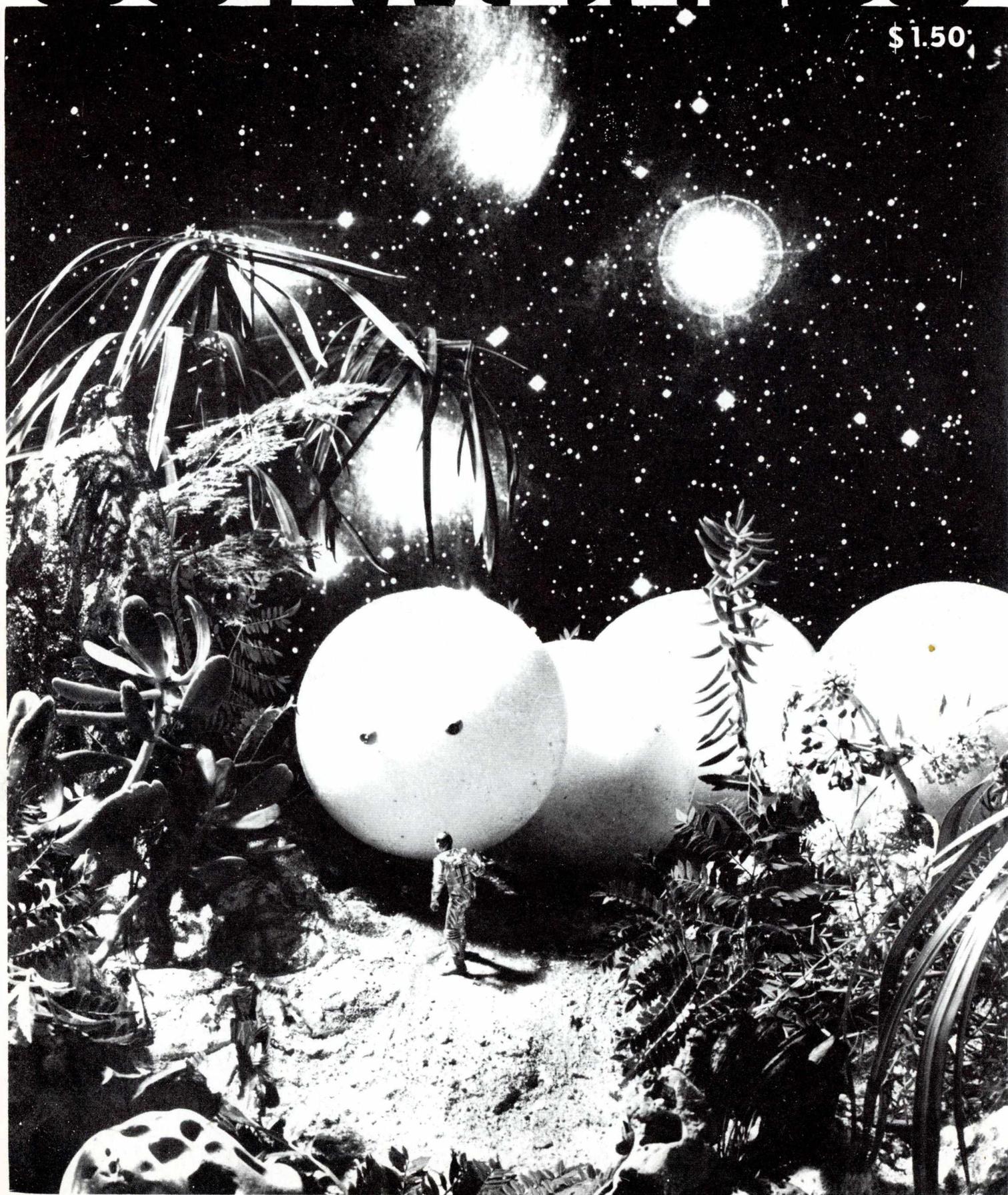


SIXTH
ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

OUTWORLD 27

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knights

"...each new issue is light-years ahead of the previous one..."

Bill Bowers, *Outworlds* 26

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from William's Pen

BILL BOWERS

...ah yes, the Sixth Annish; and quite probably the last annish that *Outworlds* will see in *this* incarnation. But, before we get on to that tale, there are several other things to cover...such as some Old Business from OW25 & OW26:

Item: I have been assured by people in a position to know that Harrison is *not* "Kent Bromley". (They also offered to reveal the identity of the culprit, but I begged off: if (s)he doesn't care to come forward, having the knowledge second-handed would do me no good. And at the moment I'd really rather forget it all!)

Item: As of this writing, I have not heard from Elwood on OW25, or from Piers or Dean since the publication of OW26. (...in case you were curious.)

Item: As might have been expected, my little bit on SF Expo in the last editorial produced a vocal, and rather varied, response... A few thought I was totally unfair to Linda, or that I don't "like" her. Wrong...at least on the second count: I've known Linda since the 1969 Philcon, and I consider her one of my closest fannish friends (and hope that the reverse holds true). It's just that...well, Linda does, on occasion, express her opinions rather forcefully...which is one of the things I like about her. But in this particular case she happened to strike a nerve, and I used it as an excuse to react. I probably would have found some other way to say my piece even if she hadn't happened to have pushed the SF Expo button.

On the positive side: As a result of my little sojourn, and through the generosity of a certain Bio Time Editor/Publisher, I now have an offer of a place to stay in NYC (which will make it affordable), and have been assured of meeting several fans (ones who don't make it to midwest conventions) that I've wanted to meet. There's good and bad in everything. Certainly I will miss seeing a lot of my friends at Midwestcon...but no more than I'll miss others in Minneapolis and Baltimore over Easter, or in D.C. over the Memorial Day weekend. Not even I can be two or three places at once. Not yet, anyway...but I'm working on it.

Perhaps it's simply that I'm too tired to be objective (I've been working on this issue solidly for a month, to the total exclusion of about everything else besides hanging on to my job); or it may be that I'm overly impressed with my own genius...but it seems to me that, in a lot of ways, this is the "best" *Outworlds* yet. It is certainly the best balanced of the offset ones I've done in the last two years (seems like a lot longer, but #19 came out in March, 1974). ..."balanced" in the sense of a blend of long and short items, light and heavy, serious and fannish, art and text--and balanced to the extent that while no one subject dominates, there are certain themes running through several of the pieces. (There's also a little time-binding...that little red felt apple in Ro's tale made a previous appearance in OW21...)

A few comments on the contents:

I first heard Ro Nagey relate the Real & True story of The Secret Handgrip of Fandom at the first Windycon, when he, Lin Lutz, Mike Glicksohn and Gay Haldeman were standing in the hallway outside the con-suite party...and I was sitting against the wall in my usual hall party pose. (I am old and I try to avoid standing whenever possible; besides, when both Ro and I are seen standing nearby, Michael seems to shrivel even more than usual... and I'm nothing if not considerate of the feelings of lesser beings.) It was a good thing I started out on the floor because, as I recall, it wasn't all that long before the others joined me, rolling in hysterical laughter.

I've heard storytellers before, and excellent ones at that. I knew some masters of the art in the service, where storytelling and role playing is one of the ways of surviving. (Drinking is the other way of survival; in tandem, the two are almost as much fun and as "real" as politics.) But I swear, I've never heard a story told like this before: Ro had all the nuances, all the suspenseful pauses down pat.

Or perhaps I'd just had one too many Cokes.

I told Ro then: You write that down the way you told it, and I'll print it.

That was October of 1974.



He related the story, again, in my presence at Marcon.

I said: You write that down, and I'll print it.

That was, of course, March, 1975.

He told it... I said... He told it...

Finally, in early August, Po visited Mecca (here) for a weekend...and wrote it out, longhand, while sitting in my living room. He read it to me. I loved it.

But we needed a victim, a trial run on someone who hadn't heard the vocal version. So we drove up to Cleveland (having to tie up the muffler on my car halfway there) and he read the written version to Joan.

She loved it.

I said: You type that up, and I'll print it...

He told it again at Pghlanze in late September. You'll never guess what I said to him. (This is a family fanzine...)

Then...a couple of days before Thanksgiving, Ro called, and in his usual direct manner he got straight to the point. About five minutes into the phone call, I finally pried out of him the information that he'd actually sent the story off to me several days earlier, and was curious as to why I hadn't called the very instant I received it to heap praise and abuse on his body. You see, Po, as his subtle way of showing how really impressed he was to be a small part of such a prestigious publication as *Outworlds*, purposely had not sent the final three pages of the mss. hoping that I would read it through, come to the middle of a sentence that had no end...and instantly call him and say, "Hey! What the...!"

The only problem was that I hadn't received the manuscript.

You see, rather than spring for the extra dime (this was the Old Days, folk) that would have carried it First Class, Ro had sent the mss., all nine pages of it, *third* class. I think it was about then that I decided that, yes, this was the man to go into business with.

Of course the lost envelope did show up eventually, taking eight days to cover the 200 miles between us. ...and yes, he drove down here the weekend before Christmas to hand deliver the final three pages (he wouldn't give them to me when I was up there over Thanksgiving). And yes, it is in this issue...

I swear...never have I worked so hard, so long, sparing no time, effort, or expense, to bring to you readers something so beneath the usual high standards I apply to selecting material for this magazine.

I hope you like it...

In all seriousness, I am curious as to the reaction of the ones who have been fortunate to witness Ro's verbal telling of the tale. I think he's done an excellent job of getting it down to a two-dimensional surface. (And should you others ever get the opportunity of seeing him do the routine in person, it is something you shouldn't miss.)

(Now, I'm waiting for Ro to put together the nine hours of George R.R. Martin's life that he has on tape... I mean really, when it is obvious that he used the promise of publishing the interview in OW to ingratiate himself with a Hugo winner! Has he no shame at all?)

[Continued on Page 1058]

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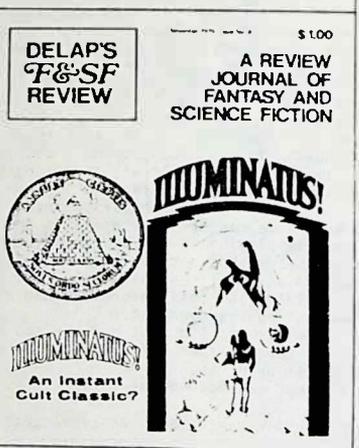
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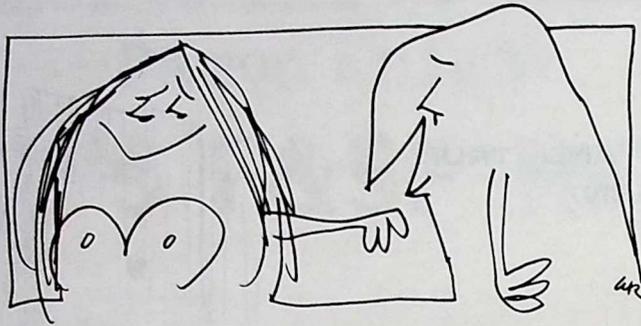
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...stopping and talking momentarily to each femmefan that they encountered and then moving on.

A femmefan approached me.

"Po, you'll never guess what happened."

"Whazzat?"

"Those two jocks--those--over there...asked me--quote--Do you want to come up to my room and fuck?--unquote."

***** They might have dressed out of *Playboy*, but they talked out of the *Penthouse* lettercolumns. I refocused my attention on their goings-on. Classical chain reaction. Question from goons. Opening wide of eyes by femmefans. Expletive not deleted. Undaunted jocks move on. Femmefan joins evergrowing group with statement, "You'll never guess what those--those--those apes over there asked me!" Question from goons. Opening of eyes.....

*There are times in every man's life when he is forced to look after the weaker sex and protect them from goons such as these. Fortunately, I'm a fan and not a man, and my credo is "Everyone for themselves" or, since this is Outworlds, haven for the uncensored phrase, "Cover your own ass, ~~assholes!~~"***

Still, from deep within, there were those stirrings of machismo lurking about. Besides, I figured I had the right to proposition the femmefans first. Isn't that what the registration fee is all about?

Standing in a circle with Moshe Feder, Ctein, Lin Lutz and Linda Bushyager, my first thought was that we should all yell SHAZAM! in the hopes one of us would turn into Captain Marvel. Unfortunately, with the singular exception of Linda Bushyager, I was sure it wouldn't work.

"This is shameful," I bemoaned. We were on our own. No Bob Tucker to ask for guidance, no ΕΙΣΠΙΠΗ STAGE OF FANDOM to refer to. Then, my eyes aglow, in my best Andy Hardy voice, "Here's how to take care of them. Let's get Patia Sandra von Sternberg!"

Ebulliently, we all ran up the two flights to the room where Patia was holding forth at her Infinity con party. Excitedly, interrupting each other, we outlined our plan. As we went on in our narration, her face became transfixed by the challenge.

She was adorned in a skimpy outfit: a black bikini top and a black skirt slit all the way up. Accepting the challenge, she slinked over to her suitcase, the one that is stocked with items obtained through her direct hot-line with Fredericks of Hollywood. On went the opera-length gloves and out came an eight inch cigarette holder that she waved about, Marlene Dietrich style. On her right breast, an inch or so above the top of her narrow bikini top was affixed a small red felt apple.

Like little children pulling a prank on the teacher, we quickly ran down the two flights and positioned ourselves, with great dignity and above suspicion, about the con suite.

I went over to my two gonadal hyperthyroid friends and attempted to engage in small talk.

"What do you do for a living?" I feared they would answer, "Whatever we want to." Instead:

"We work for an insurance company." Uuhh. I imagined their sales routine; "This is a nice place you got here Mr. Bonaducci, wouldn't it just be a shame if something happened to it." My mind became fixed on that image, so they had to pick up the conversational ball.

"Do you know where we can get laid?"

"Well, er, there must be some good bars downtown where you ought to be able to find someone to service you."

***...Outworlds, formerly home of the uncensored phrase! Editor*

"Don't get us wrong, we're just normal guys." Yes sir, Clark Kent. The guys looked like they could take on the Empire State Building and win.

