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MAJOR ARCANA
Prehensile 10.5
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MAJOR ARCANA, Prehensile 10.5, is the detached letter column composed from LoCs on PRE 9 or earlier which didn't make it into PRE 10. It is produced by Mike Glyer (14974 Osceola St., Sylmar CA 91342) on his mortally wounded mimeograph, the poor functioning of which delayed ORG 9 etc. etc. This lettercol will be as long as my patience with the mimeo -- so don't count on too much... Only these fine covers collaborated on by Jim Shull and Grant Canfield spur me to carry the nonsense this far. PRE 10.5 is available free to whoever is on my sub list, wrote a loc, or seems a likely fellow to send one of its 200 copies to. Begun 10/23/73. PS to reviewers: no extra copies will be available, so don't bother plugging this per se -- if I have any leftovers they'll go to new subbers or likely beggars.

This issue is defenestrated, er, dedicated, to Ed Cagle.....

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HARRY WARNER jr. 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown MD 21740

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Well, here I am, feeling absolutely tiptop and in the best of health. Since I've just about caught up on locs to fanzines, I can respond to the ninth Prehensile on the very day it arrives. Now that I've gotten some truths out of my system, I can relax and revert to my usual collection of lies for the rest of these two pages.

German rock music is a topic that I haven't quite become a complete authority on. But I scent a common factor in Richard Wadholm's column this time, between his comments on the rock scene and what he says when complaining about continuing series. Isn't it possible that his real problem is an exceptional fondness for novelty, the different sound or the unusual batch of characters? Then he gets disillusioned when the same style and setting bob up in story after story of a series, or when other musicians try to perform in the stule of the rare group that did things strikingly differently? The attitude is nothing to be ashamed of. It seems, in fact, to be standard equipment for listeners to "serious" music nowadays, when a new school of composers becomes ridiculed as old hat after a few years whether it's the 12-tone group or the aleatory boys or the musique concrete specialists or whatever.

Stan Burns did one commendable thing in his long review of the new Heinlein novel. He probably spared us from Freudian interpretations of the book in all future reviews, beacuse reviewers can hardly find anything new on this approach after the exhaustive treatment here. I'll reserve judgement on the value of the review until 1988 or thereabouts when I should get around to reading the novel (right now I'm up to The Moon Is A Harsh Misstress in my Heinlein experiences) but I get the impression that Heinlein has done some innovative things in constructing a science fiction novel, and isn't this one of the longest science fiction stories ever published, at 605 pages?

Any thinking about how this or that old fanzine would fare in Hugo voting today must take one thing into consideration which Dan Goodman doesn't emphasize. Several fanzines got Hugos for excellence over a long period. Either bloc voting or a lot of accidentally meshing consciences caused people to decide that this or that fanzine

MAJOR ARCANA

note: I have decided to run only 150 copies. This has been a public disservice ann..

really should be rewarded this year, even though its current issues aren't any better than those last year or the year before that. Dan underestimates the quantity and ability of feminine fanwriters a decade or more ago. From the general period he refers to, around the start of the 1960s, there were a lot of girls who were prolific and usually wrote high quality stuff: Ella Parker, G. M. Carr, Marion Bradley, Jean Young, Miriam Carr, Juanita Coulson, Joy Clarke, Sylvia Dees, and some others who were evident mostly in apas, like Nan Gerding.

I don't know which to admire more, your patience in the fiendish task of transcribing a tape for fanzine publication, or your thoughtfulness in annotating it. The lack of the latter procedure is the main fault with a lot of fanzine reprint projects nowadays. If it's hard for your readers to understand in-group jokes when they bob up in a dinner meeting only a few months old, how much harder must it be for newer fans to make sense out of material from fanzines published a dozen or more years ago?

Stan Burns' review of the Norton book is an astonishing feat: virtually a compact guide to the entire fantasy output of an author combined with comments on this latest book, all in a little more than two pages. I admire Sturgeon more than Darrel Schweitzer does, and I suspect that the generation gap is responsible for the bad reactions Sturgeon has been getting in various fanzines of late. ((Perhaps, but I have read collections of Sturgeon -- CAVIAR, or STARSHINE -- and I liked that fiction a great deal more than I have anything Sturgeon's done in recent years. On the other hand Sturgeon seems to be doing a different sort of story these days, if "Slow Sculpture" is a fair example -- much more philosophical and passive than his older work. Schweitzer may not be able to accept Sturgeon under any circumstances, but de gustibus, and like that there...))

I enjoyed the letter column despite the tinge of disappointment over the way my Mike Glicksohn thing had been blown. Fortunately nobody seems to have caught on about this Lou Stathis hoax as yet. I like Darrell's system for reviewing books; occasionally I've thought I might like to try it myself and immediately I've chickened out at the thought of how I would fret and worry over receiving more books for review than I have time to read.

You might do well to think twice before running anyone's description of Bruce Pelz or anyone else as a thief. Any such written charges are potentially libelous. Even if you're on the best of terms with Bruce, and he wouldn't get angry with you, you could still find yourself dragged into litigation if a lawsuit broke out involving someone else's published accusations, and attorneys started hunting similar things in other places.

One complaint: couldn't you arrange for a bell to ring or something so I'd be reminded to look at the running titles at the bottom of most pages? I keep forgetting that you vary them interestingly. After every ten pages or so, I suddenly halt in the middle of a sentence and frantically leaf back to see what I've been missing in the past few minutes.

((Congratualate -- also congratulate -- yourself for being the second person in my 20 fanzines to have remarked that I play around with the titles. Stencil typing is too dull not to have some fun...))

.....
MIKE GLICKSOHN -- NEW ADDRESS -- 141 High Park Ave., Toronto ONT M6P 2S3 CANADA
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With PRE 9 you've most certainly entered the ranks of the Hugo-nominee class fanzines and I hope you get the recognition you've earned. (That May date on the cover clashes with your handing me the fanzine in September, though. Shape up, lad, shape up!) And at least part of the steady improvement in the fanzine has been the continued growth of your own writing ability which reaches new heights with the fantasy of your most recent editorial. I often don't agree with you, but more and more I'm admiring the way you put your totally invalid, muleheaded opinions down on paper. (just kidding, Mike, honest.) PRE may not be one of the better looking fanzines around ((acch -- right in the, er, breadbasket)), although it's still way better than the majority of current efforts, but it's getting to be a very solid and interesting fanzine. (My apologies to Cy for commenting on repro; for some of us that's still a part of the overall quality of a fanzine.)

