé. Sunday nite and the shameless and disgusting Strip Hangman game...Glicksohn being down to his briefs and one sock; ending up with one sock. Sinful goings-on, yes.

TORONTO FANFAIR III: A very, very strange con, but I did enjoy myself, and again meeting new friends and those known only through the mail and fanzines. Stayed at Glicksohn's apartment, where my roommate was one Hillary...a very strange creature that looks like a snake with a hat on top.

WILCON: food, more food, and Killer Omelets...miserable weather...beautiful people; many thanks, Joni & Jon!

PgHLANGE: The Holiday Inn sign proclaimed: "Welcome to Pittsburgh LANGE". A last minute decision to go, but one that was well worth it.

WINDYCON: In many ways a disappointment, but that might be only in comparison to the one last year--which, with TORCON II, ranks as one of the two most "perfect" cons I've ever been too...

OCTOCON: the total relaxacon...getting surprised by Michael showing up...getting to know Gale Burnick and George R.R. Martin (who were at Midwestcon, who I met at Byobcon, who I got to talk to at Windycon)...delightful people (who will be married the 15th of this month). Bowling my first game ever...total disaster...

That was my summer. I met so very many people I'd wanted to meet/met people who *didn't* know me thru either D:B or OW... and I could still manage without having to fall back on my "credits" (that may not mean much to you, but to me...). If I started a list, it would finish this column, and still not be complete. I can only say thanks to all for helping make this by a long shot the best year of my life so far! Oh, I pushed myself too far on occasion, and I've blown some things, and I have my regrets about things said and done...more things left unsaid, undone; but with the help of my friends, I'm coming a lot closer to defining my "vision" in a concrete form, and I'm a lot more at peace with myself than I could possibly have dreamed being, a year ago.

Fandom may not be one big happy family; it may in fact be "escaping" from the Real World; it may or may not be a lot of things... Whatever it is, it is a lot of fantastic people, *my* people...and I really don't think there's any cure for me now!

The tenative (very) schedule for next year? Confusion 12--wonder why? Boskone. Marcon. (What I'll be doing over Easter is out of my hands at the moment!) Autoclave. SF EXPO 76...

SF EXPO 76...!

Yes, well let me tell you about that... It's over the same weekend as Midwestcon, which is a definite bummer of scheduling, and normally there would be no question that I would be in Cincy the last weekend in June.

But my mind was made up for me recently, altho that wasn't (I'm sure) the intended effect.

You see, Linda's done it again. In *Karass 18*--I just *knew* she was going to do it, but I hoped against hope she wouldn't--she says, in effect that, if you attend SF Expo 76, not only will you bring about the death of "fannish" conventions, you, yourself, will no longer be "fannish". (And this from the one who publicized Octocon...previously a semi-invitational con that didn't *want* publicity.)

Now I don't know about you... And I really don't know about what "fannishness" is...except it is usually proclaimed from on high...but, to be very blunt, if to be it requires that you go where others tell you to go, and that you must very, very carefully follow all the Rules...then I'm never going to make it.

Because, if I can possibly afford it, I'm going to New York next June. Just because I'm mean, cantankerous, petty, and all that other good stuff, as well as being an old grouch.

Because I'm 32, and I've never been to NYC, and perhaps I'm due for my Rite of Passage...

If you've read the fine print on the contents page, you will have seen mention of a "special" issue of OW. I just know that OW25 and this issue are going to draw some comment, even if they did shut down the Canadian postal system just because my boy Glicksohn was overloading it. And, looking at the material on hand, not to mention that promised or likely, I also know that there is no way I am going to get all that *and* decent-sized lettercol in the same issue. And I don't WANT to do another one like OW25; at least not so soon. But I like getting letters... So, those who like long lettercols can write or pay; those that don't need not worry about it.

Until that point in time when I get all caught up, Real Soon Now, I'll probably do one or two "decimal-issues" a year; not always lettercols, but things I suspect that a lot of the readers might not go out of their way to get. I found out by doing things like this in the past, that the response will be only a fraction of the regular mailing list, so the printrun of OW 27.5 *will* be very much below the norm; probably only 250...

Has anyone ever noticed how very much easier it is to be fannish, when you have a decent-sized income, and don't have to scrimp and scrape for everything above the essentials?

I'm afraid the axe is going to have to fall again, and this time a bit heavily. The "freebie/trade" list is about a third of my circulation; I can't continue that and still go to cons also. Being hooked on the latter, and being at the moment quite unable to take this creature back to a mimeo personalzine...and being totally selfish in wanting both conventions *and Outworlds*, I really have no choice. If you see the "X", do something...!

I want to thank Roger Bryant...because without the savings of doing OW25 on his press, and without the giving of his time, *this* issue wouldn't have been possible this year. Thanks, Rog.

...and I want to dedicate this (not the most pleasant of issues, but it's all I have at the moment) issue to two very special people: Lin Lutz and Ro Nagey. They were my shepherds the better part of this summer, and they are two beautiful and understanding persons. They are getting married in March...and I wish them both happiness and joy forever, if only for their being friends to mean ole Father William! ...*Bill* *11/5/75*

David Gerrold

STOMP the SHADOWMAN

Westercon Keynote Address / July 4, 1975

MY SPEECH TODAY should take about thirty minutes. I want to sound a keynote, not just for this convention, but one I hope will echo for a while in the rest of fandom. You can help.

I am not going to talk about science fiction, because each of us here already has his or her own definition of science fiction. I do my defining at my typewriter when I'm writing--you do your defining at the newsstands when you buy what you like. I want to talk about something more *pertinent* to us here.

And I want to do a little experiment. Because Harlan Ellison said in the program book that I'm courageous--I think he said that--I'm going to try to give a courageous speech. I hope. I'm going to try to open my heart and my feelings to you. See, I'm reaching out to touch....

I'm going to start out by talking a little bit about myself--not necessarily out of vanity, although it is the one subject on which I am on surest ground--but because it's a good way to get to the real subject matter.

Bear with me.

About two months ago a young woman came up to me at a convention and asked, "David, are you trying to change your image?"

I thought about that for a moment before answering. What I said was this: "No, I'm not--because I'm not an image. I'm a human being. What I *am* trying to do (have been trying for some time) is disavow an image that other people have laid on me. It is an image that I don't identify with, have never identified with, and very candidly, don't like. Part of it may be my fault, but it's still other people's idea of who David Gerrold is--a creature of myth and wishes, some true, some false--but all of them distorted by the reflections and refractions of a hundred, a thousand different points of view.

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The result has been the creation of a shadow-being--a *schatten-ganger*.

A hundred years ago, or so, I used to be a good sport about a lot of things. I made a conscious effort to be a good sport. When someone tossed a cheap shot in my direction, like a dart at a target, I used to smile and bear it good-naturedly, no matter how much it hurt. Generally, all it got me was another cheap shot. Well, now I'm old and crotchety, not as good-natured as I was in the past. You see, the only way you can prove you're a good sport is to lose a lot. Well...I'm a little tired of it. It's getting out of hand. It's starting to interfere with my writing.

I want to kill that schatten-ganger, that damn shadow-man. He may live in *your* imaginations, but he feeds on *my* life energy. And I'm not the only one with a shadow-man. We all have them; the schatten-gangers outnumber us. Harlan Ellison has one of the biggest, and most frightening--and I'll talk about that too.

The scatten-ganger is a creature of rumor who walks around conventions that I don't attend, appears in fanzines that I don't read or even receive, pops up in conversations that I don't hear; that shadow-man who deals with other people when I'm not around, but never with face washed, fingernails cleaned, hair combed and shoes shined. The shadows get fed back and forth until they take on a reality of their own--but it's not my reality. I only hear about the schatten-ganger because people keep getting him confused with me--they come up to me and ask about my terrible dragon breath, my lack of sex appeal in my mouth, and oh, by the way, is it true about the ring around your collar?

I want to kill that son of a bitch. Look, I'm not disavowing the rotten kid I used to be--you know the fellow, the one who made a lot of honest mistakes, and maybe even a dishonest one or two. I'll probably make a lot more too--but mistakes are as important as successes, perhaps even more so. We learn from our mistakes.

There's no new David Gerrold. I wouldn't ask you to

believe that any more than in the new Nixon. We all know how that worked out.

There is just the same old David Gerrold--and getting older--but some of you have never met him.

The David Gerrold that most of you know--through your fanzines and conventions--is a creature that *you* have made up; some of you have made him a hero figure, others have decided he's a monster. Both are false. But that shadow person is more real to most of you than the real me--and the result, quite often, is that no matter how much I want to be *me*, some of *you* won't allow it. Because creatures are always more fun than truth. So, I get frozen into the twenty-three year old kid who lucked out and sold *The Trouble With Tribbles* to *Star Trek* at the expense of the thirty-one year old man who's sweating his ass off writing something he considers far more important. I'm working on an epic of my own; but I'm also writing a feature length, sword and sorcery, science-fantasy script for Ralph Bakshi --it'll be an animated film, as ballsy as *Fritz the Cat*, and as good as we can make it.

But anytime someone finds himself in a piece of the public spotlight, his life takes on proportions no longer his own. Suddenly, he is a creature of the public, and suddenly he finds out that the public has taken away his right to be who he wants to be and decided for him that he must be thus-and-such instead. The smallest wart becomes a terrible affliction. The smallest virtue becomes a halo. Everything is magnified.

I want you all to look at my feet later on, when I step out from behind this podium. See, they aren't made of clay--but neither is there a pedestal under them.

If you do see a pedestal, let me point this out--it's *your* pedestal.

You see, I'm just a liar. A very good liar. I tell such outrageous lies--and I tell them so believably--and you *want* to believe in them--that you're convinced of their truth. You believe in all kinds of things that I've told you, things I've made up out of whole cloth. Things like fuzzballs and talking computers and narcissistic time travelers and space skimmers and flying sorcerers. Those are all lies, they're not real--but I've told those lies to you so skillfully that you believe not only the reality of that magic, but that I must be magic myself.

And sometimes when you find out the truth, that I really am not magic, you get upset--because you've decided that all of us skillful liars *have* to be magic.

Well, we're not. We're just liars. Always have been. Probably always will be.

So take your goddamn pedestals out from under our feet. They make it hard to walk.

I am saying all this because I care. Believe it or not, there is sensitivity within even the crassest of us. There has to be to write anything with any impact at all. I am saying all of this because I am tired of being hurt by unthinking and callous people. You can have me in fandom, or shadow-man--but not both. There is not room enough in fandom for both of us.

And that brings me to the real subject of this speech. Not me. You. Fandom.

I think I've earned a credential to talk about fandom. First of all, I am a fan. Before I was a fan, I was a buff --I started reading SF at age 10 or so, maybe earlier. I read Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke, and Sturgeon; they're my definition of science fiction.

I've been attending conventions, and been active in various areas of fandom for seven and a half years. Blame the late Zeke Leppin who stuck a note into a book I bought that turned me on to the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society.

Since then I've seen quite a bit of fandom. Some of it good, a lot of it bad. I'd like to remind you of some of the good and point out some of the bad. (Isn't it interesting here that the most important thing that the professional guest of honor at a convention wants to talk about is the fans...?)

Some of the good--way back in 1972, that's a generation and a half ago in fandom; Fred Pohl was guest of honor at the Worldcon in Los Angeles. He struck an important note in his guest of honor speech, and it was repeated the following year in Toronto by William Rotsler, who was the fan guest of honor that year.

The point was a simple one, but it is one that we seem to forget too easily.

Fandom--science fiction--is a family.

Way back in 1969, the Worldcon was held in St. Louis; we shared the hotel with another convention, the YAF--I think it means Young American Fascists, it was a collection of archetypical mundanes. They couldn't understand about all the (snicker-snicker) "little green men". One fellow couldn't understand why a near-nude young woman wouldn't go to bed with him--well, she was dressed like his fantasy-idea of a hooker; why didn't she act like one? Finally, he asked her, "What's going on here? Who are you people?"

She tried to explain to him that it was the World Science Fiction Convention. He asked, "Well, who sends you here? What are you delegates of?"

She said, "We come on our own."

He said, "You mean you pay your own way?"

She said, "Yes."

And he said, "Wow, you people must really *like* each other!"

I guess that's it. We must really like each other. I can't think of any other reason why we keep coming to these things.

Fans are--and I do not mean this in any negative sense of the word--misfits. Ray Bradbury says we are the nuts who hold the bolts of the universe together. We are the ones who don't fit into that Barbie and Ken, plastic world out there. We came to science fiction because we were looking for escape from the mundanes. We were looking for alternate realities, and when we couldn't find them, we built them--and wonder of wonders, we built a culture for ourselves where nobody is a misfit. There is a place for everybody here. It is a true, working democracy--no, it isn't.

It is a working anarchy.

And it will stay that way. If there is one thing that can truthfully be said about fandom, it is that any attempt to organize it will fail. That's fandom's strength.

We've all been misfits too long to give up that individuality easily.

And yet--

There are people in fandom who sometimes don't get the message.

Like the convention committee that thinks *Star Trek* fans should be kept away from a Worldcon, because they aren't really science fiction fans, are they, they're something else. And comics-fans too. Illogically, they haven't singled out ERB-dom, the medievalists, the Tolkien Society, the Diplomacy players, the Perry Rhodan freaks, or the (ahem) Church of All Worlds for that kind of discrimination; *they're* not science fiction fans either. But if they *were* singled out, it would be just as wrong. They say that only believers in the true faith are going to be welcome at their convention. But it is *our* convention--it belongs to *us*, the fans who support it. That committee is using the rationale of limiting the size of the con to justify bigotry and discrimination against categories of their fellow fans. *Our* fellow fans. And they are wrong. There are better ways to orient a convention toward science fiction than to throw out all the fringe fans. For instance, watch how this Westercon develops.

I believe that ultimately that convention will be damaged by that bigotry. I hope that our family, fandom, is not damaged as well. Their argument is that fandom isn't ready, can't handle a 6000 member worldcon. Hell, *Star Trek* fandom has been having big cons for years, and the New York in '77 Committee believes that that expertise can be turned to science fiction fandom as well. I think fans should rise to the challenge of growth; it means we're doing something right. I'm of the opinion that once we start cutting away the "splinter groups" we might find that there is nothing left of fandom. We are all splinter groups. There'll be no one left who's "of the body" ex-

cept you and me, Charlie--and sometimes I'm not too sure about you.

Anyone who tries to keep fandom from growing naturally will find that it will grow anyway--and without them. They'll be irrelevant. And again, that's fandom's strength.

Some of us keep forgetting that we're a family. All right, sure, you can't stand Cousin Ted, or maybe Uncle Jerry strikes you as a crashing boor, and you think that Grandpa Robert is a crotchety old man, and you wish Great-Uncle Isaac would stop pinching your tushie, and sometimes you get so annoyed at Sister Joanna's militancy to the point of paranoia--but over it all, you don't stop respecting them, appreciating them, and even loving them a little bit. You accept their faults as you do their virtues--as elements of the person's individuality. To be cherished, and not abused, questioned or stifled.

It bothers me to hear comics-fans putting down trekkies, or ERB-dom sneering at Perry Rhodan, or medievalists feuding with each other--well, at least the medievalists do it right; they use swords and shields. It bothers me to hear professional writers sneering at each other's work out of literary elitism. Even though I don't read as much as I used to--most of it is research these days--I don't like to hear Lin Carter, Zenna Henderson and Andre Norton put down because someone thinks they aren't "important". They're important to their fans. They have their niche in the field, and they've earned their places fairly--by delivering a dollar's worth of entertainment in every book. I think we ought to stop pulling up our noses at other people's definitions of science fiction just because it doesn't match our own.

The only thing that any of us has that we can call our own is our uniqueness, our identities. Not one of us has the right to measure anyone else's identity with his own meter-stick. It won't work. And you are wrong for insisting that it should.

We have too much to teach each other. Why are we wasting ourselves trying to trim away those important differences? That heterogeneity is the source of science fiction's and fandom's vitality. Every little meaning has a movement all it's own.

And each of those movements has something to teach the rest of us.

The art shows have taught me to appreciate artists more. In my house are originals by Connie Faddis, Don Simpson, Wendy Pini, Tim Kirk, George Barr, Bill Rotsler, Grant Canfield, Dan Steffan, Isidore Haiblum, and others who you'll probably be hearing a lot more of in the future. That represents an investment--not of money--but of appreciation for the works of other people in an area I wasn't too sure of before; but one that fandom taught me to appreciate.

Fandom taught me to appreciate the organizing abilities of a John and Bjo Trimble, the perceptive reviewing eyes of Buck Coulson and Richard Geis, the big hearts of Walt Leibscher and Tom Scortia, the friendship of Steve and Kathleen Goldin, and Dorothy Fontana...when I think of all the people I wouldn't have know otherwise, then I know that my emotional investment and commitment to fandom has been worth it.

This is my family. It's a very nice family. It stretches across this continent to Canada and Mexico, overseas to England and France and Germany and Poland and Argentina and Australia and Japan and god knows where else ...it's a family that *cares* too. There's the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, the Trans Oceanic Fan Fund, the Down Under Fan Fund--there are special funds like the Strelkov fund and the Tucker fund. There are also things as special as Forry Ackerman's Big Heart Award and the Gene L. Coon memorial fund, and a lot of other things that make me proud to associate with this group of people.

I like this family. Despite its faults, I like this family. I like being a part of it, and I want my family to like me back. I want my family to want me and be proud of me. Most of all, I want my family to know me as I am. Me--not shadow-man.

I can't compete with shadow-man. He's conceited and loud, a braggart and a snob. I don't feel that way about

me; but that's who I'm supposed to be. I pick up the fanzines, see that my books aren't worth reading because I'm a terrible person. That's a foul, it's hitting below the belt; but I can name two fans and one professional critic --all of whom have been around long enough to know better --who've done it. I don't want to come to a convention and hear five different rumors about myself, all of them libelous, all of them contradictory, and all of them started by the same person. It's happened. I don't want to be introduced to a scattering of applause and a round of booing by the Pig Squad in the back of the room who think they are demonstrating their class. It's happened. It's because of this creature that you've created, the schattenganger, shadow-man. Total strangers think they have the right to be rude to the original because they've been offended by the shadow, and primed by the rumor. It's happened because some of the fans don't know how yet, and don't want to learn how, to separate myth from reality. In this wonderful world we've built for ourselves, we have to encourage the growth of myths; but we also get a lot of shadows. Some people think the shadows are more exciting than the reality. That's where the problem starts.

Other writers have shadows too, and theirs bugs them as much as mine bugs me. Alexei Panshin gets treated rudely by people who think they are defending Heinlein's honor--Mr. Heinlein can do quite well for himself, thank you. Harlan Ellison can't walk into a room without some plowboy wanting to call him out and see if he really is a number one gun.

I know a man who I used to think was too loud, a discourteous boor--then I found out he was deaf in one ear, and he was overcompensating because he literally couldn't hear himself otherwise. To understand everything is to forgive everything. Shadow-man doesn't give explanations though...so, it's easy to confuse confidence with conceit, enthusiasm with bragging, shyness with snobbery--but things aren't always what they seem, are they?

I'm not going to try to tell you that I'm modest and sensitive and humble--you wouldn't believe it. I *am*, but you're not going to believe it. But what I am really like, you can find out for yourself. I try to make myself available to the other members of this family, because I can remember when I was just a kid reading other writers' works and wishing I could borrow a minute of their time. I have to repay that debt; besides, it's fun to meet new people. But, it has as its price easy familiarity without the understanding that comes from long experience. Whenever any fan starts discussing the people who wrote the books--without knowing his knowledge from first hand experience--he is helping to spread the reign of shadows.

I must point out here that the majority of fans that I have met are good people--otherwise, I wouldn't be here at this convention, or at any others. Unfortunately, it's the rude ones who make the most vivid impressions.