At that precise moment, Patia Sandra von Sternberg sashayed into the room. Boom ta da Boom ta da Boom Boom Boom. Red animal lust sprang forth from their eyes. Their jaws dropped open at 9 c and their tongues dangled helplessly out.

As moans issued forth from their throats, Patia would turn and talk, touch and kiss various fans and then -- with a Boom ta da Boom ta da Boom Boom Boom of hips -- move on and repeat the process.

With all the humility and innocence that I could muster, I queried of the two, "Would you like to meet her?"

Assuming that their murmurs of adoration, glazed eyes and rapid breathing could be taken as an affirmative answer, I gestured Patia over. Putting her best efforts, and her chest, forward, she approached. BOOM TA DA BOOM TA DA (I AM WOMAN!) BOOM BOOM BOOM!!

"There are some people that I would like to meet you," sez I.

"Helloooo. My name is Patiasandravonsternberg."

"Uh....can we call you something--er--shorter?" sez Richard.

"Some people," she said, shifting her weight from one leg to the other with an impressive, suggestive circular motion of her hips, "call me...the Countess." She took a puff from the cigarette in that incredibly long holder and blew smoke into their eyes.

"Well, it certainly is a pleasure to meet you, er, Countess." The rutting drive was so strong in these two bulls that they hadn't noticed the smoke at all. In fact, Raymond, the smaller of the two, had lapsed into a semistupor. Richard, on the other hand, saw the little red felt apple and saw, apparently, that his name was written on it. He reached out, index finger extended, in an attempt to touch it, and asked, "What does this mean?"

As he thrust his finger forward, Patia made a dipping of the right shoulder, a twisting of the upper torso and a parrying move with the right arm that not Antoinoni, Truffeau nor Fellini could have directed better. The parry, instead of saying "No", said, in a very promising manner, "Yes, Yes". With this move she replied, "Don't touch me unless you plan to do something."

CLICK

I awarded Patia both ears and the tail. OIē. She had killed the bull neatly and with style. He was now little more than a machine. Upon her statement, his parried hand formed into a cup, he centered his sights about two inches below the red felt apple and homed in on his target.

And--oh my god--another parry, better than the first, unbelievably, saying in effect "Not good enough, big boy, but you'll learn." Richard got the message alright. In the suave and sophisticated manner of one of his upbringing, he asked, "Why don't we go up to my room and fuck?" Subtle. (Raymond was insensate at this point, suffering from terminal sensory and fantasy overload. He took to muttering silently.)

"I only go to bed with big name fans," Patia replied, smiling sweetly. "Are you a big name fan? How many conventions have you been to?" Flutter, flutter of the eyelashes.

"This is my--er--first."

"Well, come to five or six more and I think that I can fit you into myschedule." And another shifting of the weight with the circular motion of her hips.

After a bit more conversation following this same level, Patia informed them that she had to move on. Richard, obviously wanting to leave a good impression, extended his hand in the

As a three-line, vulgar joke that is amusing enough. It is a verbal attack on the person addressed (and the "your" puts the reader to some degree into the range of the shell). I suggest that the poem is structured on a trimeter line beat, with some secondary accents:

In order to blow someone's mind
 there is absolutely no need
 to get down on your knees in front of him.

Further, the off-rhyme of *mind* and *need* (perhaps nearly consonance, with their nasal openings), and the repetition of beginning sounds in *need* and *knees*, support the first two and a half lines of this tercet. But what is wrong with this as a poem (a free-verse limerick, so to speak) is implicit in the technical comments I have just made: the last line is weak where it should be the emphatic line. We have final stresses (with off-rhyme) in the first two lines (the second ends with a double, alliterating stress), but the third trails off after its last stress in a prepositional phrase, "of him". (The poem would be just as clear, I think, if the phrase had been dropped, although less close to speech.) Also, I think the echo of *need/knees*, while effective in emphasizing the second stressed word, tends to make the latter part of the last line an anticlimax. (I wonder if anyone has ever written a sexual poem about an anticlimax?) The failure is one of technique. Catullus, with his distich, could have structured the poem metrically; Pope, with his heroic couplet, could have tied two lines together with a rhyme. To leave myself open for attack on the poetic merits, let me attempt a tetrameter couplet on Brunner's theme:

Enlarge his swelling thoughts? You'll find
 You need not kneel to blow his mind.

Not all of Brunner's poems are free verse: most, in fact, are in one regular verse form or another. Several are sonnets, one--"Are You Sure You Had It With You When You Came?"--with one odd tetrameter line (l. 8) amid all the pentameters. (After all, if you're going to play the game for thirteen lines, why not make it fourteen? *Soy Tupamaro* (which I discussed above) is a better sonnet, and the title poem, *Life in an Explosive Forming Press* is an interesting experiment, with the beginning metrical phrase appearing at the end of the poem instead of in its empty space at the start (presumably to suggest one should start through the poem again). And one poem--"He Was Such a Nice Chap--Why Did He Do It?" -- incredibly enough, is a sestina.

I suppose I should say something about the rest of the contents. Several poems are comments on love affairs: the sestina is about a man who is impotent, and the sonnet with the tetrameter line is about loss of virginity and the meaningless of it. Others are social satire (if that's distinguishable from political protest, as I believe it is, by tone): *Asking*, about white expectations from blacks; *America*, the shortest poem in the book about a Carlylean cash-nexus; *Wishful Thinks*, which details various things the speaker would like to do; and *The Silent Majority* (mentioned above), which is a list of failures to be just and honorable. Still others are less classifiable, such as the exuberant diatribe, *A Flying upon Mr. X*, which is fifteen quatrains of abuse ready to be applied to anybody. (My desk dictionary does not list "flying", but it is a fine Scottish word for an abusive poem.) Here is the fifth stanza:

Hanger-on, bletherer, half-truth gatherer,
 Confidence-trickster, cheat,
 Current-fad follower, dishonest borrower,
 Moron with two left feet!

Also a few poems are on science-fictional themes: *What We Have Here* is about man's descendants journeying across the galaxy:

They came very shortly to Arcturus
 And there found bones in heaps around machines
 Which had been listening to the sky a million years

(to quote three lines from the middle of the poem). Another clear example is *Excerpt from a Social History of the Twentieth Century*, which is about the Establishment taking over the drug revolution.

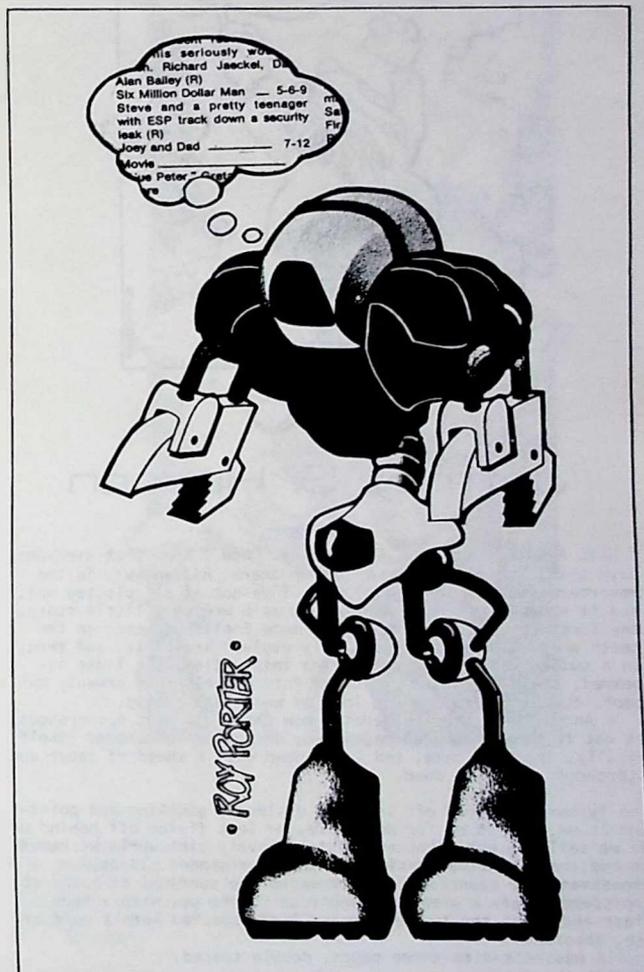
To balance the science-fiction verse, one may consider the medieval touches. Two of these have been mentioned--the *Flying* and *The Coffintree Carol*, which echoes the medieval title of *The Cherrytree Carol*. Another medieval parody is *Only My Name Isn't*

Porcival, which celebrates the learning of modern science which makes the school room a siege perilous. More bawdy (but medievally so) is *No Lay for the Last Minstrel*.

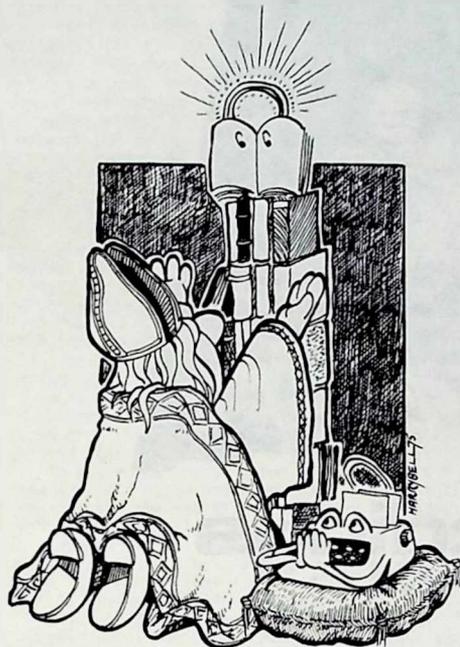
Over all, it is a nicely balanced collection. I find some of the poems obscure in spots, perhaps because of British references or popular culture references (I recognize Warhol and Jimi Hendrix in the title poem, but I do not claim certitude about some references elsewhere which are not proper names). I also find the poems more interesting intellectually than exciting emotionally. (This is a comment on their type, not on whether they are good or bad.) Finally, despite my analysis of the metrical weakness of one of Brunner's free-verse poems and my dislike of the language of one sonnet, I find most of the poems carefully crafted (at least by modern standards) and the words usually fresh and precisely chosen. The amount of scientific knowledge (or at least knowledge of scientific terminology) is impressive.

I suppose one is supposed to conclude even such a brief study with some sort of evaluation-in-light-of-eternity of the poetry; however, Brunner has clearly established his role in the majority of these poems as an ironic observer of the modern world, and contemporary irony is usually temporary irony, even though John Dryden and Alexander Pope made it more than that. Brunner is closer to Dryden's unevenness than Pope's polish, and he does not seem to me as successful as Dryden (perhaps because he's writing lyrics, not the longer genres); however, that's the league in which he's competing.

--- J. R. CHRISTOPHER



ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY BELL



Once again I sit before the typewriter, once again the sheaf of paper, the fresh ribbon.

With a fiendish grin I prepare to type, the plot and characters clamor in glee, they are about to be released, to live as words! I have carefully, deliberately headed off all obligations at the pass. I am free!

Slowly I begin, one word, two. I am writing whole sentences now, I am really getting places...

Over the hills and far away, off in the distance a voice, a single note calls. Many times I have heard it, it is most familiar, yet immediately my head snaps up, I gaze toward the sound. I am transfixed!

The collection!

My hands cease their pounding, I sit motionless for a moment. The voice is stronger now, now it is joined by others, a trio, a chorus. More and more join in, a mighty orchestra calling me to the temple, to fulfill my religious duties.

Silently I leave the typewriter, it sits dead still, it understands. Without a sound, I walk to the bookshelf, genuflecting the whole way. My feet barely touch the carpet.

I kneel before the altar, my fingers running slowly, lovingly over the sacred, beloved volumes. Here in the holy of holies, the voices rise to their full values, sweeping me away in their glory.

With complete reverence I open my mouth and begin the holy chant, the Old Litany, "A for Asimov, B for Bester, C for Campbell (here I genuflect)..." And on through Z.

Then I glance to the top of the collection once again, touch the volumes with care, and begin the New Litany, equally holy. "A for Aldiss, B for Ballard, C for..."

Once I have completed the two sacred litanies, my hand reaches out of its own will and grabs one of the books. It opens before my eyes, the reflex falls into place; I read. It is superb. Of course.

One hundred and sixty pages later, I put the book down. Glorious. My typewriter leers at me, jealous and righteous at the same time.

It is the middle of the night and I haven't written a thing.

Yet again I seat myself before the typewriter. This time I am going to do it. Several pages, maybe even a chapter; nothing will distract me!

The typewriter, vexed, spits and bites my fingers. I swear and continue. Slowly, agonizingly I climb up the mountainside, clawing for each inch, beating back the forces of the clutch up that resists me.

Ridges fall, and minor peaks. I will make it to the top! I fight wickedly, slashing with adjective, pressing my attack with a mighty climax. Finally I reach the top; I can see it all now, above me, my characters move, alive.

Hoho, they see me! I am having trouble breathing (the air at this height is very thin) but having made it to the top I shall not leave.

No! But the central characters are gathering about me, pointing accusing fingers as the thunderclouds gather and storm about the peak. No! They will not work with me, they say I am too slow, that they are on strike for higher wages, shorter work hours (now wait a minute!) and, in general, a more congenial attitude on the part of the proprietor. And then they stomp off, their feet like thunder, and leave me on the mountaintop. The rains begin, gray.



Someday I will write the novel. No doubt it will come out as an Ace Double, but some kind reviewer will recognize it as a classic. He will show it to everybody and it will win every award in the field of science fiction, and I will make witty, modest remarks as I drag off all those awards.

Someday.

--- JEFFREY S. HUDSON



Understandings

ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES

The Differences That Knowing Him Made

A SPRAWLING, SUBJECTIVE REMINISCENCE OF JAMES BLISH

"I am the cat who walks by himself, and all places are alike to me. ..."
(Kipling, JUST SO STORIES)

WELL, NOT EXACTLY ALIKE, and there are such things as preferences. But I'm like Kipling's cat in that while I will make concessions (and rather large ones at time) for the sake of temporary amusement or something more important that I want at the time, there comes a point where I will go no farther; and that has often been distressing to people who felt very sure that I was safely settled in a path of their choosing -- so long as I could be kept away from what they considered subversive influences.