All these references to Ed Buchman are totally lost on me. Is that the name of Dan Goodman's new pet boa constrictor? ((No, it's the nom de plume of the mail drop Donn Brazier set up when he was in California to defraud the welfare authorities.))

It seems pointless to keep on pointing out to you that the NASFiC sections were never legally made a part of the WSFS rules and therefore their deletion is not the heinous crime you keep touting it as. You are obviously trying to swing the current fanish feeling against a different committee and facts would only cloud the issue. I suspect I'll have more to say on these matters later, especially if PRE readers continue to discuss them in your lettercol, but for now let's leave it be. I like you, and I like what you're doing with PRE, and I don't want us to be at each other's throats over this. ((I have no intention of using the TORCONcom as a scapegoat or decoy from any discussion of LACon. Nor would it be to my advantage to do so -- this series of bullshit allegations is not the sort of thing to lay down a die a quite death -- it will be back if we don't resolve it. Still I dislike the TORCONcom's clumsy way of taking advantage of their position to change to their liking a part of the WSFS bylaws that they had not legally been able to stop in the past years. To declare the NASFiC provisions "ultra vires" is stupid. In an unincorporated organization whose by-laws contain provisions for self-amendment, the idea that the will of its members -- as legally voiced in the business meeting -- can be "ultra vires" -- or, not in the powers of the organization -- is inane. Fortunately Chalker, and the bidders, circumvented this fiat to their satisfaction.))

The Stevens-White pastiche was very well written. But I said I wouldn't talk about these matters any more, so...

I can't agree with Wad's contention that Brunner is an untalented hack, or that THE SHEEP look up was a pain in the ass. I do agree that far too many writers seem to be striving far too hard to write in an arty pretentious style for which they lack the ability, but Brunner isn't one of them. His format may be highly stylized, but I found his book quite straightforward, if a little pessimistic. But what else could you expect from that sort of extrapolation? ((Gee -- I thought THE SHEEP LOOK UP was a pain in the ass. I read 36 pages and hung it up. Any author who gets his information on America from the newspapers, as Brunner does, is already at a disadvantage. But when his characters, supposedly American middle-class types, begin spouting lines like "it's like the race between guns and armor...", which is a 19th century Britishism, it's time Brunner went back to writing about space or some other place we don't know better than he does.))

Aljo's writing ability continues to soar like his seagull. This piece is at once as lyrical and as morbid as you'd want to get. If he stays in fandom we're in

for a variety of fascinating reading experiences.

If Ted really wrote that piece in 69, it certainly emphasizes the plus ca change theory of fandom. His comments fit perfectly with the major topics of current fan-nish discussion and most of what he says about the little vs. giant convention is completely true. There still isn't really an acceptable solution to the problem, though, and I don't really expect to see one in the near future. Whatever is de-cided, though, I guarantee this: I'll be attending worldcons for as long as I can, but I'll never work on one again! The Ranquet transcription itself was also amusing. I look forward to the one from TORCON. I also look forward to -- hopefully -- your lengthy conreport. I want to find out all the things I missed.

On the letters, I vote negative on your attempt at answering locs in an editor-ial after the column. In the first place, your response is far too limited, and in the second, the interplay between you and your readers is a major factor in the enjoyment of the PRE letter col.

I notice Andy Porter doesn't mention that Dick Lupoff is paid for each review he does for ALGOL. A mere oversight, I'm sure. I also question strongly his inti-mation that NERG spent \$300 an issue. The \$900 we spent in 1972 paid for most of five issues of NERG, about a dozen apazines and left supplies for most of XENIUM 2,1. Even my students can figure that at a lot less than \$300 per issue.

I'll never punch Lou Stathis anywhere simply because I don't take him either seriously or personally. I may write scathing letters, but they're certainly not created in the heat of passion and if I sound annoyed or exasperated, I don't remain that way once the letter is written. In all he protests too much and I still think if he finds fans and fandom so generally distasteful he should wander off and leave us alone But if he insists on staying around and being a gadfly, he should have some purpose other than the desire to create controversy. ((Give the guy a break already. Whatever happened to your sense of putridity?))

What's with all these ever-changing typefaces? You doing graphics on us or something? ((Now you know I'd never do the perversion known as graphics, especially in public. After all, this is hardly Ohio...))

I admire your loyalty to the LACon committee, Mike, and I'm sure that if the TORCON committee were attacked in similar fashion I'd defend it as strongly. But I can't believe you can be as unaware of the reasons for the upset of many fans as you pretend. Your last page doesn't help your cause in the slightest... ((Speaking of rushing to the defense of one's friends....))

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RICH BROWN 2916 Linden Lane, Falls Church, VA 22042

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The part of your editorial in PREHENSILE No. 9 about Ted White was a masterpiece of something or other, and I say that as one who's been masters of style (such as Charles Burbee or Walt Willis) turn the blade with a deft hand. In all honesty, after having forced my way through it, I would have to say that you could certainly teach those two tired old hacks a thing or two, although of course neither about humor or writing. And only a few years ago I was bemoaning the lack of good, humor-ous writers in fandom! But it appears I spoke too soon... ((Gee, does this mean I don't get your nomination for "Best Fanwriter"?))

I'm sure you feel the transliteration of Ted White's name to Wed Tight was a masterstroke of inventiveness, but I'm not sure you realize the extent of the damage

you've done, with that one quick thrust. As one who lives but a few short blocks from Ted, I think I should report the following conversation to you:

"I am done for, devastated," Ted White said to me. "Mike Glycer is transliterating my name in his fanzine. Nearly 20 years a fan, and now this! There's just no way you can fight an inspired wit like that."

