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QUODLIBET 15 is an occasional perzine issuing from the flickering fingers of Bill Patterson, 537 Jones Street, No. 9943, San Francisco CA 94102. Available only for locs or contributions after this issue.

Back in business at the old stand, in regular format and (probably) frequency.

I'm generally pleased with the way Quodlibet 14 turned out, although I did become bored with the material toward the end of the three-month production schedule. Seemed stale. It was the largest fanzine, in terms both of pages (47) and wordage (about 45,000) I've ever done, if you discount the IguanaCon publications and The Little Fandom That Could (85,000 words or thereabouts), and I began missing the "immediacy" of this fast and...er...uh...loose, more "intimate," format towards the end of July.

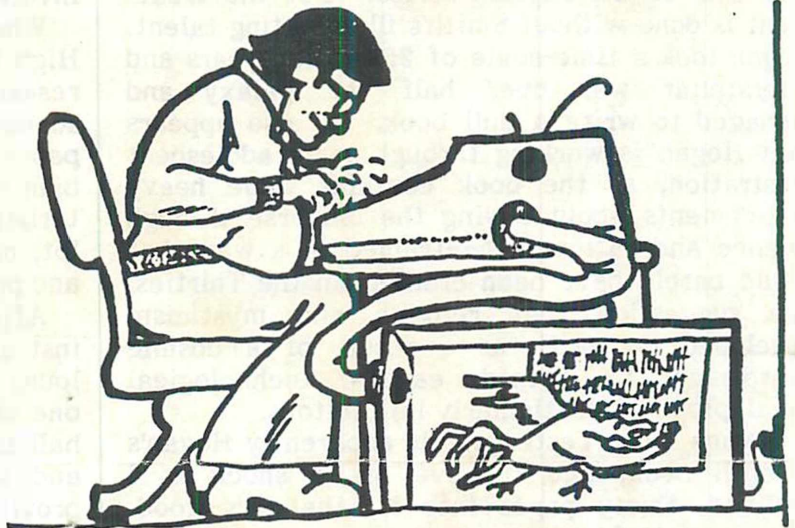
On the other hand, you really feel you've accomplished something when you mail out one of those big muthas. I'll probably produce them occasionally from now on, but I don't think I'll use the larger ones to replace the monthly numbers again. I tend to lose impetus.

Let's see. On other fronts, I mentioned my wayward FAPA application last time. I received Fantasy Amateur No. 180 a few weeks ago and found my name on the bottom of the waitlist--which means another two years' wait. A couple of weeks ago I received a copy of Shadow FAPA, a dubious collation if ever I saw one. I had originally intended Quodlibet for FAPA, but I don't think that would work out very well. Looks as if I'll have to start another publication for that purpose.

The "**recycled fanac**" thingie I did in the last number of Quodlibet reminded me that I finally recovered the masters for the fanzine that was to have been the third number of OAFS and was then retitled Parameters in 1973 but was never published. When I finally got them back from Jim Kennedy in 1980, I think, I read through the masters and found them very much out of date. But, the artwork--mostly by Randy Rau--is quite good, so I think I'll excerpt some of it out. Randy denies any creative talent and admits only to draughtsmanship, but I think otherwise, and you will have an opportunity to decide for yourself.

As to the reason it didn't get published--well, money was one reason. I was going through a period of extreme impoverishment at the time. But the main reason is that I had written a multi-page review of the just-then-published

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Time Enough For Love that was to cap the review section of the genzine (which also included reviews of fanzines, other books, and prozines of the period--something that is mostly drudgery but really ought to be done on an on-going basis--as long as I don't have to do it...). And then, I...er...uh...lost it. The review, I mean. It was on a clipboard that I lost. The prospect of the effort involved in reconstructing the close analysis that I put into the review was Too Much. The masters lay unpublished. Jim and D borrowed them a few years later, when we were discussing a genzine devoted to introducing neos to the various techniques and possibilities of fanzine editing. And packed them away when they moved to San Francisco. Eventually, Jim gave them back. I know other faneds have published older mss than that--but the wax I used to bind the galleys to the pages has absorbed into the paper, discoloring it mightily. And bits flake off. The center cannot hold. Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. So this rough beast will not slink to the printer to be born. Or borne, for that matter.

And I need to qualify some over-hasty remarks about James Hogan in the past. I read his Thrice Upon a Time about two years ago and was thoroughly repelled--in particular by the low level of craftsmanship. In Quodlibet 14, Robert Prokop enthused about his Voyage from Yesteryear, which surprised me. So when I happened across that book and his Giants' Star in a local bookstore, I picked them up.

Giants' Star is apparently Hogan's second novel, and it is a thousand percent improvement over his first--although still no great shakes. The prose is often clunky, and the philosophy of

the book can charitably be described as "sophomoric." There is something awkward and space-operaish, reminiscent of Smith's duller moments of the Skylark series. But the treatment is done without Smith's illuminating talent. Hogan took a time-scale of 25 million years and interstellar war over half the galaxy and managed to write a dull book. It also appears that Hogan is working through some adolescent frustration, as the book contains some heavy preachments about saving the universe through science and rationalism--framed in a way that would barely have been credible in the Thirties. The suggestion that religion and mysticism developed on earth as a result of a cosmic conspiracy to retard earth's technological development is particularly infelicitous.

Voyage from Yesteryear is apparently Hogan's seventh book, and it gave me a shock as I realized, thirty pages into it, that it's good. Very good, in fact.

The framework on which the story is built is a retelling of the "And Then There Were None" section of Eric Frank Russell's The Great Explosion, but Hogan has transformed the material into his own creation and invested it with many quite elegantly conceived and executed ideas. Most amazing, the story is carried by characters, consistently worked out and carefully maintained. Hogan does not have any great insights into the human condition, but his people are recognizably quirky and possessed of that self-consistency that marks the acquisition of the skill of characterization.

There is, admittedly, a certain amount of anarchist preachment, but it doesn't run away with him, as the message did in Giants' Star. And he does hark back to Doc Smith again with a charming theory of organization for the plethora of "elementary" particles (that goes on much too long). If only Hogan could forget his models--particularly Smith and Clarke--he would be a better writer. As it is, not to put too fine a point on it, Hogan shows every sign of having developed from a schmendrick into a writer of considerable skill while I wasn't looking.

So kick me, already. That kind of revision-of-opinion I'm always happy to make.

I was sitting here the other day, minding my own business, when one of the secretaries in the office walked up and, out of the blue, asked me if the city's Pacific Heights area had been settled as a British colony. I blinked and told her that, no, the Pacific Heights area was one of the middle class developments of the 1870's and never had any particular ethnic character and went back to work.

As I typed, I flashed on the chapter in Friday in which Friday gets stopped in the hall or

refectory for odd questions at odd times. And that started me thinking about the various and entertaining research projects I've gotten involved in over the years.

When I was in my salad days at Phoenix Union High School (1965-69), I did a series of long research papers. Only three stick in mind--a sophomore paper on DNA structure, a junior paper comparing various aspects of Precolumbian cultures with comparable European characteristics, and a senior paper, the longest of the lot, on the development of advertising methods and practices from 1942 to the present.

After I gave the Precolumbian paper, the instructor must have mentioned it in the faculty lounge, because a few days later Madlyn Turcott, one of my instructor-friends, stopped me in the hall to ask what kind of sources I had consulted and was first shocked and then sternly disapproving when I told her that the bulk of the material came from three books. "A good paper," she said, "should make use of hundreds of sources."

As a result, when the senior paper came around, I dug into the ASU library rather than the PPL or the PU library and found all kinds of fascinating monographs and symposia on the subject. I got so caught up in the reading that I forgot about the paper and had to reconstruct notes and citations virtually at the last moment.

That remark of Madlyn Turcott's opened up a whole new world for me. I will never make a proper scholar, but the methods I developed as a result of that remark have given me a permanent love and appreciation for proper scholarship and incidentally led me into just the kind of wide-ranging research Heinlein has Friday engaged in.

Let's see. When I was teaching at Phoenix College six years ago, I was hired to track down the exact details of the summer Mary and Percy Shelley had spent at Lake Lucerne with Byron and others in 1818. The relevant volumes of Mary Shelley's diaries are missing (probably intentionally), and since that is the period in which Frankenstein was conceived and first drafted, there is a great deal of interest about that summer.

So I started by reading biographies of the Shelleys and Bryon, memoirs of Polidori and Trevelyan, literary histories of the Godwin-Wollstonecraft circles. Byron's letter. Clare Claremont's correspondence. Mary Shelley's travelogues with which they supplemented Shelley's meagre trust income, and, finally, Mary Shelley's fragmentary diaries.

I never did find out the complete story, but I was able to reconstruct an amazing amount of detail during the five weeks I worked on the project. Comparative reading of Mary's travelogues, for instance, with the Byron-Claremont

and Byron/Polidori correspondence allows one to place them precisely at a given location at a given time. Undated references in the Trevelyan memoirs (although he did not join the Shelley circle until later) and other peoples' recollections of contemporary conversations with Byron, allow one to date certain events, almost to the day--because the wager that resulted in Frankenstein and The Vampyre is placed in relation to a visit by "Monk" Lewis, a popular writer of supernatural stories, and his itinerary can be traced from his correspondence. Fascinating work, collating together bits of information from dozens of locations and creating a coherent structure out of them. But the most fascinating thing that emerged was the portraits of the people--Percy Shelley, intense, brilliant, a "born anarchist" carrying on an "open" marriage with an entire group of people; Mary Shelley, not too sure about any of the goings on, but standing by always; Clare Claremont, given to bullying her sister, Percy, and even Byron--and, finally, the much-maligned Byron, more and more bemused as the summer wears on, escaping to Madame deStael's salons for an occasional evening of wholesome corruption away from the Shelleys and Polidori.

There is something compelling about Shelley's personality, even at the remove of 150 years. But the anecdotes about the group (and later groups, as well) make it quite clear that it was a snakepit at the time. At one point, they had worked themselves up to such a pitch of nervous hysteria that Shelly ran shrieking from the room when Mary entered because he had hallucinated an eye in her breast. She was fully clothed at the time. And this was before the grand Victorian tradition of maiden aunts who thought they were glass pianos. Whoo-boy!

Well, that was fun. The next one kind of stretches over almost a decade.

In 1971 or so, four of us in Phoenix--Robert Lackey, Joe Sheffer, Randy Rau, and I, decided to write a fantasy novel along the lines of Sam Weskit and the Planet Framingham (an early, stfnal version of Airplane). So we plotted it carefully and took turns writing a chapter apiece. Then when one chapter was finished, it made the rounds of the other three for rewrite and polishing. It got as far as the beginning of the fourth chapter before our little writers' circle fell apart. In 1972 I left the fragmentary manuscript in Delaware and spent the next six years trying to get it back. At one point in 1979, I even went to Delaware to rescue it, but that happened to be the weekend that Three Mile Island broke out, and nobody was too interested in digging through old boxes.

Well, I finally (in 1980) decided to forget about the fragment and start over from scratch. It

became Professor Bradford's Dragon, which is circulating now.

Back then, though, I got interested in finding out what kind of clothing and accoutrements would be around at the time and did a little research at ASU. Not much. But when, in 1979, I read on Teresa Nielsen Hayden's recommendation Barbara Tuckman's A Distant Mirror, I got all enthused again (it was that reading that prompted me to do Bradford) and started digging around and writing at the same time. So I was actually writing the book in 1980 and 1981 while I was researching it. By the time it was finished, I had a lot of notes and found a lot of inaccuracies, so it had to be rewritten this year to conform to later research. That'll learn me. In the meantime, I've got these voluminous photocopies and notes and books hanging around. Somewhere down the line, I'm going to turn them into two other books--an "everyday life" in the 14th century, and a mainstream novel about an Irish monastery during the Black Death. But try and find sources on monastic organization in the 13th century...I still haven't been able to lay hands on a copy of Seneschaucie or the Menagier of Paris' book of advice to his wife. That kind of blind research, where you don't know how you're going to come out of it when you go in, is both frustrating and fascinating.

While I was in New York in 1980, I conceived the idea of a book about the streets of the city, and it then occurred to me that I had heard a lot of anecdotes about the people for whom the streets were named in San Francisco. So I decided to start a non-fiction book that tells the history of San Francisco as seen through its street names as soon as I finished Bradford.

Boy, I had no idea what I was getting into...