There is a physical ecology on this planet that we are endangering with countless different kinds of pollution --from automobiles to aerosol cans. There is also a social ecology, and we can poison that ecology too, with toxic behavior.

Schatten-gangers are pollution. There is only one answer to pollution. To stop. We must stop our polluting one a one-to-one level. We stop it here, now, by saying, "Okay, I'm not going to do it any more. I'm descended from killer apes, but today I'm not going to kill. I might think about it, but I'm not going to kill." We stop toxic behavior in ourselves first before we can ask others to stop. And then, we can't demand that they stop, we can only point out the damage that they are doing to themselves and to others.

I've been making a conscious effort for some time now to avoid toxic behavior in myself. It's been noticed. Harlan Ellison called it growth. Ted Sturgeon calls it maturity. The young woman I spoke of at the beginning of this speech noticed it--she thought it was a change of image.

Let me give you an example of one thing I've been doing, and it's something you can do very easily too. I won't make jokes at Harlan Ellison's expense. Not at all, not short jokes, not jokes about his temper, or his fast mouth, or his "image", not about anything if Harlan Ellison is the butt of them. Not in public, not in private. It's the cheap laugh, the easy one--it's the "Would you buy it for a quarter" line from THE MARCHING MORONS; it's "Sock it to me", or "Here comes de judge". Not really funny, but you laugh when you hear it because you've been told you're supposed to. And it does a disservice to Harlan Ellison the writer, and an injury to Harlan Ellison the person. There is somebody inside there who is really a neat person, good to know. But if I--who happen to be in the public eye; and thus one of the many mood-setters in fandom--express a negative opinion, and in public, even facetiously, even if meant only in good-natured jest, there will be fifty people who will take it seriously and maybe will think just a little less of Harlan Ellison because of it. They will have been given a piece of an image--and I can't kill my schatten-ganger if I'm going to feed someone else's. I don't want to hurt my friends; but even if Harlan Ellison weren't a friend--I would be wrong for feeding his shadow. So I've stopped doing it. And I'm going to ask you to stop too--at least during *this* convention.

So, I have told you now how I feel about you. I have told it as honestly as I can. I have told you how I feel about myself. I admit to a certain degree of vanity, because vanity is part of what lying is all about. For the time that you are entranced with my little falsehood, my meager tale of wonder, for that time, you are paying total attention to me. Yes, it's vanity to ask for your total attention; yes, it's vanity to believe that I deserve it--but your response sometimes indicates that you want that involvement with some liar--and as long as he doesn't bore you...well, maybe I can be that liar for a while.

But I am not lying now. I am being myself. I have always been myself, even though sometimes I may not have realized it, and perhaps you may not have either. Let's bury shadow-man. I'll make a deal with you--if you'll help me kill that son of a bitch, I'll keep on trying to be the best member of this family I can.

Let's start learning to realize that we *are* a family--let's recognize that our similarities outweigh our differences. We come to these conventions to have a good time, to all be members of the same tribe.

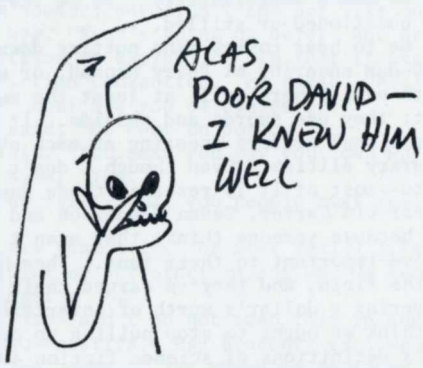
Remember how the YAF thinks of us. We have that image to live up to. Hey, that's a good shadow--! Let's start acting a little bit more like we really do like each other.

Thank you.

.....DAVID GERROLD

Guest of Honor Speech: WESTERCON 28

David Gerrold



I BELIEVE A SPEAKER should always announce how much time he's going to take before he speaks. Me--fifteen minutes.

I AM NOT the traditional sort of Guest of Honor. At least, I've tried not to be.

Generally, the Guest of Honor at a convention is someone who has been in the field for a long time and is usually overdue for recognition and appreciation. That's the way these things have worked in the past.

But I don't feel that way about myself. If anything, I'm probably underdue for this.

But two and a half years ago, when this committee started organizing--when they asked me to be the Guest of Honor, I couldn't say yes fast enough.

I must confess, I did spend a few moments wondering, "Hey, have I really earned this honor yet?" In my own mind, at least, I need to be sure. Because there are quite a few other writers who have not yet been honored, and perhaps should have been honored before me.

I can't think of any offhand though--no, please, that's not a joke. Originally, I wanted to list some of the people who I thought deserved this honor more than me. But when I double-checked it with someone who knows his convention history, he said, "Oh, no, this writer has been honored, and so has that one, and Miriam Allen deFord had her turn too." I had wanted to remind future convention committees not to forget some of our old warhorses before it's too late. Guys like me have time to wait. But as it worked out, all those old warhorses have had their turn. So....

You're stuck with me.

Now, I wondered--and perhaps some of you have wondered too--why did this convention committee choose me? I want you to look at these people. They all *appear* to be rational and intelligent. So there must be a valid reason somewhere.

I know where the idea got planted in their heads--because I planted it there. They had asked me to be pro-liaison for this convention, and I said, half-facetiously, that I sort of had something else in mind.

At which point, they went all funny-looking, mumbled something about having left the children in the oven, and disappeared for a couple of months.

But I made them a promise, and they asked me to be Guest of Honor. I promised to return their families unharmed.

I've been on convention committees myself--it's like

trying to run a work-therapy program at the Camarillo outpatient clinic. Pretty soon, you're ready for the rubber room yourself. But I know how conventions work--and this committee is one of the finest working teams I have ever seen. Out of all the convention committees I've ever worked with, this is the first one where it *looked* like every member of the team knew what he or she was doing. And the amazing thing is, that they actually do know what they are doing--and they are doing it well. There's something else nice about this committee too--it's a personal thing--but I've never had the pleasure of dealing with a committee before that I have liked so many members of so much. On my part, there is not just respect, there is affection.

So, I think one of the reasons they decided to honor me is that some of that affection is coming back. But I think the other reason, the real one, something Harlan Ellison pointed out in the program book, is that this is also a signpost toward the future. Maybe the committee is saying, "Hey, we like David, we want other people to like him too, to notice him and to watch out for what he's going to do in the future."

I want to talk about that great future that everybody keeps predicting for me. In the words of a great philosopher, Linus, "There is no greater curse than an unfulfilled potential." So, I *have* to push.

I haven't won a Hugo, yet--I've been nominated a few times. I haven't won a Nebula, yet--I've been nominated a few times. Bob Silverberg once told me that it's easier to lose an award after you've won one--I suppose he's correct. I know that it's also easier to lose an award after you've lost one, or two, or six. But at least you know you're consistent.

Now, it has been said that I would sell my mother's soul for a Hugo. Now, my mother is here in this audience tonight. And she still has her soul. And I don't have a Hugo. Or a Nebula.

I couldn't find a buyer.

Listen, the Devil has enough trouble in Hell without my Jewish mother to nag him. In one week, she'd have the place air-conditioned; in two, she'd be organizing tour groups.

But to be quite candid, I don't need a shelf full of Hugos or Nebulas. I'm serious about this. The wards would be nice, but I don't *need* them. The Nebula is a lovely doorstop, and if you have two, you can use them as bookends. The Hugo would be terrific if only they'd hollow it out so you could put a vibrator in it. But all that the awards really represent is how a whole bunch of people voted at the time they were given ballots. They don't change the value of the book as a *book*, not one iota. They do help with the marketing, hype, ego-boo, and all the other kinds of PR that help make you a lot more money--but there are a lot of writers who've never won awards and they get top money already just by writing good books; so the awards aren't the be-all and end-all of writing. They're nice, but that's it.

I also don't care if I get to be the most-published, or the most-reprinted, or the most-famous. It would be nice, but if it happened, it would happen by accident; and not by conscious pursuit. I haven't published a major work in more than two years. Because I haven't cared about the paper chase. I only care about making my stories as good as I can, no matter how long it takes. I don't need to be the highest priced whore on the street, not the most spectacular, not even the most beautiful. I don't want any titles, either. I don't want to be the "Dean of Science Fiction" any more than I want to be an "Enfante Terrible".

I will be quite content to be just the very best. Not necessarily the very best science fiction writer of all time, or in the world, or in America; but simply, the very best writer that I myself can be! I think that would be pretty good.

Whether I make it or not it's definitely worth the try--and fun for you to read.

I'm not competing with anyone else--especially not any other writer. The only person I am competing with is David Gerrold. I have to do better than his last book. Every time.

My favorite book is always the one I am working on now.

In my kenynote address, I said that all of us magicians aren't really magicians--for which statement, I will probably be thrown out of the magician's union. Well, let me be vain now and say that we are storytellers, entertainers, performers. When necessary, I will be a clown, I will be a mime, I will divert you, I will be a buffoon, a juggler, a jester. I will be a high-wire artist, a lion-tamer, an illusionist, a big brass band and a whole damn parade--and if necessary, even a con-artist. I will be a showman. I will preach, I will teach...and I will inspire. I will tell you something you have never known before.

I will entertain you.

I have a feeling about what writing must do--it's a paraphrasing of something Faulkner said, but I like my way better--I must make you laugh, make you cry, make you mad ...and make you *care*.

I am not going to say anything more than that about what writing is. Those who can, *should*. Those who cannot, can argue about what those who can have done. As long as they don't get in my way.

I want to tell you the only honor that I want. Really.

It is nice to come to a convention and be treated special--to have your room and meals paid for, and get some free drinks, and be on a lot of panels, and get to sit at the head table and get another free meal-- Look, if you don't accept the free drinks and the free meals, they throw you out of SFWA--and it's nice to listen to good people talk about how wonderful you are, and a credit to your species, and so on...but--

--that is not the real honor. If I wasn't worthy of your respect, you'd all be poking each other and saying, "Huh? Why him?" And if I am worthy, then no convention in the world, not this one or any other, could add any more to that; a convention only gives you the chance to express it. Respect cannot be bought or sold or traded; only earned.

And that's the real honor--your respect and appreciation. The only award, the only honor that I ever really want is to know that I have somehow touched you with my writing--tickled you here (the head) and made you laugh, touched you here (the heart) and made you cry, kicked you here (the gut) and made you mad, touched you a little lower if necessary, squeezed you, stroked you, whatever. That's the award I want; knowing that I have successfully communicated. All those other things, the plaques, the statues, the doorstops--they'll take care of themselves if I've done the important things first.

Now, I have taken advantage of this convention to be as much myself as I could. I feel that I must give you a gift in return for that privilege. Something magic.

The only thing that I have to give is myself. Or something that I have done. Like my books. If I've done them right, they're the real magic.

I don't like to talk about works that aren't finished --I'm not superstitious, but it's bad luck. But if I don't share part of this big one soon, I'll bust a gut, I am so proud of it. So I want to share some of it with you. I asked the convention committe a few weeks ago, "If you have some time available, the one thing I would really like to do is read a piece of one of the novels I'm working on now." So, tomorrow, I'll read three or four--or however many you want to hear--chapters from A MATTER FOR MEN. This is my gift to this convention and to you. I cannot think of anything more important for me to give, than some of the magic.

I think it will make you laugh, make you cry, and make you mad. I hope it will make you care.

And, if it does, and you appreciate what you hear, and you are entertained, if you enjoy the stories that I tell, then *that* is really all the honor that I--or any other writer--really needs.

Thank you.

.....DAVID GERROLD

Beer Mutterings

POUL ANDERSON

Warning: This will be no more fun to read than it was to write. If you don't want to be disturbed and perhaps angered, skip the following.

AFTER THE CATASTROPHE in Southeast Asia, we owe it to the dead, the maimed, and the enslaved, as well as our children and even ourselves, to think again, from the ground up, what we are doing in the world and what we should be doing.

Already the smooth voices are assuring us that it really doesn't matter, we don't need that part of the globe, we aren't endangered, in fact we can hope for a Vietnamese Tito. Shriller voices declare we've been stealing babies, and the adult refugees are all a bunch of thugs, crooks, whores, and bums, who'll snatch his job right out from under the American laboring man.

Then what the hell were we doing there? Tell me, Mr. Rusk, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bundy, Mr. Rostow, Mr. Common Cause Gardner--tell me, you shades of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson--all you liberal idols whom the media could not adulate enough, O glorious leaders, what were we doing there?

As for the baby stealing, tell me, Jane Fonda, why mothers who could not get away themselves and knew it, were pressing their children into the arms of American strangers. When the forces of the revolution made that final southward sweep, it might be understandable that villagers didn't want to risk getting caught on a battlefield; but tell me, Stoughton Lynd, why they fled south, not north. Is it possible, Reverend William Sloane Coffin, that they remembered Hué, Song My, rockets slammed at random into Saigon, or headmen disembowelled before the eyes of their families? People say you're quite a women's liberationist, Congressperson Bella Abzug; is that why you don't seem to disapprove of the liberators of Cambodia shooting not only all officers of the defeated army down through lieutenant, but their wives? Does the expelling of city dwellers into the countryside to root or, likelier, die, strike you as a useful population control measure, Dr. Benjamin Spock?

In 1968, two science fiction magazines ran two opposing declarations. My name was on the one which read, "We the undersigned believe that the United States must remain in Vietnam in order to fulfill its responsibilities to the people of that country." So-called hawks are getting hard to find; apparently everybody knew right along what a terrible mistake we were making. Well, I'll leave my signature in place. Having assumed such a responsibility, the United States copped out. Now our noble humanitarians begrudge shelter to what few thousands managed to escape.

As for the strategic importance of Vietnam, it grew very fashionable to scoff at the "domino theory". Ladies and gentlemen, if any of you are still reading this, we have just lost what's left of Asia. That'll take another five or ten years to become plain, of course; and maybe we won't pay too much attention, being naturally concerned about the more or less simultaneous loss of the Near East and Europe.

Where I made my own mistake about the Vietnam War was in an unspoken assumption: That the government of the United States could be made to care about winning it, that is, actually attaining its announced goal of guaranteeing the South freedom from the monster. I did not support the insanely half-hearted approach it used. If, say, we had bombed Hanoi and mined Haiphong early on--or if, when the army of the North first drove down in force, we'd made an Inchon-type landing, cut across the narrow neck of the peninsula, and bagged it--

Well, that's blood over the dam. I should have drawn the lesson of Korea. Throughout this century, the liberal establishment has been avid to get us into wars, succeeding every time there was a Democratic administration; but it hasn't been interested in winning those that were against Communists. "Pas d'ennemis à gauche" seems to be the motto. In my opinion, the sole sentence to rank with that one for pure idiocy happens also to be originally in French: "Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner". I am not in an especially forgiving mood these days.

My private feelings aren't important. But the world has duly noted that the word and the will of the United States government are worthless where it comes to the Red tide. (We might still go beat up some Arabs or such-like, who never did us any harm--the machismo of the impotent.) We won't change that result without a complete realignment of our politics, a national renunciation of both the Democrap and the Republicant; and realignments take time. Meanwhile, there goes the eastern hemisphere.

In short, through our own folly, we are left with no rational alternative to isolationism. Granted, it would have helped if Western Europe had been willing to shoulder its share of the common defense burden. But it never was and never will be. Too bad. Already I mourn for countries I have loved--though not for their Jean-Paul Sartres and Graham Greenes and similar intellectuals who have done so much to prepare them for the hammer and sickle.

Increasingly, from this day on, the problems we Americans tackle must be our own and nobody else's. True, our continent can scarcely survive alone. At a minimum, we also need South America and a Pacific perimeter, and it is certainly desirable to stay allied with Japan, Australia, and/or New Zealand, if they'll agree. Despite what Kennedy did to it, the Monroe Doctrine should be revivable, provided we really mean what we say. As for raw materials and energy sources, we must start *now* to stockpile, economize, and develop substitutes. Most important, of course--the reason for the whole effort--we must find ways to preserve our institutions, especially the institution of liberty, not too badly damaged. While Fortress America under a native fascism would be far preferable to native Communism and infinitely preferable to foreign occupation, still, at best it would be merely one more God damned empire, and freedom would have to be invented all over again, a thousand years hence or ten thousand years or never.

To these ends, obviously the first absolute necessity is to get rid of the liberal establishment which, since 1912 or earlier, has been bringing us to this pass. The political realignment I mentioned might, for instance, under whatever names, produce as our two major parties the Libertarians and the Conservatives. But before that can happen, the liberals are much too likely to throw us into a new war whose only results other than bloodshed will be further destruction of our national economy and further tightening of the government's grip on our national throat. (I'm not pushing the Bircher thesis that this process is the working out of a vast conspiracy. It's just a built-in consequence of the interventionist philosophy. See Bertrand de Jouvenel's ON POWER for an excellent discussion.)

How can we put some brake on that tendency?

Here's a preliminary suggestion. It's based on the fact that the liberal establishment includes, though it is not identical with, the plutocracy. Indeed, the effect of every liberal measure has been to aggrandize the plutocracy, whether by directly ripping off the taxpayer to subsidize and protect it, or by stifling its potential competition.

Suppose we pass a law that future wars will be fi-

nanced on a pay-as-you-go basis out of monies that would otherwise be interest on the national debt. If the cost should exceed this, we'll raise taxes to match the difference, but simultaneously repudiate an equal amount of the debt itself.

I said in an earlier polemic that such action would amount to confiscation; and this remains true. However, wars confiscate lives, and debasing the currency confiscates savings, whether or not we practice word magic and call it "Keynesian economics". Then why shouldn't we require a few sacrifices from our huge financial institutions? That prospect might make the establishment think twice about its next contemplated no-win-allowed adventure.

Pure quixotry, no doubt. Those are mighty big windmills. But do you really propose to sit passive and let their stones grind you up? Maybe you figure you won't be dust for a good long while, during which you can get your living done. Maybe you're even right, though I doubt that very much. But what about your children?

.....POUL ANDERSON

FRIENDLY VILLAGE BOMBED, STRAFED IN MISSISSIPPI

by Neal Wilgus

Mellonseed, Miss. (LEAK)--The Brazilian Air Force mistakenly opened fire on this sleepy village during the twilight hours last evening, believing the area to contain elements of the hostile Americommie (Vigilante) forces. Brazilian bombers based in Mexico continued their attack for almost an hour before the error was discovered and the operation temporarily suspended. In Atlanta President Babbitt supported by his Brazilian advisors promised he would look into the incident.

The village is in the center of the delta region, generally under Americommie control, but Mellonseed County is considered friendly to the Babbitt administration and the Brazilian forces. The attack came at a time when most of the population was in the village, rather than working in nearby fields, thereby increasing the number of injured. At least 15 were known dead and 52 wounded.

The accidental attack was apparently caused by the rumor that Vigilante leader Carmicheal was in the area. The bombing raid was intended to soften up an Americommie stronghold for a ground assalt which is presently under way. Brazilian officials were cautious in their statements, maintaining at first that their maps showed the village in Hominy County rather than Mellonseed. Mississippi authorities said they expected a Brazilian apology within weeks.

Elsewhere in the war news, Americommie forces attacked a newspaper office in Dallas, killing several of the staff and setting fire to the building. The Dallas *Torch*, a supporter of the Babbitt administration, expects to be back in circulation by the end of the month with the aid of Brazilian funds.

Brazilian bombing of railroads north of the Mason-Dixon line continued this week, racking up the largest number of missions in the war to date. Fuel boats in the New York harbor were struck as the Canadian based bombers hit at non-civilian supply lines. Other air strikes were made at Detroit, Pittsburgh, Boston and the Denver area. Special attention was given by Brazilian pilots to the Port Chicago area in California, suspected of heavy Americommie concentration.