"Yes," I agreed, "and what makes it really depressing is that if Mike keeps it up he'll be twice as good as he is now."

Ted chose to ignore that as he mumbled, "Glike Mirc. Tike Flyer. Flat Tiro. No, I guess I just Don't Have It." He kicked a baby duckling in the neck to emphasize his exasperation and then said something about having underestimated you: I don't recall whether what he added was "I frankly never suspected him of such originality" or "I frankly never suspected him of originality," but it scarcely matters -- there you have it, begrudging, if real, admiration from your chosen foe.

((Gosh, Rich, when it comes to getting in your digs you don't squander subtlety. But at least it looks like I'll be getting Ted's nomination for Best Fanwriter. Or was that Best Fanwriter? I forget.))

...In any event, while the 'humor' had an overall effect on the piece as a whole, the most impressive feature was actually its fairness: At the conclusion you picture your erstwhile hero, Milty Frank, threatening the livelihood of villainous old Wed Night, as well as a \$30,000 suit, something only the worst fugghead would do in real life. The associations such juvenile activity conjures up -- George Wetzel, Christine Moskowitz -- certainly don't cast your hero in a favorable light, and you can always point to this if, as I suspect, anyone accuses you of misstating Ted's views.

But, Mike, do you know what's really funny about this whole situation? ((No, Rich, why don't you tell me what's really funny about this whole situation?)) An "expose" of the LACONcom was the farthest thing from Ted's mind when he wrote those editorials. He did not dislike any members of the committee, to the best of my knowledge, not even Milty Frank. He had no reason to suspect possible wrongdoing, much less anything resembling proof.

What he had, Mike, was the admission of an East Coast fan that his group intended to bid for a Worldcon because it would be easy to rake off the profits (a bid which, perhaps as a result of those editorials, did not materialize). He had heard at least two -- to my knowledge, since I heard them, too; there may have been more -- who bragged openly about pocketing most of the exorbitant fees they charged for the regional conventions they "put on", that is if hiring a hall and charging whopping fees to hucksters and equally whopping admission fees to get to those hucksters can be called 'putting on a convention'. What he had was the fact that no Worldcon since Baycon had published a financial report, sometimes for very good reason. He'd heard numerous stories, some from convention committee members themselves, about misdeeds ranging from the vaguely unethical (most of which were common knowledge) to outright mishandling of convention proceeds.

His targets were past and future possible abuses by convention committees generally -- which you and I and he and most everyone who's ever attended a con know can and have occurred -- and what might be done to curb them.

((But of course White expected to be sued if he printed specific details on any of these, especially about what I have been told by "a reliable highly placed source" were his principle targets, namely Schuster and Lewis. Therefore he wrote disjointedly, and with such a general tone, casually using the present tense about the Worldcon, that his focus was blurred. Since I had managed to be in fandom for while before that first editorial saw print, and had never heard of Schuster or Lewis involved in anything suspect -- still haven't, so far as Lewis goes -- I tended to assume it was obliquely aimed at LACON. It was not hard

to believe that White's 30,000 or more other readers, who had even less opportunity than I had to hear the full story, would be persuaded in the same direction. With that statistic in mind Co-Chairman Crayne wrote to White, a letter that White eventually ran with an admission of his own vagueness, excepting LACon at long last from the list of Evilepersons. Stevens reacted to that vague editorial much more strongly than Crayne did, but you are wasting your time trying to absolve White of something he has already apologized for. I also believe there's more to it than just scaring Schuster, Lewis or whoever out of launching a particular conbid -- White could have accomplished a similar end more efficiently through private fan channels, assuming he actually accomplished anything, than through the esoteric moralism of his editorials. But they were nice for boosting readership, no doubt.))

I can't jump into Ted's mind, though I think I know him better than most people. So I', relatively certain he took some devilish glee in imagining how some of those people above would squirm when they read those editorials, and accordingly wrote them in an "if the shoe fits, wear it" mode.

And what happened? Milt Stevens put on the shoes.

Now, that's what's funny, Mike.

It was in the pages of his fanzine, PASSING PARADE, after all, that Milt first pointed out the "obvious connection between Ted's editorials and the LAConcom." In fact, to read Milt, they even went so far as to accuse him of "associating with crooks and thieves." -- Milt's phrase, not Ted's, not mine. ((Talk about having a firm grasp of the obvious...))

I've since reread those editorials and can't find any such accusations. Nor could Milt, when Ted challenged him to do so. Nor for that matter could your or anyone else; they're simply not there.

So when this had gone on for a couple of months, people had to start making out why Milty was coming on like a raving paranoid or a two-bit clerk who'd been caught with his hand in the till. I, for one, began to ask myself if there was any particular reason why he saw a connection between a series of articles about convention misdeeds and LA's convention committee. And -- Milt had been carrying on for several months at this point -- why the rest of the committee was in silence while this perfectly ridiculous and one-sided argument went on. Did they share his paranoia? If so, why? If not, why hadn't they said so?

((Rich, you are a classic. I really have to admire how you distort for effect. You make it look like Stevens was writing a daily fanzine about Ted White, with your "carrying on for several months" bit. And then you show your class by trying to prove something from nothing -- a lapse in logic to say the least.))

I wrote Bruce Pelz, a convention committee member whom I assumed was on reasonably friendly terms with me, although the letter was not particularly friendly, outlining much of the above and asking just those questions. I believe I also asked if LACon intended to break established ~~tradition~~ tradition and publish a financial report. I never received an answer. The closest thing to it came about two months later in the form of LACon's "FINAL REPORT."

The subsequent challenge to those "final" figures, Fred Patten's reply notwithstanding, only makes the whole matter fishier than ever. I mean, to claim, after the financial figures have been challenged by someone who knows, that the FINAL REPORT was only a semi-FINAL REPORT and that a FINAL FINAL REPORT will be forthcoming...well, it's a little hard to believe. Oh sure, there'll probably be one. Now, anyway. But it's hard to believe that had it not been challenged there would have been one, since

the FINAL REPORT made no mention of any future accounting: The only impression you, or I, or anyone can get from that FINAL REPORT is that the word "Final" means "final" -- end game, signing off, complete, this is all, gang, no more, bowing out, finished, done, curtains, The End.