Last year I took a week's leave and spent most of it in the California History Room at the SFPL digging around contemporary documents--Bancroft's seven volume history of California to 1889, the town council minutes for 1849-50, real estate circulars from 1850-52, contemporary maps--whatever miscellany they had around. Overwhelmed with detail. By the third day, I was despairing about making any headway in the morass of papers, but it occurred to me to organize the book in sections according to the maps of the various periods. Everything fell into place; I had a set of priorities.

It turns out that I won't be following precisely that form, because SF grew in such spurts. But I didn't know that at the time.

After that, I made copies of lots of TOC's and indices and got ahold of a book (only one copy--a reference copy at the History Desk--of Block's Immortal San Franciscans and the Streets They Gave Their Names To that collected anecdotes about thirty or so pioneers--much the same

thing as I'm planning, but on a much smaller scale, and without the summary history aspect of San Francisco Street By Street.

And this past Labor Day, since I couldn't afford to go to Chicago, I stayed home and drafted the first two sections of the book. Pity I won't be having a bibliography--because it would run to about eight hundred cites.

Madlyn Turcott would be proud of me.

And, frankly, I'm proud of me.

As you might expect, I got a number of locs from Quodlibet 14. Best to start immediately with the first, from:

Scouter
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Santa Cruz CA 95062

Dear Bill,
I've only once before loc-ed a "fnazine," as Matthew

Tepper would doubtless refer to it; and this loc itself is based on an all-too cursory onceread of half of yours. Unfortunately, one of the Three Fates interveined, and I was bodily thrust from the August presence of Quodlibet 14, which you have just published, I suppose.

But there were several things which caught my eye and in my humble belief, demand comment.

First, if you recall I met you on a Saturday in the middle of August, in the company of Tim Kyger, Bruce [Balfour], and Dianne, returning from the Renaissance Faire--we shared many amusing and interesting arguments, wonderfully spiced by mutual understandings. Upon picking up your fnazine the very next day ("was it the next day?" "very!") I was struck by how similar you are in print and in person, a rare accomplishment these days. While many people are shy and retiring in person, only lashing forth their venomous villainies in mimeo ink, and others in person would scald the scales from the Midgard Serpent, although in print they present as ferocious an image as Hans Christian Andersen ...you are as obstinate, stubborn, opinionated, witty, creative, and discriminating in flesh as you are on blue paper. So proceeding on the assumption that this betokens honesty....

There are other modes of discourse...

Second, I highly agree and wish to amplify one of your sections on Moorcock and Anarchism, viz., the difference between European Anarchism and American Self-Reliantism, a.k.a. the "counterculture."

Silly me--and I thought I was talking about anarchism...

Counterculture is appropriate because it is exactly that, a culture based on reciprocity and minding one's own business, running counter to the typical "American" culture as represented by blue laws, the money-talks syndrome, the might-makes-right syndrome, and so forth. Bear in

mind that most of the people involved share an equal distrust for gummint as they do for some of the leviathon-like multinational corporations, seeing them rightly as simply another form of government. These people (and I) make a distinction between an industry, such as the auto industry, the space industry, and the power-structure corporations which exploit such industries; I feel, for instance, that a corporate monopoly regulates an industry every bit as surely as the worst sort of government interference, and as such both are to be opposed.

Actually, he said, economic theory indicates that coercive monopolies can only exist when they are protected by a government. A coercive monopoly in an unregulated economy attracts investment capital, thereby breaking up the monopoly or at least forcing it to behave non-coercively--that is, as if it had a competitor--even when it doesn't.

It seems to me that the "European" and "American" anarchisms (terms as you used them) represent the creative and destructive aspects of anarchism, in the same way that uplifting, optimistic faith and fearful guilt do for religion, or keeping people from starving to death and absurdly taxing the individual do for welfare. It is a common feeling and fallacy to believe the two aspects are inseparable--thus when many middle-class or upper-class Americans see "hippies" one of their first thoughts is of Weathermen, or radical Viet-Nam protestors (and indeed there is quite an overlap between counterculture and radical protest, indicating this inseparability identification extends thither also). But there is certainly no physical law which states this; and thus it is possible to maintain the creative aspects of the anarchist movement--interpersonal interactions on the basis of mutual respect for the other's rights, equality of rights regardless of race or sex or religion or indeed everything else generally found in the Bill of Rights--while refusing to embrace the destructive aspects, such as time-wasting protest (for any problem which one can protest, there are probably dozens of more effective solutions). Indeed there are positive, creative aspects of any system of thought, and some which we should be able to keep from the standard American "Establishment" are medical care, hygienic food, many laws (such as those against murder and rape, and suchlike, and against monopoly, and against slander and libel...for instance, if the latter didn't exist, and the New York Times decided Bill Patterson was a no-good shit, it would be absurd to point out that BP has as much right to say horrible things about the Times as they do about him! ("The Law is very just and fair; it prevents the rich as well as the poor from sleeping under bridges and

begging in the streets"). It is as destructive to throw out these aspects of the Establishment as to use local bacon to break up Pagan Midsummer Festivals (remind me to tell that story one of these days) and from Bill's letter this appears to be the mistake of Michael Moorcock. Incidentally, this creative/destructive analytic method can be used to toss out all this sort of drivel he's written and yet retain some of the marvelously inventive heroic fantasy which has also come from his pen.

Well, no, not exactly. I was identifying the emotional roots of two different strains of anarchists. They represent the same ideas but spring from different media. European left-wing anarchism is not different in its theory, so one can't properly call it "destructive" and American voluntarism "creative." Left-wing anarchism is a radical liberal movement, heavily influenced by nihilism, to be sure, because it was at the forefront when nihilism crept into the avant-gardes. The anarchists among the Wobblies, as far as I can see, are the American inheritors of the European tradition. Anarchism in America was such an isolated and individual thing for such a long time that it never became associated with a political movement. Every anarchist, until very recently, had to work out the theory from himself and disaffiliated, rather than affiliating with a movement. But both strains embrace the same ideas. This is just to say that the creative/destructive dichotomy can't be applied to the ideas--although it can, surely, be applied to the way one lives the ideas--which may be what you were talking about.

Second, while I think you've correctly identified some of the "creative" aspects of anarchism, I have grave doubts about a number of the "destructive" ones you point to. No protest, for example, is wasted. Look at Henry David Thoreau. I've said something very similar to what you just said about keeping the helpful elements of the old Tao--because it seems self-evident to me that some social principles--such as an agreement to speak truthfully--are necessary to make any society work. But I'm extremely leery of keeping laws of any kind, worthy or unworthy. By its nature, the state is such that only it can limit or control its own growth--and it seems to be a law of nature that bureaucracies grow whenever possible-- i.e., whenever economic conditions permit, whether state or corporate.

This seems to me, by the way, to show that science-fiction and fantasy literature is one of the creative aspects of anarchy; it is anarchic by its very diversity, allowing multiple visions of reality, and in that it stimulates discussion and cogitation it is certainly creative.

One can have creative and destructive

disorder, and creative and destructive order; but isn't it better to have creative order and creative disorder? (read Robert Anton Wilson.)

The rest of your Moorcock essay was amusing and informative, and except for a disturbing tendency towards the "look at me I'm erudite!" school of essaying, well written. Please in the future however do not assume that everyone is widely read in such fields as the early history of IWW anarchism and the writings of Ayn Rand! I lose you in many places, and I think it's more a matter of non-understood references than stupidity on my part.

My, but you do have a talent for the off-the-cuff insult. If you will reread the preface to the piece, you will see that it was originally addressed to a symposium of anarchists, people who might be assumed to be familiar with the theory and history of the movement. I frequently put things into Quodlibet which might be of interest to only a few people on my mailing list--because Quodlibet goes to only about fifty people, and I'm not bound by any mass-market constraints. But, this kind of criticism irks me greatly. Both the history of the American Labor movement and Rand's writings are widely available. Don't creep at me because your education has lacunae--start filling them, instead. When one takes up a subject, one has to learn the technical vocabulary of the subject, because that vocabulary is generally the only precise language available for the phenomena under discussion. To criticize someone as playing "look at me I'm erudite!" is quite unjust. Third, I was rather attracted to both your con report and your quest for the Ultimate Burger (speaking of sublime and ridiculous, the day I read that I wolfed one down at Carl's for mere sustenance.)

Actually, Carl's Junior is about the best of the fast-food chains I've run across--saving only the Whataburger chain in Phoenix.

All of my recollections are primarily visual and secondarily auditory; I find I can rarely if ever remember what something smelt like (one exception: the old tour through Busch Gardens, when you got to visit the room where they hopped the malt, or malted the hoppers, or whatever the hell they did with malt and hopper). I can never remember what something tasted like, even if the meal was sumptuous and extravagant; I remember what it looked like before I sunk my teeth in. I would guess that gastronomy is one of your primary memory centers...I wonder if there is a neurochemical explanation for such differences? For instance, I don't have very discriminating taste buds--I can tell beers and colas and cheeses apart, but can't distinguish what spices are in a soup, or whether a wine is properly aged.

Well, being color-blind and having virtually no sense of smell (due to Valley Fever, Coccidioidomycosis, as a child) might have something to do with shunting sense-memory identification to other sectors. There is a lot of pure, sensual gratification in preparing and eating food--and a great deal of psychological gratification in sharing a meal with good conversationalists. So a lot of pleasant memories revolve around dining in Phoenix--the day-to-day experiences were usually fairly drab, so they get edited unless I make a specific effort to recall them.

Well, that's about as far as I got before I was cast forth from the home of Tim Kyger and Bill Dale, back towards the wilds and woolies of Sancta Crux, and so here ceases my loc.

Scouter

Richard Prokop
180 Waverly
Sunnyvale CA 94086

Dear Bill:
I've been doing a little reading of Quodlibets. Dan

[Wynne]'s letter [in No. 13] went on and on and on. I told him so. He agreed, but said he had a lot to catch up on.

Well, not really. A lot of people prefer short, quotable letters for loccols, but I prefer long and chatty ones. Since I generally run them as part of the text of the perzine, they thus become part of the ambience of the whole.

I really get confused keeping your comments separated from the text of the locs. Why don't you use all capitals for your comments. I promise not to suspect you of thinking your ideas more important.

Well, I've tried several methods. Back awhile ago I tried changing to a 10-pitch for the letters, but that involved immense hassles. I tried using an italic typefont for my comments, but that involved a lot of hassle, too--changing the print wheel every time I wanted to interject something. The boldface of the last issue was still a problem, but less so than any of the other methods I've tried, so I'll probably stick with that. It takes a bit of doing, but at least I don't have to change printwheels.

I have a review of Star Trek II--Wrath of Khan to give. Perhaps you may wish to put it in a Quodlibet. I've seen it seven times so far. I don't know whether your response will be "only seven times?" or "How could you stand to see it more than once?" Actually, the only review I've gotten on the movie has been from Tim Kyger, who said it was just ok (If there were other good movies showing in my area, I probably wouldn't have seen Star Trek so many times).

Overall I like the movie and I give it a score of 80-85%. I really wish I could give it a higher score, but it has too many errors to allow this.

I haven't yet decided whether or not the plot of Star Trek II is too simple. After all, it's basically just two sides slugging it out with blasters. The inclusion of Genesis into the story adds some complexity but not much. Also, I keep wishing that Khan was a more complex character. But perhaps he is portrayed just as he should be. C.S. Lewis said that the great tyrants were all monstrously alike; and Khan is just that. He thinks and operates within a very limited spectrum: power, domination, revenge.

Overall, I think the acting is good. As far as I'm concerned, Ricardo Montalban is incapable of doing a poor job, and in this movie his performance is superb. I also think William Shatner's performance is (generally) superb (I say this as a person who has held a poor opinion of Shatner's acting ability in the past). There are several scenes which no one could have done better. Leonard Nimoy's Spok has also improved through the years (Nimoy, however, has been a good actor for many years. I recall his portrayal of a newspaper reporter in an Outer Limits episode which was aired recently; he did a good job).

I must say that I really enjoy the new character Savvik--which is precisely what Paramount intended. Her presence throughout the movie adds much to its quality and interest. I'm particularly fascinated by the changes in her appearance and behavior from scene to scene.

The special effects and sets throughout the movie are generally good. They are clear, detailed, and colorful. I also think they are believable, with the exception of the Genesis Cave, which is somewhat fake--though interesting.

The music is generally adequate--sometimes good. There isn't anything particularly memorable about it such as you find in Star Wars I (Episode IV), but that really only hurts the album--if there is one. There is, however, one scene where the music is above average and fits the acting like a ballet. I'm speaking of the scene where Kirk and Spok enter the bridge as the Enterprise approaches the Reliant for the first time. Next time you see the movie, take note of this.