Such a viewpoint was no more flattering to those who held it about me than to me, myself; but I'll admit that my temperament makes such a conclusion both easy and seemingly plausible. I suspect, though, that Don Wollheim was aware of the truth about me back in 1945 when circumstances he had a hand in brought me into a position where I could get to know James Blish well beyond the level of acquaintanceship and occasional meetings. He may even have suspected that some sort of drastic alteration in my views was due sooner or later, anyway. John Michel, on the other hand, seemed to think that I could be kept safely where I was, so long as I was protected from "undesirable" associations.

I'd seen letters by Jim in the various magazines--there was one in *Astounding Stories*, September 1932, the same year that my own first letter appeared in print (*Wonder Stories*, July) with my name spelled "Lownder"; had met him briefly at the International Scientific Association convention in 1937, the one where-

in the committee to arrange for a science fiction convention to go along with the 1939 World's Fair, was set up (chairman, Don Wollheim); had heard about Jim now and then in relation to continuing the ISA when, later in 1937, Will Sykora resigned as president in such a manner as to break up the organization; had become his agent some time in 1940, after his first story, *Emergency Landing*, appeared in the initial issue of Fred Pohl's *Super Science Stories*; and had run at least one letter by him in the departments of my magazines. That letter had to do with the Fortean Society and with the comments of one Mallory Kent; I recall that Kent's reply took a dim view of the Fortean Society on the grounds that it seemed to be regimenting doubt. Jim was astonished later on to learn that I was Mallory Kent.

And some time in 1942, I believe it was, while he was in uniform, he joined a number of us at one of our gathering places -- the old Dragon Inn on West 4th Street. The highlight of the evening, for me, was an animated discussion of *FINNEGANS WAKE*, which I had not read, though I'd managed to acquire a copy of *ULYSSES* in 1939 and found it splendid. I do not know whether any of the others had read *FINNEGAN*, though I know that Don had some of the "Works in Progress" material, which had appeared in various literary and avant-garde publications of the time. He'd shown me some samples, and they did, indeed look like pretty meaningless jumbles of sounds to me--far beyond the free association parts of *ULYSSES*, which do have continuity and make sense if you just pay attention.

Jim's contention was that the book entire makes sense, however difficult and obscure -- after all, Joyce was exceptionally learned, knew many languages, and puns in all of them, so that any reader has to bring an equal amount to the reading of the book in order to get everything out of it. At that point I dropped out of the argument and listened. Since then, while I still

Most of the revisions did nothing but to make those sentiments unworkable.

It wasn't pleasant to learn that writing poetry worth reading in the present day (that is, poems that are good enough to justify the potential reader choosing to read *them* at this particular moment, instead of a masterwork of the past) is hard work, even for a poet of great talent and some genius. There were many arguments, many of which were thrashed out in the Vanguard mailings. One of the most persistent ones (expressed in many different ways) can be put most simply as: "How hard can the surface of a poem be without becoming a private cryptogram?"

One of the differences between poetry and "verse" is that verse necessarily has a very soft surface. Almost anyone can get the point on a single reading, and without much thought. And there are many truly great poems which have soft surfaces, too; the difference being that the great poem has a lot underneath the surface: it says much more than that simple and effective appearance suggests -- but for those who do not care to look any farther, here is a well-made thing that says something meaningful. Verse is all surface; there's nothing beneath it to dig out -- although the light verse of earlier times may require your brushing up on customs, usages, idioms, and events of the day.

Pound claimed that poetry should be defined as "words charged with emotion", then added "as much as possible". Which won't do; if you put the highest charge possible into each word, then you are going to wind up with a cryptogram.

And there was the question of "obscurity" and multi-lingual poetry. I suppose there is no reason why a poet should be barred from putting anything (or for that matter everything) he knows into a poem, but at that time it seemed to me that some liberties just weren't sporting to take. Multi-linguality seemed to me to be one of the worst offenses. It shuts out the person who does not know more than one language, without necessarily providing the motivation to learn. Of course, it is not necessary to learn the entire language; and I can see now that what I was really objecting to was the poet's demand upon me -- the demand that I earn the right to enjoy his poetry; and each particular poem may have different requirements.

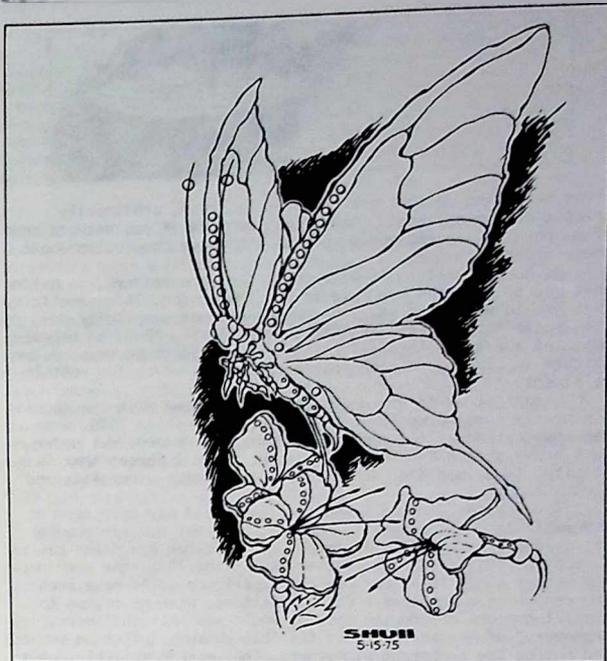
What I learned finally was that often the rewards are worth the effort, because each problem solved opens up wider areas of appreciation to you. The labor one may undertake to grasp a particular *Canto* of Pound, for example, is not going to result in a little package of new information floating in a vacuum. You may or may not feel that what the particular one says was worth the effort involved to find out; but it may pay off better with latter *Cantos*, or with other poetry, or--most wonderful of all--with something which would not seem to be remotely connected, and might not be at all.

How hard should the surface of a poem be? I don't believe there is a simple answer, but my present feeling is that hardness of surface should not be something which the poet works for. I'm not convinced that the poems which Jim ran in his Vanguard publications, etc., were written with the intent of excluding as many of his potential readers as possible even if it did seem that way. And I know I had no such motivation with my efforts. But both of us managed to produce things which were quite obscure to others (and to each other!) although he came out with a higher score.

The difference that knowing Jim made, in respect to poetry, is a much more definite one, than with music. I think it is very likely that otherwise I would have been content to continue on the same level of comprehension as before. And since I do not regard any knowledge as evil (even though no knowledge may be truly sufficient), it was a good thing for me to be shaken up. Being lazy (something which Jim never caused and certainly did all he could to cure), I stopped writing poetry a few years later, when it had become still more difficult. But that may not be quite correct: Lazy as I am, I somehow do find the time and do manage to make the effort over things I really want to do. (And that is one way of finding out what I really want to do.) So the answer may be the simpler one of no vocation. Which does not mean that I might not be moved to try to write a poem once in a while.

Sam Moskowitz so moved me in 1966 or 67 by asking permission to reprint a thing for Edgar Allen Poe that was published in *Fantastic Novels*, back in the '40s; he wanted to run it in his anthology of stories wherein Poe appears as a character. Well, he said, when I replied positively *no*, how about writing a new one for this anthology? I did; all I can say about it is that it was *not* easy to write, and that I don't believe it's difficult for anyone to read. (A little background knowledge of Pe may be helpful, though.)

Ezra Pound has been proclaimed as very difficult, but I don't find him excessively so. Despite his use of ideograms and expressions in foreign languages, *once you know what he's talk-*



ing about at this particular point, he comes across. (And you can now get an annotated index to the *Cantos*, that includes translations of the multi-language material -- which really does not take up a large percentage of the work, and is nearly always paraphrased reasonably near to the excerpt.)

The real difficulty is to know when he's jumping from one subject to another; and Jim hit the nail squarely when he noted in an article on EP and the *Cantos* (*Rituals on Ezra Pound, The Sewanee Review*, Spring, 1950) "Pound assumes, in short, that everything he ever wrote is going to be carried forward to posterity in the same steamer trunk; ..." There are many personal references in the *Cantos* which will remain obscure to the person who has not read various personal memoir material by EP--unless he has a thorough annotation handy; and some of those references are important to the tone of the context.

I remember a junior high school shop instructor who urged us not to copy someone else's mechanical drawings--not just because it was cheating, but because everyone makes some kind of mistake, and if you copy someone else then you're going to wind up with his mistakes in addition to your own. And that principle certainly applies to trying to imitate a poet or writer you've just become enthusiastic about. You haven't really digested him, but some things seem to be quite clear, so you imitate what moves you. Unfortunately, those are the very things which may be your model's weaker aspects. The finest aspects can't be imitated at all; they can only be caricatured.

After some dubious attempts to be a little multi-lingual, I stopped trying to imitate anyone in particular, or to come up with symbolism that turned out to be too personal, and went back to a model that was more congenial to me, and seemed to come more naturally; the King James version of the Psalms and the prophets. I grew up in a Bible-reading family, and despite my having put religion aside, still found much of the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament moving as literature. While that turned out to be easier in a sense, it wasn't easy. Free verse that is worth reading is *not* easier than writing in the more or less fixed forms; and I'd say generally that in order to do free verse well, you need to have attained some mastery of the strict forms, in order to obtain a feeling for flow, rhythm, cadences, etc. Otherwise, what you'll turn out will prove to be something that could have gone just as well as prose -- which means, as EP noted, that it'll go *better* in prose.

Let me confess that one thing still baffles me. There are times when I really can't be sure that a particular poem in free verse would be much different when typed out as prose. I've tried it at times--and can only say that reading it as prose did not destroy any of the sense, but something did seem to be missing. In other cases, that exercise of typing the poem out as

ALPAJPURI'S POEM

Head so sleepy it won't quit dreams
but coffee coming soon
dreams going on while I'm awake
in these hours hours
in these dreams beneath the Buried Star
where mortal man came questing
for a music beyond dreams and the singing of stars
where a phantom womb of darkness
crawls in the Legend of the Deeper Night

Old comrades of the road come to me in dreams
& we hitchhike the endless highway
bound for the legend of America
& dreams of future journeys
up mountains down streams in Autumnal Wood
dreams my head in my hand on the kitchen table
woozy consciousness mind images
a feast for the head
dreams of the night in continual spaces
in a house in Oregon country
leaving a.m. for San Francisco for a while
for the epic poetry of the streets
dreams pouring in from the window at night
but Everlasting Now too fused to woo it to paper

And once I found the legend of America in the rain
in Oklahoma, when I couldn't get a ride out of midnight downpour
a hungry little bum heading home
while the vast Panhandle spaces
linked me with road blues and a faint glimmer of light
at the end of my mind.
I read Jack's books / he's gone from us now these 6 years
his bones lie in Lowell, Mass. gone in sentient October
and
dreams of me in a new beard the colors of Mars---
i hope Jack's in Heaven with lots of happy paper---
i hope the dream comes to an end so we can live the dream.

night for dreams.
the drama of the universe is old.
Earth is but a place we borrow