Patten's comments about the Combined Book Exhibit and Spacewar games are further grist for the mill; they "didn't exist until the LASFS organized them," but would the LASFS have organized them if the convention had not been there, in their control, to give them the free space? Fred says that "nepotism" is the worst the committee can be charged with, but I don't think that's the case. Let me see if I can give you an example.

You and I and a few other people make up the board of directors (convention committee) of a company (the stockholders of which equal fandom). Let us assume, for the sake of a rough parallel, that we pay no rent for business facilities because we will attract a lot of people who will be good for the business of the people who own the building (hotel). We board members all belong to the Executive Club (=LASFS) and at an EC meeting we decide to start a second business, using the free facilities of the first, but indemnifying damages we might cause and staffing smaller business #2 with members of the EC. This "costs" the shareholders of the #1 business nothing but the loss of some free space. But we, in business #2, benefit from the advertising and promotion of business #1 whose costs we do not share, we never mention to the shareholders the relationship between our board and business #2, and at the end of the quarter we publish business #1's financial report without accounting for business #2's operation.

The question I would pose to the junior lawyers of the world, under such a circumstance, would be: regardless of other irregularities in the report, are we (the directors) indictable for a) "nepotism" b) unethical conflict of interest c) fraud d) all of the above?

((I think we can relieve the junior lawyers of having to answer that question by pointing out the serious ~~are~~ flaws in your example. The Worldcon is not a joint stock corporation, nor is it even incorporated. Its membership does not even equal fandom -- only that portion of fans and quantity of other interested people who sign up and pay. The Worldcon is a service organization administered by a series of groups picked through a process agreed upon by past memberships. Actually if somebody chose, he could stage his own "Worldcon" any time he wanted, unlike anyone who might want to start his own "Radio Corporation of America" or "United Air Lines." The members of the Worldcon pay for a service (the con itself, the right to vote on Hugos and future Worldcon sites), not for part ownership of the convention. Odious as it may seem, McDonald's is a more apt example. When you buy a hamburger there, that does not entitle you to a voice in the working of the kitchen, nor any special consideration when the company decides to give half a million bucks to Nixon's campaign. And simply because the latter is not published on every hamburger wrapper, that is no grounds for any legal action, nor any public censure. Furthermore, the existence of the CBE and the Spacewar games provided far more of a service to con members than McDonald's provided to its customers when it donated to Nixon. While it's a snappy thing to heave into the discussion, perhaps you might furnish some reasoning to support your already-present snotty rhetoric about fraud and conflicts of interest?))

....Then there's the matter of those accounts receivable -- advertising revenues and foreign funds not yet in the hands of the committee -- which were unaccountably left out of the "FINAL REPORT." Patten seems to imply that other things were left out when he says, "Obviously we aren't going to have a complete financial report reckoning until we know how much our PROCEEDINGS ~~is~~ going to cost..." when in fact the "FINAL REPORT" estimates the cost of the PROCEEDINGS at \$2700. According to the

"FINAL REPORT" that amount is being held in reserve from funds on hand. So the fact remains that there is \$903.50 due the convention in advertising revenues alone. Not counting the foreign funds. The committee -- Patten's comment notwithstanding -- still has not said what it intends to do with that money. Is the PROCEEDINGS now expected to cost \$3,603.50? Will the LASFS Building Fund be \$953.50 closer to its goal? Or should one assume that those advertising debts have been forgiven?

When all is said and done, however, I think fandom will be able to see and give credit where it is due; Milt Stevens, you, and Fred Patten have done the most to expose the convention committee, and for that, I suppose, fandom should be grateful.

((That's right, folks -- lay that Hugo on me already. Anyway, I printed just about all of Rich's letter, not so much because it contributes anything new, nor because it is a well-reasoned commentary -- hardly -- but it puts my own remarks of past issues in proper perspective: the turgid rhetoric of those who take up cudgels for their friends. However, Rich, you ought to sift through Ted's mail once in awhile and update yourself. That Porter stuff was all wrong; and I wrote a detailed analysis of this affair in response to a letter from White, about five pages worth telling him that he can't have his cake and eat it too. Yet for some reason I am not surprised that White did not answer my letter, though you seemed to be that Pelz did not answer yours. Just remember, Rich, it is not legitimate to try and prove something from a non-action or the absence of a statement.)) ((Oh, and Rich, I hope you aren't too disappointed that I dropped that paragraph that virtually called me a bigot. It's one thing to let a person wear shoes if they fit, and another to try and stick a shoe in a person's orifices.))

LEON TAYLOR Box 89, Seymour IN 47274

8/14/73

Naw, I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to tell you that PRETENSE 9 is one of the best issues of any fanzine I've seen all year. After all, what do you care? You do it all for altruism, right? One can't get into Heaven on the basis of honest LASFS card games alone...

Your editorials are deft and amusing and they improve the quality of life, but for the life of me I can't find any comment hooks in them. I suppose it goes back to my Oedipus complex which mysteriously prevents me from taking any rabid interest in the LACon affair -- and rabid interest is just what it needs: ((either that, or hydrophobic interest)) Lord, quantum mechanics is easier to understand! (No, please don't try to explain it to me; my mind is inundated enough with Washington aficionados trying to explain Watergate to me). But if I get the gist of it, your whole meaning is that if Ted White becomes President of the United States, Milt Stevens will go to the guillotine. I'd certainly hate to see that happen; Milt's head wears so well on his shoulders that I don't think I could ever get used to seeing it lolling wistfully through city gutters. The moral, obviously, is that no one should lose their heads, but I'm not sure what the accompanying fable is. ((Didn't they screen Billy Jack out there in the wilds of Indiana? Sheesh -- it played 2 years straight in Dayton Ohio, so allowing proportional time at your distance, it should have been around Seymour for at least 6 months... Statistics strike again...))