Getting on to hardware, I find the Enterprise more realistic than in the TV show. However, they made too many changes, and this bothers me. In particular, the hallways are too narrow. The bridge controls also include a number of displays which appear to be useless.

I mentioned at the beginning of this review that Star Trek II has too many errors to rate a really high score. The fact is, the makers were incredibly generous when they made out the error appropriation for the movie. I'll mention only a few. Khan was confident that Kirk was on

the ship sent to investigate the Genesis disturbance; however, there was no way of knowing that Kirk would be there at all. The Enterprise met the Reliant twelve hours out from Regula I at some warp speed (Warp 5 possibly). But after the Enterprise's warp drive was knocked out they were still able to make it to Regula I in a short time interval (In both this move and the TV show, space travel is hopelessly messed up. I'm not going to bother trying to straighten it out). Ceti Alpha VI supposedly blew up, but somehow the Reliant did not pick up any evidence of this event and made the mistake of thinking CAV was CAVI; this I can't buy. The movie also has many small errors which could have been cleared up with a little thought. For instance, when the Reliant comes into orbit about CAVI, Cmdr. Chekhov is near the large viewscreen looking at the planet. Later, still near the screen, he says, "Must it be completely lifeless...we've picked up a minor disturbance on one of the scanners." The scanner is about ten feet away from him, and he was never shown to be near it; neither was anyone else.

The Wrath of Khan also has several things which I merely don't like. The uniforms are nice, but Too Much. The scene in which Scotty brings the injured cadet to the bridge is senseless--the Sick Bay is down below. How is it that the best thing Kirk can say about Spok is that he was the most "human" soul he ever met--Spok always took that to be an insult. The scene in which Kirk yells, "Khan! Khan!" is overdone. And the monologue spoken by Spok at the very end of the movie is pure corn.

Overshadowing all that is wrong with The Wrath of Khan are numerous good moments, some of which I'll mention now at the close of my review. I loved all the exchanges between Kirk and Savvik. The Vulcan conversation between Spok and Savvik is a nice touch. The movie has a good balance between action and slow moments. I really like the scene at the end where Kirk says "all is well." The movie is sprinkled throughout with humor--most of which I enjoyed very much. I particularly liked the "here it comes..." line by Kirk when the Enterprise gives it to Khan. Also, the segment leading up to the "I exaggerated." line by Spok is great.

Well, this wraps up my review of The Wrath of Khan. Perhaps I'll see something else someday and write another one.

Richard Prokop

Hmmm. I'm not sure what standards you're using to grade the movie in your percentage ratings. I've seen the movie once, and I tend to agree that it's just an inflated episode from the TV series, with some added complexities. I

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found the terraforming experiment interesting, but, really, it couldn't conceivably happen like that. And the bomb's creating a free planet in the middle of the nebula was laughable.

Wrath of Khan bears Roddenberry's distinctive stamp, and that's irritating, partly because I infer that Roddenberry is the kind of person who thinks in terms of images, rather than ideas, and works by stringing together compelling images. You have the image of two old antagonists strung together with "nieges d'antan" and a cosmic terraforming--all good images well used in the genre. But once the images are strung together, they don't get the necessary refinement and ideational development they deserve. So the whole becomes faintly implausible, even if visually pretty.

Star Trek is on Showtime (I think) this month, so I've caught fragments of it several times recently. There's no doubt that Wrath of Khan is a far superior product, even if Khan himself isn't.

Tim Kyger
211 Smithwood Avenue
Milpitas CA 95035

Dear Bill:

Creeb, creeb,
creeb. I'm sitting
here at work typing

this bloody thing, I'm hot, I want to go home, I have other things to do than type up a bloody damn loc just so I can get the next Quoddribblet. Is it worth it??? Is this even a loc, I ask you? After all, I'll probably hand it to you this weekend rather than mail it: does it qualify as a letter, then?

If it walks like a duck...

Consider this, then: we talk almost every day on the phone for some period of time, and you do tell me about Quodribbets' contents, and I comment back at that time. Is this no less a loc?

LOC = Letter of comment. I can't print telephone conversations.

Or consider this: available for the usual, or by Editorial Whim. Whatever happened to Editorial Whim, I ask you, when it's I, not you, that treks up to the City, a not-inconsiderable distance I might say, to visit you?

To visit me, Tim? And here I was ungraciously taking you at your word that all you wanted me to do was to do flyers and free typesetting and pasteup for the L-5 Society...

Isn't this worth Editorial Whim? (Ask your TV and stereo, Bill...). Isn't driving you around the City without charging you for shock absorber replacement fees worth at least Editorial Whim?

Cold, Kyger, cold.

For the love of goddess, Bill, you're asking a lot of me! I hate to write! I have to do it all day long at work, eight hours a day, five days a week. And you want a fucking loc!

Well, here it is. You should feel honored. This is the first loc I've written in about two years. Reads like it, too, but don't say I didn't warn you (which I did in one of our recent phone conversations).

So: comments on Quodrivet. The reproduction is nice. The artwork is horrible; what awful fanartist did you dig up to do this stuff? The paper the fmz is printed on is real nice. And I like the people in the lettercol; these people I lost touch with many, many years ago, and it's been nice to see what they have to say, what's happening to them, and what's already happened to them. Hello Bob Prokop, and Dan Wynne, and Doug Woods; such a time I've had since last we were in Phoenix! I've found what rich brown has to say fascinating (I love Hill Street Blues, rich!) and...and...

You know what, Bill? I find that I could type up several pages of comments on Quodrivet (for example, did you know that E.T. is a french-fried muppet? and who was that person that thinks that James P. Hogan can write?!), but I really don't have the time.

I'll loc the next Quodbidet, Bill. Trust me...
Tim Kyger

I see. Instead of a loc, you send me a zero--a place holder. This reminds me of the stone soup story--ah, what a luscious loc I could concoct if only I had some (fill in the blanks). In this case, the blank is time. How appropriate...

And between now and then there will be as many pages of L-5 Society flyers as there are pages in this Quodlibet, no doubt. You know, despite the fact that I belong to none of these organizations, my donations of time and money to the cause must already equal that of at least a number of your most active ~~stages~~ people. I hope my name is being inscribed in some fabulous book of heaven somewhere...

rich brown
1632 19th St. NW, #2
Washington DC 20009

Dear Bill:
Quodlibet 14 received. The best
(read: most enjoy-

able) piece in your issue is your "Recycled Fanac" article; the worst (read: least enjoyable) is, as you half suspect both at its beginning and end, your convention report; you seem to have had as much of a problem writing it as I did in reading it. It's not that it's really so badly written--but in comparison with your article on anarchism in the fan community and even your reviews, it's rather flat.

I think your mistake is in bringing the approach and techniques to the latter which you utilized to good effect in the former. Your prose is a bit high-flown but nonetheless well-suited for writing articles or reviews which

require the clear, straightforward exposition of ideas. When the ideas are flowing, as they are in "Recycled Fanac" and your reviews, this makes good reading; but the same does not apply to your convention report. I think the form requires a different approach and technique.

You made some mention of people all around you making professional sf sales but not being able to do the same yourself--and I suspect it could be for much the same reason. Your use of language is unquestionably of professional calibre--but you can still learn a lot about writing fiction from doing a good con report, as both require some of the same things. That, I think, is why so many fannish fans have gone on to write sf professionally where so few sercon fans, for all their devotion to talking about sf, have done so. You're right, of course, that we're all (as far as convention-report writing goes) in the shadow of Willis--but I would point out that the shadow is cast darkest upon those who ignore what Willis has shown us. Whether you want to write good fiction or a good convention report, it's necessary to involve the reader, and this can best be done by setting a scene and describing your characters (real in convention reports, made-up in fiction) [I'm not so sure about that real in convention reports part...] and utilizing a more anecdotal style. You tell us you had various "interesting conversations" but don't show us any--and sometimes don't even say what they were about. You tell us what you surmise of others' feelings but do not show us what they did to make you reach these conclusions. So, with the exception of some of your feelings about them, the people--who are or should be the focus of your report--are kept rather remote. Before you object, I know it's probably true that, unless you were taking notes, you can't remember precisely what people said--but they probably don't remember either, and so long as you don't violently misquote anyone, I doubt they bring up the point. A little "realistic" conversation would certainly make for better (read: more enjoyable) reading. Too, it's hard for me to imagine going to any convention without someone, at some time, doing or saying something amusing--but if they came to your attention, you didn't report them here."

Uh...and after all that, I hope you don't feel these criticisms are too harsh. They're intended constructively, and I hope you take them in that vein; I would not bother to make them if I didn't think you had the ability to put them to use.

Ah, I've been saving up spit for more than a column...actually, with a couple of caveats, I think your basic criticism is both concise and extremely apropos. I agree completely with your analysis of the technical points that contribute to the piece's manifold insufficiencies.

The caveats are that your speculation as to why it turned out flat is both off-the-mark and rather presumptuous (this is also said in a friendly spirit; I'm not hot under the collar about it). The underlying reason is that I do not like convention reports, have been bored by virtually every such report I've ever read, and regard writing such things with distaste; furthermore, I wrote this report towards the end of the work on Quodlibet 14, when I was beginning to be bored with the whole job. As a result, this got short shrift and less attention than anything I've done in years. I'm unhappy that the difficulties I had composing it communicated themselves that obviously, but I went into the project regarding it as a chore, and it does show, apparently. The reason I felt compelled to do that is simply to bring everyone involved in the project up to date about the resolution of the Little Fandom That Could project. The stuff about restaurants, etc., was for my amusement.

I have no doubt that your impressions were sharpened by the fact that, like many other readers of Quodlibet, you are just coming into a situation in which the people and events are thoroughly familiar to many others on my mailing list. I didn't take into consideration that a number of you have little, if any, interest in or prior information about the circumstances that led up to that. In sum: it was a sloppy job of reportage, and I apologize to each and every person on Quodlibet's mailing list.

One thing I'm surprised you didn't mention, though, was the unevenness of the piece. The anecdote about Shulman, for instance, is treated just as you suggest the rest should be, and although the Long Beach-Pasadena section is a summary treatment, I think you probably approve of that, don't you?

Curiouser and curiouser.

Well, I don't agree with your review of Friday--as you may have guessed since, at the beginning, you address a few things I attributed to other people about it and a few things I said myself (e.g., "Heinlein is back in control," "Heinlein is writing a story again") and label them "balderdash" and "stuff and nonsense." When you say, immediately thereafter, "Heinlein is writing as he is and has been for the last fifteen years," I'm tempted to ask you to turn your tin ear in my direction and give a listen--but you don't know me very well and might take the remark personally rather than the tongue-in-cheek humor I intend. So go back and scratch that out if it offends you.

Well...actually, I was thinking mostly of the jacket-blurbs and comments I've heard from a number of people about Friday, not your comments in particular.

Actually, after I wrote that sentence about

Heinlein writing as he is and has been, I had grave misgivings about it, because Friday is obviously like nothing he's ever done before in many ways (and like other things in the ways I pointed out). But, as I read the corpus, Heinlein's writing since, roughly, Starship Troopers has variety as its central characteristic. Certainly Farnham's Freehold is nothing like Glory Road, and Time Enough for Love is nothing like Number of the Beast or Podkayne of Mars. That's one of the truly wonderful things I find about Heinlein--he manages consistency without ever doing the same thing twice. So, in the sense that Friday is, like all the others, sui generis, he is writing exactly as he has been for the last twenty years. It happens I like that very much and approve even more. I can't say that that has particularly influenced my own writing, but my first novel was a light, deCampian fantasy; the next thing I did was a hard-science sf mystery deliberately imitating Larry Niven's mannerisms in order to make a point/comment on Niven's characters; an earlier story is Silverbergian in its treatment of themes and prose style, although it owes nothing directly to Silverberg, and so on. Variety. Rarely treating things the same way twice.

You create something of a straw man in speaking of an "arbitrary division" (by date) of Heinlein's corpus into "good" and "bad" periods. The first sour note Heinlein ever hit, for me, was in "Gulf" (in whose universe Friday is situated), which goes back quite a way (I don't have anything handy to check the date)--just a line about "not counting the zeroes" (referring to the great numbers of what Heinlein called the Great Unwashed--the non-technical-oriented who, in his view, simply don't count). However I might quibble about that in a philosophical or political vein, it has nothing to do with the story as a story. Starship Troopers turned me off for much the same reason and in much the same way--yet I'm certain, if I ever found myself (strap on your disbelief suspenders with me here, please) teaching a course in sf or sf writing (did I just hear yours suspenders snap?) I would have to cite its beginning as a textbook case of How To Begin A Science Fiction Novel. The book as a whole ain't bad, either--as a story. And the most recent book by Heinlein which I've enjoyed thoroughly--both as a story and finding no "sour notes"--was The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress, which is relatively recent.