In Brazil, President Juanson once again extended an offer to end Brazilian intervention as soon as the New York directed Vigilante forces ceased infiltration into the south. "We are most anxious," he said to a gathering of coffee plantation owners in Brasilia, "to end the escalation of the war. But we must make it clear that as long as foreign troops continue aggression toward the Republic of North America we will aid that nation in its defense. We cannot and will not allow the Americommie forces to obtain domination over one of the most important cotton producing areas in the world."

Commenting on the Mississippi bombing, President Juanson said, "It is unfortunate that these incidents happen, but we must reconcile ourselves to their inevitability. Until we have convinced the Americommie power bloc that we will not be turned aside, this is the price we pay for being the defenders of freedom."

END

SCIENCE FICTION GOES TO COLLEGE:

an interview with JAMES GUNN

by DARRELL SCHWEITZER

SCIENCE FICTION has invaded the universities and become accepted by The Establishment. There are now literally hundreds of college science fiction courses being taught across the country, but none by a person more qualified than James Gunn. Mr. Gunn is both a member of the English Department at the University of Kansas and an active, respected, and very good science fiction writer. He has been writing since the 1950's, and first gained widespread attention for his novel THE JOY MAKERS, which many consider to have been the best SF book of 1961. (That was the year STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND came out, by the way. Gunn's book is better--and shorter.) More recently he produced the superb novel THE LISTENERS, and his earlier THE IMMORTAL was made into a television series.

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Science fiction has suddenly gotten very respectable. How would you account for that?

Gunn: Well, a lot of things have suddenly gotten very respectable. This is actually sort of a pop culture era, when a great many things which have occured relatively without academic notice have suddenly caused a great deal of interest in the academic area. One example that isn't always thought of is American Studies, which came into the university curriculums about fifteen to twenty years ago, perhaps a little longer than that in some places. But it was followed up by the popular culture movement which had a number of manifestations. There was pop art which made art out of soup cans and other kinds of materials found around us in everyday life. There was pop music which began to come into the curriculum through the respectability of jazz and through the recognition of other kinds of musicians. I remember Leonard Bernstein doing a television show five or six years ago in which he was praising the musicianship of The Beatles. So SF is following a trend in which popular literature and popular arts are receiving attention, in part because students are interested in them, in part because people who once enjoyed them are now wanting to teach them, and to bring them into conjunction with the academic institutions, and in part because of a certain vitality within science fiction itself. Or to put it another way, a certain lack of vitality in certain aspects of mainstream literature.

Do you think that putting science fiction in the classroom will have the same effect as putting mainstream fiction in the classroom did?

Gunn: When I talk about mainstream literature I'm talking about Hemingway and Faulkner; I'm talking about popular contemporary writers like John Updike, Philip Roth, and others. I don't think they've diminished in their stature or popularity. If anything I suspect that have been enhanced, that more people read them than would have had they not been brought into the academy. If one looks back at certain other popular writers, like Shakespeare for instance, who was a popular writer of his day, the fact indeed that we can still read Shakespeare, that we can still see Shakespearean plays, is a product of the fact that he was recognized over the years as having something to say to us. And if indeed he had not been so recognized by the academy it is unlikely that today anyone would be conscious of Shakespeare.

Do you think then that teachers form the literary tastes of the masses? If everybody studies science fiction in high school and college, will that vastly increase the readership for it?

Gunn: I think it will. Not because of the teachers' forming popular taste; it will increase the readership of science fiction because young people, who would not have otherwise found this, are going to be exposed to it, and they're going to enjoy it, and they're going to go on to read other things. One example I might give you is when I taught my first science fiction class at the University of Kansas, some four years ago, and the college bookstore suddenly had a run on science fiction criticism. They happened to have been knowledgeable about the matter, but they said, "We're selling out all these Advent books on science fiction criticism, and it must be your class that's responsible," and I'm sure it was. There was interest in not only the reading of science fiction, but the students wanted to comment on it as well.

You mean you didn't assign these books?

Gunn: No, they just got them themselves.

Is the general reader interested in criticism?

Gunn: Well what is fandom but a kind of criticism? The general reader reads fan magazines, reads criticism. Well the first thing I turn to in a science fiction magazine, long before I read the magazine itself, is its reviews. I don't know how many other people do that. Maybe it's my own particular interest, but I suspect that many people are interested in what a reviewer has to say about contemporary SF.

These attitudes are certainly prevalent among the very active readers, but then fandom only comprises at best ten percent. Do you think that the general reader, the average college student, is going to be interested in real science fiction scholarship?

Gunn; I don't think he'll be that interested in scholarship. Some will, some won't. It depends on the depth of their interest. Some will read SF and enjoy it and go on and read more. Others will be turned off. But at least they'll be exposed to it and have an opportunity to be turned on by it.

How do you go about teaching a science fiction course? What do you do in the classroom?

Gunn: Well, you can approach SF in a lot of different ways. I happen to teach it from a historical viepoint. It's my conviction that a reader cannot really appreciate contemporary science fiction until he knows how it got to be contemporary SF. And so I try to trace the evolution of SF, what made it what it is, through the study of certain historical trends, sociological, technological, and scientific influences, which eventually produced over a period of time what we know as science fiction.

How does your being a teacher of science fiction effect you as a writer? Do you find this compatible with your writing?

Gunn: Well there's no doubt that whatever you do takes up time you could be using for writing. At the same time I would say that being a teacher gives me the freedom to write only what I am interested in writing, and that which I think is worth writing, rather than what I think will sell. There are many other people who are full time science fiction writers who turn out work not because they particularly want to write it but because it is what they know they must write in order to meet the bills. Fortunately having another kind of job, which I like very much, [teaching] gives me the opportunity to be very choosy about what I write, and it is true as well that the academic scene provides for, and, in fact, expects me to do this kind of work. It is part of my responsibility as a teacher of fiction writing and as a teacher of science fiction, to be creative in this area.

Then if every science fiction writer had another job to support him, wouldn't the quality of the field as a whole go up?

Gunn: Everybody's different. You can't generalize from one person's experience. I think for some people the discipline of fulltime writing is essential. I did write fulltime for a period of four years, and if it hadn't been for certain circumstances I might be freelancing now. But for some of us, a few of us, having a compatible job like this gives us a certain advantage. Some people, and I suspect maybe Philip Klass ((better known as William Tenn)) find all their energies going into teaching and do very little writing. Others like myself are able to adjust to these different demands and spend energies in both ways. I might say that it seems to me that perhaps teaching brings a different quality to writing as well. When one is teaching literature one becomes conscious of certain values that can be found in writing, which one would like to put into one's own writing. So it may be that my writing has become a little denser, a little more multi-levelled than it once was, or perhaps this is merely due to the effect of experience and maturity, which allows me to focus on those things which I might not have done without teaching.

So the writer who has time is going to produce a work of vastly greater depth than the bulk of freelancers?

Gunn: Well let's take one example for instance. For John Brunner the writing of STAND ON ZANZIBAR was a very serious economic risk. He was only able to do it because a publisher was willing to advance him a considerable sum of money, having confidence in his ability to do this kind of work for which they could get back their advance, because John had to spend many more months on this book than he would have had to spend on any of the other books he writes. This sort of decision would not have been as difficult for me. I would have been willing to spend the time necessary to produce the book if I could have written it--I wish I had--because I do not have the economic pressure to keep producing work, to produce that which is easily saleable.

Now that we have more writers willing to take a chance, are we generally better off than we were twenty years ago, when the field was more commercial? Are we presently living in a golden age of science fiction?

Gunn: It's a matter of psychological viewpoint. The golden age is usually when one starts reading science fiction, because those are the stories which turn you on to science fiction and they have an aura of newness and the miraculous. There are a lot of exciting things going on, but I'm not sure at the moment whether they are of enduring value, and it remains to be seen. Only the future can look back on the present and say this was a golden age.

Looking over contemporary science fiction, what writers and works do you think will survive? What will become a classic?

Gunn: Well I think some writers, some works will become classics. I think Ursula LeGuin's THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS is one, and perhaps Frank Herbert's DUNE is another. And perhaps STAND ON ZANZIBAR and Robert Silverberg's DYING INSIDE. There are many others. The thing that sets these books apart is that they are primarily experimental. They're primarily statements of mature writers who are now writing at the top of their form, who are trying to do something more ambitious than they tried to do before, and I think they are succeeding, because obviously they have been recognized broadly as writing something of exceptional merit.

When you write a book, such as, say, THE LISTENERS, *what are you trying to do?*

Gunn: Well I was trying to write as good a novel as I could. But mainly I was trying to attempt something different. The general subject appealed to me. The image, I suppose, of people listening to voices from the stars, because it is a striking image. It gets back really to quite a basic dichotomy with man's hopes for the universe. The one hope, for instance, that we are the chosen, the elect, the only sentient creatures, the ones favored by God and the universe, and we are alone. The other is the hope that we are not alone, that there are other people, other creatures intelligent enough to communicate with us, to share our dreams as we share our ideas and cultures with them. Just as in a part of THE LISTENERS I refer to the old problem of the human imagination, both in imagining a universe without beginning or end, or imagining a beginning to the universe and wondering what existed before that. Both of them are basic, contradictory images. They each chase out the other one. Neither of them is completely consistent, and out of this, I hoped to make *art*, a story people would want to read about the basic problem, not only in physical terms of listening for voices from the stars, but as well the basic problems between individuals, between humans, communications on all levels. I tried to pair off the problems of interstellar communication with those of inter-human communication.

Another place where you got in front of a large audience, aside from your books, was the TV show The Immortal. *Did you have a hand in the production and did you approve of the results?*

Gunn: No, I had no hand in it. I sold the motion picture and television rights to the book, and although I did have a little bit of influence with the scriptwriter who did the original motion picture of the week, which preceded the series by a year, I did not have any influence on the series itself. If you have read my *TV Guide* article on the subject you'll know that I thought it was pretty poorly done as a series. It sacrificed any SF value it might have, any appeal of the ideas, except for the basic concept of personal immortality which can be passed on to other people--sacrificed all those potentials in order to make another adventure show, another *Fugitive*.

Do you think it was necessary to simplify sophisticated science fiction concepts for a mass audience? The producer certainly did.

Gunn: No, I don't think it's true. I think it's a misconception on the part of the people who are in charge of making decisions like this, and I think that upon occasion, when the producers have not underestimated the intelligence or the appreciation of the audience they have come up with something which has been top rated and excellently done. For instance the Jacques Cousteau undersea specials, the works which have appeared on public broadcasting, the various series from England, the *Upstairs, Downstairs*, the *Civilisation* series, for that matter those which have appeared on commercial television, the Aleister Cooke's *America* series. Everytime something has been done with taste and intelligence I think it has been successful.

Has anything of taste and intelligence been done in the science fiction field, or is the first adult SF series yet to come?

Gunn: Not consistently. I have seen very few shows that I would have sat down and read as books. Certainly *Star Trek* had its moments, but they were not consistent and were tied to a formula. There were occasional good shows on the science fiction and fantasy anthology series, and an occasional good show has been done on the other dramatic anthology shows back in the time when they were doing such things. But on the whole there has been nothing at which one can point and say, "This was outstanding science fiction".

Have you ever had any other encounters with the visual media, aside from The Immortal*?*

Gunn: I had a story called *The Cave of Night* that was made into an hour television show on the old *Desilu Playhouse* back in 1959. It was a good production with E.G. Marshall and Lee Marvin but unfortunately they missed the whole point of the story.

Have you ever done screenwriting yourself?

Gunn: I have done some screenwriting, and one of my screenplays, or my one screenplay which was an adaption of my story *The Reluctant Witch* came within a hair of being made into a movie. Actually they started shooting when suddenly the money they were counting on didn't show up.

So it was never produced at all?

Gunn: No.

What do you have coming up in the future? Any irons in fire?

Gunn: I might mention that THE LISTENERS has been optioned for television or movies; I don't know which way they'll go. And there is some hope that perhaps something might be done with this. I have a new book just out called SOME DREAMS ARE NIGHTMARES from Scribner's and another one also from Scribner's next year, THE END OF THE DREAMS. My history of science fiction entitled ALTERNATE WORLDS will be published by Prentiss-Hall a year from now. I have two more books coming out from Scribner's, additional to the ones mentioned. THE LISTENERS will be out in paperback from New American Library. I'm working on a novel for Bantam Books called KAMPUS. This is my major effort at the moment.

Thank you, Mr. Gunn.

.....DARRELL SCHWEITZER

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Understandings

ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES

THIS TIME, I'd like to respond to some of the most interesting comments some of the readers have made on my most recent columns. [*Outworlds* 22 & 24]

Barry Gillam: I enjoyed that little Shull creature who popped up in *Understandings*, too. Don't know whether it ought to be called "subversive", but as a general comment on my stuff, you're right: it hits the nail rather than the thumb. I remember back in the early 40's, when I was corresponding with Robert A. Heinlein and arguing passionately about my political convictions of the time, there was no "maybe" about anything. I was right; this was the way things were; full stop. At some time in one of his gracious (and long) replies, Bob said, "Let us pause for prayer, remembering that ten years from now both of us may see these matters in a different light." (That's as near as I can come to a full quote since I do not have the letter handy at the moment; but I'll attest to the gist of it, as it's turned out to be one of the golden phrases I've received over the years.) One can, of course, overdo it; and since I'm something of an extremist, maybe I do at times. (If you carry the old Greek aphorism "Moderation in all things", to its logical conclusion--and I'm just the sort of kook who would--then "all things" has to include "moderation" itself. I vibrate between excessive moderation and moderate excess.)

John W. Andrews: The attitude you mention: "Great literature sits on a Throne, while lesser genres like weird and SF huddle up to its kness, like the lesser court officials carved about the legs of a colossal stone Pharaoh", is one which I've been victimized by in the past, and detested. And often found myself falling into without realizing it--when I did I got out as quickly as possible. The music critic, Virgil Thompson, once acknowledged that criticism itself has so many faults that just about the only thing you can really say for it is that it can, at times, be an antidote to advertising.

How do you and I--how does anyone--decide what "Great Literature" is, anyway? Certainly I haven't spent my life

in intense study and scholarship on this subject, and I rather doubt that you have, either. Even if we had, the chances are that we'd disagree on the subject in various aspects each one of us felt important.

My solution (at least now and then) is to acknowledge ignorance; I really can't define that term "Great Literature" so tightly that everyone who reads is likely to agree --any more than I could likewise define "science fiction". I'm aware that there is a body of prose and poetry which is loosely called "Great Literature". Haven't read more than a modicum of it, but hope to get to some of the neglected examples which I suspect would reach me when I did.

My own tenative definition would be something like this: "Great Literature": works of prose and poetry that have remained fresh and vital to a very wide spectrum of readers over the course of centuries. At times, it may be hard to distinguish any goven example from "Popular Literature"--prose and poetry than may enjoy a brief and/or limited period of acclaim, but which vanishes after awhile and is generally forgotten, not revived except in a limited way for a relatively small group of enthusiasts. (Who remembers what the best sellers of 1950 were?)

Obviously a work or works of "Great Literature" need not enjoy *continuous* acclaim and appreciation over the centuries. Shakespeare has been in and out, for example; yet throughout my lifetime, Shakespeare's works have been continually in print and selling, not only to students who were required to read it, but to the general public. It's the variety of sorts and conditions of people--rich, poor, formally educated, formally uneducated (like me), etc.--that respond to a particular author, rather than a percentage within a particular group, that I'd call the key.

I wouldn't put weird and science fiction as a "genre below the Throne" by any means. What is more or less recognized as "Great Literature" (according to the definition above) certainly includes examples of both. To a wide variety of people, Dickins' *Christmas Carol* (weird) and Mary Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN (science fiction--and I mean the original book, not the film debasements, for all of Boris Karloff's wonderful portrayals) do come across.

There was a time when science fiction meant so much to me that I was really eager to see some of the examples that I enjoyed in the magazines acknowledged as "Great Literature." (That would, I hoped, shut up elder persons who, without bothering to read it, proclaimed *ex cathedra* that science fiction *per se*, was trash and predicted a rather limited and not entirely attractive future for misguided youths like myself who wasted precious time on it. Well, one thing's true: had I not spent so much time reading science fiction magazines I *might* have gotten to some of the more "improving" literature that I still haven't read. But there's no guarantee. Actually, I *was* getting to some of the more "worthy" literature that actually reached me at the time. I did respond to Shakespeare, and, of course, Edgar Allan Poe; and, surprisingly, Ibsen. First heard of him in THE BISHOP MURDER CASE, by S. S. Van Dine--Willard Huntington Wright--and looked up Ibsen's *The Pretenders* (which is a powerful clue in that novel) in the library. From there to Ibsen's other plays. Went through as much of them as I could find in soft cover a few years ago, and was happy to find that they still reach me.

And, of course, you and I are very likely to "interpret" for ourselves any work of prose or poetry that hits us hard, and be at least interested in others' interpretations. But other people's interpretations are, I think, a very poor way to encounter a work you haven't read, aside from brief appreciations which might leave you with the feeling that here is something you might enjoy. All of us vary in suggestibility, but there is the danger than an interpretation that you found persuasive before reading the work in question, could so color your expectations that you'd see only what you've been preconditioned to see and miss what you might have seen for yourself at once otherwise. (I never appreciated *Hamlet*, for the strong work it is, clear through, until I managed to get rid of that subversive interpretation that it's the tragedy of a man who can't make up his mind.)

Loren MacGregor: Yes, indeed, there are such things as bad stories. That word "bad" covers so much territory that I doubt whether the preceeding sentence says very much. There are stories which are badly written, stories which add up to nothing, so far as you are concerned, etc. But what do you call a novel like Lindsay's A VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS? I was steered to it by reading C. S. Lewis's comment that he found the writing appallingly bad, but it was nonetheless a wonderful story. I think if I had started to read it without that hint, I might have tossed it aside before getting to Arcturus--which, for me, is where the story becomes so wonderful that I no longer pay any attention to the writing. (For someone whom the story just doesn't reach, the bad writing will be all that there is to it.)

There was a time when I felt some sort of virtue in reading a story that did not reach me but nonetheless seemed to be a fine example of writing. I don't do that so often these days, but I'm still willing to; it's good exercise. I don't feel virtuous, but it does stretch my appreciative muscles in some way.

Brett Cox: It looks as if we agree in principle. Neither one of us *like* the idea of censorship; we both have at least been in danger of being victims of it.

I offered you a straw man in order to see if we actually do agree in principle. Now let's take something closer to reality--whatever that is.

Are you in favor of unrestricted circulation of well-written, highly persuasive arguments to the effect that Hitler was right and the only way to a better world is to apply his Final Solution to all "inferior" races and individuals? If you're not, to whom would you restrict such reading matter--or do you feel that no one should be permitted to read it?

I think I should be. But the thought of angry and inexperienced youngsters reading it giveth me pause. I really wonder that if such material were up before me to decide upon the extent to which it should be made available, just how greatly I would command its restriction--or whether I'd say, "Let anyone who wants to read it do so." And if we're to avoid hypocrisy I could not wave the hand liberally but make the material inordinately expensive or otherwise difficult to obtain.

As they used to say in Western stories, when I was editing them, "Talk is cheap but it takes hard cash to buy good liquor." It's when something comes close to you personally that you find out how liberal you really are.

Eric Mayer: I used Roger Elwood for an example simply because it was my most recent personal experience with censorship. Meaning, direct, person-to-person; on a less direct level, I cannot see an unbowdlerized version of *Deep Throat* or *The Devil in Miss Jones* anywhere in Manhattan. Whether I really care about seeing either of them again, is somewhat irrelevant; I just might get the impulase. Well, as of June 29, 1975, they're both still playing around the 42nd Street area, but the prints have been altered so that they come out on the "soft porn" level, according to *Screw* magazine--which I believe can be trusted to report accurately on matters of such nature.