So Wadholm's a high school Harry, huh? They probably printed his diploma on wolfskin. Nice to know that he's going to be around for a long time, though. As you remark about Florence Jenkins, Wad's column can be seen to improve in style and content with each installment, and the first was pretty good. Stick around Wad, OK? Interesting speculation there on science fiction's need for a little good ol' trashy reading. Personally I thought Panshin's Lord Charteris books were a gas, and not an ill-smelling

gas at that; but probably it is true that continuing series in science fiction don't wear nearly as well as they do in mysteries, where the featured character is expected to do the same thing over and over -- only the situations have been changed to detect the guilty. Maybe this is due to what I think is a basic fault in science fiction: it mostly assumes that while the environment is in ceaseless change, human nature will pretty much stay the same. Thus we have the initially attractive spectacle in sf of a character rationally changing the world about him while he remains the same; in most fiction, of course, it's exactly the other way around. But science fiction isn't basically a "puzzle" genre like mystery, and so a series character in sf is more than just a component in the puzzle; it is necessary that the writer show him growing through-out the series, that he demonstrates him to be a pliable, responding human being. Otherwise the series will certainly come across as "generally boring and generally overwritten and very often embarrassing" and for good reason: it doesn't make any sense. What real human being could possibly travel to dozens of worlds and not mature in some way? That premise is useful only in black comedy; and sf and black comedy are antithetical. Science fiction says that tomorrow is worth dreaming after, while black comedy insists that our dreams aren't worth tomorrow.

(I see where an objection could be raised here, in that the sort of tomorrow in "A Boy and His Dog" for instance is hardly the sort worth dreaming after. I think that's exactly the point JJ Pierce and other Old Wavers get fumbled up in: such pessimistic sf stories are warnings more than prophecies, and it is precisely because of Ellison's dreams and concern for the future that he writes premonitory apocalypses. One of the reasons why Ellison and Pierce fought like mad dogs was because they believed in the same things, and hence their argument could only be developed by ad hominem.)

((Modern pessimistic sf is often not a warning but a commentary, the reason I don't consider "A Boy and His Dog" particularly pessimistic. In that story the protagonist defends his survival morality without being portrayed as a depraved individual. Now take a look at some of Malzberg's stuff where human depravity in its various guises is his theme -- that is pessimism in sf, to my mind: the absence either of hope or of redeeming human behaviors. Warning stories -- like ' BRAVE NEW WORLD -- are optimistic for they believe that man can change, can improve, and can save himself from depravity. Though if you look around, it seems like we are living most of what was warned against in BRAVE NEW WORLD.))

...I'm not sure that putting down "stage fright" as the cause of death of Panshin's fiction is quite fair. †Perhaps he is only rethinking his attitudes towards fiction -- at least that's the feeling I get from his voluminous essays in AMAZING (the other feeling I get from them is undiluted frustration -- they're mighty hard to read, people.) And I certainly can't second W's statement that Silverbob has learned "not to think of all the people who are going to hate his latest" although that's an understandable inference to make. SF Commentary carried a letter from Silverberg a while back in which he complained that so few people seemed to read his novels with any care that he'd really like to quit the field,-- sometimes. I almost sent him a GET WELL card on the spot. Silverberg is one of the few writers that science fiction really needs' a trained creative mind and utter courage and a hell of a lot of compassion. To me, his only fault is that flatly functional style that Paul Walker takes to task -- and Cy, I think the objection Paul raises is that while Silverberg tells the story, he rarely conveys the experience; he doesn't grapple to achieve that placenta which embroils your mind with the writer's mind, and which makes all rational parts of the story blanch before the mystic whole. ((Leon -- sometimes I think you're the Norm Crosby of sf reviewers.)) Joyce Carol Oates duplicates this magic flawlessly, and so does Silverberg on occasion (Nightwings) -- but mainly one gets the feeling that he's in a hurry to finish books.

Bill Warren -- are you a Judith Crist fan? There is some similarity in style. The

difference between you and her to me, tho, is that I trust you. Have you ever gone to one of those Judith Crist Film Festivals? (I think they're called A Weekend With Judith Crits, or something like that.)

Stan Burns does some really innovative things here. The Heinlein bit was creative and illuminating, but I haven't read the boo under fire so I can't comment; but Stan handles this form very well, although I think he might cut back on the plot summarizing. "A room full of masks" pegs Heinlein's latest stuff perfectly. He ain't interested in anybody else, he ain't interested in the world, he's only interested in himself. If this is what old age is, then harikari has moral potential. (Gad, this sounds harsh. Somebody who is more familiar with Heinlein than I am correct me, OK?).

Reed Waller: damn, man, wish you'd write longer letters! This is a very intelligent loc of yours I am scanning...actually I agree with you about F&SF; my objection about it is that certain staple writers -- like Leonard Tushnet -- seem to reach a certain level of literary competence and then just stay there, for 40 years and 40 centuries. And those lazy writers occur in enough issues of F&SF that a really unlikeable taste of sameness is left in the mouth. Of course, all the sf magazines are like that (save the new AMAZING which I haven't read so can't speak for), but I singled out F&SF because I believed it to be the best of the lot. I don't read any of the sf magazines anymore and don't miss 'em (he trumpeted, sucking up his host's food and making noises like a traitor); now I just buy the Best of the Year anthologies and skip half the stories in those. Wonder what's happening?

Lou Stathis: I'd like to know you better, too, but are you sure that there are only a "paltry handful" of interesting people in fandom? If fans are substantially like people I know, then it'd be a damn sight difficult to find a fan who wasn't interesting, or worthy of your affection; but you have to respond to them in different ways. Not everyone is a good bullshitter, but nearly everyone I know has something to say, whether verbally or nonverbally...their honesty comes and goes in FTL flashes, but it makes undergoing all the wall-to-wall boorishness and social plastic-explosives a worthwhile affair...

Mike Shoemaker loses his bet. I've been playing euchre for several years -- for longer than I've been in fandom, anyway -- and am very sure that I'm not a lousy player. I used euchre as an example in that sentence because, to me, it said exactly what I wanted to say. I do not believe that the science fiction fan is a "Baby Huey", and know of nobody who does. I believe that some sf fans are like Baby Huey; so I find Mike's statement a gross exaggeration in itself. But mebbe that's my fault. Mebbe the actual passage in my article isn't as clear as I should have rendered it -- so, my apologies. The rest of what Mike deduces about me is, I think, going to take considerable untangling.