Not that recent--1967, I believe. And "Gulf" was 1949, and a peculiar case. In 1948 somebody wrote into the Astounding lettercol analyzing the November, 1949 contents. Campbell was sufficiently taken with the idea that he commissioned the writers mentioned to do the stories and features mentioned for that issue. I

always take into account that it's one of the rare written-to-order stories in Heinlein's corpus when talking about it. But there are a great many peculiar stories from that period—"The Man Who Traveled in Elephants," for instance, or "The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag."

In talking about the "arbitrary division" I was synthesizing conversations I've had with a number of people who make this division. The fact that the division point is arbitrary is strongly suggested by the fact that there is a close correlation between the age of the reader and the date of the book he chooses to mark the division point, although the candidates for books to mark the division are relatively few. I infer that a certain number of Heinlein readers make a heavy emotional investment in a particular line or strain of books; when Heinlein makes a departure from that line, they do not choose to follow him. There is a general consensus about many of his books, and considerable disagreement about a few. So the division points are usually marked with Starship Troopers or Stranger in a Strange Land, or Farnham's Freehold or I Will Fear No Evil. I don't think there is any real disagreement about Number of the Beast. It is rare to find someone marking a division before 1959, although the stylistic and methodic differences between Heinlein's pre- and post-War material are considerable. I suspect that before 1959, Heinlein was moving with the mainstream of cultural development in terms of the ideas he thought important enough to realize in his fiction (e.g., the technocratic liberalism of Beyond this Horizon, the war-themes of Sixth Column; the politics-business-and-industry motifs of his work during the '50's, particularly the Future History stories and late semi-juveniles, such as Door Into Summer and Double Star), and in 1959 he decided to strike out on his own. This may have been helped along by his disagreements with Scribner's, although I don't have any information about when that began to materialize.

I have found that the matter of "sour notes" is quite individual. The things which set my teeth on edge are his flirtations with solipsism and genetic determinism. Phil Paine and I have been trying to trace the course of Heinlein's reading and early education based on the ideas fossilized in the corpus at various times, and it's clear that his expressed admiration for Shaw and Twain are not idle; in particular, Twain has heavily influenced both his personality and his writing. Cf. Starman Jones, which is a reworking of Life on the Mississippi, and Twain's comments on genetic determinism.

I think Heinlein has written a few clunkers over the years, yet that's to be expected--this view is, by nature and, in the case of

Heinlein, the time-span and number of books involved are long and numerous. Certainly as someone who, like you, started with his juveniles, and only found one of those "too cutesy" for enjoyment (Podkayne of Mars), I probably came to expect too much of the man; I thought Farnham's Freehold was both dull and boring, and those two adjectives--based on my experience of reading Heinlein--were not ones I believed could ever be applied to anything he wrote. The error, however, may have been in my expectations.

I think so. I found Farnham's Freehold not very pleasant to read because it has such a downbeat character through most of the book--and Farnham is so powerless and dependent. But for precisely that reason, I find it one of Heinlein's most valuable and personal books. He is looking squarely at an aspect of human society--slavery--that is very uncomfortable to confront. For that reason, one needs to pay particularly close attention to what he says. But the quality of the portrayal seems to me indisputable, whether it is pleasant or not.

Stranger in a Strange Land is something of a special case. On the one hand, it's the first instance of which I'm aware where Heinlein's self-indulgence exceeded the entertainment factor--for me. Heinlein prosed on, through the mouth of Jubal Harshaw, for pages and pages and pages--to the detriment of the movement of the story. Admittedly he picks up when he's done for the moment and moves on--but then brings us back to good ol' Jubal, who prosed on at us for pages & pages. Perhaps you enjoyed it; I found it tedious. Heinlein had been prosing on with his "Jubal Harshaw" character--he has a different name in each book, but it is essentially the same person--for a number of years; this was the first time he had done so (in my opinion, anyway) to the detriment of the story. However, there is also, for the Heinlein fan, some self-indulgence which doesn't harm the story but makes for some amusing reflection--a point which would escape someone for whom Stranger was a first taste of Heinlein. He reportedly started writing Stranger in the '50's but decided he wasn't "good enough" to do it as he wanted it to be done, so put it aside and turned to Red Planet, one of his better juveniles. A certain amount of enjoyment can be derived from comparing the two--they are astonishingly similar---but the real amusement is to be found in Heinlein's off-hand acknowledgement of this. In Stranger, the Martian Old Ones have been debating two questions for a thousand years or more--one their destruction of the fifth planet, the other a matter of artistic standards. It's this second which I refer to: Martian art is judged by one standard for the work of nymphs and another for that of Old

Ones; when a nymph accidentally discorporates and becomes an Old One without noticing it and continues his magnum opus, it raises the questions of which standard to judge it by--the one applied to nymphs, to Old Ones, or a new standard altogether? Now apply that to Heinlein himself--and note that we have the advantage of the Martians, since we can compare the nymph's work (Red Planet) to the work started-by-the-nymph-but-completed-by-the-Old-One (Stranger). (A point you miss in your review of Friday is that, in addition to "Gulf," Heinlein makes a few oblique references to Stranger; at least two people in the group she joins after being sent packing by her Christchurch family make pointed references to taking Friday to church. I, at least, would assume it was not the church of Nehemiah Scudder to which they were referring.)

You have a mouthful of misconceptions, miscomprehension of terms, and plain bizarreness in that paragraph. First, the "nymphs" of Stranger and Red Planet were the Willis-form of the Martian. The adults are the "ice-boat in full sail" form Heinlein describes at various places; and the Old One is a virtual entity the closest approximate for which is an angel. Second, only one question was being contemplated by the Martians--the esthetic one regarding a composition about the destruction of the fifth planet. Third, that reference to taking Friday to church is not strong enough to identify it to the Church of Foster. Similar churches occur at least as early as "Year of the Jackpot." This has to be regarded as a special instance of a general conception. Fourth, you make much too much of the similarity between Red Planet and Stranger. They bear exactly the same resemblance as Between Planets and Starman Jones--i.e., they are set in the same or closely related universes. Fourth, a handful of subsidiary points about Stranger. You (in common with Panshin) have not acknowledged a vitally important issue about the work: it is not a novel; it is not a romance; it is a Menippean satire, and its form, including the multi-page digressions and so forth are characteristic of the Menippean satire. Cf. Rabelais, John Barth, etc. The suggestion of parallel between Heinlein's career and the esthetic dilemma of the Martians is interesting and possibly fruitful for further study. It hadn't occurred to me, but I seriously doubt the motives you attribute for breaking off. I found a reference in one of Heinlein's articles for Library Journal to "a Martian named Smith," antedating, apparently, the first section of Stranger, but I suspect that Heinlein put it away simply because he didn't know where to go from the section he had written, and because he had the juvenile contract to fulfill; not because of any feared incapacity to do it. Given the form

of the work, it is not appropriate, at this point, to call those features self-indulgent.

In short, Jubal's "prosing" is the story. The other peoples' to-ings and fro-ings are simply realizations within the story of Jubal Harshaw. I freely admit that Jubal Harshaw is an acquired taste for many people, but it happens I love to listen to eccentric and Boring Old Farts talk, so I sympathize fully with Jubal's extended family. Harm one gray hair on that man's chest, and I'll have your liver, sir! I also suspect you try to take him much more seriously than Harshaw takes himself. Take him for all and all, we shall not see his like again.

And, finally, I think you have totally misapprehended an important theme of the work, which may be why you evidently don't understand what's going on in it. Heinlein is placing before us again, as he did in "Lost Legacy," a portrait of the difference between the (theoretically) psychologically healthy individual and the unhealthy individual who accepts the dicta of an unhealthy society.

Heinlein, like many other writers, has his ups and downs--I doubt if anyone could continue a straight-line progression of improvement novel after novel, and Heinlein is certainly no exception. This is true, I think, whether you agree that certain Heinlein books are "clunkers" or not--unless each of his books has impressed you as being better than the one before.

My point was that, prior to Friday, Heinlein wrote not one but three clunkers in a row--and they were all the same kind of clunkers. The self-indulgent polemics which had been marginally acceptable when they were part of his protagonist's solutions to problems faced in the course of the novel became prosing on at interminable length in place of a story. This is the stuff of which soap-box speeches are made--not novels. And this point, I think, applies universally to the three works I cited--I Will Fear No Evil, Time Enough for Love, and Number of the Beast. Arguably, Time Enough for Love contains scenes which may be appreciated by the long-term Heinlein fan for all of that, but I found myself sneering every time another member of the cast of interchangeable characters, predictably, wanted to bear one of Lazarus Long's babies. Indeed, my only surprise was that a character introduced in one of the first chapters--a male technician who had been a woman before his previous rejuvenation--didn't have a quick sex-change operation so he too could have a child by Lazarus [Maybe in the next rejuvenation...]. The writing in these books is flabby beyond belief (or beyond my belief, at least), and Heinlein's strong suits--a previously unrivaled sense of pacing and the ability to show rather than tell about the technology of his

created future--are, where they show themselves at all, buried under the weight of that prose. I would almost say that, taken as a whole, the three are universally boring--except that it's obviously not the case, since I could at least force myself to finish both Time Enough for Love and I Will Fear No Evil.

I couldn't disagree more. Leaving aside Fear No Evil, I think TEFL is Heinlein's truest masterwork, the most complex structure he's ever attempted and brought off, full of ingenious and satisfying solutions to technical problems of the writing, and certainly at least equal to his best writing of the fifties in terms of pacing and tightness of the prose. But it is a different work. In TEFL--particularly in the novel which comprises the last two hundred pages of the book--there emerged an astonishing colorist whose accuracy of eye and ear, and uniquely individual approach to his materials, left the rest of his corpus in the dust.

Your identification of Heinlein's strong suits is completely inapt. In Heinlein's work, for example, he has never placed much emphasis on the technology *per se*, but great emphasis on social and personal accommodation to technology. His skill in realizing that is perfectly preserved in TEFL. He goes into considerable length to set forth a theory of culture deriving from the Howard families' preeminence in space exploration, for instance, and then embodies that theory in precisely the passages you have just pointed out. You don't like it? Very well. But to be fair to Heinlein, you have to accept the premises of the story--which you simply have not done. Another thing I've always found delightful in Heinlein's work is his posing of puzzles and encyclopedic grasp of apparently extraneous and ancillary materials. Heinlein does precisely the same thing time and again in TEFL. It has repeatedly been pointed out that he has great skill in handling large numbers of characters in a single scene--cf. The Rolling Stones. Again, this is perfectly preserved in TEFL.

Frankly, I don't see what you're yapping about.

The state of Heinlein's health seems to have played a large part in this. A few years back he was told an artery which supplied blood to his brain was not performing this function properly--and we all know what that can do. In Heinlein's case, he had trouble concentrating, speaking, getting about; I have no doubt it had profound effects on his writing as well, as the thrust of my comments indicate. But, shortly before The Number of the Beast was sold, he decided "to either get well or die" (his words) and a bypass operation was successfully performed. Knowing this, I had some hope that Heinlein would "get back in control" of his

works--but the timing was such that I had hope for The Number of the Beast. I was disappointed.

But Friday, while still somewhat flawed, indicates that the hope may yet be realized; in addition to what I consider to be the major error of its ending, I think it must also be said that it doesn't have a plot so much as it has a series of subplots (you call them "eight incidents") and some of them are simply discarded without much of a resolution--they're just replaced with the next subplot. But the "strong suits" I mentioned are once again visible--the prose of Friday is taut, the story moves so that it's almost possible to overlook the poor points of the plot, the "old" Heinlein has taken over and replaced the self-indulgent one. And by the "old" Heinlein I don't mean the Heinlein of the '40's or '50's or '60's but all of those Heinleins, the one who gave us an occasional clunker but also provided some of the finest fiction the genre has ever seen. Indeed, when I spoke of the Heinlein ten years ago, I meant merely that he did not then turn out clunkers back-to-back.

Well, apparently our major disagreement is a point of interpretation on its place in the corpus, because we're very obviously talking about different things and using the same words from time to time. That disagreement is not going to be resolved, because I will not accept the proposition that Heinlein's last four books represent any kind of "departure" from what he has been doing for the last twenty years or so. However, it should be said that we seem to agree that it's a damned fine book, which is, after all, the important thing.