-BILLY WOLFENBARGER
outside Harrisburg Oregon
June 30th, 1975

The Autumnal City

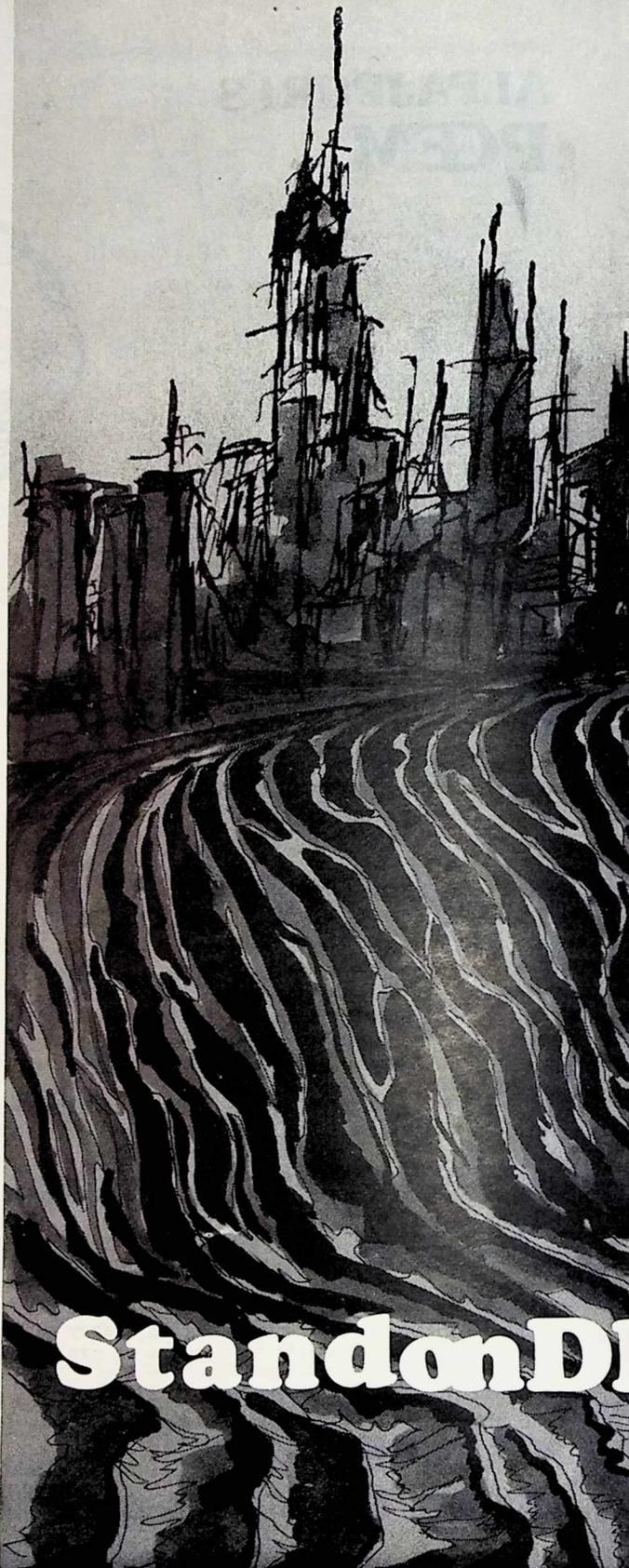
DOUGLAS
BARBOUR

*Some Notes Towards a Putative Review of
Samuel R. Delany's DHALGREN*

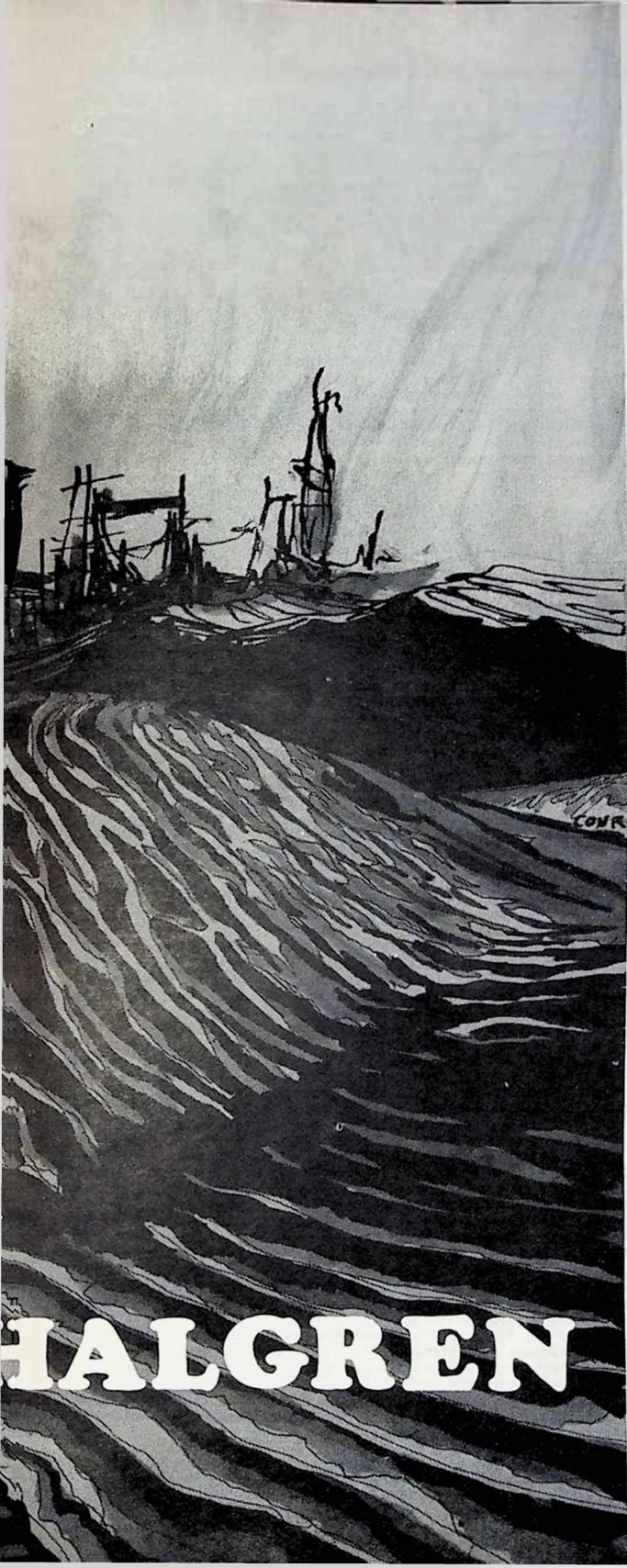
1. Let's get this out of the way at once: I liked this book. That I also found so much to provoke thought, various kinds of aesthetic & emotional responses, critical theorizing, & delight follows, though not necessarily (I rather liked--to take a fairly far-flung example--Phyllis Eisenstein's Alaric stories, but they did not *demand* the spectrum of complex responses DHALGREN does). I suspect it is necessary to like something this big if you are ever going to finish it (I liked GRAVITY'S RAINBOW, too). I further suspect that a lot of sf readers are not going to like DHALGREN sufficiently to keep going through all 880 pages of it. Fine, but that doesn't give them the right to dismiss it as a poor job. And I, for one, believe it is a very strong, major work of contemporary fiction.

2. Is it science (or even speculative)

[Continued on Page 1040]



Standon D



HALGREN

Dully Grinning Delany Descends to Disaster

DARRELL
SCHWEITZER

*Refuting Douglas Barbour
An Essay With Numbered Sections*

1. In 1970 James Blish wrote an article on what was then called "The New Wave" and you can find it in his collection of critical essays, *MORE ISSUES AT HAND* (Advent, 1970). One of the more interesting points made, from the viewpoint of 1975, is a rather cautious statement about Samuel R. Delany:

That Delany has drive, insight and a certain music I cannot doubt, but neither his clotted style nor his zigzag way of organising a story strike me as being much better than self-indulgent and disdirected. If I am right about this--and my experience with Ellison suggests that I am more likely to be wrong--Delany's early popularity, laid on well before he was either in control or was convinced of the necessity of being in control

[Continued on Page 1041]

fiction? Even Fred Pohl, who showed great editorial courage in purchasing it for Bantam (he may be doing less, but I think he's worth a lot more than Roger Elwood--partly because he does know the field, & does have high standards, but no special social/political/spiritual drums to beat as editor), has admitted in conversation (fall, 1973, Penn State) that he is not sure if it really is sf. Well, by my very broad definition of 'speculative', it certainly fits that category: & if we accept the idea of science fiction that Delany & Joanna Russ have suggested--that it deals with events that have not happened (but--implied--possibly could, or could have)--then it is definitely science fiction, too; at least it's sf. Of course, it's so much more than mere sf, that perhaps such categorization is an insult to it. Perhaps, but I'm not sure. Delany has remarked somewhere that science fiction provides marvelous metaphors for a writer to play with. Indeed, as he implies, sf is a marvelous metaphor. How many sf titles can you think of with a phrase something like 'other worlds' in it? In DIALGREN, Delany does not use the usual sf trappings, yet Bellona (named for the Roman goddess of war, if for anything) is an 'other world', to which we--along with the kid--travel by means of a bridge (the bridge of art?). This wounded, autumnal city is, like most sf landscapes, both terribly familiar & terribly alien, & strangers (aliens) live strange lives within its walls. Delany is just not that interested in telling us ('scientifically') how Bellona came to be such a strange place, but he does exercise his very subtle art in rendering its presence--as an alien, yet not totally unrecognisable, landscape against which humans can act out their various roles--with great verisimilitude. This is good sf writing: create the 'other world' as fully as possible, & put some believable characters in it, whose actions will intrigue, interest, & perhaps overwhelm us.

3. What a lot of people will not like: the frank enjoyment (or sometimes simply acceptance) of human detritus. Most of the people we meet at any length in DIALGREN, especially those who hang out, or about, the scorpions' nests, aren't too clean. There is quite a bit of description of human smells, etc., very little of washing (though the one bath the kid has, to clean off a lot of blood, is described with Delany's usual precision). Delany may be attacking the western bourgeois concern with hygiene here. Anyway, those who were turned off by Delany's description--very light, & doing double duty as part of a scientific explanation of the changes in health by the year 3,000 -- of Mouse's dirty foot in NOVA, will definitely be turned off by the kid, & unable to understand, or even appreciate (perhaps -- though it's always possible Delany's articulation of these things will win said reader over), Lanya's desire for him, that way.

Why go into this? Well, those people have every right to say they don't want to read this book. They have none to say that Delany's exquisitely detailed rendering of human funkiness represents some kind of falling off in his artistry. He is doing something beyond what he has done before. In 880 pages he can attempt--at some length--scenes that have never before been a focal part of his work. I think of the dinner at Richards' apartment, where his representation of 'polite conversation' is so devastatingly accurate it creates its own satiric context. The whole shifting scene of the party at Roger Calkins' carries some of the social conflicts suggested in Prince Red's Paris party in NOVA to new heights of subtle confrontation; it's an exquisitely realized piece of writing.

4. "But what is this huge wallop of a novel about?" I hear some poor readers crying in the wilderness of Lit 100. After all, any book this huge has got to be about something. But then, there are others who accuse it of being 'irrelevant', & therefore out of date already. Well: precisely. It is about what it surrounds, & that is as relevant as you--or any single reader--wants to make it, taking it as whole as you can, & responding to it--this other world where things happen which you can or cannot relate to--as fully as possible (or you wish to). It is--precisely because it is so big -- about too many things for me to even attempt to list them. (Can they be listed? No. It is a fictional construct, an artifact, an other world; in it many wondrous events happen. As is true of any experience, the experience of reading this novel can be a learning experience. So can getting up in the morning, if you want it to be.) The point I'm labouring to make here is that Delany is not interested in messages, but in creating a fiction so multiplex & profound (i.e., something we can dive deeper, deeper into every time we enter it) it will stand for itself alone. Has he succeeded? It will be a long time before anyone can pronounce authoritatively on that.

5. "Nothing we look at is ever seen without some shift and flicker--that constant flaking of vision which we take as imperfections of the eye, or simply the instability of attention itself; and we ignore this illusory screen for the solid reality behind it. But the solid reality is the illusion; the shift and flicker is all there is. (Where do sf writers get their crazy ideas? From watching all there is very carefully." [S.R. Delany in *Shadows, Foundation* 6, p. 32]). Delany, I believe, is interested in perception (yes, yes, I am going to tell you one of the many things I think DIALGREN is about; like poets or lovers, critics reserve the right to contradict themselves in a good cause).

Delany has been accused, & has accused himself in *THE TIDES OF LUST*, of being pretentious. The word is applicable if we can remove the sense of derogation from it. I think the sheer cloudedness of his recent style, the increasingly ragged difficulty of it, is due to his interest in reconstructing what happens, from here to here, the perceived particles of event (by particles, here, I mean something akin to what happens at the sub-atomic level in physics -- to measure that, record what is going on--Delany wants to record what is perceived as happening--which does not include all that is going on -- in a language that will represent the perceived event. Perceived, because any event is too full & complex to be caught whole in words, but some uses of language, such as a highly compacted style used phenomenologically, may get at perceptual knowledge, what one individual could perceive as happening now. I think Delany's desire--articulated in his essay in *Those Who Can*-- to write down exactly what is happening is one reason for the high pretentiousness of his style in his latest work: he is attempting to capture physical & psychological events in as full a manner as possible.

& he does this much of the time, right from the strange -- possibly dream -- fuck in the first few pages, through many different actions, including a number of other sexual encounters. But he does something else as well. There is one triple sex scene that is described--from the kid's perceiving point of view --in exquisite detail. Shortly afterwards there is another similar scene, only this time the kid loves both other partners. Lanya & Denny: he can't remember the details because he wasn't concentrating on perceiving the act, but the shared emotion of the act. This is done, it is not simply talked about.

6. Things I don't like that much? Yes, quite a few, but then such failures to continually achieve perfection must be expected in a novel that dares as much, over such a great distance, as this one. Sometimes it is a pretentious use of language that does not come off. A small example: "swive-juice", in which the word "swive" in its archaic presence calls too much attention to itself, thus loosening the bonds the story has on my imagination at that point. Possibly Delany overdoes his explanations of brass orchids, so they aren't allowed to achieve their own resonance the way Lobey's hollow blade and Mouse's syrxinx do. On the other hand, when BRASS ORCHIDS becomes the title of a book of poems, the art/weapon paradox Delany has long been obsessed with is neatly made literary rather than musical. There are some places, especially in *The Anathemata: a plague journal*, where the style becomes too clotted for me, though I'm not sure the passages won't clear up with rereadings.

7. Things I do like. Lots. Much of the characterization. The sex scenes: they are erotically stimulating & yet demand intellectual response as well, & they're written with grace & sensitivity. The handling of interpersonal tensions and the way such tensions can lead to quickly erupting violence. The descriptions of the landscape of Bellona & of the sky. The marvelous scene where another young poet, Frank, tells kid-- & he's the only one to do so -- that he doesn't like the poems of BRASS ORCHIDS. The tension of that confrontation is perfectly rendered: I know that scene, & Delany has caught it perfectly. Too much else to go into. But there is more than enough to allow me to cry, Piches galore.

8. Delany's literary obsessions. They're all here. The sexual/loving triple relationship. The conjunction of artist & criminal --an old Romantic notion (see my article in *Khatru* 2). The continual discussion -- in fictional terms -- of the place, effect & value of art & the artist in society (one of Delany's finer minor characters in DIALGREN is the Audenesque Mr. Newboy, who holds forth on these matters most wittily & at some length). The analytical interest in violence. Linguistic theory & philosophy (what, after all, is real, & how can we name it?) ("These things I'm writing, they're not descriptions of anything. They're complex names." DIALGREN, p. 198).

9. Look, when I say I enjoyed reading this book, I mean it. If

said this several times at conventions, in conversation and on panels, and I respect him for his faith. It's a very dangerous thing for an editor to buy a book he doesn't understand, because he could be making a mistake, and one mistake is all you get in publishing.

I'm not holding my breath for the Great Revelation, because I don't think it will come. DHALGREN has no meaning. By traditional rules it isn't even a novel, because a novel has to be a story, and a story is a series of significant events which lead to some sort of character change. If the character is the same at the end it is because the development has run a complete circle, and the sameness is the point of the story. DHALGREN makes a few weak noises about a cyclical structure, but the essential movements aren't there. You can excise any section you want and there's no difference, because nothing is being dismembered. The book has no structure beyond the kid's entering and leaving the city. The great bulk of it is a formless lump.