Mike condemns the "audacity" of my "pronouncement" on Wadholm, I am confused. Has he taken too seriously a humorously-intended opening sentence, or is he saying that I don't have a right to my own opinion? Mike seems to be a decent enough chap, and I'm sure that all that's involved is a semantic misunderstanding; perhaps again I haven't written as clearly as I might. But I do like to have a little fun at the typewriter, and would hate to think that I write so obscurely that I will have to put "(joke)" or "(serious)" after every sentence I write (joke). At any rate I'm sure that my opinion of Wad is no more audacious than Mike's "I too would be impressed if Wadholm's answers were at all worthy of consideration. Unfortunately they have not been..." I had always taken for granted that a person set forth his own opinion only and was not expecting his reader to believe that he had an exclusive pipeline to Absolute Truth; at any rate, no, Mike, I am not the Word From Above. However, I do know what the Word From Above is: it is COOL IT. I am not a fanwriter Hugo nominee, and I am not -- fingers, type

the words! -- "approved BNF critic." Where on earth did you get such notions? My late grandmother would have spent a couple of bars of Lava soap on your tongue alone! In fact, Mike, I've just turned 20 and am still learning how to write. Admittedly I don't write with very much precision or knowledge of the craft, but I feel that I'm improving from piece to piece...I don't write for BNF or Hugos or whatever; they're nice, harmless games and they're interesting to play, but what honest writer would stake his integrity on them? I find that I depend on my own reactions to gauge my progress, and I frankly don't believe that I have ever written anything quite worth the trouble of reading -- but I'm striking closer and closer, I hope.

...Thumbs up or thumbs down comments on my stuff is nice, but that's subordinate to what I think of it. What I'm after, pure and simple, is response. People who have things to say about what I think. If I think...Mike, you have no notion how happy the electricity of ideas makes me -- far more happy than someone who mentions that he likes my stuff, then moves on to the next order of business.

Harry Warner: Yes, you are so "self-centered and miserly" with your ideas that you can only force yourself to write 100 locs a year filled with them! Did you know that Hagerstown, Maryland has not met the federal minimum requirements for drinking water? There was a thing about that in WORLD magazine awhile back. (And that's why you're a fan, man. It was something in the water.)

MICHAEL SHOEMAKER 2123 N. Early St., Alexandria VA

9/28/73

PREHENSILE 9 seems to be a rather pedestrian issue. A relaxing read, but it does little to initiate new discussion. This is what you need, new topics for discussion, as the old ones seem just about played out...

Richard Wadholm unleashes yet another in his continuing series of demonstrations of sloppy thinking compounded by ignorance. His line "Continuing series are almost universally worthless," left me agape as memories of the "Space Beagle" series, the "Gallagher" series, the "Ham Hammond" series, the "City" series, the "Machine" series, etc. flashed across my mind. The next line, however, floored me with laughter: "The old ones, the Falkayn series by Anderson, the Lord Charteris books by Fanshin..." These series are old? ((Most of Anderson's series started in the mid-50s; is that old enough for you?)) It becomes clear that Richard Wadholm's problem is that he is not very well read in the older stories of the SF genre. No wonder that his sweeping generalizations such as above, and on the top of page 13, are worthless as any kind of meaningful observation regarding SF, based as they are on such a narrow knowledge of the field. Later he says that Silverberg does not take himself seriously. I suspect that this is wrong, since his more recent works imply that he does take himself very seriously. He is indeed striving to create art. In fact, after BOOK OF SKULLS he said that he might retire permanently because of fandom's refusal to take him seriously enough.

((While I find it hard to believe that he said any such thing, assuming he did, what kind of serious artist would rest his career on the opinion of fandom, for God's sake!))

Bill Warren's movie column continues to be interesting, useful, and very much appreciated.

BRIEF FILLER KIND OF STUFF: While this letter supplement was begun last October, the repro on the mimeo became so atrocious that it was exiled to Oklahoma for repair. Now, in mid-January, we're back in business.

I think, or at least hope, that Wadholm is really longing for is the sort of thing Graham Greene calls "entertainment" rather than genuine trash. In other words he wants a simple story told for fun, with no pretensions of being meaningful and Relevant. This is what pulp fiction tried to be in the past, but usually it was so badly written that it also qualifies as trash. There is nothing inherently wrong with a space opera or a sword & sorcery epic save that most of the people who write these things are illiterate. Curiously, most of the writers who are actually capable of writing decent, entertainment fiction do it outside of our field. Greene does it very well, as did people like Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and, more recently, Ian Fleming. James Bond is very competent adventure writing, with no pretensions of being anything else. Within SF we have Roger Zelazny, who used to write more serious stuff, but now seems to have settled for lightweight material. He is, as someone else put it, the ultimate in polished pulp writing.

There is no reason why this kind of writing must be hackwork or why it must be bad. Most of it is, because it tends to attract that kind of author. However, hackwork only results when the writer deliberately slants a story to a specific market while he is writing it. The more conscientious, but equally commercial writer produces a story, then sends it to the editor he thinks will buy it. It's the difference between "I'm going to write an ANALOG story" and "this story I've just finished might go over well in ANALOG." Someone writing entertainment fiction can be as artistic as someone making a Profound Commentary On The Human Condition.

The problem is that in the aftermath of the New Rave, entertainment fiction has gone out of style. The very idea was anathema at Clarion. Still there is a definite readership for such things. (If I may venture into heresy, I think that LORD OF THE RINGS is basically entertainment fiction. Somewhat more complex, yes, but still the same kind of thing. Storytelling for its own sake. An unthinkable concept these days.

BILL PATTERSON 4326 N. 14th St., Pheonix AZ 85014

9/17/73

Literary criticism seems to be coming under fire -- a topic I am much interested in, because a major portion of my own fanac, outside my genzine, is involved with book reviews.