You may want to drop the abortion discussion in your letter column--I dunno. But I noted a point in Quodlibet which you made in your letter but which sort of got lost in the shuffle, as it were, when I wrote my reply. Before [fertilization] there is not one discrete entity, but two: spermatozoon and egg." A spermatozoon is a discrete entity. So is an egg. So all human beings were at some point not a single entity but two discrete entities--an the discrete entity of the embryo cannot come into being as a potency without both. The sperm and the egg are as much alive as the embryo they may come to comprise--but since none of the three discrete entities can survive outside the body, what you call the "real question"--whether they are separate individuals or purely an adjunct of the mother/host (or in the case of the sperm, father/host)--should be applied. And as none of the three can possibly survive without the support of the host, I think the answer to that is obvious.

Actually, the question is more complex than it appears on its surface. The potency of any

individual inheres in that individual. Now, a spermatozoon is not a human being; it is a human spermatozoon; its complete and maximum perfection is to combine with an egg (and vice versa). So it cannot have the further potency of a complete human being, because its potency is completely perfected, and therefore completely exhausted, at fertilization. A human being's potency comes into being at the moment a human being comes into being--which is the moment that the two gametes merge into a zygote. Human-being potency does not inhere in a gamete in the normal course of events.

Furthermore your supposition contains an inherent contradiction: if it is true that a single zygote contains the potency of both gametes, then you have an entity which is, at the same time and in the same respect (prior to fertilization) two individuals. This is a violation of either/or. And it leads to a number of other absurd notions as well--as the entity "existing" in some respect from the moment both egg and spermatozoon are created. And what, then, is the state of such an entity's existence if one gamete comes into existence before the other? And, further, it should be self-evident that there must be some division point at which the human entity comes into being, because otherwise your component atoms in the cells prior to their transfer to the gamete would be the resultant individual, as well. And you can trace the chain back so that everything is identical to everything else--and you would come out with the absurd notion that nothing has a discrete identity. Fortunately, the old notions of form and substance provide a perfectly good basis for determining where the division point, if any, occurs, and it turns out that fertilization is that point. Your argument is sophistic, but it does pose an interesting and delicate problem in logic.

And as for your final point, I fail to see why the relative helplessness of a foetus should make it subject to being murdered at its caretaker's whim.

And a few points that weren't in your letter:

The coat-hanger/knitting needle abortions went away when the Supreme Court ruled medical abortions legal; they came back when the Moral Majority decided women on welfare shouldn't have the same options open to them as women of a more fortunate class. After all, we know what kind of women they are, eh?

You don't make a problem go away by trivializing it. I am not a member of the moral majority; nor do I believe women as a class ought to be granted a special privilege to kill a child if they wish to. Please do not class me or any other sincere, thoughtful opponent of abortion that way. If social problems exist, they can--indeed, must be--solved without reference

to murder.

Assuming that laws will be made, my presumption is that laws will be made applicable to everyone--including the person who made the law. If robbery is illegal, this means you and I, men and women, old and young, legislators and non-legislators are prohibited from robbing anyone; it's not illegal for some people to take money or goods from others by threat or force, it's illegal for anyone to take money or goods from others by threat or force [How about the IRS?] Now this is not to say that some laws are not made to apply to certain classes of individuals--e.g., bankers are subject to laws and regulations which you and I and the lawmaker are not because we are not bankers. But the presumption is if any of us become bankers we will be subject to the same laws. As a male cannot, short of drastic surgery and futuristic technology, become pregnant, it goes considerably beyond that presumption for males to make laws which force women (and only women) through an unwanted, expensive, and though you do not seem to wish to face the issue squarely, often dangerous pregnancy and delivery.

You say the notion that having an illegitimate child destroys one's future is "patent" nonsense." I agree to a limited extent--the notion is nonsense if applied absolutely and across the board. But the reverse, if applied absolutely and across the board--that having an illegitimate child cannot destroy one's future--is equally absurd. Further, whether or not having an illegitimate child "destroys" one's future or not, pregnancy has certain health and monetary consequences--and I believe it is the woman's right, not yours or mine, to decide whether or not she must face these consequences.

I'm always bemused when I hear someone talk about the "right" to commit murder. The question of health risks in pregnancy has been addressed--to the extent that I recognized that no one is required to carry a clear and present danger to his person to term. And you have vastly exaggerated health risks in pregnancy, no doubt confusing them with the inconveniences that attend it. And, as to legislation, the point is moot as to any anarchist.

Robert Prokop
1717 Aberdeen Circle
Crofton MD 21114

Bill,

I remember that you wrote you were impressed by Donald Kingsbury's Courtship Rite, so I thought you might be interested in its review by H. Bruce Franklin in the 25 July Washington Post. I'm still not sure, although I read the review several times, but I don't think he liked the book. My Analog subscription began with the May issue, so I missed the first two installments of the novel.

I read it but I don't believe it. For the benefit of other readers, I'm reprinting it on the facing page. This monocentrism gives me the pip. During the sixties and seventies the academics were certain that SF was all social satire and cautionary tales. This reviewer, presented with a genuine cautionary tale, insists that the whole corpus consists of nurse novels and other escape fiction genres. Gives me a case of cholera.

I see The Lensman Series is back in print and was mentioned in a mini-review in the same newspaper. I even saw all six volumes in the new covers in a local drugstore. Don't be surprised if you see a (perfectly awful) movie version come out sometime soon. The general popular culture is ready for it.

The reappearance of the series backs up a point you made in Quodlibet some months back about the availability and popularity of authors on bookstore shelves being quite cyclical. Doc Smith had totally disappeared from local bookstores for over a year before this latest reemergence. Now he is very prominent--as I mentioned, even in drugstores.

The scientific odyssey I've been on of late has taken an interesting new turn. I have discovered space. Now, you're probably wondering what the hell am I talking about, since in my last three or four letters, I have been obsessed with planets, moons, asteroids, etc. Well, here by "space" I mean precisely that--the "void between the stars," or as E.E. Smith would have put it, "the starkly unimaginable and illimitable expanse of indescribably perfect vacuum that is the universe," or whatever Kinnison said in Gray Lensman. I've never given it much thought before, but it turns out that "empty space" is an amazing place--absolutely stuffed with matter and energy. An article in the July Sky and Telescope suggested that a study of the interplanetary medium may give us better clues to the origin of the solar system than a study of planetary surfaces.

SF has largely ignored space in the past. Asimov recently described the general attitude as "planetary parochialism." The L-5 Society has played a part in drawing some attention to it recently. But I think the most interesting developments have come from Fred Hoyle's recent investigations into the existence of complex molecules in the interstellar medium, although he concentrated on nebulae. Harry Stine summed the matter up in the September Analog by pointing out we've discovered structures in interstellar space as complicated as bacteria! Life in Space (literally)??? It can't be ruled out. It seems that many meteorites contain organic compounds. The Trojan Asteroids appear to be covered knee-deep in them (shades of Poul Anderson's "Garden in the

Void"). There is a particularly interesting region out beyond the border of Neptune where the Solar Wind ends and the interstellar medium begins. There is a tremendous amount of activity in this area, which is known as the Heliosphere. Incredibly complex molecules that

Donald Kingsbury's Courtship Rite (Timescape/Simon and Schuster, \$17.50; paperback, \$8.95) entices the readers with the kind of pleasures The Iron Dream will not allow, but in the end we are left with little but a foul taste in our mouths.

The 200 million humans who inhabit the baneful planet of Geta are rigidly divided into clans of ruler-priests who monopolize arcane knowledge and sub-clans of highly specialized workers. The natural life forms of the planet are poisonous, so survival depends on genetic engineering. "God" is a "rock" that orbits the planet, apparently a remnant of the starships from Earth that colonized Geta in the mythic past. The characters with whom we are supposed to identify are members and lovers of a group marriage, one of the most wealthy and formidable families in the Kaiel, a clan of power-seeking priests. The plot revolves around their intrigues for dictatorial power and a new marriage partner.

Cannibalism in various forms is practiced by the clans of Geta; those eaten include conquered enemies, the remains of deceased friends and relatives, impoverished people forced to commit ritual suicide, and those "culled" as genetically unfit. These practices are explained away as environmental necessities. Our heroes the Kaiel, renowned for their wizardry in microbiology and genetics, go even further. Most of them are genetically engineered, implanted in the wombs of "genetic monster-women," and then raised in creches, where the vast majority, either as babies or children, are deemed to be "substandard" and "used for medical experimentation, teaching purposes, or sold to the abattoir." Some of this is obviously meant to shock our sensibilities, as the elegant hedonism of our heroes is emphasized by such off-hand comments as "She fixed him an appetizer of baby-liver paté on crunch bread" or "Noe bought a small jar containing two pickled baby tongues."

Are we being set up for a Swiftian blow at our consciousness? It seems so when a fragmentary text from Earth is discovered, giving the history of warfare, including the trench combat of World War I, the death camps and firestorms of World War II, Hiroshima, and the massacres of defenseless villagers by U.S. troops in Vietnam. The Kaiel are as profoundly shocked by our practices as we are by theirs, for their "ethics forbade the killing of more enemies than one could eat." But our genocidal wars here function mainly as an expression of Kingsbury's revulsion against our history and as a tricky device to license his escapist alternative. The pretentious illusory surfaces of the novel are frequently shattered by anti-communist diatribes worthy of Homer Whipple and lectures propounding contemptuous, silly theories about human history. Kingsbury then leaves Earthly concerns behind to wallow in endless descriptions of the rituals and love affairs of his beautiful people of wealth and power. Ultimately this society of tyrants and cannibals is offered to us as a charming fantasy of elegance and sexual freedom in which we may indulge as an alternative to our own history.

make RNA look simple are being formed out there. Hoyle has speculated that these substances are brought into the inner solar system by comets, and may account for the origin of life on Earth! Apparently, "empty space" is a less hostile environment for the building blocks of life than is a planetary surface.

Well, I don't know. I've heard all this before, of course, but I'm still dubious. After all, it appears that any time you put the right ingredients together with sufficient ambient energy you come out with proto-proteins and amino acid precursors. The problem is to have just enough energy. Remember that the high-intensity energy that is building those complex molecular structures is also busily knocking them apart at the same time. There has to be a mean or limitation on the amount of ambient energy for enough complex molecules to stabilize and clump together to make life-as-we-know-it possible.

Similarly the heliosphere-comet hypothesis seems to me overcomplicated. If, as the experiments indicate, those amino acid precursors can be formed as easily as they seem to be, there is no particular reason to suppose that the molecules were brought to Earth, rather than home grown. There is, incidentally, considerable convincing evidence that all life on earth descends from a single entity or event. Particularly convincing is the fact that all our molecules are stereochemically left-handed instead of mixed, as one might expect them to be.

As to the "organic molecules" stuff, it doesn't mean a thing. When a chemist says "organic," he simply means "containing a carbon atom." Carbon is a relatively common element, the fourth fusion product (since lithium can't be produced by natural fusion methods), and combines well with everything. So it's not surprising that there's a lot of methane and suchlike around. Virtually all stars throw off bunches of carbon atoms in their stellar wind.

The cover story for the September Analog, "The Manna Hunt" was a hard-science story built around the speculation that the cometary halo (Oort's Cloud) may someday be Earth's major food supply source. It sounds like a wild idea at first, but the story really builds a case for it.

Actually, this is all a vindication of what C.S. Lewis wrote in Out of the Silent Planet: "He [Ransom] had read of 'Space': at the back of his thinking for years had lurked the dismal fancy of the black, cold vacuity, the utter deadness, which was supposed to separate the worlds. He had not known how much it affected him till now--now that the very name 'Space' seemed a blasphemous libel for this empyrean

ocean of radiance in which they swam. He could not call it 'dead'; he felt life pouring into him from its every moment. How indeed should it be otherwise, since out of this ocean the worlds and all their life had come? He had thought it barren: he saw now that it was the womb of worlds..."

Lewis may have been more correct than he could ever have guessed.

And no doubt it would horrify him...

By the way, I miss Quodlibet...Looking forward to hearing from you again, in one form or another.

Bob Prokop

Hope this meets your approval...

Dick Bergeron

Box 5989

Old San Juan PR 00905

Bill:

Many thanks for Q14 which I enjoyed very much--it's a

good zine and I hope you surrender completely to your inclinations to take it all the way genzinewards (oogh!)--while at the same time keeping your strong and individual editorial stamp throughout.