It's a very literary lump, to be sure. It has lots of Symbols in it, most of them sexual, the most obvious ones being the huge red sun and the double moons. Delany is not subtle about this. He all but stands up and shouts, "Hey! This is symbolic!" But do the symbols do anything but hang there, like art Christmas tree ornaments? They do not. They do not illuminate, expand, parallel, or otherwise work on the thematic material, because there is no theme, just as there is no plot or character development.

Pohl seems to think DHALGREN is great literature, but I would have to disagree. Great literature is something which speaks to people of all ages and all times. It's something you read when you're young, and maybe only enjoying it for the superficial story. Then when you're a little older you come back, and it means something new to you, something visible only now that you have entered a new phase of life. You keep coming back, and the work continues to speak to you. I've had that reaction with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

This isn't the case with DHALGREN. It is all vague touching and feeling, with no personality dominant, no intellectual content. It does not speak because it has no voice.

5. When you get down to it, DHALGREN is pornographic in the strictest sense of the word. I don't say this to condemn it, only to describe it. The book works on no other level but the erotic, and even that is only in passing intervals between large chunks of complete non-function. I've been suggesting rather cynically for a while now that the thing should be subtitled "The Collected Fetishes of Samuel R. Delany", and that's how I explain much of what others call the book's kinkiness, the fascination with dirt, human odors, and chains. There have been traces of this sort of thing before, in *Time Considered As A Helix of Semi-Precious Stones*, in *NOVA*, and in *Night and The Lives of Joe DiCostanzo*. Delany seems to be on a grime and bondage trip. To each his own.

The book has been enormously successful in America. It has

sold something like a half a million copies since its initial publication, and has gone through at least five printings as of this writing. I suspect much of its appeal is that it isn't just anti-intellectual, but non-intellectual, and this fits the temper of the times. The middle Seventies seems to be a period of regression and exhaustion for this country, filled with a hazy mental apathy. Nothing matters anymore. Hence it's just the right time for a book which allows the reader to escape into a fantasy world where people can lounge around without cares, where the rigidities of modern society are gone, and all the people Samuel Delany doesn't like don't exist anymore. There's no mental stimulation at all, no challenge, as is to be expected in a daydream. Delany compromises the basics of human experience overlooking such things as greed, lust for power, and brutality. Nobody in DHALGREN seems to worry much about territory, property, or taking over the whole scene and ruling others, as people really do in life. Even the hoodlums are basically nice people.

The thing about all this is that the self-conscious reader who imagines himself to be an intellectual can read this soothing mind-wash and pretend all the while that he's experiencing great art. And the sexual angle shouldn't be overlooked. Most people are ashamed to be seen reading hardcore smut. DHALGREN is packaged respectably. No one will ever know.

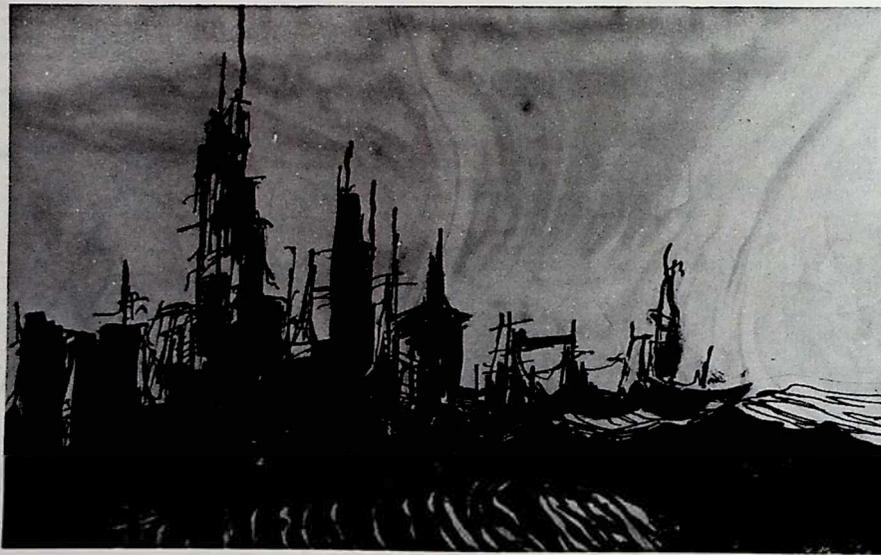
6. DHALGREN is, I think, the most disappointing thing to happen to science fiction since Robert Heinlein made a complete fool out of himself with *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL*. Heinlein proved with that book and the subsequent *TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE* that he was artistically exhausted, written out, and had lost his touch. But then Heinlein is an old man, and has a large body of respectable work behind him. For this to happen to Delany at the age of 32, after he had shown such tremendous promise and begun to fulfill it, is nothing short of tragic. Of course it has happened before. Stephen Crane burned himself out at an early age, as many flaming geniuses have, but the catastrophe of it is undiminished. Blish is right; the damage has been done; and Delany has been put out of business artistically. DHALGREN might have made a mildly interesting 10,000 word novelet, and some of the literary discussions could be excerpted as essays, but beyond that it's all padding.

Science Fiction's Great Hope of the late 1960's has just fizzled out.

--- DARRELL SCHWEITZER

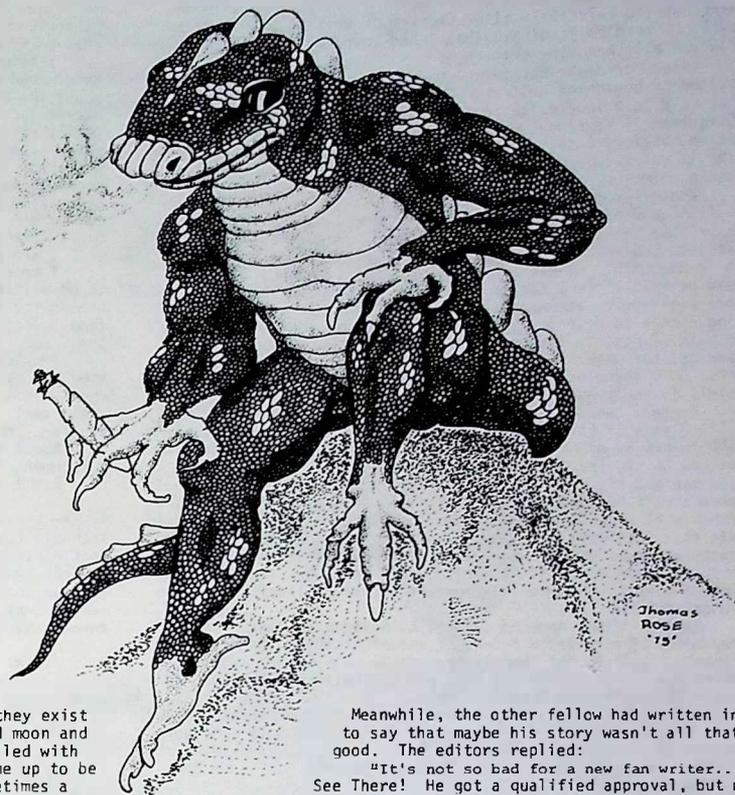
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My Writing Career

S. A. STRICKLEN, Jr.



ON CERTAIN SPECIAL NIGHTS -- they are not many, but they exist -- I withdraw into myself and sit under the stars and moon and gaze upward into a universe which is far away and filled with a fountain of diamond stars and which seems to draw me up to be the rainbow that must dance atop that fountain. Sometimes a gentle breeze disturbs the molten silver of full moonlight and shatters it against the trees into myriad magical fragments each beckoning me onward. Then I feel a fluttering near my spine and a rising thrill and an overpowering urge to express myself.

Whenever this happens, I usually express myself with a loud yelp and shake the moth from underneath my shirt. Then I finish my beer and go inside.

At other special times I think that I want to be a writer. This feeling lasts, usually, about four pages, and I realize for the thousandth time or so that I don't want to be a writer at all because it is such terrible hard work. What I want to do is dash off first drafts at forty words a minute and have people gape in awe and make me rich and famous. Possibly I am not alone in this desire.

When I do try to write, my ego dances between two extremes, one minute growing vaster than empires and substantially less slow, and at other times shriveling smaller than a mote, not even large enough to make a good parable out of. I feel I ought to mention this because I doubt that many of the readers of this article will be familiar with such feelings.

It was, as I recall, in the summer of '63 that I was particularly exhausted from my real-life career as a free-lance genius and happened across an issue of the late lamented *Double:Bill*. Here, I thought to myself, is the perfect outlet for my literary aspirations. I wrote a story and sent it in, and got back another copy of the magazine with my story in right there for everybody to see. Also I got a nice letter. In the next issue, people wrote in and said nice things about my story. My heavens, I thought, perhaps I'm better than I ever dreamed. I scanned over the fiction in various fanzines. Yes, I could do that well. Over the next year or two I sent in a couple of other stories, not too badly received. Vaster than empires, I believe I said. But was there any competition?

With one exception, I thought I could compete with the other fanwriters. The exception wrote with a rather poetic style -- but was sometimes hard to understand. Competition, perhaps? Rely on another opinion, had I not better? Ah, but complacency. The editors of *D:B* said of me:

"We have always considered Si to be one of the best finds in fandom."

Meanwhile, the other fellow had written in to say that maybe his story wasn't all that good. The editors replied:

"It's not so bad for a new fan writer... See There! He got a qualified approval, but my approval had no strings attached. The other

fellow's name was Zelazny.

Meanwhile, my interest returned to my work. I had a particularly important assignment around then: the government had accepted my offer to arrange for a small (preferably fifth rate) power to pick a war with one of our allies. I figured that a quick military victory would unite the country and raise morale at home. The editors of *Double:Bill* kept putting issues in the mail until eventually they got tired of it. Naturally, with an exciting job like mine, I couldn't be bothered with mundane things like changes of address.

After I had taken care of my project, the old lust started to rise again, so I wrote in and asked for back copies. The reception was pleasant, and I sent in a few more stories. My correspondence in those days was with Bill Mallardi, so I asked (roughly every letter) how one went about getting into print, how much money would one get, and do on.

Then came the -- I can't very well say high point--the hot spot of my ambition to write. Under the spell of Mallardi's insidious pen, I decided to go to the '69 Worldcon in St. Louis. I figured the place would be just oozing with people who knew all about writing. I not only wanted market details, I wanted to get some critical remarks about the structure of novels, how to do characterizations, and suchlike.

I arrived in St. Louis with definite queasiness. Aside from Mallardi and Bowers (both know to me only through the mails) I did not know a single soul in fandom. The whole thing could have been a disaster, especially for someone with my shy, retiring personality. Fortunately, Mallardi and Bowers (and lots of other people) turned out to be full grown and mature. I saw little of Bowers--he was busy with other things, and, anyway, was too respectable to associate with the likes of me. Luckily, I was sharing a room with Mallardi, so he couldn't get away that easily. Thanks to him I met a number of interesting people, both fan and pro.

I was interested in trying to be a pro, so I asked Mallardi the same questions from time to time (maybe every ten minutes) about sales and so on. He eventually managed to get me into a room which also contained Terry Carr, who told me what the going rate from Ace was at the time, who to submit things to, and what

the chances of a beginning writer were. This left me with nothing but the relatively minor problem of writing a brilliant novel. I told Mallardi all that I had found out. "I could have told you all that," he said.

Later, or maybe earlier, I had that unique experience so coveted by beginning writers. Someone (I simply can't remember who) said in a loud voice from all the way across the room, "Si Stricklen! I've always wanted to meet you!" and came over and met me. Vaster, I say, than empires. Ninety seconds later, whoever it was said, "Well, it's been good to meet you." Smaller than a mote.

Another room, which Mallardi got me into, contained Andrew Joffutt and his wife Jodie. At that time I had seen his name in print a few times and figured, probably incorrectly, that he had just broken into print and would be all full of good advice for a newcomer. He was busy just then, so I cozened Jodie into reading an article I had in D:B 21. As it turned out, Andrew had some business to attend to, but he did let himself be disturbed long enough to help a newcomer with advice on writing. "Write," he said, "write." I turned back to Jodie. Her eyes had glazed over and the magazine had slipped from her cold, uncaring fingers. As I stumbled from the room, Andrew looked up at me with a fairly friendly eye. "Write," he said.

I spent much of my time looking for R. A. Lafferty because I liked some of his stories so well; I thought maybe if I could talk to him he might be interesting, and also maybe I could find out how he did it. One time I was sitting in a room next to a nice man and his nice wife. They weren't talking to anyone, so I asked him if he knew where Lafferty was. He said Lafferty was probably at such and such a place, and why did I want to know? I said that I thought he was a good writer and might could tell me something about writing. I then excused myself and went to look for Lafferty. As I left, the nice man's name kept scratching my mind. I knew I had heard it somewhere before. Silverberg. Sure sounded familiar.

Another time I managed to meet L. Sprague de Camp. An old army buddy of mine was a friend of one of his sons. He was quite friendly at first, but shortly grew to be rather cool. On later reflection, I concluded that this was probably because I persisted in calling him Fletcher Pratt.

The whole convention experience had kindled my writing desires to white heat. Unfortunately, I was called away to supervise the security arrangements for George Wallace's presidential campaign, and I also had a minor job designing a rustic bridge from Chappaquiddick Island to the mainland.

In the meantime, D:B folded and Bowers won me in a crap game, or something like that. He started up OW and kept on sending me copies. I eventually sent in a story which he said he liked better after reading it a second time. The story drew no comments from readers. Smaller than the smallest mote.

After that minor rekindling of the lust, I got a big contract with the Soviet Union to establish a training program for the Syrian Army. Whilst I was engaged on this important business, Bowers grew tired of sending OW off into the void. Time passed.

Then Bowers sent me a flyer which said that Terry Carr had picked up my first story of all in his FANTHOLOGY '64. Vaster than empires.

I immediately set to work writing again. This time I was determined to do a good job. I sent in a story and asked Bowers about the writers market these days, and where would there be a market for what I wrote. He didn't know, but was encouraging. I really polished up a story and showed it to whichever of my wives or mistresses I was with at the time. Tears glistened in her eyes. "That's fantastic," she said. I really thought that I ought to try to sell it, but Bowers had been good to me, why not send it to him? I packed it up with some other stuff and sent it off to him. He sent it back by return mail. "It's not that I don't like it, but -- it is a bit much." Mote.

