

Quodlibet

Back in the old days, before The Objectivist went under, Ayn Rand used to publish a department called "From the Horror File." Generally, the department would contain news items presented without comment, illustrating the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of western culture in the 20th century. Their presence in that "file" was enough to send shivers down the backs of Good Objectivists (pardon me: "Students of Objectivism"), and that department constituted the most eloquent "social commentary" Rand ever published. Looking over the items I've collected for this issue of Quodlibet makes me feel as if I'm compiling my own "Horror File."

I broke a longstanding rule and watched part of the MacNeil-Lehrer Report a few days ago. The rule exists to help me control my blood pressure.

The program was about the upcoming Texas schoolboard textbook review. It seems that Texas chooses its textbooks through a central committee for the entire state, instead of district-by-district, as is the usual practice. The reason for the coverage this year, though, is the presence of a "reviewing company," a 21-year old mom-and-pop organization that reviews textbooks for "American Dream Orthodoxy" (my terms) and presents recommendations to the committee. Because this committee makes a uniform choice for a huge chunk of population, publishers drop books by the dozen from their lines once the committee has made its decisions. So a Texas committee has immense impact on the textbooks available in the rest of the country--and a tiny company making recommendations has immense influence on the education available to the entire nation.

The program began with MacNeil asking the representative of the company to respond to charges that they were, in effect, censoring textbooks. He responded by saying that they were not attempting to cancel textbooks, but



rather pointing out prior "censoring" done by the authors of the texts to put forth their liberal, anti-American point of view.

To answer and represent the other side in the issue, the program had a representative of Norman Lear's new anti-Moral Majority league. His counter-

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response to the same charge blathered on a bit and did not address the issue at all.

That's why I don't watch these political-current-events programs.

Since I don't make a habit of talking back to television people, you get the blast this time.

The term "censor" derives from the name of an office of the Roman Republican government. The duties of this office were to take census, to make value assessments of property (since there was a level-of-wealth requirement for the equestrian class and since it was the practice to confiscate the property of an exile--and occasionally to return property or reimburse at the end of exile), and to act as guardian of public morals--which is to say that they oversaw performance of the state religion's practices and investigated and reported on corrupt practices on the part of public officials. In the modern era, a censor is employed during time of war to delete from private correspondence material which might be used to derive information about troop movements, etc. Many organizations have censors who oversee the ideological content of the organization's publications, public and private. The two organizations of censors with which most people have had some contact are the Catholic church's and the Hays Office.

Censorship has come to mean the practice of suppressing information, usually at its source, that is not wanted to be disseminated. This apprehension of the term implies the presupposition that, generally, the widest dissemination of the most diverse types of information is desirable. The more information around, the better. That is an idea that is a fundamental part of the U.S.'s culture and patrimony, the notion that we draw our greatest strength from diversity--e pluribus unum.

If the term is to have any meaning at all, it cannot be randomly applied to anything and everything that has to do with choosing among alternatives. It cannot be "censorship" to widen one's focus, to permit-by-acknowledging the diversity of lifestyles and choices, because the process of censorship is concerned not with widening, but with restricting--and that is precisely what this company is attempting to do: to restrict the information (and therefore choice) available to Texas schoolchildren. To acknowledge the point is to corrupt the language beyond remediation.

When the Lear-representative did not attack this point, I turned off the tv and got depressed. Christ, if the people who are supposed to be fronting against those bastards concede those basic points, the terms that underlie the discourse, there is no hope. They're hamstrung and ineffectual from the very beginning. You can't start off by accepting the opposition's

definitions.

I really don't want to live in a country ruled by the Moral Majority--even more than I don't want to live in a country ruled by conservatives or liberals.

Item 2 is "Topic A"--the succession crisis in the Soviet Union. I don't really have much to say about it that I haven't said before. At the moment Andropov is the favorite, but we'll see.