Had Elwood started out by telling me that there were certain themes or treatments that he didn't want, and specified them, I'd have accepted the situation, whether or not I wrote for him. After all, there were themes or treatments that I either did not want (or my publisher would not permit) when I was an editor; I tried to make that clear to writers. What turned me against him was the falseness of his liberal pretensions.

Reminds me of the story about the visiting cousin. When the cake is served, one piece is somewhat larger than the other. Mother says, "Now, Johnny, our guest must have his choice." So Johnny looks at Willy and says, "Go ahead --choose." Willy reaches for the larger piece, whereat Johnny says, "Put that back and take your choice." So goeth phony liberalism.

Is there a genuine liberal around?

.....ROBERT A. W. LOWNDES

Language at MIDNIGHT

Bill Wolfenbarger

[to *Jim Adams* & *Sally Pollak*]

CHAPTER 11: THE OCTOBER TREASURE

OCTOBER GOT TO OREGON at last in a full Fall glory. This entire month is a celebration for us. The sky is a wide-grinning blue. The turning of every color is exposed, and the energy level for Libras is *high*. And I feel I'm about to have some sort of a nervous breakdown, which, (Loretta tells me), has been accumulating for about a year! Only yesterday she informed me I was a manic depressive. "You're not *that* far off the beam now, but you could be headed that way." Says wife Loretta. I agree. There have been too many kids around this neighborhood. It has been so "convenient" for me to watch. I don't get to spend enough time with Loretta or myself, but that's old hat. Depression: I haven't sold anything I've written this year/I haven't been able to contact old friends/I'm not busy enough, thus have more time in which to brood...I'm a great brooder.../ daughter Sara has been throwing temper tantrums/three thousand and five things: depressed because I had to sell my typewriter, and had to borrow another from a friend, etc., etc., a whole long list of infinite categories. At all events, the main and foremost hassle within myself is ---I've been trying to get back to God, and haven't made it yet; I keep blowing it, and fumbling back. I want to utilize all the writing time I have left to communicate and entertain, to try and get it all said the way in which it must all be told.

In almost four years of marriage, Loretta & I have had practically no time to ourselves. We want to be alone, just us, for a couple of days. The people in Harrisburg aren't cool enough for us to leave Sara Dawn with them for that length of time.

Susie Wunderlich (fomerly of Rich & Sluzie fame in THE LIZARD SPEAKS) is the only one real person we'd feel absolutely right & positive with to have Sara spend a couple of days with. Susie & Sara are looking forward to it.

Susie and Rich are separated now. They are leading two seperate lives. Already, Time has washed away most of the pain. We love them both. Susie is a member of our big Family, while other members live all across this vast paranoic nation. (Susie lives now in Eugene, some 20 miles away, and recently got a job in a day-school; and that's the way she wanted it, to be a teacher of young children--for her it's a Natural Act.) Rich is planning on moving into a little house in a small town called Dexter.

The sunset is a vivid swirling pink. Below, where the attraction is riveted from the sunset, the Wylamette River surges on up north past Portland where, at Orgeon's end mixes with other rivers greater and lesser to flow with Ocean.

Now the weather has grown dark. Harrisburg sleeps its Thursday night away. Hardly a sound. Glad to be a part of the Oregon movie. Glad to be a part of all things. Confession *is* good for the soul. I wrote a horror story, which may be published as a comic strip. Out of California. Once upon a time out of Texas I grew a black beard--I have a black beard now. My days in Texas were my SPACE days. I even quit reading science fiction & fantasy for a number of months. I was hungry. A lot of creepy people in Dallas, but on a more psychotic level than in Neosho Missouri High School when I was introverted and bewildered there. Yet somehow, I was able to write a fair amount of poetry when in Dalls, several months, a couple of times. I thought of how I wanted to see if this ex-speed freak named Goldie wanted to live with me. She had other plans. She was about 5 years older, always had a hint of Spanish or Indian in her. She loved to read good books and magazines like the *Evergreen Review*. Old Beat. She's looking for my poetry in the *Evergreen Review*. I never turned her on to *Dynatron* or *Double:Bill* or *Vandro*. We used to drink herb tea at her place. She's the one who called me a "Zen dishwasher". And now, all that space & time later, dish-washing (pearl diving) is one of my morning meditations. Yes, I get to thinking of my Dallas days and my Texas nights every so often, and the other places (locals in America) I have lived, and the places in & out of America I have visited. And the people, the events. The October night deepens.

Now my fuzzy black beard is in Oregon, and I have never been a hippie in my life. President Ford would be proud of me, I'm sure.

Harvesting a homespun consciousness is surely worthy work. In Venice West *(that's Venice California where people have seen the ocean and they are naked)* THERE WAS, IN ONE MAGIC SUMMER CONSCIOUSNESS, a redheaded lady, Ann, who opened, with her love, mindblowing wholeness of love with me. Among many many other things, Ann showed me more ways to love *poetry* than before I ever thought or dreamed or imagined possible. Poetry of why-and-how people love one another. Poetry of Nature breathing sentiment in all true things. Ann gave me ocean poetry. Poetry of the essential tenderness of living. Poetry on both sides of the coin. Poetry. Poetry of God being in every micro-second in all life eternity.

You can feel the October in this midnight.

Weary mind to take my hand to wander. Like a story I once did, *What Do You Do When the Universe is Over?* -- trying to peer within and ahead to find disclosed a life chapter of what was unknown to me. I have yet to solve that question. But I should remember to take off my boots! At rest, with a candle dim, when what is within, the expectant trembling, freeflight Astral consciousness going about its welcome way to paths unknown to some others, the traveler can find a happy place. The laws of the universe are namelessly old.

Feel as if Time is trying to hurry me by, and I know there'll never be enough Time to let me do all the things I want to do. This problem is one of my current hangups. Not in reading dead authors, but being able to say what all I have to say.

Feeling lonely. No matter how ritualized your personal cosmology is when you write the midnight languages in the secret places, loneliness is always just above my shoulder.

Maybe the only vacation I'll get is in that place between the words. I got the Old Mind Blues.

(A JUMP INTO SPACE AND TIME): This is All Hallow's Eve in 1974---feeling back upon what has happened since the above, take note of the following:

On my 31st birthday on October 12th, that evening, Sara, Loretta, Susie & a friend of hers named Terry (Jewish boy) went to see *Them* and *Forbidden Planet* in some sort of section at the University of Oregon in Eugene. I'd seen both flicks before and enjoyed seeing them again. What a fine birthday!: earlier that day, Alpajpuri came over to wish me Happy Birthday.

Our 4th wedding anniversary, on the 24th, was spent with softness and quiet.

Sara fell asleep on the sofa about an hour after she & I returned from trick-or-treating. She returned home with a load of sweet-tooth loot. This year she was a ghost: white sleeping shirt from Loretta, a portion of white sheet as a cowl, and a 45¢ longface Ghost Mask.

I remember I kept reflecting on this being Sara's first real Halloween.

But it seems to me that Halloween isn't celebrated with the same meaning behind it as it was once when I was a boy. Then, it was the phantoms of the imagination that kept All Hallow's Eve alive; now, in this even more paranoid age we live in, this Very Special Night seems to be little more than some sort of a charity drive.

Well, whistling in the dark.

And it was about that time I realized that Sara is the vehicle of the future.

What else happened this day? Sara and I did six loads of laundry. Loretta made ream after ream of pumpkin cookies for the trick-or-treaters.

I'm always at a sorry loss to see October go, and always sure to stay up until after it's over, so I can miss none of it while it lasts.

A special time. And it is time again to harvest my thoughts and feelings under the full moon, with everything in the balance.

CHAPTER 12: ANOTHER PLACE

IN THE CAVES AND GROTTOS OF MY MIND I returned, getting more and more accustomed with some of the inner landscape. Dreams and haunts and flashes of old visions! Had to recycle a metamorphosis. The sage advice of Ezra Pound came back with greater comprehension---"make it NEW!" Trying again to open with the flow. Gaining a deeper acid clarity with what is going on and on. Gaining a greater understanding of myself and others. At long, long last the scattered obscurities, the pain, the fear, and another glimpse of underlying love helped move me from caves and grottos to a blue open space, where it is wise to let old/new scars heal themselves. And with my brown poet eyes I could see the world around me once more. I know there isn't much time left. I want to use what time is left for the timeless things. Time passes slowly.

In gray November Loretta & I took a 5-day second honeymoon vacation at the Oregon Coast up north about 75 miles. Sara had her own vacation with Susie. These fingers here aren't ready to lay hold of those pages; Time has passed too slowly to be able to be that objective, i.e. *writing* it without all the facts and feelings before all the organic fantasy has passed through to reach them. We stayed in a cabin some 200 yards from ocean's edge just this side of Waldport, which is mostly a kind of tourist village, although living hulks of a town has its influences. Where we were, our immediate environment was little bushpatch places in the sand, a few other cabins scattered around, with always that oldtime newtime ocean music.

CHAPTER 13: FIELDS

SKULLCOLORED COBWEBS GLOWED in the livid caves and earth places. There are things there I don't know about yet. It was good and it was happy to be in those open blue spaces. The move we made has improved my life. We moved out into the country a couple of months ago, about 5 miles north of the town. We're fairly close to the river; we're surrounded by grass fields. We live in a 3-bedroom house, the rent is $40 cheaper, the house is in a good, reasonable shape.

CHAPTER 14: A MIDNIGHT TABLE

HALF OF 1975 GONE, a few poems written, a few stories, a science fiction symposium held 3 separate nights in Corvallis, with Ursula LeGuin, Frank Herbert, Vonda McIntyre, Peter Beagle and Terry Carr, who subbed for Joanna Russ, who had the flu; oh yes, Harlan Ellison was there also. Sara stayed with friends in Harrisburg, while Loretta & I caught a ride with some sf readers, and sf writers Alpajpuri and John Varley. I seemed to enjoy Peter Beagle's words the most, because they seemed much closer to me, and felt more comfortable with him in unplanned Beat clothes--and Beagle an old Jack Kerouac fan--But Loretta & I only went the first two nights, too many prosaic tasks to deal with Harlan on Friday night.

The symposium was at a very high level, but I was somewhat moody and depressed for reasons I couldn't identify. The moodiness and depression have stayed with me now for quite some time, hard to pin down, hard to identify. When a poem hits me I can let it flow.

Tomorrow morning we leave for San Francisco and Palo Alto and the Westercon (28) in Oakland. John Varley is catching a ride with us; we'll pick him up in Eugene and then head on out. We're all excited. The first convention I ever went to was Westercon XX in Los Angeles in 1967; the second con I went to (a first for both Loretta and little Sara) was a few years ago at PeCon II, held in Peoria, Illinois. John V. told me over the telephone tonight this would be his first con! Well, that first Westercon of mine was mindblowing; I look forward to John's reactions.

Haven't been out of Oregon since May 1973...

I only hope my depression lifts, and get all the cosmic business straightened out.

All I know is it's a crazy hour to be up, when we all have to get up *early* to pack and split, and go to a science fiction convention and visit old friends in Northern California, and those coming up from Southern California (& elsewhere) for a few summer days. But my brains are wired on this rich Colombian coffee, Sara and Loretta sleeping, and me to my lonely business.

I have worked the rhubarb fields two summers in a row. Got high among the rows of stalks and leafs in the Spring sun.

Grew weary when I thought of how the universe watches me when I play Dylan's excellent *Blood on the Tracks*, or when I go to the bathroom, or when I Zen-wash dishes, or talk with the cats in this house of cats. Sometimes for me I see it as the same old universe grind, flowing from everywhere to everywhere. And then my mother in Missouri sent me two letters and a birthday card from my father, killed in action during World War II; a letter from Camp Hood, Texas in July 1944; the other from New York in January 1945; a happy birthday card when I was one year old in 1944. They made me cry. These things are all I have. He was such a peace-loving young man of 26. The birthday card sent from Washington, D.C. "Billy Ray Wolfenbarger", an address on Broadway Street in Neosho, Missouri, a short note on the back to Ruby, wife & mother. I know he's in Heaven. Wendell Wylie Wolfenbarger, dead and buried in Germany. My sister Wylene (2 years older, now married, a schoolteacher of High School English in Boulder, Colorado) remembers him more than I ever possibly can; I *do* recall impressions though, and I treasure them with all the love and strength in me. Now I am 5 years older than he ever was, and I miss him greatly...

The night closes.

.....

CHAPTER 15

THERE'S A LONG CALM SLOW NIGHT RAIN. Otherwise, this place is quiet. The quiet the way I like it when I have things to tell you. And even though the night is October night again and the rain comes from out of Heaven, and the beat of this night is contained, I realize I have been away from you far too long with this typewriter, that the last Chapter existed in July, that Westercon 28 is long gone over in my mind and most of October is back there in the collective Past (Loretta had her 27th birthday, I had my 32nd); there yet remains for the Wolfenbargers these gentle celebrations: our wedding anniversary and Ghost & Goblin Night, at the close.

And even though the sf convention known as Westercon 28 is still mostly fuzzy in perspective, it was Important to me. For one thing, I got to meet the editor & publisher of this magazine. And you know, all of the nice, kind things people say of Bill Bowers is true. He's one of the nicest, warmest human beings I've ever known or hope to know. There were so *many* fans at Westercon, my goodness, 548,577,848 things were all going on at once for three days in Oakland California that nobody had much time for much of anything, a bunch of crazy people trying to meet everybody and see everything & do everything that it seems, at least to me, that not much of anybody could get a fair shake of spending much time & space with friends. Bowers & I didn't really get much time to just sit down and soultalk, but at least beautiful beginnings were made.

In the huckster room (where I met Bill Bowers), I soon got to meet another favorite Bill of mine, a young man now living in San Francisco, Bill Breiding. We had a few brief chances to rapp, and we dug our souls. We took a little break from the Convention Fluries and took a night stroll around the block in the strange city. Among other things we spoke of his older brother Sutton, also in "fandom", also now living in San Francisco. Sutton Breiding I had gotten to know through the pages of his magazine *Black Wolf*, and other publications, and thru correspondence. Now brother Bill is the sf freak, while Sutt is more into darkling fantasy and is, in fact pure & absolute, a great madman poet.

Even before we left Oregon, I had this wild Plan. I was going to slip off from the convention and go to San Francisco to visit with Sutton, to share our souls & coffee & dreams & poetry.

But it never worked out. *Damnit, it never worked out!* One of the biggest bummers in my life. I blew this great opportunity to dig another soul whose head is so close to my own.

Well, knowing full well I still need a weeks' "vacation" for the good of my perspective, I got this *other* plan to save my money and take a trip to visit with Sutton. Sometime in the future, but just as soon as possible.

Also wanted to mention that Bill Breiding does an excellent fanzine of his own, and he calls it *Star Fire*.

Westercon 28 was a nice boost for my ego. There were several fans there who told me how much they dug my writings; most especially this *Language at Midnight*, which, at all events, is just what it is. Had a nice chat with fantasy fan Greg Stafford, fan artist Joe Pearson, and a nice friendly room party with Frank Denton & his wife. Got to meet Grant Canfield for the first time. Spent a good amount of time with dear Alpajpuri and John Varley. Lessee, I also met (for the first time), John D. Berry & Bob Vardeman & Andy Porter and a host of other fan-people/people-fans. But why go on with a list.

One of the neatest things at Westercon was having Bill Bowers (er, Father William) and Bill Breiding meet Loretta & Sara. And vice versa. The convention was too crazy & complex for Loretta (altho she really dug the Art Show) (and meeting nice people). The heaviest thing Sara enjoyed was elevator fandom. But Loretta & little Sara didn't stay long; they went back to Palo Alto to visit friends while I stayed on at a crazy science fiction convention in Oakland, *very* occasionally catching an hour-or-so sleep up in Father William's & Andy Porter's room, with Alpajpuri.

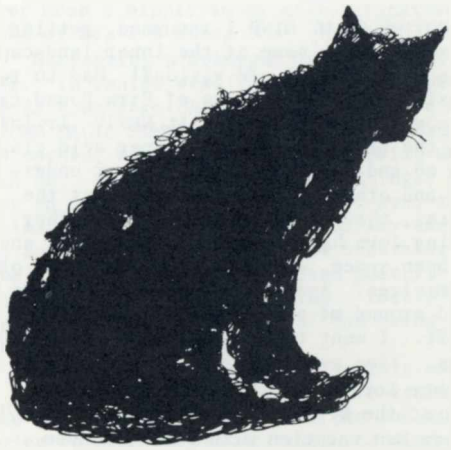
While my family was there, they got to meet Joe Pearson. Loretta drew Joe a map of how to get to our house from Highway 99.

About a month later, Joe came by for a couple of days, and we had nice chats, although local family events prevented us having a real soultalk thing. And while Joe was here, Alpajpuri and a fan from Portland, Greg Burton, came by, and we all spent a sunny afternoon down by the river, swimming & soaking up the sunlight. And if Joe ever comes back this way, I want to have a deep long talk-feast with him.

A few more moments at the Convention: Like I've already mentioned, failing to get together with Sutton Breiding was a real bummer. The only other big bummer (aside from not having much money to spend on a *large* stack of *Weird Tales* & other farout, fargone magazines and books) was not being able to talk with Fritz Leiber again. Oh, I caught the last half of the Fantasy panel he was on, but by the time I got up from the back to the front of the large room, everybody had split. Thereafter I caught only flashes of him. *It was a busy, crowded convention!* But, such is the price of popularity, I suppose. Maybe next time, Fritz...

And Loretta, Sara & I *did* get to see Peter Beagle again, if only briefly.

But *enough* of science fiction convention madness. And since then I wrote a conreport, only told in fictional terms, and called it *The California Fool*. It was good to see ole California buddies again, discovering their new madnesses, as well as meeting all these new people I'd become acquainted with only thru their words or drawings. And strange as it may seem, only tonight I made the discovery that my con-going follows a four-year cycle. Westercon 20 in '67, PeCon 2 in '71, then Westercon 28 in '75. But right now I still can't tell whether '79 someplace is too near or too far. But I did say this is *enough!* convention jazz when what you really came here for was something else entirely.



Our cat Justin died. He was not much over a year ----(or is it two years----)----old. It looked like a car had hit him. Loretta found him near the road on her way home from work one morning. He was about two miles from our home. Justin meant, and still means, a lot to us. I don't know the words.

We got a good load of oak wood in, and in a few days it rained. The next night, I knew it was time to write to you. The frogs have started up. Every so often I'm made aware of the atmosphere of the lazy rain, the elemental moments. And the Voice of the rain is beautiful. *[10/21/75]*

.....BILL WOLFENBARGER

TED WHITE
THOTS WHILE LAWNMOWING

WHITHER, COLUMN? I have purposely avoided continuing this column for nearly a year now--more than a year, in fact--out of dismay with the direction in which the column had turned. It had become a place in which to contend with a number of fellow-professionals over matters not properly the concern of fandom. It did nothing to enhance my karma and led to at least one threatened lawsuit (to my total astonishment). I have no desire to continue in that direction--neither to defend the 25¢ readers' fee at *Amazing* and *Fantastic* (pace Jessica Salmonson, who has my permission to attempt to seduce me, but whose efforts to cram a bloody quarter up my ass I shall resist), nor to take up cudgels once again in matters relating to the SFWA, etc. I'm pleased that Phil Farmer and I have ironed out our differences--largely produced by misunderstandings on both sides--and I'm content to stop at that point.

Before taking up the actual topic of this column, however, I should remark upon recent outings upon the lawn. When last I discussed this topic, I was still using a tired old Toro which I'd purchased some years ago from Jay Haldeman. Last spring (1974) I took the mower into the shop for what appeared to be its annual tuneup, and was told that it was shot. As a consequence I bought a new Toro--also self-propelled--which has given me faithful service for two mowing seasons now. As before, I've had time to do a lot of ruminating while following the mower about over an acre of lawn; my ruminations were disturbed this June when the mower hit a hidden stump under a wysteria bush and I, ducking the branches of the same bush, collided with the mower. More precisely, my mouth collided with the mower handle. The collision destroyed two teeth in my upper bridgework and required $1,200 to repair. I am now much more cautious with the mower.