I wrote another story. Very nice card from Bowers. Vast.

I kept meaning to write more, but every time I was supposed to be writing, I was either on a secret mission as an underground spy or with the wife of a close friend, except for the time I went of to Nova Scotia to see the total eclipse of the sun.

Eventually I finished up my consultant work with the McGovern campaign. Hey! One of my stories got picked up from OW and I got a tiny sum for letting them reprint it! Vast, oh, vast, vast. Then I got a rejection slip from *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. Mote. mote, mote.

Now I have to go back to work again, this time helping the government with its anti-inflation program.

But I just finished this article. Vast.

With all these nasty letters in OW lately, I better make it perfectly clear that all the above is a fictional story designed for the amusement of the readers. Anything dredged by my feeble and inaccurate memory couldn't possibly resemble a living person -- much less a dead one. No indeed. In the ridiculous event that anyone thinks otherwise, he should write directly to:

S. A. Stricklen, Senior Partner
Stricklen, Stricklen, Stricklen, Stricklen, & Stricklen
Attornies at Law
Penthouse, The Stricklen Building
6969 Stricklen Boulevard
Stricklen Heights
Atlanta, Georgia 30030

Lawyers, nitwits, and the insanely stubborn can write to:

Judge S. A. Stricklen III
U.S. Court of Libel and Slander
Stricklen Courthouse
3 Stricklen Plaza
Washington, D.C. OHOH0

----- S. A. STRICKLEN, JR.



INTRODUCTION,
BY
J. KAGARLITSKY
TO
A VISIT TO
FANTASY
LAND

(an anthology of SF & F, almost entirely by mainstream writers)

Translated from the Latvian edition (Riga: Zinatne, 1971)

by DAINIS BISENIEKS

A LOOK AT THE TABLE OF CONTENTS of this book will show you such names as Jack London, E. M. Forster, O. Henry, Andre Maurois, Primo Levi, and Truman Capote. Rarely will you find all these writers in one place, but this is an exception: they have met in the land of fantasy.

Where is this land? Some brave explorers have reached it, but they found it hard to determine its boundaries and to give a complete description. One region differed from another, the climate was not uniform, and the natives had their peculiarities. To the traveler's inquiries about the inhabitants of the next village they would answer, giving the stranger a queer look, that no other village existed: beyond the hedges of their fields began the reaches of space. Yet, hard as it was to give an account of this land, there was no doubt that it existed. After all, many people had visited it and made themselves remembered, while others felt quite at home there.

This is not hard to explain. The wide variety of climate and scenery characteristic of this land enables almost anyone to pick out a region to his liking. Those whom we meet in this collection are little like each other as fantasists or otherwise as authors. Of course, each appears here in an unusual guise, but we should easily remember that we've met the man before, only in different dress. Sometimes a mirror image is before us, but even then it's not hard to understand just who is in front of the mirror. Even in the realm of magic it's difficult to turn into another being. And maybe some aren't trying to change. They enter the land of fantasy not to be freed from themselves but with another purpose. In this land they try to discover themselves more fully, to uncover yet another stratum of their talent.

In the past decade the attraction of this land has grown so



much that we may suspect yet another reason common to them all. Indeed there is one: it's called the 20th century. All the great revolutions in man's history have been accompanied by fantasy. The Renaissance was permeated by it; the rational age of Enlightenment paid it homage. Every one of these had its own conception of the fantastic, but none are imaginable without the fantastic tales they left us -- GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, MICROMEGAS.

Fantasy has always had an active role in changing the real world, and of course in explaining it. To Swift's contemporaries, the voyage to Lilliput shed light on the essence of court intrigue, the mechanisms of government and party quarrels. The voyage to Laputa helped them understand whom the achievements of science would serve if they were exploited by the privileged classes; the flying island is used to intimidate people and extract taxes from them ... and as for the "upper classes" (in a literal sense) though they are foolish, they are not foolish enough to neglect their advantages.

But here is a wonder: though there was fantasy, there were no fantasy writers. Neither Rabelais nor Swift nor Voltaire could be called such. If the term applied to them, it is only to stress how much they contributed to the development of fantasy. All literature was their province. If they wrote fantasy, it was because the conditions of literature at the time required it. Fantasy had not yet developed into a separate branch of literature which could flourish or wither: it was there all along, whether society had any great need for it or not.

The tendency of fantasy to live within its own boundaries developed only in the 19th century. The work of Jules Verne accelerated this trend. Since then fantasy has had its own writers, its own readers, its own favorite themes. It has become a separate movement in literature. But isn't there a certain danger in this? Couldn't fantasy become isolated from the main stream of literature?

It could, of course, and did so more than once. But then, whenever the world's artistic trends had need of it, fantasy could respond to the call, bringing its own methods and its un-

looked down on.

In our collection this tendency is represented by *The Machine Stops*. It is one of the earliest stories of its author, and maybe it made his reputation. It was written in 1911, when Forster was 22 years old. Less than ten years passed, and it turned out that Forster had been the founder of a whole new trend in modern fantastic literature.

Of course those who start something new in literature are themselves followers, and this is true also of Forster. It can be readily seen that his story was written following an old tradition, and Forster himself later spoke of his debt to Butler's *EREWIKON*. He rated Butler's work higher than *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*. But Forster's story marks an important turning point in the development of this tradition.

The happy world without machines which other writers of anti-machine utopias so loved to portray remains on the periph-

ery of Forster's story. We learn quite casually that somewhere on the Earth's surface there live men who breathe ordinary air, subsist without the services of the ubiquitous machine, and are capable of interest in and sympathy for their fellow men -- they can even come to the other's aid. The author concentrates wholly on those who are in the machine's power. He portrays the realm of the machine with masterly insight, and no few writers of the next several decades have followed his lead. A few sentences here, some lightly sketched scenes there, or a passing gesture will remind us of the works of Huxley, Bradbury, and Vonnegut which were to come; they wrote of the contradictions of bourgeois progress, which in certain circumstances could turn its forces against humanity.

Forster keeps emphasizing that men who have become dependent on the machine have degenerated not only physically but also spiritually. They have become homogenized--one like the next. If something still distinguishes one from another, don't worry, soon these differences will disappear, and there will come "a generation which will know how to free itself entirely from facts, from personal impressions, a generation that will have no faces of its own, a generation divinely free from the burden of individual traits." Nothing worries them, and likewise nothing leaves any impression on them. Since people no longer need anything, they have lost a common goal. They all live under identical circumstances and are themselves identical. But this uniformity does not bring about the unification of mankind. On the contrary, it leads to its complete disintegration.

Everyone lives for himself here. One can live for years without meeting anyone and without feeling any need for contact. If anything unites these people in any formal sense, it is not the remnants of human feeling still flickering within them, but rather the Machine, a force external to them which determines the conditions of their existence.

Not only has society disintegrated, but also any integral conception of the world. Nobody can get an overview of the world any more. Even the Machine, the only part of the world accessible to people, already seems to be something mythical. It is too complicated for their indolent minds. It cannot be grasped as a whole. Faith has replaced science: people pray to parts of the machine for protection against the whole.

Forster's story is not only a warning against what is threatening us, it is a satire against the egoistic, fragmented and yet spiritually unified bourgeois milieu which the writer himself has experienced. His subsequent works of this sort also unite warning and satire. In this respect Forster showed himself as a prophet who got into a blind alley: he could not free himself from the society which he portrayed.

Whatever the case, Forster and his followers help give us a perspective on unacceptable variants of the future. Now that is important: important to learn today how to hear what the future is saying. Are there dangers in it of the sort which Forster shows? One must learn to hear all the voices of the future. But one must not let oneself be lulled by the gentle voices or frightened by the harsh ones. One must listen and learn the truth.

No, today we don't visit Fantasyland just to pass the time. It is little suited for that. It isn't easy to find there a corner where real life might be forgotten. The shadows which gather around you may be dark and strange, but the objects that cast them are perfectly real. If the shadows are dense, this is largely because the light is intense. Under the fiery skies of this land hot disputes are ignited about man, society, and the world. This world, after all, is illuminated by Understanding.

There is no chance to forget reality here, for here it is made clear.

...I should think the primary interest of this piece is that it's a Soviet Russian's view of SF&F. I have also read (and translated) a preface by Kagarlitsky to a book of Kuttner's stories; he stresses that Kuttner is fond of plain folk: witness how unpretentious the Hogbens are.

You'd think from some of the things he says that our critic lived in a free country, where such things as *WE* or *1984* or *ANIMAL FARM* could be freely published. But all in all I find this piece, and most of the others, detestable. It stinks of agitprop. K. is trying hard to get across a point of view, and he uses various tricks of rhetoric to get this end. Like the flights of metaphor. They all get my back up; they are condescending...

DANIS BIENIEKS, November 26, 1974



Jodie Offutt

ONLY WOMEN BLEED



UNTIL RECENTLY my experience as a hospital patient was limited to trips to the maternity ward, and those several years ago. All that's changed now. I even watched *MEDICAL CENTER* one night and said things like, "It's not *really* like that, you know..." All-knowing and full of disdain.

MY BATTERED BODY

I WENT TO THE HOSPITAL because my Pap smears hadn't been normal for awhile. My doctors decided a more thorough inspection was in order. And that, in medical terminology, involves a surgical procedure.

For the curious and the concerned, let me interject that no, I don't have cancer; my womanhood is still intact. A little the worse for wear, perhaps, but in working order. "The trauma of childbirth" is one of the phrases the doctor used when referring to my cervix.

It occurs to me that I'd never read about any of the inherent risks involved in having babies, while pamphlets and magazine articles have kept us constantly informed over the years of the dangers of all methods of birth control. It's odd that the more militant feminists haven't picked up on that.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FEMININE CONDITION

ANOTHER ODD THING--as I think about it after some time has passed--was my attitude and reactions to the situation. The possibility of cancer wasn't nearly as much of a threat that had to be coped with as the fact that I might have a hysterectomy. It seems that the AMA and the Cancer Research people have done a very thorough selling job on the cancer detection test. So good, in fact that cervical cancer implies no fear whatsoever. I thought at the time--and still do--that my attitude bordered on the nonchalant, a bit frivolous.

At the same time, the prospect of the removal of an organ I was definitely through with, had no intention of ever using a--in fact, I'd been taking a drug for a number of years to prevent its functioning!--caused me quite a bit of anxiety. As illogical as it was, I had some notion that my femininity was threatened.

I suppose I suffered a female version of the castration complex.

My dentist tells me that his women patients in general seem to go through more trauma at loosing teeth than do men. And most females who suicide do not go about it in such a way as to cause disfigurement. Perhaps it is more psychologically important for women to remain....*intact*.

While I have always felt that men are as vain as women, it could be that this is the basis for the popular female vanity that is supposedly inherent in all women.

SIGN IN, PLEASE

THE DOCTOR had suggested I go to the hospital ahead of time to pre-register myself and give them a blood sample. They were more interested in getting my Blue Cross number than my blood, but they took both and were very nice about it. I think hospitals have been concentrating more on PR for the past few years in an effort to improve their image.

It was a good thing I'd pre-registered, too, otherwise I might have had to wait! Longer than the hour and a half I *did* sit around, that is. Then there was the lab (more blood and urine in a bottle) and the X-Ray (two views: one up-against-the-wall stance that Dolly Parton could never have done and one with my arms draped over my head in sort of a cheesecake pose).

I was finally presented with my plastic bracelet, escorted to my floor, weighed in and shown to my room. At this point I had been in the building nearly three hours. Since there was no good reason for his presence, and since he's not particularly noted for his patience with institutions, Andy had long since gone.

When I was finally left alone, I felt somewhat uncomfortable

able myself. I unpacked my bag, talked to my roommate a bit, messed with my bed and sort of felt like "How what?" It seemed kind of silly to put on a gown in the middle of the afternoon. On the other hand, it seemed dumb to be sitting on a hospital bed in my regular clothes. I settled on my robe.

Somebody came along to tell me what they intended to do later that night and what to expect the next morning. More PR. Much appreciated, since I'd have assumed I was near death had I discovered in a state of semi-awareness the IV dripping fluid into my body via the back of my hand.

Besides the TB patch test, they came for another dose of blood and urine. Those people know more about my body than most of us think there is to know!

"What," I asked, "are you doing with all this stuff?"

This latest sample was for a pregnancy test, I was informed. And you know what? For some strange reason, I felt vaguely flattered about that. I could even feel the corners of my mouth trying to curl up. It's an even stranger reaction when you understand that I was well aware of the fact that I was in a Catholic hospital and the good sisters were taking no chances than an inadvertent abortion be done right under their holier-than-thou noses. (I was to have a D & C the next morning.)

The flattery was swiftly negated by my next visitor: a girl with an EKG machine and the word that EKGs were routine for all patients forty or over.

KLUNK!

I asked a nurse if I could wander around. Sure I could, as long as I didn't get too far "out of pocket". As it turned out I was downstairs in the lobby conversing with my daughters by phone when they were ready to begin the cleansing rites.

One of the aides, if her cute little grin was any indication, seemed to enjoy her work. She was the one who gave me the "deuce"--that's what she called it. (I might add that she was about the size of a VW bug.) Actually, she gave me a pair of deuces--and that was just for openers. You wouldn't believe how un-septic I was by the time they finished. I felt practically virginal and *very* pubescent.

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

EARLY NEXT MORNING after two shots of Demarol, I was wheeled to the operating room, all shiny chrome and wrinkly blue, given a saddle block, then poked with a pin ("Can you feel anything when I do this?"), had a piece of me cut out to be sent to the pathologist (my scattered body), sewn up and wheeled hazily back to my room, interavenous bag drip-dripping into my arm. Andy was waiting with the mail.

That was that.

I had two books: ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN and Silverberg's SON OF MAN. I started both of them, and stuck with Watergate, probably because I was familiar with the plot, and I couldn't muster the attention that SOM deserved.