First, Schweitzer is off his nut: literary criticism is not (at its best) purely subjective opinion. A critic has to answer questions like: is the prose style competent (i.e., is it readable, reasonably free from awkward constructions, logically paragraphed, syntactically sane); is the background material both realistic and sufficiently well-developed and thought out to support the work; is the plot competently handled (ie, is it a series of events which logically succeed and which, by means of consecutive climaxes leads to a resolution of the conflicts posed in the work); are the characters sufficiently well-developed so as to interact with the reader and with the plot; are the characters consistently carried through the novel; is the work stuffed with extraneous scenes, gratuitous sex and/or violence. etc.

((I submit that these questions which "a critic has to answer" are of peripheral importance. A book which neglects them to the extent that they become the most noteworthy feature of the review should never have been printed; some books like this are of course printed, and duely cremated. But the greatest contributions in both the context of a buying guide, and as literary criticism, that the reviewer can make

is not to emphasize manner over matter, but to deal with a book's contents (story and ideas) as they affected him emotionally, intellectually, in whatever terms the reviewer is capable of doing so. Of course most fans who review books (or purport to) can't react to a book creatively, and 80% of their review is, in essence, a re-summation of the story and plot; pointlessly mechanical reportage. At this stage of my opinion-formation, I feel that to whatever extent the fan reviewer is capable he should be making inputs towards helping a writer, and the sf market generally, get a comprehension of what he is doing and how it can be improved. Even if the writer lashes out at the reviewer for being ignorant, pretentious, wrong, and pushy, the reviewer may help himself by developing his own conception of writing and the genre -- he can never do this by clinging to some occult stance of objectivity based on super-technical analysis of an author's craftsmanship. HL Mencken went even further than this in saying: "I have no superstitions about critical honor. I lean toward men I like and away from men I dislike. The calm, judicial judgement makes me laugh. It is a symptom of a delusion of infallibility. I am often wrong. My prejudices are innumerable and often idiotic. My aim is not to determine facts, but to function freely and pleasantly -- as Nietzsche used to say, to dance with arms and legs."::You don't influence a writer by creebing at his style, his grammar, or his characterization -- his handling of these things is a personal maturation. And you don't help the potential reader by dwelling on technical matter, except when the writing is so bad that the book ought not be bothered with; otherwise, you really say nothing. Educated subjectivity (and educated is a word of many colorings here) is the only thing that makes reviews entertaining enough to run in a fanzine. And a reviewer must be more flexible than you describe him.))

The reviewer/critic's like-dislike evaluation, expressed in critical analysis, must take these factors into consideration. The critic is not obliged to LIKE anything but he can be expected to recognize good writing when he sees it...The dislike is the end product of large numbers of subjective factors -- most of them extraliterary. Any other approach than that outlined above is not literary criticism, but a journalistic recording of the emotional reactions of one individual at one particular time, and is of no use to the reader.^{er}A strong statement, perhaps, but I think justified. ((Obviously, I have to disagree.))

As to the idea of "inflexible standards" for judging writings, first tell me what you and your readers mean by that phrase, with respect to what. I do have minimum standards of competency. Is this what is meant? Or does someone among PREHENSILE's readers think that westerns and nurse novels and popular historical fiction are all written within the same set of conventions and can be judged with the criteria belonging to any of them? Seems a rather strange idea.../But/ no one is entitled to use genre as an excuse for inept writing. And the same "rules of writing" apply to all genres. But not to the conventions of the genre, if you take my meaning.

...Incidentally, has anyone seen a Ted White rejection slip? The first symptom ever observed for Twonk's Disease -- ghod!!! "This kind of story went out in the (check one) 20s__, 30s__, 40s__, 50s__." Presumably no stories went out of style in the 60s!!!... OK, nosy, the item checked for my story was "We found your writing unobjectionable and competent, but we felt the story was too 'slight'."

BARRY GILLAM 4283 Katonah Ave., Bronx NY 10470

9/5/73

My other quarrel is with Richard Wadholm, who dismisses Alexei Panshin's brilliant Villiers books as "generally boring and generally overwritten and very often embarrassing." Wadholm is typical of fannish thickheadedness and dullness of sensibility that in part caused Panshin to interrupt a series which has already taken its place among

the best, and best-written, stfnal humor ever and which promises, when complete, to form an unparalleled rainbow arch of rich, wonderfully observed approaches to the problem of how man should live in the hierarchical, expanded system of worlds that form Panshin's (our) universe.

I won't go on at length about the Villiers books -- I've argued their merit before and I will again. But it disappoints me to see such insensitive comments on Panshin's delightful and splendid series. If nothing else (and I think that the Villiers books are a major work of the last decade), Panshin is one of the very few writers whose wit, charm, polish, characterization, and comic invention has ever lived up to the promise of the Kelly Freas paintings gracing the covers of his books.

((Our tastes are obviously separate, and I haven't made it my ambition to throw myself under trains of epithets like "thickheadedness, dullness, insensitive", but if the Villiers series is a major work then the qualities that made it such must have remained hidden from me, too, as I plowed through the rambling plot, trivial action, and deliberate stylization in several areas. Panshin's execution is usually professional, but unlike his other writings I found nothing appealing about that series.))

MARK SWANSON 489 Summer St. #4, Arlington MA 02174

10/13/73

Richard Wadholm's comments on old series seemed a bit confusing since I did not remember them being a bore. They do, of course, have the problem that they keep on happening. We have already seen the great love of Flandry's life, and any other girl, whether bought or volunteer, can only be a diversion to him. There is also a tendency for any series to get into a rut, while there is a limit to the number of times that a hero can reasonably save the Empire, Terra, or the universe. ((Tell it to Rhodan.))

But this very difficulty makes such stories more "realistic." In real life "and they all lived happily ever after" rarely lasts more than a few years or at most a generation. Happy the world, such a Middle Earth, where a victory will permit thousands of years of partying and feuding.

Different authors tend to have different preoccupations. Anderson keeps playing the theme of the doomed defense, of the attempt to hold and preserve that which is already lost. This is a very old theme, but not very Christian. Among other things it is what makes Lucifer the hero of Paradise Lost.