I'd write at greater length but must concentrate all energies on finishing up Warhoon 30 (runs 86 pages). I'm at that do-or-die stage where the final details are so boring that I don't want to look at the thing ever again. That's the stage one pushes the PUSH button or else.

Dick Bergeron

I know the feeling. Not only did I scrimp the attention the convention report deserved, but I was so tired of Quodlibet 14 that I also unintentionally cut off negotiations about the graphics package of Steven Black's "American Samizdat" prematurely. I was so bored with the thing that I rushed it into print two weeks ahead of schedule, just to be done with it.

Doug Woods

1149-B South Sixth Avenue
Yuma AZ 85364

Dear Bill,

Tomorrow is the first day of classes at Yuma High,

which leaves today feeling like the eve of Pearl Harbor--in a few scant hours it's into the fray again and damn the torpedoes. As usual, there hasn't been enough time to get ready, but I feel better prepared this year than ever before. It's taken three years for me to start school with my own class room, a mapped out course of study, and a ready supply of teaching materials. This year, no marching across campus with boxes of books, no toting of thirty pounds of projectors, and no forlorn vigils for supplies ordered three months earlier. Back in the saddle again....

Amazing--no matter how burned out I feel by the end of May, I'm actually eager to start again in September. The resilience of youth, I guess.

A very impressive Quodlibet 14 was waiting for me upon my return to Yuma--again, my thanks. I made the mistake of reading your comments on hamburgers late at night without a thing in the larder to munch on. It was a restless, stomach growling even. The next day found me purchasing ground beef, cheddar cheese, onion, and bell pepper at my earliest convenience and frying up the lot of it with a couple eggs basted in Teriaki sauce for breakfast. It hit, as they say, the spot. Have you considered writing for Food & Wine magazine? I've got a friend there in the advertising dept., and while they might not go for an article on burger delights (or then again, maybe they might) perhaps they would welcome you as a freelance columnist.

It's an interesting notion--"you mean people get paid for writing like that...?"

The only aspect of burger prep that you overlooked, I believe, was herbal seasoning. Good ground beef really calls for some rosemary or thyme while it's afry, don't you thing? I heartily second the onion and bell pepper combination as well. They help to spice up omlettes, too.

I don't much care for rosemary as a beef spice--marjoram is really more in my line. Bell pepper is not one of my favorite seasonings--particularly as it's very easy to overdo, and then the dish is ruined.

Speaking of herbs, and in view of Quodlibet's laudable excursions into culinary criticism, perhaps you would appreciate some notes on how to prepare really first rate herb tea--for fun and healthful profit. For coffee addicts and coka-holics alike, a raised appreciation for some of nature's more benign roots and leaflets may prove a healing balm, particularly in the colder months ahead.

I suppose it would be ideal to grow one's own mint, licorice, etc., but as the desert summers are fierce here, and since I seem to have inherited Bob Lucky's black thumb (even aloe vera does not thrive for me),

It was my purple thumb from the old OSFFA days, purple being the color-wheel opposite of green, and I seem to have lost mine somewhere. I actually managed to get a rabbitsfoot fern to live eight or nine months, and my desk is now decorated with a prayer plant, a fern of some kind, and a palm. All have survived six months so far and are in no imminent danger of dying except when I go on vacation and depend on the others in the office to water them. I've even produced a cutting from the prayer plant. Anybody want a prayer plant cutting?

I find it more convenient to stock my cupboards with what the local healthfood store provides. (And stock up I do--if any narks break into my apartment they're going to have a helluva time figuring out what sort of strange stuff I've been ingesting.) Some absolute essentials for the beginning herablist are licorice root, spearmint, peppermint, raw ginger root, hyssop, saffron, and chrysanthemum blossoms (which are a rare item--try a Chinese grocery store). All of these do well as tea on their own, but some make especially good combinations: spearmint and licorice, chrysanthemum and ginger (excellent for congestion), hyssop and cinnamon rose sweetened with honey, or spearmint and peppermint. The saffron is also good with whole grain brown rice and, along with the two mints, works as an excellent blood purifier. Ginger with Oolong tea is another good remedy for colds and sore throats, but by all means use fresh ginger root and get some decent oolong imported from Taiwan or the PRC.

When they first moved out to Berkeley, Ruby Sheffer made a concoction she called "sinus tea." I can't, unfortunately remember the ingredients, and I seem to have lost her recipe. All I remember is that she used anise in it, and I can't stand licorice, fennel, or anise. But that, she informed me, was just a flavoring element. The stuff really worked. Perhaps I can persuade her to send the recipe from New Zealand.

Somebody said that all knowledge is contained in fanzines. I guess that must be true.

Incidentally, heh-heh, none of that is uncommon here...

Preparing the infusion is as important as the herbal ingredients going into it. Pure water is a must, and if your tap water is as poisonous as it is here in Yuma, I should warn that once you taste clean water there may be no turning back. You would also do well to purchase a kettle not made of an aluminum alloy--at boiling temperature, the aluminum combines with the water, tainting and poisoning it as well. Have your herbal concoction ready before the water boils; then, as soon as it starts to bubble, pour it into a ceramic mug and prepare to drop worries and ambitions from your mind. As the tea cools, sip it and let yourself mellow out.

F'Ghusake, you begin to sound like a vegetarian cookbook or Mother Earth News, Doug. You may have missed your decade!

There is, though, something to what you say of the water. As I read that sentence for the first time, I wondered how much a part the taste of the water (for I am a water-drinking fiend) plays in how much I like or dislike locales. I have never been terribly interested in Tempe, for instance, and it also has very flat-tasting water. San Francisco's is delicious. The flavor of the

water is something I virtually can't help but notice very early in my experience of a locale, and it's bound to be a correlative absolute of my sensual experience throughout the time I'm there. Give Auden his snow and Lawrence his chrysanthemums. I'll take the water any day...

Glad to hear you managed to avoid martyrdom at Phoenix last July. Your mention of the eclipse that weekend reminded me of how I spent that evening--helping a new friend with a spot of composition, then strolling for a longish time across the NAU campus beneath a blaze of stars (we could see the Milky Way) and discussing her native Taiwan. I hope that the night of the Fenris Wolf was as good to everyone else in the world as it was to you and me.

School starts in about nine hours. Gotta catch some shuteye.

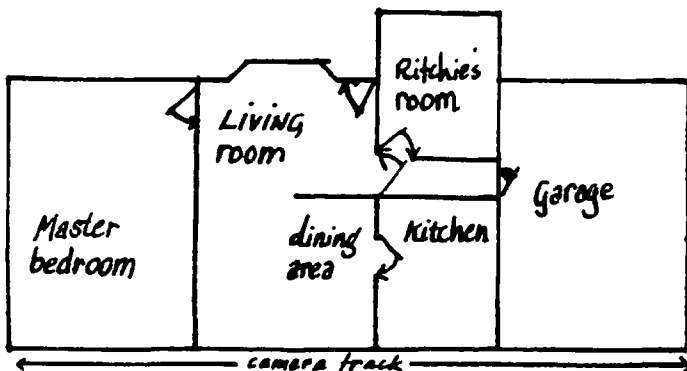
Thanks for the continuing Quodlibets.

Doug Woods

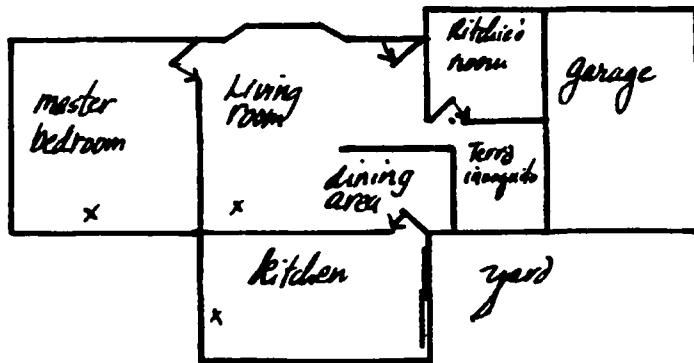
Waiting for the last loc, which Dan Wynne semi-reliably informs me is on its way, I might as well clear up a few remaining topics. Got to have topics, eh?

One of the more peculiar topics of conversation recently was an argument Phil Paine and I had about the layout of the Rob and Laura Petrie house in New Rochelle. You remember Rob and Laura Petrie of the old Dick Van Dyke show, don't you? I used to watch it religiously--partly because I (blush to admit that I) had a crush (have a crush) on Rosemarie, and partly because that show is such a good embodiment of the 1950's. Kind of a cultural monument.

Anyway it occurred to me that the director was very careful in his use of camera. Or perhaps unimaginative would be a better term. For each of the sets there is an almost entirely fixed camera position, and the movement around the camera gives an implied floor plan for the Petrie house. This is where the disagreement arises: Phil thinks the implied floorplan is identical to the set layout, like so:



Now, while it is entirely possible that the shooting layout is like that, I have a very different mental image of the house's layout:



Phil's notion is obviously much more convenient for camera shooting, as it only requires the camera to move in a straight line outside the "fourth wall" of the rooms. Mine, on the other hand, requires several different fixed positions (marked by "x's"). But I think Phil's reasoning provides a point against his position, as well: considering the horizontal track, it would not be necessary to have fixed camera positions, and those cameras are definitely fixed. Note that from the camera track, you can get dozens of different angles on the rooms, whereas their practice on the show was to take a very few angles from a very few locations, following the action with a pan, if necessary, instead of moving the camera to give a different angle on the scene. For example, what does the wall between the living room and kitchen (on my sketch) look like? Has anybody ever seen it? I think there was one shot of Ritchie's room in a single episode, but nobody knows what the passage between the garage and the house looks like, or how the garage relates spatially to the living room closet and Ritchie's room.

The curious fact is that we arrived at these very different floorplans using the same spatial relationships. We are agreed, for instance that one comes into the house between a bay window and a closet; that Ritchie's room is slightly recessed and immediately behind the closet, to the left as you enter. To the right of the bay window and on the same wall is the doorway to the master bedroom, entered via a low corridor formed by the couch. The bedroom is entered from the living room on the far side of the bed. The near side is where Rob does pushups. There is a closet on the wall the master bedroom shares with the living room and, although you can't see it very well, a bureau with a mirror. The dining room is contiguous with the living room on an "open" floor plan, although there is a bearing wall of some kind. In that wall is the door to the kitchen. One enters the kitchen from the left, and it is divided into two long sections, kitchen proper and breakfast nook, by a counter. The kitchen has sliding glass doors which look out on the yard, as his neighbors Jerry--the--dentist and Millie frequently come into

the kitchen. The house also has a garage which can be reached by the kitchen, although it is more common for Rob to come in through the front door. I have the impression, but I can't pinpoint any evidence to support it, that there is another room of some kind and a short corridor next to Ritchie's room.

Anybody else have opinions on the subject?

Speaking of Topics, which leads me to sentences, which leads in turn to sententious...I recently saw a news item to the effect that Reader's Digest has finally made an old joke come true: they are about to introduce the Reader's Digest condensed version of the Bible, forty percent reduced and edited for coherency and readability. Perhaps it's true that man's consuming mission in life is to plumb the uttermost depths of tastelessness.

Along the same lines, the radio provided me an item about the city of Charleston WVA, where chronic alcoholics may no longer be jailed because their courts have deemed this "cruel and unusual punishment" to deprive an alcoholic of his booze. So a plea of chronic alcoholism is a defense that can be raised to a charge of public drunkenness.

Let's see...the big news stories coming out of San Francisco the past few months have been the suspension of basketball at USF and the shutdown of the cable car and trolley systems. Personally, I think LoPresto's decision an exceedingly rare act of courage. About the shutdown of the cablecars, the less said the better. Fortunately, we are promised to have them back in twenty months. Last night (as I type this on the 23rd of September), the last fleet passed in gaily-decorated procession, broke down for four hours (conveniently at the start of the commuter rush), and ceased to be. Less publicized is the death of the streetcar system. That ended last Monday. Fortunately I was able to catch a ride on the Car No. 1 they have had in service on the J line for the last couple of months. Built in 1914, it was the first car to go through the newly-completed Twin Peaks Tunnel. It was airy and open and comfortable--which is a lot more than one can say for the 40's boxes that usually ran on the lines. There are two mysteries here: first, why did they build cars less comfortable as time went on, and second, why is the Muni taking a major source of transportation out of service when the demand for public transportation is increasing so dramatically? The flight to the suburbs has been over for a few years now, and SF is back up to the 700,000 mark. The Muni Metro, although a wonderfully speedy and clean addition to public

transit, is already overcrowded.