The two books I decided *not* to take were Marc Stevens' 10 1/2 (It made me wince--it was just the wrong time.) and Norman's latest Gor tale. (I was in no mood to read about submissive women; I was being submissive enough.)

LONG-HAIRED HIPPIE TYPES AND THINGS THAT GO IN THE NIGHT

SINCE THE HOSPITAL is across the street from the high school, the boys visited daily. Jeff celebrated his birthday that week. I told him I felt pretty much like I had 14 years before -- sort of touchy through the middle, as though something had been taken from me. A couple of Chris's buddies paid their respects; I suspect they were more interested in having a legitimate reason for skipping classes than in the state of my health.

I had two roommates while I was there. One was a young woman who'd had a complete hysterectomy, plus the removal of a



grafanedica

A FANZINE COLUMN ABOUT FANZINES

THE WITCH'S BREW

Gerard Houarner

(with a little help from William S.)

Being an article on the construction of an artificially organic and symbiotic reproduction machine designed for use by male and, with certain alterations, female editors currently involved in producing irregular periodicals that pass the rigid obscenity inspections of the Post Office disguised as pornography.

FIRST YOU GET A CAULDRON. Any cauldron will do, although you'd best get a good solid metal one, since cauldrons made of marsh-mallow, though very tasty, tend to ruin any mixture you might be trying to cook in them. You might also try a charmed pot, though you must be very careful not to confuse a charmed pot with a charmed pothead, or even worse, a charming pothead like Mike Glicksohn. Not only will it ruin your efforts, but it will quite probably put you in ill favor with certain government officials who are currently gathering evidence against charming potheads in order to send them very far away for a very, very long time. After you've acquired your cauldron or charmed pot, as the case may be, you put it up on your stove and light your fire. Or rather, light the stove's fire. Anyway, somehow get a fire started underneath the cauldron. Once you've done that, you are ready to begin the brew.

Poisoned entrails are, of course, a must. They will ensure your machine has the proper "intestinal fortitude" to survive the most nauseating garbage you might ever choose to print. Follow this with a toad, which will give your publication an edge over normally printed fanzines in that they will be able to hop to their destination instead of risking life and staple in the dungeons of the Post Office. A word to the wise: do not confuse toads with frogs, since the latter will only sit around drinking wine and eating bread and cheese all day long, occasionally mumbling things like "vous coulez" and "merde".

Stir gently and let boil, toil and trouble for five minutes. Then you can add the fillet of a fenny snake. No one knows what this ingredient adds to the entire process, but it has been shown that brews without fillet of a fenny snake show a marked tendency to vomit at the first application of cor-flu, and some have even slithered down drain pipes rather than reproduce a William Rotsler cartoon. Obviously this can be a severe handicap in publishing a fanzine, so be sure you add this ingredient.

Hoof of bat and tongue of dog will keep readers warm in the winter and allow zine reviewers of a particularly shallow nature to call your effort "Man's best friend, sort of". Be prepared for nasty letters from vampires and the ASPCA, though, as some members of these two groups might question your method of acquisition.

In order to capture the essence of any insulting retort you might make to a letter of comment, or to add spice to a denigrating book review, you will need adder's fork and blindworm's sting. Of course, a blindworm's sting might prove insufficient to carry the full strength of your words, and so you can either substitute with or add the more modern and far rarer wit of Spiro T. Agnew. One lizard's leg and a howlet's wing will allow your

machine to walk, talk and crawl on its belly like a reptile. This will save you needless movers' bills when you are thrown out of your apartment by the landlady, who will no doubt have strenuous objections to your cooking habits after you've finished this recipe.

Allow to simmer, bake and bubble.

The scale of dragon will render you impervious to any snide remarks other editors will make when they find out your method of reproduction, and the tooth of a wolf is always a good idea if you're planning any kind of a review section. All fanzines need some sercon contributions, so the addition of a witch's mummy will not only provide the correct atmosphere for the discussion of academic affairs, but it will also fill the head of the editor with arcane and useless information that, though it will have no bearing on anything under consideration, will confuse the academicians and render their arguments ridiculous.

The maw and gulf of a ravined salt-sea shark is a extremely important part of the mixture since it will give you the proper attitude towards any contributions that might cross your path. Unfortunately, there are several problems in acquiring this particular ingredient, not the least of which involves the loss of one or more limbs. But you, the editor, must remember that publishing requires sacrifices above and beyond the call of ordinary human endeavors. So ignore any losses you may incur in the search for a shark and remember the famous phrase of a bit actor in *JAWS* who, upon performance of his role, was heard to say "ouch".

Now go into your neighbor's garden sometime tonight and dig up the root of a hemlock. Do not ask what your neighbor is doing with hemlock growing in his garden, just be thankful that as soon as you finish cooking your landlady will throw you out and you will never have to see that neighbor again. Throw the root into the cauldron, making sure to stand clear and avoid any bubbles that might rise out of your pot and explode, releasing noxious fumes. Then you may proceed.

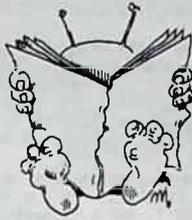
In order to avoid any unpleasant religious altercations, you will have to add the liver of a blasphemous yak. The gall of a goat and the slips of yew are a great help in facing any typos and lay-out errors with disdain and arrogance comparable only to Bill Bowers. For good, clean, entertaining fun, there is nothing like the nose of a Turk and Tartar's lips. Remember, half the fun involved in those last two objects is obtaining them without any undue loss of vital bodily parts that the shark might have missed. Finally, the finger of a birth-strangled babe ditch delivered by a drab will round out the zine with a fine and noble sense of humor.

Add a chaldron of tigers to thicken the mixture and cook for forty days and forty nights. Cool with baboon's blood. For added effect, dance and sing around the cauldron like an elf or fairy.

Note on use: This method of reproduction depends a great deal on the symbiotic relationship between man and artificially organic machine. The zine editor must either imbibe or otherwise force his construction/mixture into an easily accessible orifice a week before running off the first issue, after which the machine will be sufficiently in tune with the editor, and vice versa, so that the resultant product will be an instant nominee for the Hugo award. Just goes to show you what a Hugo is worth these days.

--- GERARD HOUARNER





IN WORLDS 17

NEWS & MISCELLANEOUS * REVIEWS & MISCELLANEOUS * REVIEWS & MISCELLANEOUS * REVIEWS & MISCELLANEOUS * REVIEWS & MISCELLANEOUS

A GOREY CELEBRATION? Yes, yes, & it's surely long overdue. At any rate, though I only discovered him a few years ago, I cannot understand why he isn't a great cult figure. He deserves to be. To be known by far more than the small group of devotees who must congregate about his work. Edward Gorey has published over 40 books, all small. All of them have illustrations; most of them also contain words. Both the words & the pictures come from Gorey's mind, & there are some, perhaps, who would argue they should have stayed there. Not me, but I've always loved purity in madness. A number of the books are supposedly for children, as for example the "Three Volumes of Moral Instruction" which make up *THE VINEGAR WORKS*. They are about as far from Little Golden Books as you can get & still be in the same space/time continuum (actually, I'll have something to say about this later, but the books exist in this world anyway). Most of Gorey's voluminous output has first appeared in small press editions (as, for example, his marvelous *THE SOPPING THURSDAY*, available from the Capricorn Press in Santa Barbara). This past summer, however, Berkeley Publishing Corp.--blessed be their name!--published a huge & beautiful paperback collection of the first fifteen Gorey books under the title of *AMPHIGOREY*; & it's only \$4.95. Such a bargain I haven't seen since I don't know when.

Look, all I really want to say is, *Get this book!* You'll be sorry if you don't, but I suppose that's no skin off my teeth. Nevertheless, I'm going to go ahead & celebrate Gorey things. They're like the mushrooms in *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*. To quote Grace Slick, They feed your head. If they don't, you're somewhere else already, & good luck to you.

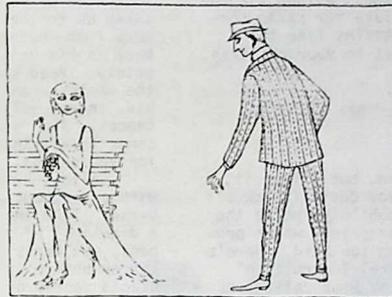
It's my firm belief that Edward Gorey is a visitor from an alternate universe, who decided to settle here & produce realistic drawings & tales from his past else/where & /when. In the universe Gorey comes from Edward the Sixth ruled for a long, long time, there were no world wars, & London, indeed all of England, remained essentially Edwardian--both in the upper crust estates & the slums (there's still a white slave trade in young girls & boys)--till the present day. H.G. Wells' Time Traveller, had he gone sideways as well as forwards, would have felt at home here. Except, perhaps, for one thing: it's a very queer, dark, evilly funny place. Definitely Gorey events occur there. Gorey's essential landscape is English-weird.

Actually, the stories & pictures aren't always examples of black comedy; sometimes they're just comedy. Gorey's first book is entitled *THE UNSTRUNG HARP, OR MR. EARBRASS WRITES A NOVEL*. All you writers out there should read this one. You'll revel in its grimly funny glimpses of the ultimate truth of writing, such as this:

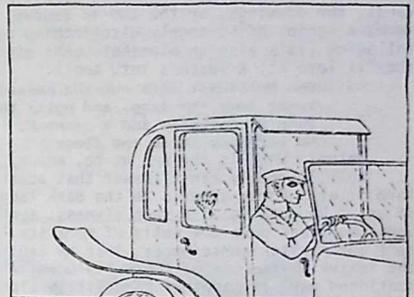
The first draft of *TUH* is more than half finished, and for some weeks

a Gorey Celebration

DOUGLAS BARBOUR



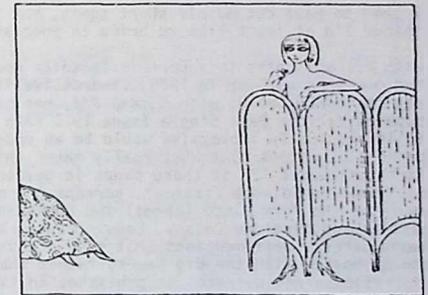
Alice was eating grapes in the park when Herbert, an extremely well-endowed young man, introduced himself to her.



He invited her to go for a ride in a taxi-cab, on the floor of which they did something Alice had never done before.



After they had done it several times in different ways, Herbert suggested that Alice tidy up at the home of his aunt, Lady Celia, who welcomed them with great cordiality.



Lady Celia led Alice to her boudoir, where she requested the girl to perform a rather surprising service.

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its characters have been assuming a fitful and cloudy reality. Now a minor one named Glassglue has materialized at the head of the stairs as his creator is about to go down to dinner. Mr. Earbrass was aware of the peculiarly unpleasant nubs on his greatcoat, but not the blue-tinted spectacles. Glassglue is about to mutter something in a tone too low to be caught and, stepping sideways, vanish.

Or take poor Mr. Earbrass's state when he makes the mistake of re-reading some earlier part of his novel while he's still working on the first draft:

Mr. Earbrass has been rashly skimming through the early chapter, which he has not looked at for months, and now sees TUH for what it is. Dreadful, *dreadful*, DREADFUL. He must be mad to go on enduring the unexquisite agony of writing when it all turns out drivell. Mad. Why didn't he become a spy? How does one become one? He will burn the MS. Why is there no fire? Why aren't there the makings of one? How did he get in the unused room on the third floor?

THE UNSTRUNG HARP contains more words than any other Gorey work I know of. I love Gorey's drawings, & indeed they always enhance whatever writing may accompany them. Some of the totally silent books are incredible. Yet he is such a wonderfully parodic writer I can't help wishing he'd write more. The tone of these passages is so very late Victorian or Edwardian as to undermine any usual response to them as such; & this truly subversive effect is something Gorey always manages, either via the words, the drawings, or the two in tandem. Take *THE FATAL LOZENGE*, a series of strangely disquieting quatrains like the following (it's also an alphabet book: give it to your children, they'll love it, & learn a lot, too!):

The Fetishist gets out the hassock,
Turns down the lamp, and bolts the door;
Then in galoshes and a cassock,
He worships it on the floor.

Jesus! What is the man up to, anyway?

Well, I really can't answer that question, but I love it, I love it all. Gorey appeals to the dark laughing devil inside all of us, & he does so with such slyness, such subtlety, we're the ones who break down the walls of morality & propriety which protect our puritan consciences, just by laughing too hard. Here's the letter K from one of those "Volumes of Moral Instruction" mentioned earlier, another nice little alphabet book called *THE CASHLYCRUM TINIES*: "K is for KATE who was struck with an axe." This one needs its illustration, of poor little Kate stretched out in a snowy wood, an axe larger than she stuck in her small body, a trail of blood fading back into the forest. Do you begin to see my point?

Then: there's *THE LISTING ATTIC*, a collection of merry little limericks like this:

From Number Nine, penwiper News,
There is really abominable news;
They've discovered a head
In the box for the bread,
But nobody seems to know whose.

I seem to have cut myself short again, but there are a couple of things I'd at least like to bring to your attention...

With due apologies to a Certain Canadian who produced a limited run one-shot earlier in 1975...impressive it was, too...I must say that JEFF SMITH, with *Khatru* 364, has produced what I'll be pushing for the Best Single Issue 1975 FAAn Award. To say that it is physically impressive would be an understatement: 156 mimeo pages plus covers. But what really makes this double issue is the fact that about 120 of those pages is devoted to Jeff's symposium on "Women in Science Fiction", perhaps the most impressive example of the form since (ahem!) *THE DOUBLE: BILL SYMPOSIUM*. The participants include Delany, LeGuin, Russ, Tiptree, & Wilhelm, among others. Jeff mentions that should you be interested only in the symposium with the Bq Names, rather than the usual mixture of criticism/reviews/etc. he publishes in *Khatru*, he'd prefer you waited for the Mirage Press edition which will be out later this year. However, if you can't wait, or would simply like to get an excellent "sercon" fanzine, *Khatru* is available for 4/54.00 (this double issue is \$2.50 by itself) from: JEFFREY D. SMITH, 1339 Weldon Ave., Baltimore, MD 21211.