So much for lawn-mowing.

The body of this column is a reprint--one which I am indebted to Bill Bowers for digging up. The reprint is of a piece I wrote originally for *Silme #2*, published (or at least dated) August, 1962. *Silme* was, if my memory is correct, the forerunner of *PAStell*, the official organ of the original Project Art Show, organized by Bjo Trimble. Bjo was not only an important artist-cartoonist of the late fifties and early sixties (she shared top-cartoonist honors with Rotsler and Ray Nelson), she was a mover. She had enormous energy and she used that energy to accomplish an enormous amount in fandom. Only one of her many achievements was the art show which has now become a tradition at Worldcons and some regionals as well--but which hardly existed at all before she began pouring her energies into establishing and continuing it.

Silme and *PAStell* were basically fanzines for artists --they promoted the art shows, tried to organize fandom's artists, and existed as clearing houses for the exchange of information, techniques, etc. I wrote two articles for Bjo. The first follows. It concerns itself with the use of electronic stencils, or electro-stencils as they're known now. The second dealt with color mimeography and appeared later in *PAStell*.

At the Midwestcon this year Bill reminded me of this piece, and suggested it might be a good thing to reprint it. Here it is:

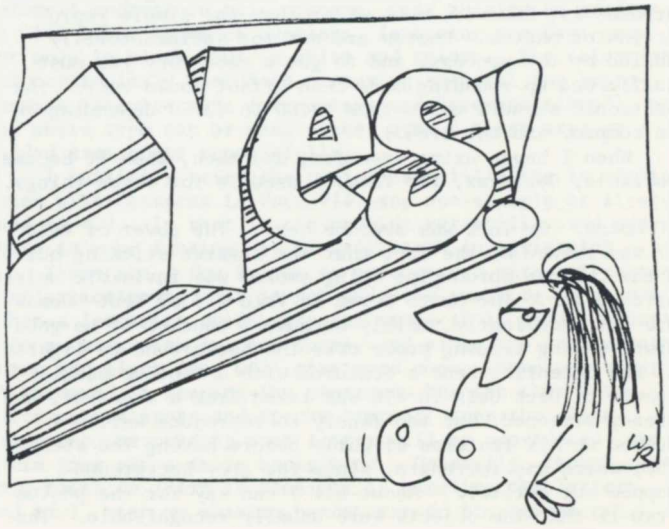
Using Electronic Stencils

HAL SHAPIRO CLAIMS THE HONOR of introducing electronic stencils to fandom, back in 6th Fandom days, in *Ice*. But the first I ever heard of them was from Dean Grennell, in *Grue*. Dean had made a set of Stenafax stencils of some fannish photos, and with much trepidation he ran them in *Grue*.

This was a marvelous idea: mimeographing photos. If the images were a good deal less clear than in photo-offset zines, at least it was more fannish, and more accessible to the average fan-pubber.

Since those early days of Stenafax, a lot of us have played around with the process, and I've had enough experience with it in the last year or three that I think I'm qualified to talk about the process and what you can do with it.

Stenafax, which is one brand of electronic stencil cutting (others are Electro-Rex and Gestefax), is a process of reproducing from original copy a near-photographic copy onto a stencil which may be used on a mimeograph. The process itself is not a complicated one, and grows out of such devices as the wirephoto machine.



The machine which makes the stencils contains two side-by-side drums large enough in circumference to wrap a legalength stencil completely around. The first drum (on the left-hand side in most models) has a clear acetate sheet connected to it. The original copy (line drawing, magazine sheet, photo, etc.; we'll get to that in a minute) is slipped under the acetate sheet, which is then wrapped around the drum and fixed at the bottom. A stencil, which looks gray and rubbery and actually consists of a ruberoid coating over a paper backing sheet, is clamped to the second drum. Both drums are then rotated at a fixed speed, while a tiny scanner begins to crawl across the left-hand drum, and a stylus crawls across the right-hand drum at the very same slow speed. As the drum passes under the scanning eye, on the left, and a fragment of the original copy is scanned,the stylus at the right dips and cuts a facsimile on the stencil. Since the drums are rotating while the scanner and stylus slowly cross them, a spiral path is being followed across both original copy and the stencil, covering the entire area.

Now, because the scanner and stylus move so slowly from left to right, the lines they are tracing are quite close together--so close, in fact, that they may be invisible. The average electronic stencil is cut with from 200 to 600 lines per inch.

The original Stenafax machines cut only a fixed 200 lines per inch, and often the lines were visible. The new Gestefax machine can be set for 200, 400 or 600 lines per inch, and at the latter two settings the lines are close to invisible.

This method of scanning only a tiny bit of information at a time allows light and dark areas to be broken down into electrical impulses, transmitted (either, as with wirephoto, to a distant office, or, here, to a nearby reproducing machine), and reproduced, without expensive processes like half-tone screens being necessary.

However, it has its drawbacks.

While the electronic stencil process makes an excellent discrimination between very light and very dark areas, and will make a good reproduction of a line drawing or a page of type, it becomes somewhat confused by medium tones. It will, usually, pick up pencil lines (so that if you don't want them to show, they should be erased), but often either ignores the middle tones of a photo, or darkens them. As a result, most photos come out quite contrasty, with the light tones entirely absent.

The companies which make such stencils suggest using high-contrast photos to begin with, or photos without either heavy blacks or large light areas. They would also prefer, in the New York area, that you have your photos screened first. This is quite expensive, and the only fan I know who has tried it is Ed Meskys. Naturally, once your photo is broken down into a series of large and small dots, it will reproduce without difficulty, since it is, in effect, a line-cut, and without medium tones.

The application of electronic stencilling to fannish purposes is, however, much wider than the simple reproduction of photos. Photos are not too satisfactorilly handled by the process, and to get a good copy you must usually end up spending more than offset would cost. (An electronic stencil costs from $2.50 to $3.50 depending on the company and the area.)

When I began using Stenafax, and then, when it became available, Gestefax, for *Void*, I used it for three things.

1. *Photos*. My luck was average here. The cover of *Void #17* was ruined by the fact that the cigaret sticking out of the Chinese opium pipe being smoked was invisible unless searched for. The photo I ran in *Void #21* of Kent Moomaw came out excellently, mainly because I touched it up good first, laying tracing paper over the background to lighten it, and accenting Kent's features with a touchup pencil. A photo of Dick Geis in #18 was taken from a magazine, and already screened, but too finely to reproduce well. I touched up his features slightly before having the stencil made, which was fortunate, since the grey background dropped out entirely. About all I can say for the photos I ran is that the objects were usually recognizable. The least so was the cover of #19, which was taken from a poor photo to begin with, and contained too much detail. I'd suggest anyone using photos use ones with simple, obvious detail. Subtlety is lost.

2. *Artwork*. This is the obvious area for fannish exploitation. Many fan artists are capable of a sophisticated pen and brush technique which is nearly impossible to stencil by hand. Or, they may simply want to work with large areas of blacks, or thick black lines which are quite difficult to stencil well. My first experiments with artwork were some Harness drawings I'd been saving for such an occasion, and two lovely Zuber ink-blot drawings. Ink blots are just about impossible to stencil by hand without making a complete mess of things. The Harness illos either used black areas, or contained fine-line work which I preferred not trying to stencil.

More recently, I've Gestefaxed a Nirenberg Pogo spoof, which had been done in Walt Kelly style varying-width lines, a Stiles illo which was a huge jumble of linework (I'm sure I'd have ripped the stencil if I'd tried it by hand), some abstract designs by Andy Reiss (most of them massive blocks of black), and the last Bhob Stewart multipage cover for *Void*.

As the Stewart cover shows, there's a lot which can be done with Gestefax work, and the copy need not be devoid of such things as shading and the like.

The Stewart cover was drawn same-size on paper first, without shading, and inked by brush. (Bhob and I both inked portions of it; Bhob used various pens, and I used a brush almost exclusively. The brush I recommend for such work is the Windor-Newton #2, which is used widely by cartoonists.) We used poster-paint white for whiting out errors, and touching up, and then I had a set of negative photostats made. These are exact black-for-white reverses. Photostats can be used to enlarge or reduce, but I had them made same-size. I went over the stats with my brush and black ink, correcting errors which had escaped us before, or were too delicate to be whited out. If one wishes, a scratchboard effect can also be gotten this way. Corrections made, I began applying the first stage of the shading.

For this I used standard Zip-A-Tone overlay sheets. These are clear celophane with designs, shading patterns, etc., printed in black, white, or colors, on the reverse side, which is then coated with wax. The sheet can be laid over the area desired, and lightly burnished. This causes the wax to adhere to the paper. The unwanted areas can be cut away with a stylus (which is nothing more than a needle stuck into the end of a stick), and the remainder burnished down flat. The beauty of the wax backing is that it is not sticky, and can be lifted up and moved around until satisfactory. I used a black heavy screen over several of the white areas on the negative stat. The result is that when positive stats are made, the white area (which would otherwise now be black again) becomes grey. One can lay such an overlay over lettering on the negative stat, for instance, and come out with the final product of grey screened lettering, which can look quite fancy.

Once the negatives were finished, I had the positive stats made. These of course incorporated all of the improvements I'd made on the negatives.

Because the original drawings were too full of pencil erasures, paste-ins, whited-out blobs and were generally too messy, I had held off applying the final shading overlays until I had the positive stats to work with. (Also, photostating tends to blur detail, and it's best to apply fine-dot shading as much towards the end of the process as possible in order to keep the detail fresh.) These shading overlays were applied exactly as were the ones I put on the negative stats--the difference of course being that they would remain at the same value, rather than being reversed.

Zip-A-Tone overlays and similar brands of overlays are the type of shading best suited for artwork to be electronically stencilled. However, care should be exercised in making sure that the screen of dots is not too close nor fine--as a rule no smaller or closer than one would find

on a shading plate. Extremely fine screens will either drop out (if they're too light) or become a black area (in the opposite case). Care should also be exercised in selecting the size of dot. That is, two screens may have the same exact number of dots per square inch, but the dots on one may be much smaller. It is wisest to pick a screen which looks a *little* coarse, and the dots a *little* light. The electronic stencil process tends to make each reproduced line or dot slightly bigger and blacker than the original, and as I said it won't discriminate between dots when they're too small and too close.

A point to remember with Gestefaxing is that pencil lines will reproduce, as will blue lines. (When preparing artwork for a printer or for photostating, one can use blue pencil lines which will not reproduce. One can also use *red* overlays, which can be seen through for aid in positioning, but which will print as black when photographed.) This can be a headache if you don't want them to show, but it can also be used for half-tone-like shading effects, such as the Gregg Trendeine folio we ran in *Void #27*. Indeed, drawings entirely in pencil, and utilizing pencil-shading can be reproduced, although with the same increase in contrast found in reproduced photos.

Colors will also pick up, although with varying results. Gestetner advises, "All bright colors reproduce as black, therefore printed copy should not be on a colored background." And, "...as a general rule, black, dark blue, and dark red are the most dense, and light blue, green and yellow are weak," by which they mean that the "dense" colors will reproduce as black, while the lighter ones will reproduce as grey or not reproduce at all.

Among other things, this means that a picture done in color will not necessarily reproduce as a black and white copy of itself, but may have changes in the color-values, with deep blues, most reds, and blacks indistinguishable.

3. *Lettering*. The least-explored area of electronic stencilling in fandom is that of lettering. I cannot think offhand of anyone besides Richard Bergeron and myself who has exploited the advantages of Gestefax for heading titles, logos, and other uses of lettering.

Lettering-guided headings are possible in a wide variety of styles, of course, but all are limited to the use of the same-width line and variations on width of lettering can be shown only by outline. However, electronic stencils can reproduce any form of typography, and thus vastly enrich the appearance of one's headings.

Of course, in order to do this, you have to have an original first. This *can* be obtained by ordering it set in type by a printer, but unless you have lots of money or professional connections with a printer, forget it. Then too, you can clip already printed words or letters and paste them up to form your title. This however is a tedious and unhappy process; the only person I know who has used it successfully is Richard Eney, in his convention-booklet ads for the Fancyc II.

The easiest method I know is to purchase overlay lettering sheets. The most common are made by ArType, however Ad-Letter and CrafType are also satisfactory, providing you obtain only recently-made Ad-Letter sheets (the older ones were made by an inferior process and have gummed backs). These sheets are made exactly as are Zip-A-Tone shading sheets: they consist of an alphabet printed on a celophane sheet with a waxed backing. The alphabet contains a number of each letter, distributed roughly according to general usage. Each row of letters has a line drawn under it, and when each letter is cut out and laid out for your title, this line will be helpful for lining the letters up and keeping them even. Once the lettering is burnished down, of course, the lines should be removed.

This form of lettering can be obtained in a wide variety of styles covering virtually the entire spectrum of type styles, plus a number of hand-lettered styles as well. It is useful for preparing material for photo-offset as well as for mimeo work, and I and many others have employed it in preparing convention ads and the like. (From time to time one may encounter an amateurly done offset fanzine in which the little lines under each line remain... before I understood this process, they puzzled me greatly.) As with other types of overlays, lettering overlays come not only in black, but in white and colors. The colors are not particularly useful in preparing material for reproduction (they're made for posters and "presentations"), but the white type can be used either over a black area or a shaded area quite successfully.

I initially tried the use of such lettering in combination with Gestefax in *Void #18*, and one example of it was used in #24. In that it can provide versatility and added scope to your fanzine, it is well worth investigating.

There are a few tricks to be observed with ArType and similar lettering. It is not made too small to reproduce (when a lettering guide gets too small it is almost impossible to work with in this form), and since the letters are sharp and clear they will give good copy. Some care must be observed in keeping the paper you burnish them onto clean, since spots and specks trapped under the clear celophane surrounding each letter will be reproduced, and could give you a fuzzy background. Generally, though, the only trick to learn is facility in handling the letters, and if I, with my shaking hands, can do it, anyone can.

By this point, we've reached the stage where your copy --photo, artwork, lettering, or all three--is ready to take on down to the local Gestetner, Times Stenafax, or Rex-Rotary office. No matter how much or how little copy you give the man, you are going to get back one or more grey stencils with your copy reproduced on it. Theoretically, you submit a page of copy for each stencil.

But fans being fans, and thus not particularly rich, are not going to do this. What I mean is, if you have a heading to go at the top of the page, it is foolish to submit only that on a sheet, and have only that on your finished stencil. That way lies poverty, if you have a separate stencil made (at $3 each) for each heading.

Instead you put all your headings, artwork, etc., on one sheet (which may be fully covered up to 8-3/8x13-1/2"), and when you get the stencil, you cut each individual heading or whathaveyou out of it and patch it into a normal stencil, onto which you type text...best if the text is done first.

Not everyone has always done this; I recall that Charles Riddle, when he used Stenafax for *Peon*, typed up an entire page of text to be 'faxed along with the head. But this requires a very black ribbon, and tends to produce blurry text, not to mention being quite wasteful.

In pasting up your copy, remember that it must be wrapped around a drum, without wrinkles. It should not be thicker than two government post cards, which means no cardboard or blotters. (The Zuber blotter drawings I used had to be photostated first.) When pasting up copy, rubber paper cement should always be used, and copy should be pasted down only at the top, letting the bottom flap free. Once on the drum it won't, and this prevents wrinkling. Gestetner says, "Your original must be wrapped around a cylinder and it wraps flatter if the edges are loose."

You should also remember to leave at *least* three-quarters of an inch margin between items to be cut apart--preferably more, as you'll soon discover.

Okay, so you pay your money, and you get your stencil, and you take it home. What have you got? A funny piece of thick rubber-coated paper, which smells funny--like ozone--and which shows all of your copy produced in black lines and areas on the rubbery grey side.

Before doing anything else, put the stencil on a mimeoscope or hold it to the light, and look for lines and dots which shouldn't be there. You may find a lot of miscellaneous dots scattered over the white areas which shouldn't be there, and you may also see faint lines where one sheet of paper overlapped another on your original copy. These you should go over lightly with correction fluid. This should be done *before* separating the stencil from the backing sheet, if possible. The reason is that, otherwise, the stencil tends to wrinkle and pucker where corflu has been put.

Okay, now you can do one of two things. Either you can peel the stencil loose, or you can cut only certain items from it. I suggest that if you do not intend to use all of it right away, you cut only what you do want from it, leaving the remainder still adhered to the backing sheet. They keep best this way. Otherwise they may wrinkle and become unusuable before you need them.

But let's say you want to use the entire stencil right now. To peel it loose, you start at the bottom, and tear it about a quarter of an inch into the stencil. You'll find the paper part tears, which the rubber part stretches. You'll also find the paper has separated slightly at this point from the rubber. Starting with this point, and working carefully and evenly, take the paper in one hand and the rubber in the other, and peel gently apart. Once completed, you will hold a flimsy thin sheet of rubber through which you can see your designs or printed copy, and which will tend to stretch or wrinkle out of shape unless babied. To cut each item apart, use a razor blade or Xacto knife.

Patching is in itself a process I don't want to get into here--it requires pages to thoroughly explore. A few tips, though. Allow plenty of overlap for your electronic stencil and your wax stencil. Use patching cement freely. And, if you haven't much overlap, add a thin strip of wax stencil over the joint. The reason for this is that electronic stencils do not adhere well to normal stencils, and unless you are careful your patch may break, and ink pour through the break. To repair this is quite messy. Once patched, the electronic reproduction is ready to be mimeographed. Make sure the cement is dry, of course (otherwise it doesn't hold nearly so well) and then run it off.

I suppose it should be obvious, but in case it isn't, I'd better point out that black areas electronically stencilled are just as hard to ink as otherwise-created black areas. If your mimeo is an ABDick or similar drum-type machine, you should stay away from large black areas entirely. If you have a Gestetner or similar dual-drum silk-screen machine, you'll find black areas easier to ink, but still a headache if too large. "Too large" in this case approximates the size of the Zodiac figures on the *Shaggy* calendar, which I noticed shows signs of trouble in inking (and represents a task I wouldn't have attempted, coward that I am). Gestetner suggests "solid areas should be screened, using {white} Zip-A-Tone or a similar product, particularly large shadowed areas."

Black areas can cause another kind of trouble. Once in a while, when you are trying to separate stencil from backing, and you're peeling across a large black area, you may find the stencil tears, and comes apart in the weakened black areas.

Should this happen, or should the electronic reproduction be too roundly inferior to your adequate original copy, *return it to your dealer*. He is obligated to replace it at no extra cost. He may try to tell you otherwise, but should he, simply say you'll report him to the head office. It's his responsibility to give you a good stencil. Some such people will attempt to excuse a worn reproducing stylus which jumps lines or cuts badly by saying it isn't important. It *is*, however, and you should insist on a new stencil. (This is mostly annoying because each stencil takes from twenty to forty-five minutes to make; however, that's his lookout, not yours. His stencils are guaranteed by his company.)

Okay, that's the scoop. Now you can go out and produce as snazzy a fanzine as anyone on your black.

.....

AFTERTHOUGHTS 1975: The foregoing article was written in late 1961, and is, consequently, somewhat out of date. None of the techniques, etc., described have themselves gone out of date, but in the ensuing fourteen years a lot has happened.

The primary thing which has happened is that fans have become more affluent and their fanzines show it. Since I first published this article the use of electronic stencils has become widespread in fandom--so much so that an article on how to stencil artwork by hand might be of more value today; it's all but a lost art--and indeed photo-offset fanzines are no longer a rarity (Hi, Bill!).