Ah, well: it's a mystery known only to God and Dick Sklar, the Muni Czar.

On second thought, known only to God...

Dan Wynne
3100 Fulton, No. 3
San Francisco CA 94118

Dear Bill,

I was just sitting down to write a missive of comment on Quodlibet 13 (realizing that QL14 was to be published soon) and lo and behold, there was Quodlibet 14 stuffed into my mailbox,

"How I escaped the Jaws of Death and Dared to breathe to tell about it. And other fine Tales."

which by its sheer bulk gave me trouble extricating; whereupon I promptly forgot about writing or reading. So comes this late LOC.

Quodlibet 13 had an interesting potpourri of news events that whizzed on by but no doubt will have some grave significance in the future. Just in the last day two events in the world news have shown a rather coincidental, or rather grim, way how the news is handled. In early news reports both Princess Grace (Grace Kelly) and the President-elect of Lebanon were involved in rather "tragic" events. In both cases, despite the circumstances, both seemed to be in fairly good health. (Princess Grace a broken leg, and the President-elect minor injuries). A few hours later both were reported dead. Could this be the news media feeding people what they want to hear on an international scale or just some sloppy reporting as only good as rumors? In one case an ex-movie star is dead; in the other the good possibility of major Mideast conflict.

Now on to Quodlibet 14. WELL DONE! That's what I think about your new format (and the way I like my hamburgers).

"Walking Down the Strand With My Mind On My Hand" was a great piece. And it is true. But I must add it also hurts like the devil because my knees have grown slightly outward too and it's like trying to make a pretzel of them.

Other than the wrong saint (should be St. Sebastian) I really enjoyed (?) your con report of the Phoenix westercon. Things at least there haven't changed. It appears to have the same old faanish ~~backbiting~~ activity going strong. The things I miss about Phoenix are rather short-listed--a few good friends, and coffee tarts and croissants at Caf' Casino.

That's embarrassing--because I knew perfectly well it was St. Sebastian that got pincushioned by his own colleagues. On the other hand, St. Anthony is not entirely inappropriate, as he was a desertish hermit, after all--and the first monk, too, I understand.

And now on to reviews. I did see Das Boot

(The Boat) in German (and now it is in English) and was fairly impressed. It told the story of the officers and crew of one mission of one particular U-boat. I talked to some people who refused to even see it because it had something to do with Nazi Germany. I find an excuse such as this somewhat lame and painting a whole country and time with a very broad brush. Even terrible injustices should be viewed with a respect to their historical context, if for no other reason than to see that those signposts of the initial injustice can be recognized. The film itself almost gives anybody claustrophobia by the depiction of the incredibly cramped quarters the crew had to endure during the forays. The only objection to the film that I have is the so-called realism involved to show the day-to-day life on board. It sometimes got into too much detail at the expense of the story. All in all, a pretty good film.

I wasn't as taken with it as most of my acquaintances. It certainly did what it set out to do, and it did come to grips with the realism fairly well, without dipping much into melodrama. The last scene I recognized intellectually as a fine ironic comment. But, in the end, I couldn't identify to the people, who were, after all, bringing human civilization to new depths of savagery, both internally and on the fronts. Patriotism is no defense. There is no defense. I felt, at that last scene, the same etiolated sense of "proportion" that one finds in a Greek tragedy when, at the end, divine retribution is brought to the hubritic. The universal scale is brought to balance again, after a fashion--but it bears so little relation to what else was going on that it's hard even to say "there was justice done" with passion. So the sum of my reaction to the film was "mu."

On the other hand, you have to admire the film makers for not providing us a host of technical infelicities to go along with the conceptual difficulties of the work.

Seeing you mention the people who refused to see it because it treated Nazi's with less than total condemnation reminds me that Tim Kyger refused to see Capricorn One several years ago because it took the thesis that a Mars landing was a NASA hoax. I dislike having art called to "ideological purity."

On the same day I saw Firefox with Clint Eastwood. What can I say? It's a Clint Eastwood film. Good entertainment with some rather silly errors in the way of knowledge of physics or aerodynamics. The basic plot is Eastwood as an ex hot-shot Air Farce pilot with mental fatigue from too much combat in Viet Nam and from a lady friend's being bombed, is hunted out by a top secret official to go on a top secret mission to steal a top secret Russian super-fighter which

can go Mach 6. There is a big dogfight between the stolen fighter flown by Eastwood and the second prototype flown by the top Soviet fighter pilot.

Fortunately, I was warned about it, so I didn't see Firefox. Funny, reading that outline made me think how much Firefox is like a non-stfnal version of Escape from New York. And I also flashed on the fact that one of Eastwood's very first roles was as a jet pilot in, I think, Tarantula or another of those giant-insect thrillers of 1950's AIP vintage.

I wanted to break in at this point and give a plug to a local fan project, the Emperor Norton Science Fiction Hour. What brought it to mind is the fact that Dan happened to drop by with this loc while ENSFH was playing last night, and we both watched it.

I didn't pick up with Quodlibet until March, 1981, long after I had left ENSFH, and I see that I haven't made a single reference to it in Quodlibet since then. Shame on me.

ENSFH is a weekly cable tv video-fanzine begun in April, 1979, I think. It is produced by D. Carol Roberts, and stars, currently, a group of players led by Jim Jones and including Jim Kennedy, Roger Patterson-no-relation, Allyn Cadogan, and others from time to time. I was with the group for about six months at the beginning, doing a variety of things--mostly book reviews and taped interviews. There was always a heavy injection of inane comedy sketches in the show, which made me impatient. After awhile, I got bored (and frustrated, because the people weren't getting more "professional" about memorizing scripts and so forth, and because of the technical limitations of the Channel 25 equipment). So I left the show, and, as I haven't lived until just now in any section of the city that had Viacom cable, I haven't been able to see it. In fact, I have never even seen the half-dozen interviews I did for the show.

Fortunately, Viacom has recently come into our neighborhood, I have it, and I make a point of watching ENSFH.

The last few shows have been surprisingly similar to the ones we did--with a less crowded format, though, and often much more pointed humor. A couple of weeks ago, the entire show was a single sketch about Madame God pulling the plug on the universe, somewhat reminiscent of the way the material is treated in the BBC productions of Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, with interviews, etc. introduced as interruptions to the sketches. Since D has been taking the videocam to westercons for several years, she has managed to tape some very good interviews with people not generally available in the Bay Area. Not bad.

Perhaps I should explain a bit about cable access. I understand that the FCC requires cable stations to have one channel open for community access programming. A lot of cable companies hate their public access channels and make it difficult to use them, but Viacom seems at least to tolerate its (Channel 25) and give it some modest support, as long as it doesn't cost them anything. The time rented, in 1979, for something like \$10 per half hour; \$25 per hour; and you could even take out the portable camera and videopack if you had the requisite two or three hours of instruction for about \$25. So you can film "on location." There's a perfectly awful show on 25, produced from New York and called Love & Logic, syndicated on these access channels. The host goes on at great length how supportive SF's Channel 25 is because he actually got a letter from one of the station personnel. Somebody was watching.

One of the interesting things about working with cable access is that you have absolutely no idea who may be watching. Speaking now from experience, I wouldn't dare turn Channel 25 on unless I knew there was something I wanted to see. No telling what you might be exposed to--Love & Logic, for instance. Or the hideously pretentious amateur musical/video graphics show that comes on before ENSFH. They did me horrible damage one night when ENSFH cancelled without notice and the show just kept running and running and... Anyway, I remember what a thrill it was, years ago, to get a letter from an actual viewer. By Ghu, there was someone watching!

But to continue...

Last night's show (as I write this on 9/28) had a live interview with someone called "Winnie" whose full name I didn't catch. His distinction is that he had been reading sf continually from the early 20's to the mid-60's. He was a delightful person, opinionated, crusty, and clear-as-a-bell, intellectually. I did think Jones missed a good bet in not asking him what he thought about those periods that could be called "inflection points" in sf's history--1939 to 1941, for instance, when Campbell made a dramatic change in the literature; 1950-1954, the changeover when the pulps began dying off to be replaced by the digest-sized magazines, or 1965 when the "New Wave" broke. As an aside to Jones, who may see this at second-hand, as I send a copy to the Kennedy/Roberts menage), he seems to have two small problems as an interviewer: first, he doesn't always do his homework. By this I mean that you can't get the good stuff out of an average interviewee unless you know a little something about his career beforehand. As there is a great deal of bibliographical material lying about, there is

virtually no excuse for going into an interview ignorant of the writer's corpus. It's often harder to keep track of film people, but I just happened across John Stanley's Creature Features handbook at Fantasy, Etc. and it should be able to help track down a lot of information. And Jim Kennedy has been following low-budget horror and fantasy films for a good while.

When I was doing this, I often had a fair grasp of the peoples' careers already, so I just spent the half-hour or so before we actually began taping talking to the interviewee about alternative directions or topics to take up. I can see that happening sometimes in Jones' interviews, but not nearly often enough.

Second, the general run of questions is much, much too general (possibly as a reflection of the lack of preparation of point 1). It is occasionally profitable to ask, say, an editor or a writer what their favorite book was, because you can elicit some very intimate and personal expressions that way, but it's absolutely pointless to ask a 60-year reader about his favorite books and then not narrow the focus. If you get a laconic response, always try to narrow the focus instead of skipping to another, unrelated question. It helps, of course, to have some idea what the interviewee doesn't want to talk about before you go into the taping.

End of Lecture.

Anyway, the second, taped interview was with the producer of A Boy and His Dog, L.Q. Jones, whom many of you may remember as the County Agent on the ancient and bizarrely-remembered Green Acres. I keep expecting these interviews to be dull, but somehow they always wind up being fascinating and informative and all that good stuff. A credit to both Jones and interviewee.

And finishing it all up, Roger and Jim did a Roman skit, seated and dressed in sheets with wine glasses. They read their scripts (the ENSFH group have given up trying to memorize scripts or using prompters and cue-cards; instead, they hold the scripts up before the camera) at such a hurried pace that it was virtually impossible to tell what they were talking about. Both cracked up when Roger broke his wineglass by banging it on the table. At the end a waitress brought them their "Caesar salad." Eyes light up. They leap up and bring out daggers, stabbing the salad to death. The show closes. Dan and I crack up.

And that's the first teensiest smile a deliberate funny on that show has gotten from me in about three years.

Congratulations ENSFH. Vous arrivons or something.

Anyway, one of the things we had in mind when we first started ENSFH was to set up a

video-fanzine network, trading tapes of shows with other such groups around the country. Sounds like a great idea, eh?

Hose off, you hoser. I've spent hours at conventions trying to find anybody doing similar things in their own cities. No luck. Not even anyone interested in doing this.

Why?

Anyway, back to you, Dan...

Another movie I saw awhile ago was the all-time tear-jerker Bambi. Only three things to say about that film. One, it is definitely Disney at his best. The animation is superb. Two, Bambi's mother is not shot by a hunter. On the contrary, she was shot by a poacher in late winter or early spring. Does not can be taken legally any time of year unless some very special circumstances and never in late winter. Hunters are probably more aware and much more vocal about poaching than so-called Friends of Animals. And third, one of the saddest scenes to me was Bambi and his mother stripping bark off trees in the dead of winter slowly starving to death. If the deer population is higher than what the environment can support then starvation is the result. In this case, a bullet from a hunter is much more humane since the end result would be the same.

Another movie I saw was Annie. It was a bit too cutesy and over-choreographed, but Albert Finney played a perfect Daddy Warbucks, and Burnette Carol was very good as a sleazy, drunk, matron of the Orphanage. I feel this movie is a little too big, though, and is much better as a stage production (I definitely felt that way about 1776 when it came out (Although I unfortunately haven't seen either live). Most of the other child actors were very good, many better than the one playing Annie.

Somehow I've managed to miss Annie so far. But it's playing at the Regency III downtown, so if the Alioto's let up on me a little, I'll probably have seen it by next Quodlibet

I enjoy reading your loc's, because it's like listening to old friends you haven't heard from in years (like an old OSFFA meeting). Bravo, Bill, on using bold type to offset your comments. It is easy to read and distinguish and quite pleasing to the eye. rich brown's comments about living in alternative universes--i.e., role-playing--reminds me of the repugnance I felt and to some degree feel toward some types in SCA or even the tendencies I saw in D&D or T&T in trying to live out their fantasies. That is no better than seeing some of those unfortunate people here in San Francisco talking, cursing, or yelling to people who aren't there. The main problem with any fantasy, over time it sometimes becomes hard to separate the real from the unreal. And it becomes harder and harder to deal with the unpleasant realities which brought you to think

of fantasy to escape in the first place. I know when I first moved to Arizona and unwittingly moved into the house of a dope dealer, people couldn't believe I was straight and didn't use drugs. I didn't need to: I could fantasize and role play much better than they without the bother or artificiality.