I agree with Wadholm's comments on the new series, though, which are so bad as to be beneath discussion. What he didn't mention were the psuedo-series. Gordon Dickson is the best author with this affliction. Every one of his more recent books has had the basic plot: The hero spends 2/3 of the book running around, in the process acquiring a "good woman". At this point he becomes a superman, and after fooling around ends the book by (1) deciding to do nothing, (2) forming an elite group, (3) making everyone likewise. Unfortunately this plot allows little variation, and Dickson has just about used it all up.

((At least, he's used up his ability to rework the plot. There aren't that many different sf plots.))

FLIEG HOLLANDER: Speaking of Staniel, I might as well swell his head awhile. I haven't read any reviews by him in some time (about three years or so) but I must say that his shrink is making great progress. The review of TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE was excellent. I haven't read it yet, but now I have an idea of what I will be getting into (and I do

intend to read it). I have a definite feeling that Staniel's criticism will spark a good deal of comment from people who have read it, but I don't think they will be able to fault him on vagueness. This is the sort of critical review that is very hard to do well, and while Staniel isn't up to the full standard of Atheling, he is a fair cut above any fan critic I have read recently.

Aljo is shaping up as an interesting fannish writer. I shouldn't mention it, of course, since he'll only get a swelled head and become fuggheaded. Just see if you can quietly manuver him into giving us two more like these last pieces.

I also note that you really edit your lettercol, which is nice. I found that one of the hardest things to do in the brief period that I was pubbing a genzine. Your technique is a bit spotty, but it's nice to see you try at any rate.

* * *

JOHN BANGSUND: Mike, I loved PRE 9, I really did. It made me nostalgic for that personal fan-to-fan fandom I partly enjoyed in Melbourne and partly imagine I knew there. I have no specific comments on most of the issue, but from fairly long experience am inclined to guess this means it was a first-class publication. Hell: I liked it. Is that enough? It isn't. I know. So let's say a few nit-picking words to show I really read it and am not, for some unfathomable reason, just being nice to you.

BARRY mC² (sorry: finger slipped) McKENZIE has as much and as little to do with Australia as Leigh Edmonds, Waltzing Matilda and the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention. Some years ago, a fairly well-known fan in Indiana went overboard about a book called LET'S TALK STRINE, and even incorporated (or threatened to) some supposedly Australian dialect in a novel, which I have had the good fortune so far not to encounter. Bazza is in about the same class. Good fun for Australians, but not very educational for others. Be it noted that I will not buy copies of the McKenzie books for myself, let alone going to the unthinkable trouble of getting copies for overseas readers. I enjoy Pogo and Doonesbury and other comparable comic strips because I am constantly bombarded, like it or not, with mostly useless information about America, so I know roughly where you lot are at and get the point. You are not bombarded with any kind of information about Australia, so something as esoteric as Bazza must lose a hell of a lot in translation. Barry Humphries, the creator of Bazza, is a Great Australian, and I admire him immensely -- but I reserve the right to dislike anything at all, Australian, American or from wherever, and I don't dig Bazza. Jeez, I don't like the bloke next door all that much.

I liked Andy Porter's advertisement and apologia for ALGOL...Andy Porter is a great guy. Andy and I started the Australia in '75 bid. (That was back in '67 or '68, young friends.) I have never met Andy, but I love him like a brother, and look forward to clasping him to my hairy bosom in Melbourne not too long from now. I don't have a brother but am given to understand by those who do that they can sometimes give you the shits. You go on loving them nevertheless. Andy, I feel, is a bloke who could go a long way -- if he would just concentrate on that and stop telling us how much he deserves to.

* * *

WILL STRAW: I guess I missed the Torcon Ranquet; I headed up Yonge street with a group of people with the intention of taking it in, and sat down with most of them and ate. We left in groups of varying size, and none of those I was with seemed to know just what was going on, so I turned around and went back to the hotel...to catch the Hugs. I met Jim Young shortly after who gave impressions that a Ranquet of vast proportions

had taken place -- I chortled over the news that George Senda had won the award for Most Categories. I wanted to see it largely to see what reaction it would get from people on the Mall. Experiences there on most nights during the summer lead me to suspect that no one paid it any attention at all. ((Absolutely right.))

FRANK PALAZS: I'm sort of curious about what Reverend Gerrold gives you for \$25...especially when you consider some of the bargains you can get for as much as \$12 -- I mean, the Boston Pops!?? Or have I been misled into thinking that they were at least a \$15 outfit. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir may be more impressive than the Vienna Choir Boys, but doesn't it cost a lot more to get the latter over here...Does Reverend Anal Roberts have competing prices?

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Paul Anderson, Tim Marion, Denny Lien, Lou Stathis, Donn Brazier, Lois Newman, Mike Gorra, Sheryl Birkhead, John Klugh, Harry Morris, Denis Quane, Ian Maule, Martin Williams, Barry Malzberg, David Gerrold, Laurine White, John Robinson, Ken Faig, Michael Carlson, John Carl, Alan Sandercock, Jackie Franke, Rose Hogue, Steve Simmons, Mae Strelkov, and David B. Williams.

Actually there was a hell of a lot of response to that issue, and I felt I'd cheated the letterhacks by using so few in PRE 10 (a matter of time and space, but this may be merely a relative excuse)... So I've published the choicer items at long last. This last stencil goes into the typewriter at 10:30 on a Jan. 19, 1974 Saturday evening. An all-too-long gap since it began. Especially since I want to beat the deadline for compiling the 1973 WHO'S WHO IN FALLS CHURCH -- rich brown's entire paragraph may need revision now. "You are shallow, Hastings, much too shallow/ To sound the bottom of the after-times."

PREHENSILE 11 is largely ready for the printer -- all I need is to steal a week between papers and final exams, and the start of the new USC semester, and scrape together whatever cash my insurance, books, ad infinitum haven't drained. Maybe in February. But it will have about 20 pages of letters; no further supplements envisioned.

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Mike Glycer
14974 Osceola St.
Sylmar CA 91342

Response to this will be
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