Electronic stencil making machines are also much more common today. In the early sixties my father-in-law, Julius Postal, purchased his own Electro-Rex machine, and a number of New York area fans took advantage of his extremely cheap prices--which were close to cost. "Cost", at least in the sixties, was around 50¢ a complete stencil. (My own fanzine-publishing days were pretty much over before Julius became my father-in-law and before I was aware of the machine he had; I'm one of the few who never made use of his machine.) At least one minor fan of the sixties put out a fanzine entirely on electro-stencils, although a majority of the pages were only typed, containing no artwork.

The primary use of electro-stencils in the last fourteen years, however, has been to free the non-artistically-inclined faned from the responsibility for stencilling artwork by hand. I think this reaches a fairly ridiculous point when a simple Rotsler line-drawing is electro-stencilled--nothing could be easier to trace upon an ordinary wax stencil--but, on the other hand, I've seen simple Rotsler line-drawings butchered by faneds who *couldn't* trace simple lines with a stylus, so I'm sure Bill has been just as happy with this development.

Turning directly to the article, a few points need clarification or updating.

The first is the process by which the electro-stencil is made. I referred to a stylus "cutting" the stencil, but this is true only in the largest sense. In fact, the "cutting stylus" is a needle through which electricity passes, creating a spark which jumps from the stylus to the drum, passing *through* the rubber electro-stencil. This *spark* actually burns a small hole in the stencil. When the stylus is worn (which occurs after a certain amount of use) it should be replaced; when it is not the result is a blurry image from less-precise sparking.

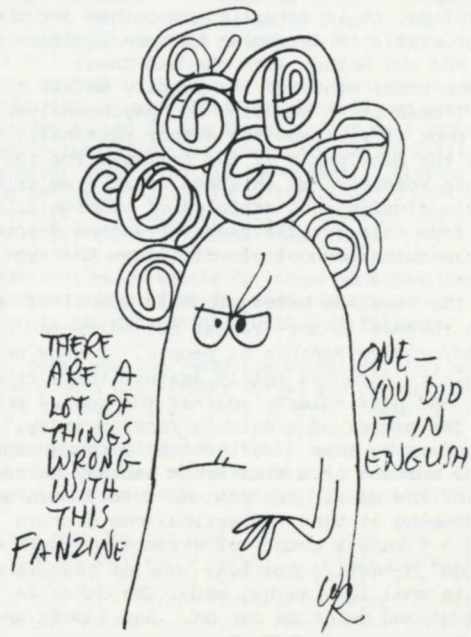
Another point is the kind of type used for making headings. In the past fourteen years the Presstype form of lettering has made enormous strides. With this form of lettering one does not have to cut out individual letters, position them, and burnish them down. Instead one positions the sheet on which the lettering appears so that the needed letter is in the proper place, and then one burnishes that letter so that it detaches itself from the underside of the sheet and adheres directly to one's copy. There are a number of companies which make this form of lettering--Letraset, Presstype, Mecca-Norma, etc.--each having its own idiosyncracies. I use such lettering for the type on the covers of *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. The process is much faster and easier than the type of lettering I described in the article--and is probably in nearly-universal use now.

The specific references to examples (in *Void* and elsewhere) must be frustrating to current-day fans with no access to fanzines of the 1958-61 era; *Ice* (cited in the first sentence of the original piece) came out in the very early 1950's; *Grue* in 1953 or thereabouts. Unfortunately, there is no way I can update these references to more current examples; their use is too specific.

I can explain however, the reference to Bhob Stewart's "multi-page cover". Bhob was an active fan in the 1950's--he started EC comics fandom single-handedly in 1953--who moved to NYC in 1960. He came up with an idea for a three-page cover for *Void*, one in which the first two pages introduced, in comic-strip form, the cover (with logo) which appeared as the third page. This idea debuted with the "Willish" of *Void* (which I believe was #23)--the issue devoted to Walt Willis and to the introduction of the Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund which brought Walt and Madeleine Willis to the 1962 Chicon, ten years after his first visit to this country. With one exception, the remaining issues of *Void* published in the early sixties had Bhob Stewart multi-page covers as well; the cover for V28--the one to which I referred in detail--ran *five* pages and Bhob bogged down after doing the first two pages. I scripted the remainder and Steve Stiles pencilled it in Bhob's style, while I inked it. It was a major undertaking and the last such I undertook. Bhob's covers for *Void* introduced Que Wertyuiop, a spritely master-of-ceremonies, whose name was based on the fact that my fanzines were always published in the QWERTYUIOPress (still are, for that matter, if only once a year for FAPA...). When Arnie Katz started up *Quip* a few years later, he appropriated Que without asking either my permission or Bhob's; he had Ross Chamberlain use Que in four-page covers which closely aped Bhob's. No doubt imitation is the sincerest form of falttery, but I wished at the time that Arnie had been more original and not ripped off not only the concept and style of execution but also our 'trademarked' character. Ross's covers, by the way, were photo-offset, although the rest of *Quip* was produced by mimeo.

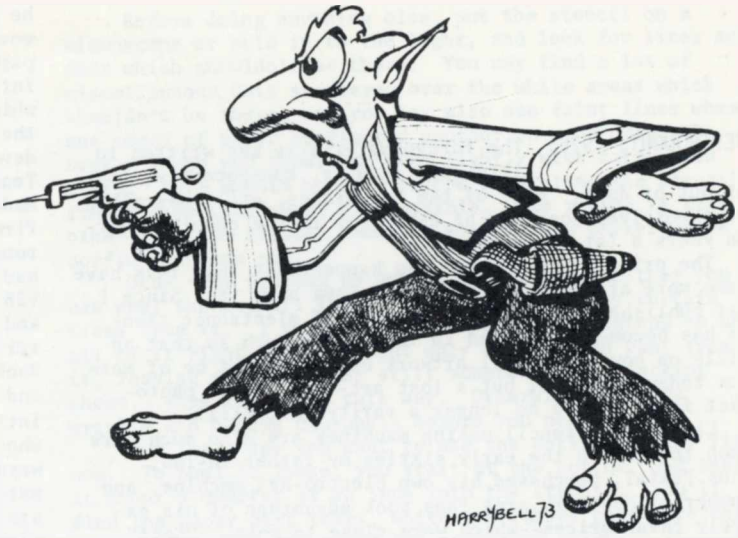
In the grand and glorious Towner Hall days of New York fandom--when I was publishing *Void* frequently and Terry Carr was putting out *Lighthouse* with Pete Graham a few feet away (both Pete and Terry were, with Greg Benford, co-editors of *Void*)--we thought nothing of devoting hours of our time to the precise and careful hand-stencilling of artwork. Both Terry and I were masters at it; if anyone was more skilled than I, it was Terry Carr. To us the use of electro-stencilling was something of a cop-out--something we did when the artwork clearly called for it, or to achieve a specific effect which could be had only with electro-stencilling. Today many fans routinely use electro-stencilling for all their artwork, and, as I remarked earlier, the art of hand-stencilling art is all but lost. That seems a shame. Perhaps it's time for a piece that offers a few tips on that neglected craft. It would be nice to turn fandom's attention once more to such areas. The pendulum has swung as far in the present direction as it can.

.....TED WHITE



The Critics at Bay

Randall Garrett



IN THE AUGUST '75 *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, the book review column is in the hands of Alexei and Cory Panshin. I may spit.

Let me say at the outset that, of the four books reviewed, I have read two, and I agree with the Panshin's judgment on both. THE FEMALE MAN by Joanna Russ is not a novel; it is a badly done, bitter, old-maidish, femlib polemic. Cordwainer Smith's NORSTRILIA is sloppily written, badly plotted, and poorly resolved.

Take careful note, however, that I did *not*, in the above, say anything about the authors of the books--*only about the books*. I do not feel that I, or anyone else, should judge the personality of an author by his or her fictional work.

About fifteen years ago, Theodore Sturgeon wrote a story, *A World Well Lost*, which was sympathetic toward male homosexuality. The critics of the analyze-the-author school immediately leaped to the obvious conclusion. I have known Ted for a quarter of a century, and hereby assure you that he was and is a blatant heterosexual. As Ted put it in an article he wrote later: "If that story makes me a fairy, then Isaac Asimov is a mule."

An author, and *especially* a science fiction author, is characterized by *imagination*. Without that, he or she is sterile. The author must be able to imagine any character, at any place, in any time, in any situation, and carry off the story--*regardless of his or her personal proclivities*. And the good ones do just that.

Therefore, it is actually impossible for the analyze-the-author critic to determine the proclivities of a good author. And why bother with the bad ones?

On the other hand, it is patently unfair to cheat. By that, I mean it is cheating to "psychoanalyze" an author's book if you know the author personally. You've looked at the back pages of the textbook for the answers.

Please remember, my children, that I am talking about an author's *fiction*--not articles of opinion. If you conclude from this article that the author despises the analyze-the-author school of criticism, then you are bloody well right.

And the Panshins belong to that school of thought.

What follows is *not*--repeat *not*--directed against Alexei and/or Cory Panshin as people. I know neither of them. This is directed solely against their critical writings, and particularly against the review noted above.

"In the mirror of a science fiction story," say the Panshins, "may be seen a reflection of the author." Yes, and on the surface of a tide-swept sea may be seen a reflection of the moon. But you can't tell much about the moon by looking at that reflection; the picture is far too distorted. I know a couple of writers who both write "hardboiled" detective stories. One of them is damn near as tough in real life as his hero; the other is as mild and pleasant and quiet as can be. And I defy anyone to tell which is which from their stories alone.

Or do the Panshins mean to imply that their mirror metaphor applies *only* to science fiction? Some years ago, when Heinlein's STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND was the Bible of the nest-building younger set, one of the devotees asked me if Heinlein had ever written anything else. "Heinlein is such a wonderful, warm, understanding person. He appreciates the true, peaceful goodness of humanity," this idiot blithered. With a perfectly straight face, I recommended STARSHIP TROOPER. He read the book, and was shocked clear to his toenails. After about a week of mental gymnastics, he came to the firm conclusions that there were *two different people* writing under the name Robert A. Heinlein. So I asked him to read CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY and tell me which one wrote it. He did, and never spoke to me or read Heinlein again. Critics who refer to Heinlein's latest works as "an old man's sexual fantasies" have fallen into the same egregious error.

In speaking of NORSTRILIA, the Panshins ask: "For what reasons did Smith invent this bizarre half-mad situation?" And they answer themselves: "Quite clearly...(it was) an intertwined problem that Smith felt the need to sort out and resolve." I will concede that this may be true, but only in the sense that any writer, after stating a problem (e.g.: a murder mystery) must, for the sake of good writing, sort it out and resolve it. I doubt that Paul Linebarger (Smith's real name) had any deep-seated psychological need to solve "half-mad" situations that he had set up himself. People who construct crossword puzzles rarely find any deep-seated need to solve them afterwards.

All the writers I know write for money. As Dr. Johnson said, they're fools if they don't. And that, dear children, is the crux of the thing. In order to sell, a story must be *interesting*. And a writer will go to almost any lengths to bring that about. At the same time, he must avoid stepping all over the reader's toes.

Imagine a world a thousand years from now where everything is peaceful and pleasant; a genuine Utopia. It came about because Germany won WWII and Hitler's dreams were realized after a rather tumultuous period called "The Troubled Times" in the history books of that era. I think I could write the story and make it convincing. I won't because I don't think I could sell it, no matter how interesting it was. But I would like to see what the Panshins had to say about me. Not the story--*me*.

I read critical reviews to find out about books--not authors. Science fiction authors get damn sick and tired of clotpoll readers asking: "Where do you get all those crazy ideas?" The only thing worse is to have some clotpoll critic tell him where he got them.

.....RANDALL GARRETT

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PIERS ANTHONY · Off the Deep End

BACKGROUND: In OW 19, wrapping up a complex hassle in my statement *Rationale of an Idecision*, I stated that I had earned under $6,000 from writing in 1972, which was small compared to the reputed earnings of over $10,000 per novel by such as Dick and Zelazny, and "I read in a recent *Locus* that even Dean Koontz made a resale to Dell for $45,000." And parenthetically: "I certainly would like to know how to land such contracts, if it can be done ethically; if straight literary talent is all that is required, I believe I can match the prevailing standards."

In OW 20 Dean Koontz replied (and here I quote at length so that there will be no confusion about his response to the single word "even"): "In OW 19, Mr. Anthony's paragraphs of ignorance and self-congratulatory moralizing make reference to me. Brief reference, but nastily calculated...I am now in a position where I write only what I want; every novel is different from the last, sometimes in style as well as in content and purpose. I'll happily submit HANGING ON and SHATTERED for merit comparison against any two of Anthony's novels... My agent...is generally regarded in New York as the toughest and most honest man in the business. I've been working with him two years, and he's helped turn my career around. But here comes this paranoid crank, Anthony, accusing people he doesn't even know...What the hell does Anthony think? That they're paying me good money *only* if I promise to help them screw other writers, only if I promise to murder infants in my spare time? When a hardcover house advances me five figures for a novel (as is generally the case everywhere these days), and when they allow me to say whatever I want in whatever fashion I choose, what more can a writer ask?"

And in response to my remark about matching prevailing standards: "Two things are required: Professionalism of a high degree, and literary talent." Whereupon he pans me on both accounts, and says: "Well, I have changed drastically as a writer over the last couple of years...But I *have* matured. Anthony hasn't, at least not to my eye. I still read him, or try to, and I still find him basically hollow, emotionaless and dull... Piers Anthony used to write letters to me. They depressed me. I felt then, and feel now, that Anthony represents the very worst in a genre I once loved and still feel affection for. He has incredible pretensions and no real sense of his own value. He is painfully boastful, and he seeks to improve his own image by subtly (and/or blatantly) maligning other writers. I feel sorry for him. The bitterness and desperation in his fan articles are sometimes amusing--but always sad. Several years ago I wrote to Anthony and asked that he please not send me any more letters. I felt obligated to answer them, but they depressed me so terribly. Anthony complied with that request. And now I only ask that he not print snide remarks or libelous references...I am happy as the proverbial clam. I don't need to be brought down even one degree, even for one hour, by Mr. Anthony's know-nothing drivel. Mr. Anthony...save yourself from stepping off the deep end..."

I replied next issue of OW with the dictionary definition of the term "paranoia" and invited readers to compare my fanzine entries to those of Koontz to see which writer the term best fit. And I accepted his challenge to a merit comparison with any two of my own novels, naming MACROSCOPE and RINGS OF ICE, and added: "Suppose we do this up right: I will plan a column on the subject of Koontz, literature, professionalism and paranoia, emphasis on his two named books, for OW 23...it might even shed some light on why some writers can do their own thing for considerably more money than others..."

Now I thought this was a reasonable response to an unreasonable tirade. (Anyone who suspects I am distorting the case is invited to look up the correspondence in back issues of OW.) But Koontz responded: "I...have no interest in the project that Piers outlines...For one thing, I consider Piers vitriolic, egomaniacal, biased, and pretty much untrustworthy...It is *he* who has written literally tens of thousands of words in fanzines, professing to be put upon and persecuted...I reject the idea that Piers could be unbiased in criticizing my mainstream work. ...Piers lives in a fantasy; he's a sick man...I receive five-figure advances from three hardcover houses...writing two or three books a year, I seem to be making on hardcover advances and foreign sales alone...seven or eight times what Piers made in his best year..." Ane he reiterated his formula for that success: "Work, hard work, talent and major ideas." And blasted the Anthony/Fuentes martial arts series as "inept, pulpish, and morally bankrupt stuff..." He compared me to R. Nixon, and finished: "I don't want to have to waste time on him...in response to his ravings...perhaps the whole thing can be stopped here."

Of course anybody with any wit knows that you do not lay such broadsides into Piers Anthony and have it end there; I am, I believe, regarded as one of the three or four most combative personalities in the field (the others are Harlan Ellison, Ted White, and whoever else is hot at the moment). Obviously Koontz was trying to get my attention to be sure I *would* work him over in print. Perhaps he is masochistic, or maybe he had a bet with Malzberg; but I believe it is deeper than that. Like a neglected child, he can't stand to be ignored; if he can't have positive attention, he'll settle for negative attention--and he has been super-conscious of me for some time.

I hope he is not disappointed with what follows.

BIAS: This, then, was the immediate genesis of this column.

Editor Bowers has already turned two new gray hairs and we haven't hit the heavy stuff yet. I didn't make it by Issue 23 because I couldn't find one of the books; perhaps in exasperation over this stalling Bowers finally lent me his copy of HANGING ON, and so prodded me into work. (I trust he is prodding Koontz similarly about his Horrors of Being an SF Author piece.)

I have now read the two books Koontz named, and you can be sure I gave them an unfriendly perusal. Koontz expressed doubt that I could offer an unbiased criticism of his work, and apart from the fact that *no* literary critique is objective--literature by its very nature evokes *subjective* response--it is obvious that a person who has been labeled a "paranoid crank" whose writings are "hollow emotionless and dull" "inept, pulpish and

morally bankrupt" is not about to waste very much superfluous praise on the author of those remarks. So we shall have no pretense of an objective hearing here--but at the root it will be fair, because I really do want to know why a writer who was not known for quality in science fiction should suddenly do so well in mainstream, and I feel that other writers and fans will be similarly curious. According to Koontz, he now seems to be making seven to eight times as much as I made in my best year. Well, my years' earnings, net after agents' commissions and collaborator splits, for the past decade are as follows: 1966--$1,000 (these are rounded off to the nearest thousand for convience); 67--$5,000; 68--$5,000; 69--$10,000; 70--$6,000; 71--$7,000; 72--$6,000; 73--$8,000; 74--$11,000; 75 (first six months only) $14,000. Thus Koontz is making a minimum of $70,000 a year, and the ante for *this* year will be somewhat higher. My *family* income runs about $6,000 per year higher than these figures indicate, as I have a working wife--but of course my taking care of the children in the day cuts down my working time and therefore my income. I have also lost markets by calling editors and publishers on their unscrupulous practices, as we have seen right here in OW. This, presumably, is the origin of Koontz's charge that I have written "Literally tens of thousands of words in fanzines, professing to be put upon and persecuted." Be all that as it may, I am exceedingly curious how a writer of average talent can earn $70,000 a year writing exactly what he wants to; if there is a secret, let's have all writers in on it. Has Koontz abruptly matured as an author, emerging like a brilliant butterfly from a formerly plodding caterpillar? Or was it sheer blind luck? It is evident from the tone of his missives that he has not matured emotionally and does not feel secure enough in his abilities to let any implied slights to his talent pass unchallenged. As he has done before, he has complimented me by emulating me; when Bob Tucker made a similar slight of *my* talent, I challenged him to direct comparison. The truth is, I enjoy this sort of thing, and I do not apologize for any of my science fiction. My first published novel CHTHON will be reissued this year (together with its sequel PHTHOR); I wrote it over nine years ago, reread it recently, and remain pleased with it. So I welcome the chance for merit comparisons. But it must be clearly understood that this column is *not* an objective critique; it is one writer setting out to take the measure of another.

Now that that caution to the reader has been made, let's begin to get into it. It is evident from his letters that Koontz does not have a very realistic view. His charges just don't fit me. Arrogant as I am, I have not bragged about five figure advances; instead I have said I place quality and integrity before sales. I have not called anyone a paranoid crank, but rather stood ready to document, as I did with the two other challenges to *Rationale of an Indecision*, exactly what I meant by such remarks as "bad smell" (Ted White) and "in some ways worse" (Don Pfeil). And I had no particular interest in maintaining contact with Dean Koontz; it was the other way around. His "letter" to me does not exist, as far as I know; I would have remembered such presumption. In short, Koontz has chosen to reverse our roles, accusing me of what he deems his own failings to be. And that, by golly, is a form of paranoia.