Bill, all of your comments about the abortion issue show a consistent ethical argument which really cannot be disputed. In this case, the ethical philosopher and men of conscience should stand together and condemn abortion for what it is, anti-life. It is the deliberate murder of our future for the sake of convenience--because of irresponsibility. Down to the simplest terms, if you can get away with it, it's ok. But it is not ok. Any hurt that is done to the least of us, is done to all of us. Because it sets the precedent. Therefore, no life is sacred or has any worth. And that is the real danger. If all really believe that, we've made our own hell.

Doug Woods' problem with teachers sounds familiar since I'm married to one (an English teacher at that). Luckily, she teaches older adults who only want more homework. All of the faculty, being Asian, are involved in Asian politics--getting more Asians on the college board.

It is nice to see the name of Gary Mattingly in print, since I haven't seen him or Patty in a very long time. Contrary to popular belief, cooking is easy. The important part is the preparation of the food prior to cooking and the proper organization.

I dunno. I used to think that bad cooking resulted from simple inattention, but I have recently come to think it may be that, just as some people have purple thumbs for plants, some people, with the best will in the world, just don't mesh with cookery. It's hard, for instance, to do anything unpalatable with a combination of eggs, butter, and sugar--but you wouldn't believe the messes I've seen made with those ingredients...

More about myself now. An interesting thing happened ~~on the way to the~~...dentist. A couple of months ago, since I now have insurance, I decided to go get my teeth looked after. Well, after some looking here and there, the doctor decided to cap my broken teeth in front, and do a root canal on a molar which had a filling out for about five years. All well and good I say. The tooth capping was a success (I hardly know myself) but when it came time to have my root canal a "minor" complication arose. It started out relaxed (the doctor doesn't like pain), a little NO2, a little music, and the job was not too unpleasant. Near the end of it, I heard the dentist (Dr. Okuji) give a small gasp and mutter something like "oops", for a clamp slipped from around the tooth, which is attached to a rubber-

ized tent-like affair to keep things from going too far back into the mouth. Well, I was pretty well anaesthetized with Novocaine and couldn't feel anything, but something was near my soft palate, so I started coughing and hacking profusely. After a little bit I was alright, or so I thought. Dr. O then informs me he is missing one of his 20mm dental files and thinks I should go and perhaps get an X-ray of my gastrointestinal areas just to find out if I have it. So he calls a hospital near my home, gives me a note, and says don't worry, he'll pay for the X-ray. Well, I drive on over to the hospital, get interred as an out-patient, and get some X-rays of my G-I and some chest X-rays to make sure of anything else. I asked the nurse if they found it and she said yes but wasn't supposed to say where. But since I didn't feel bad it was ok. Dr. O called the hospital and told them to give me the X-rays and he would come by my home and pick them up. I got home and opened the envelope out of curiosity and found that a large dagger-like thing was in my left lung. Great stuff! I called Dr. O who confirmed it. About half an hour later he dropped by and said since I'm not in pain or anything I shouldn't worry and he'll get back to me in a day or so after he'd consulted a surgeon who worked in the same suite of offices that he does. Well I took it easy and didn't think too much of this until a friend of my wife called. She works in a hospital and said that doesn't sound too good and then checked with a doctor in the hospital who said, "If I were him, I'd have it taken out." Then she called her dentist, and he said, "that doesn't sound too good. I'd have it taken out." Then I called the emergency room of her hospital to get another opinion. And the doctor there said, "That doesn't sound too good. If I were you I'd have it taken out." So then I called U.C. Med, one of the top hospitals in the U.S., and asked emergency. The doctor there said, "Boy, that doesn't sound too good. I'll talk to one of the pulmonary guys and see what he says. But if I were you I'd have it taken out." A little while later the pulmonary doctor calls and said, "Anything that goes through your mouth and into your lungs can't be good for you. Even though you don't feel any pain or not coughing (which is strange), if I were you I would have it taken out." Well, 9:30 the next morning I transport myself to the hospital, get checked in, and the doctor sees me. After getting another chest X-ray to see if things haven't changed, the doctor explains the procedure, the chances of death, and all the other niceties. I was given a morphine shot and sent into the fluoroscope room. There I gargled some very unpleasant anaesthetic and was sprayed with some other nasty-tasting stuff. Then a tube was stuffed down and then a

bronchoscope. The bronchoscope is like a periscope with a movable end and twin eyepieces, one for each doctor. An assistant opens and closes a forceps attached as well as operated the fluoroscope and additional anaesthetic. The doctors over me were like aiming a bombsight. "Where's the red arrow?" "Three o'clock." "Where is it now?" "Five o'clock low." "Location?" "Anterior lower lobe--going in for a closer look."

You get the picture. You couldn't believe that they couldn't find something that is nearly two inches long with a handle on the end? As the anaesthetic is wearing off, they find it and suddenly I feel good. Soon I was talking, wanted to eat, and do all sorts of things. I got out of the hospital feeling just a little woozy. But a couple of hours later, sicker than a dog. The morphine got to me. Plus I had a 102° fever. I'm ok now. But I did find out that things falling down from the dentist are rather common. So beware.

I really wish you hadn't said that, Dan. I've got two root canals coming up, plus sundry bridge work and fillings--with the same dentist. On the other hand, lightning doesn't strike twice, does it? I tremble in anticipation. Be still, my heart.

Well, that's got to be the most unusual dental story I've ever heard--ever notice that everybody has dental anecdotes. They generally insist upon telling them just as you announce you're (a) having a twinge, or (b) leaving for the dentist's office. Somewhat comparable to the acquaintance who told people as they were boarding an airplane to remember that their life depended on a piece of piano wire...

Bill, your rebuttal to rich brown's arguments are again extremely consistent and logical. I do have a suspicion without looking up the exact doctrinal discourse that the logic of the Church on the influx of the soul has something to do with the permanency of the foetus. In other words, if the foetus dies through miscarriage, then no blame should be attributed since it is a soulless being--i.e., tissue. Man is not only a rational animal, but one with a special spiritu dei. But we'll get into that at a later discussion, possibly in a discourse on being and essence (Joe Sheffer's weaknesses).

Well, I come by my position the hard way. Until 1977, I held the position that the woman had the exclusive prerogative to choose to abort or not, as a matter of the right to control one's own body. A libertarian friend pointed out that, although he wasn't aware of the doctrinally-correct answer to the problem, the problem had to be a two-person ethical problem, in which case the mother's right could not be automatically preeminent--that is, the analysis had to take into account the right of the child as

well as that of the mother. And, of course, I had asked Joe Sheffer, out of curiosity, to explain why the Church held its position on abortion and contraception as enunciated in Humanae Vitae --an encyclical which, along with Progresso Populorum, I find the most distressing because of their methods of approach to the material. As you may know, I don't think very highly of Pope Paul.

At any rate, Joe explained the Church's position on the issues in Thomistic terms (as we were both studying the Summa at the time), and that gave me a lot of food for thought.

I went off to San Francisco and worked out the question in great analytic detail over the summer. So, on this question, I was wrong. The Church was right. But I've come to the position after considerable agonizing and grappling with the ideas.

The toughest thing, I found, was to separate out the essential from the frivolous points. Sure, the sorrow of the mother is a socially-important thing. The sorrow of a rape victim is a socially-significant thing, too. But they have nothing to do with the question of whether abortion is a morally correct alternative. And so on. But if you clear the detritus away and look clearly at the single issue put before you, it becomes elegantly simple.

As to the insufflation of the soul...I reiterate my earlier objections. I think Thomas was correct. I don't think your argument in directly on-point, because, although the Church does hold the influx of the soul takes place after fertilization, the time-frames I've heard discussed are in terms of seconds and fractions thereof, not minutes or days. There are vast numbers of re-absorbed pregnancies and miscarriages in the early stages that would still fall within the rubric of a souled being. There would be no cause for guilt in any case in the event of a miscarriage, because it is not a willed event.

As for a special recipe, I think I'll go for Golden Buck in lieu of the real kind. I have become a preservationist of sorts recently, figuring that if things got really tough, I should learn how to persevere. So I went deer hunting. Although I did see some, I didn't get any. So here is the substitute:

And that's a classic reason for this rarebit variation if every I heard one...

But it's not really necessary to have a recipe every time you loc...although nice, of course...

Golden Buck
(Makes Four Portions)

1/2 lb. cheese, Cheshire or Cheddar, diced.
1-1/2 tsp. Butter
2-3 T. ale
1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

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1/2 tsp. lemon juice
2 eggs, beaten
1/8 tsp. celery salt
4 slices toast
White pepper, to taste.

Put the cheese into a saucepan with butter and ale and stir vigorously until creamy. Add Worcestershire sauce, lemon juice, and eggs. Season with the celery salt and pepper, and continue to stir until the mixture thickens. Trim the toast, butter well, and cut each piece into four squares. Arrange toast on plates and pour mixture over them. Serve as hot as possible.

I did see one other movie. Chan is Missing is a rather interesting whodunit in which Chan, a part owner in a taxi business, turns up missing along with some money that belongs to his partners. Rather than going to the police, his partners decide to look for him themselves. The film weaves a web among the psyche of the San Francisco Asian community, with all its inner conflicts and vast differences and forces at play between yong and old, newcomers and established community. You find soon there are more differences than similarities among Asians in Chinatown. A very good film except a knowledge of San Francisco and Eastern thought is a definite asset.

Got rave reviews here, too, although I missed it. Perhaps it's still playing.

You know, people who are intimate with orientals are let in on a world completely invisible from the outside. Aside from Teresina and a Chinese roommate, I don't know any Chinese here, except as acquaintances. But when I went to high school, virtually a third of the advanced track was Chinese, and two of my three best friends were Chinese. The insights, fragmentary, told-about, and only glimpsed, about the way the Asian community worked in Phoenix were fascinating. And, of course, San Francisco's is so much bigger. It must be more complex. And, in fact, it is. All the clan-and-tong influences that are still visible in Phoenix in the political structure have been partially outgrown here; the center cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon Chinatown.

And I begin to blather, which is a sure sign I'm talking about things I know nothing--less than nothing--about. Time to Shut Up...

Well, I must trundle now and wrap this up. I'm already looking forward to Quodlibet 15. Keep up the good work.

I remain usually,

Dan Wynne

Well, much as I enjoy getting all these lovely locs and doing Quodlibet, this number has gone

on entirely too long, and I'm sick of it. And, naturally, I've finished up on the first few lines of an even page, rather than at the bottom of an even page, which means I have to noodle on a bit to get to a decent length for closing off.

And as it happens, I've come across a decentish topic for noodling. As you see by the mailing date, this is not being sent off on the first of October. The office crush here has held Quodlibet over into October, and it's the fourth today, a very important anniversary: Twenty-five years ago today Sputnik went up.

This morning the NPR's "Starwatch" people did a little thing about people listening to Sputnik beeping and scanning the skies for the star that moved.

The thing I remember most about Sputnik--and I was only five years old at the time--was the profound sense of shock with which everyone was numbed. Years later, I looked back to contemporary documents to find out how accurate my memory was, and was astonished to find that I had picked up on a real phenomenon, a real hysteria that broad-based. Of course, everyone was pretty well numbed by then--the twentieth century has had shock after shock of

this kind.

I can't recall, offhand, anything in the nineteenth century comparable to the impact the Lisbon earthquake made in the eighteenth century. But starting with the mustard gas of the First World War, it's been one thing after another--I mean, world wars aren't that unusual, but the senseless brutality, the unseen enemies, of that war sent tremors through Western civ. for decades. That was the first important "dirty little war" as far as the West was concerned. A few years later came the Crash of 1929 and the Depression. Then, without respite, the atrocities of the Second World War, pre-tremors to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. We still haven't gotten over those. And then Sputnik, absorbed into the quiet upheaval of the Cold War. Most of us remember the bomb drills in elementary school, compounded by the sudden realization that all ballistic limitations were off when bombs could orbit.

And then the Sixties, and Kent State, and Watergate. One right after the other.

We will be nothing if not resilient, this twentieth century generation.

And on that sombre note, goodbye.

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