Those of you who haven't gone blind from my micro-type habits will recall that in OW 23 I published an excerpt from a book on John Brunner. Well, *THE HAPPENING WORLDS OF JOHN BRUNNER*, edited by Joe De Bolt [ISBN 0-8046-9124-X; 216 pp; \$12.95; Kennikat

I wish I could quote the drawings, too. Ah well, it should whet your appetite for them, anyway. Meanwhile, the subversive element should be apparent. Gorey leads you gently on, in both his words & his drawings, until you're suddenly suspended over nothing; & as you realize the fact you fall. Laughing all the way down, however, because no matter where you land it's an exhilarating, wild trip.

I'm not qualified to discuss Gorey's drawings, but what the hell: I think they're brilliant. He's a fine draughtsman, knows how to handle shadow well, has a caricaturist's eye for fine details & a genuinely grotesque vision. What else do you want? I suspect most fan artists will be jealous as hell; & will also study his work with care.

I think he utilizes the same techniques in his drawing as in his writing: an exquisite sense of the odd, awry & absurd, matched by a marvelously inventive parodic knowledge of the genres he works in. Every one of the little books in AMPHIGOREY is worth pouring over many times, but I'll finally rest my case on *THE CURTIOUS SOFA*, a pornographic work by Ogdred Weary.

How does one write a short, beautifully drawn "pornographic work"? Let Ogdred Weary show you how: it's (of course) deliciously wicked (especially in the way it excites your...sense of the ridiculous). Once again, Gorey's language is exquisitely perverse, genuinely subversive precisely because it short-circuits all the usual responses.

The first four tableaux are reproduced on the preceding page.

Believe me, it *builds* from there. Never has so much been suggested by so little, & every phrase, every illustration, takes us further in to this distinctly odd adventure & further away from whatever we might have expected. Gorey's special trick here is his use of adjectives & adverbs of suggestive impropriety. Read the prose again: see how beautifully he sets up the whole *raison d'être* of pornography for a pratfall through his "ingeniously constructed" & "exceptionally well-made" sentences. The "story", if such we may call it, moves to a highly comic terrifying ending, but I'll let you discover what that is for yourselves.

Gallows-humor is Gorey's metaphysic: his is black humour with a vengeance, for morality is ever-present in his fey universe. Take the strangely quiet understatements (in both words & drawings) of *THE WILLOWDALE HANDCAR*, where nothing really happens, yet Gorey maintains a brilliant undercurrent of sheer terror before an utterly meaningless universe just beneath the placid veneer of his almost non-existent narrative. The whole problem is, the man is so goddamn funny! Get AMPHIGOREY: it's a beautiful, totally ambiguous book. You'll love it even as you shiver, laughing of course--just a bit nervously, perhaps. I can't thank Berkeley enough for giving us this cornucopia of Gorey tales.

--- DOUGLAS BARBOUR

AMPHIGOREY: Fifteen Books by Edward Gorey; A Berkeley Windhover Book, June 1975. 8" x 11"; unnumbered pages. \$4.95

Press, 90 South Bayles Ave., Port Washington, NY 11050] has just been published...so recently, in fact, that I haven't had a chance than to do more than skim it. But several of you were interested in knowing when it was available. Contents include Joe's introduction/biography (of which you saw about a third); preface by James Blish (one of the last things he wrote); and seven essays on various aspects of Brunner's work; plus a Brunner "response" to the preceding, and a lengthy bibliography. The price will probably discourage all but the diehard Brunner fans, but you should at least persuade your local library to get it. (Perhaps we can persuade Kennikat to cover other SF authors, also!) [This must be his month, Dept.: DAW has also just put out *THE BOOK OF JOHN BRUNNER*...but since I had to buy that one...]

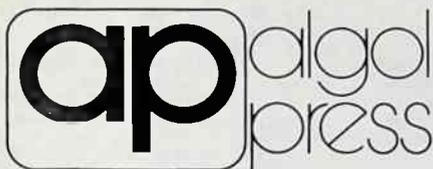
Andy Porter/ALGOL PRESS has his second chapbook out: *DREAMS MUST EXPLAIN THEMSELVES*: URSULA K. LEGUIN [36pp. + covers; \$3.00]. Most of the material appeared fairly recently in *Algoe*, but if you don't have those issues, see the advertisement over there---

DARRELL SCHWEITZER's interview with James Gunn from OW 26, along with many others, will be published under the title of *SCIENCE FICTION VOICES* by T-K Graphics later this year.

NEXT TIME: My look at the multitude of SF "Art" books (which didn't make it this time, obviously). Send Items for Review to: *BILL BOWERS* : P.O. Box 2521 : North Canton : Ohio : 44720

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Richard Geis says that ALGOL: The Magazine About Science Fiction is "professionally magnificent;" Bill Bowers says, "fantastic Gaughan cover," referring to the present issue. Of course ALGOL has a full color cover by Jack Gaughan on ultra slick Chromecote paper; typeset interiors on slick paper, with imaginative layouts and use of artwork. But more than that, ALGOL has Robert Silverberg's 15,000 word autobiography; an interview with Gardner Dozois; Ted White's overview of the SF world in "My Column;" fascinating and controversial reviews by Richard Lupoff in his "Lupoff's Book Week;" solidly fascinating letters, ads for dozens of books and bookstores, a convention calendar, and much more. Last issue ALGOL featured a full color Mike Hinge cover, interview with Ursula K. Le Guin, articles by Jack Williamson and Brian Stableford; next issue ALGOL welcomes Vincent Di Fate and Susan Wood as contributing editors. And then, of course, there's ALGOL PRESS... If you're not subscribing to ALGOL, you're missing a lot. Try one copy for \$1.50, or a six issue (3 year) subscription for \$6.00. Use the coupon below to order ALGOL and ALGOL PRESS titles.



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Having expended so much space on a neo-contributor, I must of necessity be brief in the remainder of my comments:

Jeff Hudson, in between writing *the novel*, has made one pro sale--Half Mixed Publisher's Delight, by Jeffrey S. Hudson and Isaac Asimov--which appeared in the late, lamented Ig. He is also totally crazy, but his heart is in the right place: "I really don't mind that you don't pay anything (not that I couldn't use the money) but let's face it, print is print and Outworlds, from all the informations I can gather, is a rather prestigious fanzine." Harry Bell's illustrations will help it stay that way!

My biggest "editorial decision" this time was finding something with which to follow Doc Lowndes' impressive column/essay; I didn't want something light, and I didn't want an ad...and I didn't have a suitable full page illo. But I wanted to use Bill's poem this time, particularly since it was "bumped" last time... and it seemed to "fit" right about there...

Darrell sent me his piece, offering the N.A. rights, but I said I would use it only if I could also arrange to print Doug's piece it responded to--presenting both sides, don't you know? I have so arranged, but only by inadvertently stepping on the toes of another U.S. faned whom Doug had offered the N.A. rights to on his piece! *sigh* My apologies to all concerned...

I've had that center-spread illo of Connie's for about four years...I have patience if my artists permit...waiting for just the right piece(s) to use it with. I think I found them.

Tom Rose is a young professional artist who works for the Stopas. Joni is trying to get him into doing fan art, and I think you will see why. (This particular illo [p. 1043] will also be a postcard published by Imagination Unlimited.)

I told Jodie, when she sent in this "column", that, had she outlined the subject matter in advance, I would have automatically said, "No way...!" Just goes to show you how wrong I could have been...

Robin Michelle Clifton is, as she says, not a sf fan, but I really enjoy getting this article out of the clear blue sky... However, if Robin Michelle is upset with Tucker's response, I'm not eager to see how she'll react to Ro's version: You see, he swears up and down that it is a hoax article. (The fact that he was unable to find any reference to QRQ, Wilson, or William Wright through the reference desk at the local library doesn't help.) I don't think it's a hoax, and see no reason why it should be...but my contention is that it doesn't really matter if it is: I enjoyed it and I enjoy thinking that someone such as Quentin Wilson did exist. (But then I'm a self-confessed plebeian: I even watch and enjoy SPACE: 1999...it has pretty colors.)

And, in case some of you think that you're seeing double on the page opposite this, yes, that is a repeat of Grant's cover from OW19: this time, as promised, presented without my overlaying screen, for your listening enjoyment.

It's a good issue. Enjoy.

In case you haven't heard, the TAFF race is all over and -- surprise! -- it ended in a tie. Which means that both Roy Tackett and I will be going to Mancon over Easter...at last I'll be able to meet Terry Jeeves--who I've known for fifteen years--and many, many others who are more than "names" on paper to me. I'm looking forward to it...and only hope I can carry off my end of the deal!

Actually, I'm rather pleased that things worked out the way they did; I've known Roy almost as long (we stopped at his home on the way back from Pacificon II in '64) and in some ways wasn't too happy at having to run "against" him. (I'd thought there would be at least one other in the "race", but...) This means that we will be joint American administrators for the next TAFF race...one to bring an European fan over to an American convention. You will, of course, be kept informed through this medium...

In the meantime, there is a DUFF race underway at the moment, to bring an Aussie fan to Midamericon this year. The candidates are John Alderson, Shayne McCormack, Christine McGowan, and Paul Stevens. The deadline for voting is March 31 (this year), and if you don't get a ballot by other means, I'm sure a s.s.a.e. sent to the American Administrator (Rusty Hevelin, 3023 Old Troy Pike, Dayton, OH 45404) will get you one. As with TAFF, it is not required that you be eligible to vote in order to contribute; do so!

A lot of people wrote after the ad in SFR 15 appeared wanting to know where their issues were. (I even got one phone call from California, before I received the SFR!) I really appreciate your concern people, but sometimes it is possible/desirable to advertise an issue before it's actually out. So, rather than responding to every letter/note, I kept working and got OW25/OW26 out as soon as possible. If you still haven't gotten them, let me know...but usually the only reason you don't get it with everyone else is that you move, and don't let me know... Stay put!

One thing I've been meaning to mention for a long time is this: I get a lot of mail addressed to one "Mr. Bowers"; *that* happens to be my father. The "William L." you see occasionally on the contents page is simply for posterity; *my* name is Bill. So Be It Known to One & All, that only the following three individuals are required to address me as "Mr. Bowers" (with an optional but respectful "Sir" afterwards): Michael Glicksohn, Jerry Kaufman, Larry Downes. (I told you I'd make you famous, Larry...)

This leaves me less than a column for the "good stuff": Those with a perceptive eye and an interest in trivia will have caught a change in the "press" name. I'm not sure who dubbed me with the "Billbo" handle (I would suspect Bentcliffe or Jeeves)--in fact, I'm not all that certain I even *like* the name! But I needed a new label for my own activities, and it'll serve as at least a temporary version of same.

As to *why* I needed to change the press name, and by way of explaining that little comment in the first paragraph on p.1021: I've said, for a long time, that eventually I wanted to get into publishing on a serious basis, to eventually do it fulltime and that I considered OW my self-teaching training ground as an editor/designer. Up until now that's all I've done--*easy* it. I've never permitted myself to graduate.

I first met Ro Nagey at Discon II...it was in the KC suite when Randy Bathurst was trying to form "Big Fandom" (criteria: over 200 lbs., or over 6 foot in height...sorry, Mike), if fading memory serves me right. Then at Windykid he told the Hand-grip story, and I said to myself, This kid has possibilities. At Marcon he asked me to be fan GOH at Confusion, and I *knew* he was wise beyond his tender years. Midwestcon, the long drive to and from Byobcon with he, Lin, and Sandi, his visit down here, Pghlange, yet another Windykid...

We started talking about what we wanted to do, *really* wanted to do with our lives...he to write, me to design/edit...

Double:Bill was "born" while Mallardi and I drove back from Chicon III...and it was during the ride back from Pghlange that Ro and I said, what the hell...let's go after the dream...

Ever since then, being basically a coward, I've been trying to find a graceful way of finking out...but I haven't been able to find one. Besides, deep down, it *is* what I want to do...and if I don't go with it now, I probably never will...

What "it" is, is this: Ro and I are in the process of incorporating under the title of "Outworlds Productions". What we intend to do is to establish a working, viable, self-supporting publishing house over the next several years.

That's the dream, that's the path...

We have plans, some big, some small, some definite, some tentative... And we have faith in our own abilities...

He is the business end; I am the creative/editorial half. Together we decide what projects to tackle. And that's basically what I've needed all along: someone I can trust, yet someone who can give me a budget and say that's it, you do it with that much money, and not a penny more. Someone to take the worry of raising the capital off me, so that I can concentrate on doing my thing.

Right now things are in a bit of a flux until Ro & Lin get married (there'll be a change of name...for both), and get moved to where Lin will spend the next four years of internship/residency. At least we now know where that will be. But we hope to have our first book out by Midamericon, or shortly thereafter. And the one definite commitment we have to each other is to get the first issue of our magazine out by Suncon.

A real, honest-to-goodness science fiction magazine no less --and yes, I'm quite aware of everything I said to Mike Gorra in OW25; answering others is one way I employ in answering my own doubts about certain things...

We have a name for the corporation; we needed a name for the magazine, a good, solid science fictional name. We examined the possibilities, but always came back to one certain title...

Outworlds #30 will be the last one in this fanzine/eclectic format. I wanted this last year for several reasons: to match D:B's longevity (the seven year itch), it'll give me twice as many issues as NERG(!)...but mainly I want to wrap it going up, one last shot at giving it the very best I've got. You've now seen one fourth of that final volume.

The new magazine will, of course, be titled *Outworlds*.

But, being what I am, I will still be publishing a fanzine; in essence, actually, *this* fanzine, but under a different, and a not necessarily sfnal title. The major difference is that it will not even pretend to a regular schedule, and will probably be considerably smaller...but just as varied, and hopefully will have the same columnists/contributors...if they are willing.

(Yes, we're selling shares...at a three-figure price; we'd rather be fan-owned than bank-financed. Contact Ro...not me...) There you have it. Give it your best shot...and take care.