I do not say this lightly. It happens that I know something about paranoia. I took courses in related subjects in college, I worked for a time in a mental hospital, I have known genuine mental cases, and for some time I was diagnosed as one myself. That last is a long story; the upshot was that what three MD's took to be neurasthenia (imaginary illness) was in fact undiagnosed diabetes. So I have, if you will, been clinically cleared; I am diabetic but not paranoid. (Of course it would be possible to be *both*; but in my case the specific symptons, mainly an inexplicable fatigue that *decreased* with exercise, was wholly accounted for by the blood sugar metabolism problem. For more on diabetes, about which I also know something, see my novel RINGS OF ICE.) It is hardly a term I would throw around carelessly.

In view of this, Koontz's remarks become highly significant. "I feel sorry for him...bitterness and desperation in his fan articles...his ravings" and so on. For whom does he really feel sorry? Not *me*; I am a hell of an ornery figure, but not a sorry one. There is precious little bitterness and desperation in *my* fan articles; witness *The Four Lives of Sterling Lanier* that appeared in the same issue as Koontz's attack. An editor mutilated my piece and I put the whole story in print with no crying. That is typical of my reaction to affront: to fight it out openly, with no apologies or excuses. And compare my use of the word "even" with Koontz's replies; who is doing the raving? Koontz's missives overflow with exactly the qualities he describes: boastfulness, bitterness and, I think, a truly prevading desperation. And why, if what he says is true? He should be happy, and it is manifest that he is not.

ANALOGY: As promised, I am discussing Koontz, literature, professionalism and paranoia. But a serious exploration of mental illness is a complex matter, beyond the scope of this column, and I am not qualified to make a definitive diagnosis. I shall, before this piece is done, answer the question: "Is Dean Koontz paranoid?"--but the reader must understand that this is a largely uninformed opinion, quite possibly 180° wrong. Yet there is evidence...

When I worked in the mental hospital, I encountered a number of genuinely ill types. One of my jobs was to help hold down patients for electro-shock treatments--a gruesome thing to watch, though not, oddly, to experience. The patient himself goes out like a light as the current comes on (perhaps I should say like a blown bulb); he feels no pain. But his body reacts like one in terrible agony, with every muscle straining in the convulsion. I believe shock therepy has fallen into disuse more recently, at least the electroshock (there are different kinds; another is insulin shock--shades of diabetes!), and it never was really understood. I believe it was like striking a watch with a hammer: sometimes it does seem to help. There was certainly an effect on the patients; they improved, sometimes dramatically. Shock was used more or less indiscriminately, to my way of thinking: on manic-depressives (it flipped them from depression into joy), on schizoids, and on paranoids. But paranoia was an odd category, not at all clear cut. I asked questions, based on my observations of patients, and was given to understand that in practice paranoia was the name for any mental illness the doctors couldn't otherwise define. So it is a fairly safe term to use; if a person disagrees with you, you can call him paranoid: undefinably mentally ill. I never thought much of that definition, however, and found its application at a high class mental hospital sloppy. It is like calling anyone you dislike a communist or a Richard Nixon: a mere epithet revealing more of the attitudes of the speaker than his target. I hope there are now better ways to treat paranoids than shock, and if it seems I have a certain sympathy for that type of mental illness, that is true. My major impression of the mental hospital inmates was "There but for the grace of God go I." We are all, to a certain degree, paranoid; it is a survival trait.

One of my classmates in college was a perpetual manic. Always, he was super-cheerful. Someone stubs his toe, ho-ho, that's all right. And you know, if there's anything more obnoxious than a sad sack, it's a happy sack. I have heard that the families of some depressives who were flipped into their manic stages by electroshock soon brought them back asking that they be returned to the depression; nobody could stand their happiness. I can believe it. Well, in due course this student --call him Student A--was removed for hospitalization, where I suspect he was shock-treated. He returned--and now he was completely disciplined. No ho-ho's, no depression, just an absolutely level course. He was not a zombie; he could converse normally and do his work; in fact he was a nice guy. But he had no human emotion--a kind of real-life *Star Trek* Spock. I watched him play doubles ping pong, teamed with a friend. Now the friend had played for two years and never learned at thing; he made the same mistakes over and over. I saw that friend throw something like twelve consecutive points away by hitting the ball too hard so that it flew off the end of the table. Any normal partner would have exploded or quit in disgust, but Student A merely glanced at him and said "You're having a hard time," with no rancor. What a marvelous exhibition of tolerance, you may think--but he was like that all the time, neither laughing nor crying. He had in fact lost something vital. Remember Student A: I shall have reference to him again.

Student B was a different case. He had much elequence and many skills and was quick to express his admiration of people he liked. His girlfriend was "one of the most intelligent people on campus"--though to me she appeared barely average. (There *was* a most intelligent girl on campus, though--and that was the one I married.) His favorite faculty member was terriffic in every respect. But a funny thing happened. The girlfriend seemed amenable, but Student B somehow became turned off her. And as he got to know the faculty member better, he began criticising him for faults, and finally rated him rather low on the scale. There seemed to be a pattern of early admiration and later rejection. His memory, in contrast, painted better pictures with time. He told fine stories of his physical and intellectual successes--but I was in a position to know that they were *only* stories, converting his actual failures into marvelous victories. Yet I believe he believed in them. More than with most of us, his wishes became fact--in his mind.

More recently I observed a similar pattern: a kind of hero-worship followed by negation, though the object of attention did not change. He sent me his fanzine, I sent an irate LoC, he wrote accusing me of violating an SFWA stricture against the $5000 PYRAMID/F&SF/Kent Productions contest I won, I informed him that it was at SFWA instigation I had entered that contest, he was satisfied and all was amicable. He had sold some stories

and a novel; the stories showed fine promise and I told him so, and I reviewed the novel for his own fanzine. The novel was not all that good, as he tended to imitate the styles of writers he admired, and he never ran my review. I introduced him via mail (I never met him personally) to Robert Moore Williams and he sent what I understand was a goshwow fan letter that Williams received graciously. But soon this person was speaking contemptuously of Williams. Too late I recognized Type B, and was sorry I had introduced them. I admire Mr. Williams not for his writing but for his spirit. And of course this person turned against me too. I put him down a couple of times in the fanzines and didn't think much more of it. Be he wouldn't let go; wherever I started a fanzine column, he followed with his own column. Frank Lunney, editor of *Beabohema*, told me how this person had declined to do anything for that magazine--until I did, and how eager he was to meet me personally. And so it went; it was, of course, Dean Koontz. But I was well able to live without him.

Dick Geis relayed a fanzine comment calling Koontz an Author compared to Anthony's hackwork--something like that. I declined to respond; it was, as I told Geis, Koontz's fan, not mine. Every writer deserves one fan. This particular one was called Leon Taylor, and I was struck at the time by the similarity of name and attitude to Leroy Tanner, of Harry Harrison/Ted White fame. Tanner was, it developed, largely a creature of Harrison's, perhaps a direct pseudonym, doing dirt to such fine writers as Roger Zelazny (both Ted White and I protested that)--and I suspected Taylor had a similar relation to Koontz. Just one of the interesting anomelies one encounters in the field. *Is* there a real Leon Taylor? Does anybody know him personally? Or was Koontz so eager to uplift himself at my expense that...? I really don't know.

Now Koontz himself denigrates his own prior work, as though it, like his former friends, has become too familiar and therefore suspect. And he talks of fabulous sales and income. Can this be believed--or is this Student B talking, advertsing the success he wishes he had? Others have told me privately that Koontz's claims are laughable--but they were thinking of the SF field rather than mainstream. Let's assume the figures are as Koontz claims, and take a look at the fiction that commands such prices. If it is something really special, we have our answer: talent. If not...

CRITIQUE: I read SHATTERED, by K.R. Dwyer or some such name about a year ago; it was in the local library. It was not available for me to take out this time, so I must work from memory: not the ideal situation. Now SHATTERED is interesting for a special reason, for it deals with something very like paranoia, and the writing itself reminded me overwhelmingly of Student A. It is terse, lean, controlled, as though a monkey clung to the author's back, screaming "Hemingway, not Faulkner! Watch those adjectives! Keep those sentences short!" preventing any carefree deviation from the business at hand. In the old days, Koontz was an extravagant, one might almost say voluptuous writer, throwing in half-baked concepts as if there were no tomorrow: a loose, *happy* imagination. SHATTERED is such a grim contrast it is hard to believe it's from the same mind. One pictures Koontz having a nervous breakdown, being hauled away to the hospital where he received the standard shock therapy, returning a zombie. Perhaps the monkey was the editor--but with as much editing (as I well know!) it might better have been undone. If this was the price Koontz had to pay for his success, this literary castration, it is like a pact with the devil or the monkey's paw, where more is lost than is gained.

But having expressed that regret, I must go on to say that SHATTERED is not a bad book. Many people prefer Hemingway; many find him one of the greatest writers of all time. I don't--but that's just my individual taste. The point is, when Koontz says he has changed as a writer, he isn't just fooling; he *has* changed, and not superficially. For those who like this type of writing, this is a good book; it is not cheaply done. In fact, tone of paranoia is so pervasive, in style as well as content, that one is tempted to believe the author *is* paranoid.

SHATTERED is the story of three people, one a mental case bent on mayhem, driving across America, and in this sense it resembles my listed comparison novel, RINGS OF ICE. S has a basic cast of three; ROI has six, and in that sense reflects the difference between authors. Anthony hasn't changed; he still gives the reader full measure. Dwyer pares it to the bone. S takes place in two cars; ROI in a motor home; S is essentially sexless, ROI has sex as integral to the adventure. In each novel there is violence, and finally a resolution. Because the action in each occurs along the highway with a limited cast, with emotional aberrations paramount--both might be called psychological novels--this pair of books represents not only a good, clear comparison of Koontz vs Anthony, but of mainstream vs science fiction. I recommend this set as a literary exercise to analytical readers. One type of reader will prefer one, another another--but it is really the *form* that differs, not the story.

In April, 1972, Editor David Williams at Dell found my humorous fantasy erotic novel 3.97 ERECT "Amusing and well written"--but Dell was not at that time publishing that type of thing. Maybe in a few months, if we cared to resubmit...Alas, when we did resubmit, David Williams was gone, and the sale was lost. He had moved to M. Evans, who did not publish pronography. So 3.97 ERECT (you can guess what was erect and how long it was), perhaps the sexiest fantasy/SF ever, or the most fantastic pornography (and I have also reviewed Geis, Farmer, etc. in that field, so I can fairly say that) depending on how you care to look at it--this fun novel languished, and never did find a publisher. How sorry I was to lose David Williams! But the ill wind that cost me, blew Dean Koontz some good, for M. Evans then published HANGING ON, and the dedication of that book is to that editor. I dare say that news pleases Koontz more than it pleases me. But for the vagaries of Parnassus... But it does show a parallel, for the same editor liked both our novels.

HANGING ON is completely different from SHATTERED. Instead of being lean and grim and sparing of concept, it is exuberant and happy, overflowing with ludicrous notions. Thus at one stroke my theorizing about the mental condition of the author is demolished; a true paranoid would not have let go like this. You can not judge the author by his work; the better that author is, the more completely he will fool you. You can judge his literary skill, not his mind.

But of course literary skill *is* a prime issue; as I said, if straight literary talent is all that is required...So what is the level of this novel? Well, not high, stylistically. "He was a tall, thin kid from Texas with an Adam's Apple that made him look like he'd swallowed a whole orange and got it stuck in his throat"--this is the grammer and imagery of a former English teacher? (Those who do not see what's wrong with it are welcome to take this sample to their own English teachers and become enlightened, as Koontz is not.) But of course it can be said that this novel is pitched for the popular market, where stylistic nicities and grammatical accuracy are superfluous.

This makes a problem comparing HANGING ON to my novel MACROSCOPE, which is pitched for a more intellectual clientele. The two are not comparable; the reader who thinks HO is the ultimate in literature would very likely be unable to finish M, and might even find it "basically hollow, emotionless and dull." And in this regard HO and S are parallel: neither requires much from the reader. In fact, the most nearly comparable of my own works are the martial arts books, aimed for the TV adventure-level audience. Both HO and MA are popular, fairly shallow writing spiced with humor, violence and sex. The ratios differ somewhat; there is more and better violence in the MA, less humor (and more subtle), with the sex about the same. See if it isn't so: if you like HO, you'll like the Jason Striker adventures, and vice versa. Or you'll dislike both. Perhaps this isn't surprising, since I understand Koontz has done a similar series of adventure novels. Which perhaps helps put Koontz's own judgment into perspective: he called our MA series "inept, pulpish, and morally bankrupt stuff." My collaborator, Roberto Fuentes, has taken issue with that assessment, but I wonder if this isn't really Koontz's verdict on his own work, unwittingly. For the record: I, like Koontz, do different types of books with different thrusts and different styles, for different audiences. Unlike him, I stand by all of it. I see nothing wrong with entertainment fiction--but I also do more sophisticated writing, such as MACROSCOPE and, if you want a preview of really ambitious obscurity, my religious SF-in-progress GOD OF TAROT. I doubt that Koontz has the capacity for this level of writing.

Koontz has never been in the army, as far as I know. I spent two years as a draftee, and another as a pseudo Navy officer (I suppose that needs clarification: I taught English at a military academy, so wore the uniform and insignia of an O-3--lieutenant in the navy, equivalent to captain in the army--and my students were required to salute me and call me "sir.") so I have had a certain experience with both enlisted and officer status. I haven't drawn on that experience much--just one short story, *The Life of the Stripe*, published some years back by Ultimate. But at least I have a background to draw on for comment here, for HO is set in the army. So how does the author do? Well, he obviously draws his notion from books and TV rather than reality. In fact, the novel, like his former SF, is highly dirivative, smacking strongly of CATCH 22, M.A.S.H. and such. Here we have the incompetent commander, the sexy nurse, the tranvestite soldier, the paranoid officer...the more some authors change, the more they stay the same.

But accepting this pseudo-army as a framework, as we do the equally improbable assumptions of SF and adventure fiction, how good a yarn does he spin? Well--not bad. In this story a WWII construction company is behind the German lines in France near the end of the war in 1944. Their job is to keep a bridge open so that the allies can use it when they progress this far. The Germans alternately use it and bomb it out, and once the allies bomb it out. The poor heroes are really hanging on, wishing

they could get *out* of this mess, and acclimatizing in various ways. And you know, the typical army unit *is* somewhat kooky, with rank inversely proportional to IQ, and under stress peculiarities do tend to exaggerate. To that extent, the parodies are accurate. And of course poking fun at the system is the prime relief-valve of all enlisted men. So I have to admit enjoying the exaggerated hangups portrayed here. There are even a few in-group names thrown in--Kelly, Malsberg and Hoskins. And there is a consistent rationale, for as the denouement approaches the mens' hangups become more exaggerated--one trooper even starts dating the transvestite--(there is a transsexual in RINGS OF ICE, for those who wish to compare approaches)--and then abate as the pressure does.

So let's finish this section on a positive note: some examples of what I enjoyed in HO: There is a scene in which an American soldier dresses in a Nazi uniform and stands guard at the bridge, masquerading as a German. The only thing is, the American Danny Dew is black. Yet he passes--because, as he puts it, he "thinks white." That's beautiful. Yet Dew needs his bulldozer as a musculinity symbol because he feels people laugh at his balls. Another time a German panzer unit stops by, and we are treated to the interactions between rival officers. Now I almost flunked high school because I could not master German, so I can't read much of it, but as near as I can make out, the senior officer squelches the junior one who is questioning him by inquiring "Do I become a prize when my answer is right?" to which the other replies "No, you become no prize..." And there is a diatribe against jews that seems entirely in character for the Nazis: a chilling reminder of what they were. A good job, there.

There is Lily, the luscious nympho, whose "jugs" are engineering miracles, whom the Major takes below the bridge for--well, I really enjoyed this scene, and feel you will too, so trust there will be no objection to an extended quote. "And then he was nude and between her legs. He lifted her buttocks, another pair of engineering miracles, and guided himself into her...the gentle breezes above were punctuated by hard, regular gulping sounds...Major Kelly broke his embrace of Lily Kain with a wet, mournful sucking noise...walked out of the shadow of the bridge floor, and looked up at the twenty or thirty men who were lying on the bridge and hanging over the edge watching the action...'We have agreed to imagine that the breathing is the sigh of the wind.' He spread his arms imploringly. 'But I can't deal with that sound. Is someone up there eating peanuts?'...He got into her again as smoothly as a greased piston into a firing chamber...her big jugs worked round and round, slapped together, rose and fell, jiggled, quivered, swung, *bounced*...'Oh, God! Oh, God!' one of the breezes said, above...as he redoubled his efforts so that he might reach his end with hers, the Stukas bombed the bridge."

Try it, you'll like it!

CONCLUSIONS: After completing the foregoing, I went to the local library and looked up Koontz books in *Book Review Digest*, an exceedingly useful publication that lists the reviews appearing in the better magazines. Science fiction magazines are not included, and newspapers aren't, and softcover books seldom get much shrift in the review arena, so this reference is by no means ideal--but it does do an invaluable job of what it does do. Since Koontz says "HANGING ON ...was well reviewed all over the country, raved about in *Publisher's Weekly*, where the criticism is tougher than most places," I knew it would be represented here, and I wanted to get professional contrast to my own impressions.

Well, SHATTERED and HANGING ON are unlisted through 1974. Since both were published in 1973, and the reviews must appear within 18 months to be counted, this pretty much rules them out for *Book Review Digest*. It would seem that Koontz exaggerated his review success. *Publisher's Weekly* is not listed in the *Digest*, perhaps because it is basically a library journal whose purpose is to promote reading rather than do serious criticism. I have had a number of my own books reviewed there, and have come away with the impression that their criticism is not *tougher* but *gentler* than at most places; seldom will they pan a book. Thus Koontz's critical credits are slim.

I did however find one other Koontz book listed: WRITING POPULAR FICTION, a 1972 nonfiction effort published by *Writer's Digest*. *Choice*, the magazine of the American Library Association said of it: "This book takes strictly a nuts-and-bolts approach to writing and is not concerned with literary quality...One following these techniques could at least turn out a formula novel. This book will be the bane of teachers of quality fiction, but a big help to beginning practitioners..." So now we know what Koontz means by professionalism, and have a strong hint why he resents writers like me so much. "Formula" is mainstream euphemism for what fans call "hack". Formula books are preferred by publishers and they do make money, but they seldom receive critical acclaim. Their authors are the ones who, chastized by critics, cry all the way to the bank. The antipathy between formula writers and original writers probably goes back as far as writing does; this column is but one flake in the storm. I have paid Koontz the compliment of envying him the money he makes (though I can not cry too much hardship, as my single novel MACROSCOPE has just passed $11,000 in net earnings for me and is still going strong), and he has paid me the compliment of envying me my critical reception. Yet we really would not care to exchange places.

Now we must conclude with our conclusions: *is* Dean Koontz paranoid, and what is the real secret of his success? He claims he is "happy as a clam" and no doubt he is damned near as smart; I question this happiness, wondering whether he was able to hang on to the cute wife he had and noting that where his claims can be checked they lack substance. But oversensitivity, ire and exaggeration are not paranoia. I would say instead that he lacks maturity and has some paranoid tendencies, and tends to project these traits to others, but if he had some way to ease the pressure he is evidently under these would abate. He does have skill at the literary level he has chosen, and it is not an inferior level. Entertainment fiction serves a definite need. Perhaps in time he will be able to accept this as worthwhile in itself, and not condem those of his works he now feels fall short of literary excellence. When he can look back and say "Yes, I wrote a lot of entertainment fiction, and it gave pleasure to many readers, and I'm proud of that" then he will be a happier man.

But many entertainment writers do not make five figure hardcover advances. There are any number in SF whose technical and imaginative skill meets or exceeds Koontz's own, yet I doubt many are doing that well. John Brunner, for example, has been open about his situation, and I deem him a better writer than Koontz: why isn't *he* making $70,000 a year? What about Philip Jose Farmer, as skilled and versatile a writer as the field has ever known: does *he* earn at that rate? Fritz Leiber, Avram Davidson, and so on: all thoroughly capable and superior to Koontz as craftsmen. What of them? Why, for God's sake, *Koontz*? What does he have?

I can only conjecture, for I really don't know enough about Koontz to come at a precise conclusion. I would say first that mainstream pays better than science fiction for the same quality writing; certainly SHATTERED is not better than the average SF novel. The trick is to get publishers to buy the work of a given author. That means superior agenting. And here we have hints from Koontz's own words. In reply to my musings about the ethics of certain agents (and I was thinking of one Koontz used to have), he states that his present agent is a model of integrity who has turned his career around. I don't know the identity of that man, but all the signs point to an intelligent, informed and mature individual individual who was able to recognize and discipline the better potentials of an immature and unruly writer. And who knew how to market the result. It may be true that an agent can't sell the unsaleable--but he sure as hell can get a better contract for what *is* saleable. I suspect that Dean Koontz's personality cycle will in time disillusion him with this excellent control, as a teenager feeling the jucies of manhood turns against his wiser father. But he had better keep hanging on, because the impact of the loss of that stabilizing force would leave Dean shattered.

.....PIERS ANTHONY

DEAN R. KOONTZ · Lies and Facts

1. Piers says: "Like a neglected child, he can't stand to be ignored; if he can't have positive attention, he'll settle for negative attention--and he has been super-conscious of me for some time."

FACT: Until smeared by Anthony in OW, I'd not written a word for fanzines in years. I only saw his comment because Barry Malzberg advised me of it. I leave it to the reader, familiar with Piers' reams of fan press material, to decide just who is desperate for fan attention.

2. Piers says I bragged about five-figure advances.

FACT: In response to his attack, I simply stated my case. One brags about genius, cleverness or wit, perhaps. But never about money, for there's too much of it floating around these days to make it worth bragging about.

3. He says he reviewed a novel of mine, years ago, and that I didn't print it in my fanzine as promised.

FACT: The fanzine folded even as Piers was writing the review.

4. Piers implies that I'm Leon Taylor.

FACT: I'm not--unless life really is a Phil Dick novel, in which case anything is possible. Will Mr. Taylor or associates step forward?

((I think Piers blew this one, in that Taylor was active in fandom for a number of years--and may well still be; and, in fact, Leon Taylor had an article in the same issue of Outworlds that carried Piers' review of A,DV. --Bill))

5. Piers implies that I'm lying about hardcover advances.

FACT: I've enclosed several pages from pertinent contracts so that Bill can verify what I've said. I'm not going to let a wreck like Anthony force me to actually print them and thereby destroy my privacy altogether. Bill?

((This is to verify that Dean enclosed copies from three contracts from the past two years; one each from Random House, Atheneum, and Bobbs-Merrill. Each, indeed, called for a five-figure advance--half payable on signing, the remainder on the delivery of the manuscript. And that's as specific as I'm going to get on the actual monetary amounts...so please don't ask. I realize you're all curious, but Dean does deserve that much privacy, I believe.

((Just as a sidelight: While the other two are fairly specific in the word-lengths, the Atheneum contract says that "The work will be no less than 60,000 words nor more than 125,000 words."--which indicates to me, at least, that Dean does have a fair amount of freedom in what he writes... --Bill))

(Note: Five-figure advances are not all that rare outside of genre fiction. I never claimed to be unique. If you're writing novels with a big potential audience for them, you're bound to make more money than if you write science fiction. If your work is well received, as mine has been, you'll do even better. I don't know who these "others" are who assure Piers that kind of money isn't paid; but they're woefully ignorant. Christ, ask Scortia and Robinson. I'm sure their hardcover advances are higher into five figures than mine are. Indeed, I've been settling for $10,000 recently in return for guaranteed ad budgets and print runs of some size.)

6. Piers implies that I labeled HANGING ON as an "intellectual" book.

FACT: God, no! It's meant to be a big roller coaster ride of bizarre humor which, in passing, says something about the human condition. Furthermore, a knowledgeable reader wouldn't have compared it to CATCH 22 or M*A*S*H. It resembles those books only because it is funny and is set in a war. What I was really trying to do (and a few reviewers noted it) was write a bizarre comic novel in the vein of Robert Klane (WHERE'S PAPA, THE HORSE IS DEAD and FIRE SALE). Before Piers rushes into print with an accusation such as: "Koontz imitates Klane", he'd better read Klane.

7. Piers implies I'm grinding out adventure stories on the sly.

FACT: I used a pen name for the three books I did for Bobbs-Merrill. But since my photo was on each book, I was hardly being sly. I got bored with that series and dropped it after number 3. Bobbs and I agreed to go on to something more ambitious--another of those five-figure novels Piers doesn't believe in.

8. Piers says that my serious novels were not widely reviewed and acclaimed as I said they were.

FACT: Immediately below are quotes from reviews of K.R. Dwyer's CHASE and SHATTERED. These appear on the back of the jacket for the third Dwyer novel, DRAGONFLY. I've sent Bill a proof of that jacket as verification. Let Piers accuse Random House of fabrication is he wishes.

CHASE:

"This superb book is more than a novel of suspense. It is a brutally realistic portrait of the role of violence in our society." --*Saturday Review*

"A taut, well-written book. Dwyer keeps things merrily on the boil." --New York *Times*

"A first-rate novel... The concept of CHASE is brilliant, and the characterizations of both Chase and the killer are realized substantially." --Miami *Herald*

SHATTERED:

"Any reader of CHASE will turn eagerly to this second outing with author Dwyer, whose disbolic style can turn a simple plot into a gripping shocker." --King Features Syndicate

"Astringent, satisfying, and sleek as a bullet." --*Publishers Weekly*

"A memorable study in absolute terror... K.R. Dwyer is an exceptionally gifted stylist who is able to create multi-dimensional people. SHATTERED is the work of a fine craftsman, a storyteller of great talent." --Long Beach *Press Telegram*

"The pursuit mounts to a crash climax that has elements both of satisfaction and tragedy. This one's genuinely tense." --San Francisco Sunday *Examiner & Chronicle*

I believe that supports my contention. I don't want to bore you with more of these things; I quote these only to prove that Piers is not to be trusted or believed. Because reviews on HANGING ON and AFTER THE LAST RACE were also very good, my third mainstream novel (NIGHT CHILLS, Atheneum, spring of 1976) will most likely quote them on the back jacket. If anyone can't wait for that, write me, and I'll send you a few; anything to show Piers for what he is.

There are a good many other lies in this article--in fact, virtually everything Piers has to say is a lie. I trust I've settled the case by answering only a few of them. On to more general comments:

I'm pleased Piers finds Dwyer's work to be so different from mine that it seems like the work of another mind. I worked hard to give Dwyer a unique, individual voice. I'm glad it shows. Of course, Piers thinks this shows not craftsmanship but paranoia, schizophrenia--probably beriberi, bad breath and body odor as well. My editor at Random House is one of the most respected in the business--largely because she lets a writer find his own voice in his own way. She has never asked me to rewrite more than a few lines of a Dwyer novel. So if Piers is upset by the lean style, he should blame it on me.

Piers is hilarious when discussing HANGING ON. He admits that the book, by simply being the wild-assed work it is, demolishes his theory that I'm a paranoid lunatic. Then, in the same paragraph, he decides that although HANGING ON couldn't be the work of a paranoid mind, that just goes to show you how clever paranoids can be at concealing their paranoia. Catch-22. I think Piers could do well as a stand-up comedian--except that his comedy is always unintentional.

Piers quotes one line from HANGING ON to denigrate my style I'm sure he could have found more and left me defenseless. Fortunately, he chose to cite a copy editor's change which, in spite of my correction on the galleys, went through to the printer. Happens with the best of publishers, I've discovered.

Piers would make a wonderful mud-slinging politician. I compared him to R. Nixon once, and I believe that comparison stands well proven. He implies that I've not held on to "that cute wife" I had. I imagine he'd be delighted to learn I'm divorced; people like Piers feed on the misfortune of others. Unfortunately for Piers, Gerda and I are coming up on our ninth anniversary, happy as ever. We've moved to Nevada to avoid state, local and property taxes for a couple of years at least. We have rented an eleven-room house with a forty-foot pool and we are, to Piers' dismay, "happy as clams". I suspect we'll buy a house here, at least as an investment if not for a permanent

home.

Piers persists in implying that I am embarrassed by "entertainment fiction". In fact, I've never claimed to write anything else. That is what I do, and I'm proud of it. I just write more ambitious entertainment fiction than I once did and, I think, than Piers does now.

Piers lists some science fiction writers and wonders why they can't make $70,000 a year when I can. (Actually, I'm in six-figure territory these days.) He could have listed a dozen others, and my answer would have been this, no matter what the names:

1. Some writers highly esteemed in the field are really rather atrocious; they do better in the field than they could outside of it, largely because the quality of writing has never mattered much, still doesn't, to most science fiction readers.

2. A number of science fiction writers could have built highly lucrative careers outside the field if they had never become involved in it. They made their choice, and perhaps some of them wish they had chosen differently. Once strongly identified as a science fiction writer, even the most brilliant artist will have to be blessed by God to escape the stigma of the field. (I'm thinking now of Silverberg, who should have gotten out fifteen years ago and who, regardless of his brilliance, probably now never will. They won't let him, those people who like to slot everything, everyone.) I'll go into this a bit more thoroughly in the article I intend to write for Bill in re my own "escape". It's a crime what has been done to Phil Dick, Silverberg, Bester, and three or four others, writers who would have been acclaimed and handsomely rewarded had they done their work in mainstream or even suspense novels.

3. Some writers, a great many writers, are too psychologically messed up to ever earn a good living by their work, in or out of SF. I've met a few at conventions. Were I Piers, I might name them. But I'm me, and I won't. The real SF professionals will know who I mean.

Finally, Piers attributes my success to my agent. Well, some months ago, I quit my agent, basically because he didn't understand the direction I was going with the work I do under my name, or at least he thought that direction was wrong. I've a new agent now, and I don't seem to be suffering much. In fact, I'm making more money than before, and I'm still doing only what I want to do. Piers predicts that I will leave my agent. But he sees it as being a violent affair (It was quite amicable.). And a cataclysmic one for me (I'm chugging along nicely, thank you.).

There is a great deal more I could say about Piers' vanity and professional ignorance. But that would force me to go into a lot of the material I want to save for the upcoming article about the horrors of being a SF author.

I wrote this response for one reason: to expose Piers' smear tactics and his uneasy way with the truth. When I was in the field, when I was current with Anthony's fan writing, I saw too many nice, admirable writers wasting hours agonizing over Piers' (and certain other backstabbing artists) attacks. He isn't worth anyone's agonizing. He isn't worth the space fan editors give him. And if I've saved anyone even one hour of agonizing, this response was worth the hour it took me to write it.

(An aside: I see two other small points I should have cleared up but didn't as I typed this out. ONE: Piers leaves the impression that the *Choice* review of my WRITING POPULAR FICTION was negative. That is not the case. I was delighted with it, in toto, and so was my publisher. Even getting noticed in *Choice*, so I understand, means additional book sales. WRITING POPULAR FICTION was *meant* to be an irritant to teachers of quality writing --just as science fiction and all genre fiction is an irritant to them--and *Choice* quite clearly understood my intent. They could hardly miss it, since it is stated in WRITING POPULAR FICTION at least once or twice. TWO: I can't recall ever envying Piers' critical success, as he says I did. If I ever said as much, it must have been several years ago, just after CHTHON, when I was naive enough to think that being reviewed in fanzines and in prozines in this field was "critical success". It would seem to me that, with reviews in the *Times* and *Saturday Review* and scores of other publications, I'd be rather mad to envy Piers a kind word in Dick Geis's reviewzine or whatever.)

I will write that article for OW within the next month or two, as soon as our furniture has arrived from Pennsylvania (with the grace of Bekins). Meanwhile, I simply refuse to respond further (except with a lawyer) to anything Piers has to say. If he isn't worth anyone's agnony, or even fanzine space, then he surely isn't worth any more of my time.

....DEAN R. KOONTZ

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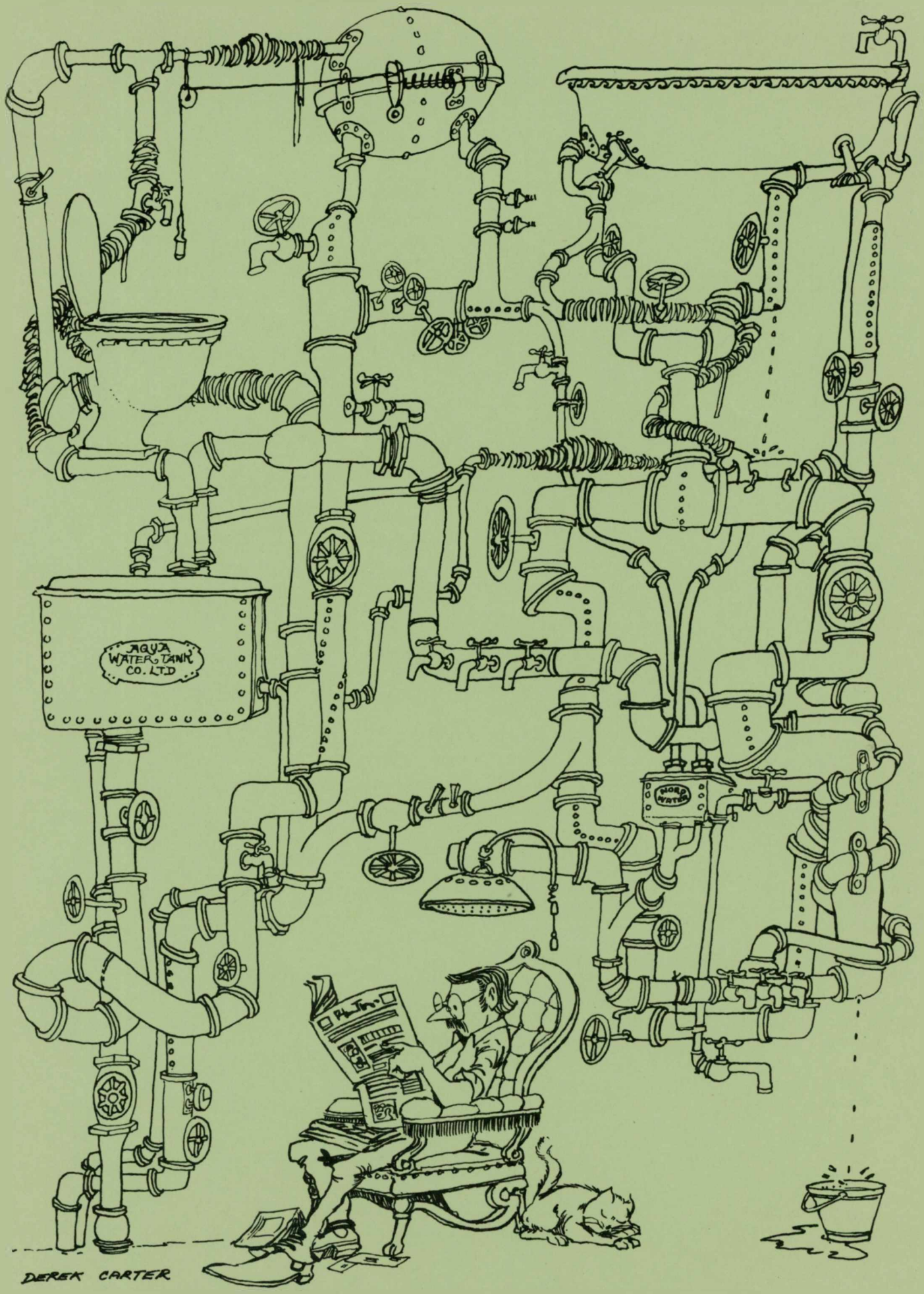
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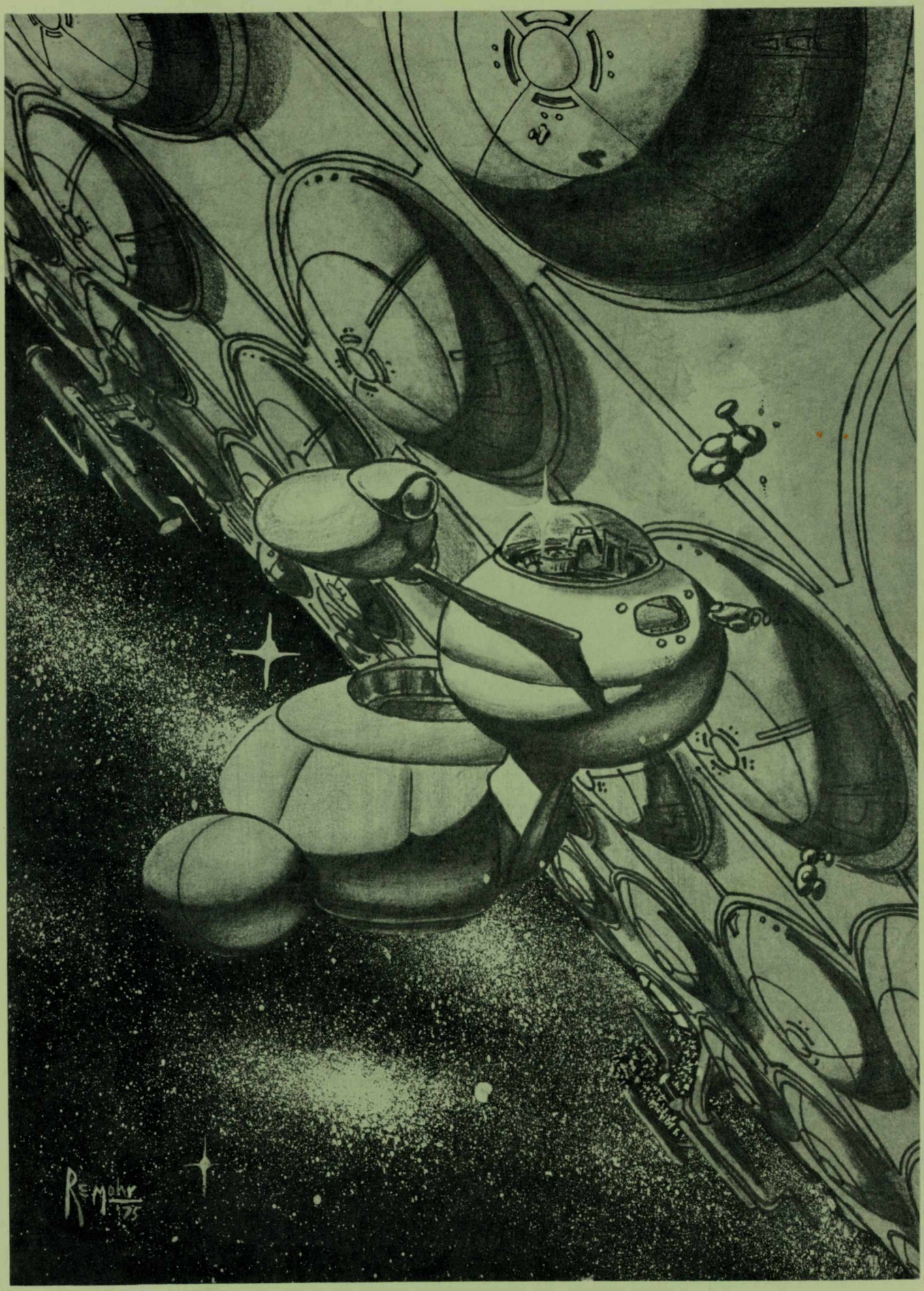
R.E. Mohr
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