Item 3 is two commercials that ran back-to-back on the local "classical" station a few weeks ago. The first was for Boardwalk Chevrolet. A woman complains of chauvinistic treatment from a car dealer--"you want to talk gear ratios, and the salesman is assuring you he can get the interior upholstery to match your wardrobe."The commercial promises that you will be treated seriously at Boardwalk Chevrolet.

The second was one of a series for Rufino Orvieto, a rather astringent white wine that is making a bid for public attention like those that Cella Bianco has made over the last year or two ("Aldo Cella is not pretty, smart, or gifted with social graces--but he knows what makes people happy"--Cella Lambrusco mostly.) The commercials are carried, not by the dialogue, but by the situation.

This commercial starts in a restaurant, a knowledgeable woman dating a superficial clod of a man. The zhlub thinks he's going to impress the woman by ordering the house white for them. When the sommelier comes to the table, she consults with him about available dry whites and finally asks for Orvieto Rufino. The sommelier becomes respectful and complimentary, and the man grows silent. When she is finished, she turns to him and says "I couldn't have done it without you, dear."

Time to upchuck.

In an earlier version, the woman walks into a liquor store and is met by an ignorant and patronizing manager. Announcing that she wants something in a white, the manager assumes she wants a chablis, the fern-bar special. No? Then Bolla Soave, surely? No. Orvieto Rufino. He has never heard of it, but he blusters anyway, shouting back to the stock clerk and getting the name wrong. She corrects him. Voice over to the announcer.

I picked up at second-hand a copy of Allen Drury's Anna Hastings and discovered that I have, quite unintentionally, read all of Drury's fiction. That gives one furiously to think, in Doc Smith's colorful phrase. I really hadn't intended to--it just happened. Back in the late '60's (confiteor--I had much more sympathy with conservatives back then. But I was very young) I

read the first four of his Advise and Consent series with considerable interest, because of the "accuracy" of his predictions. It happens that I was reading Capable of Honor even as the 1968 Democratic National Convention was being reported. Impressed hell out of me. Also intensified the "experience" of the book to the point that it made me physically ill for awhile. Probably contributed to the depth of the depression I went into six months later, when I graduated from high school, too. Come Ninevah, Come Tyre and Promise of Joy weren't at all impressive. The hobby horse had become a little worn by this time, you see.

Throne of Saturn was about as retch-worthy as Drury gets, but his subsequent Akhenaton books were very well done--no hobby horse to ride and moderately well researched: kind of an Egyptian companion to Mary Renault's Alexander books.

Anna Hastings is not a fictional biography, but someone else commenting on a fictional autobiography. Unusual form. The speaker of Anna Hastings is a fellow newsman who has followed Anna from their early days together in the Washington press corps in WWII through her marriage to a multimillionaire, to her acquisition of a newspaper which she/they turn into a major paper chain in Washington and elsewhere. Drury puts in a lot of novelistic detail about the ruination the power-obsession can wreak, but his main point is to ride his favorite hobbyhorse again. This novel throws the greatest light yet on Drury's theory of communistic liberalism. Irritating, because he tentatively advanced a prologomena to a much more elegant solution and completely missed its significance--the tinting liberal thought took during the 1930's:

Robert Prokop
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Bill,
Overcoming a bad case of writer's block, which

has lasted since the summer, I now attempt to deal with at least some of my correspondence backlog...

Quodlibet 15 is in good form. I think I prefer the shorter format--"lean and tight," like the Federal Budget.

Very funny.

The person who surprises me the most in recent lettercols is Doug Woods. This does not sound like the Doug I once knew, who would carry around his Pepsi at OSFFA meetings in a sealed jar--so that no one would spike his drink, as we frequently (in jest) threatened.

How one's past returns to haunt one. Actually, my strongest memories of Doug date from 1975 when I was tutoring him in Greek on a once-a-week basis. Awfully hard on him. Come to think of it, though, I do have a strong memory of

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Doug's making his own chain mail shirt at OSFFA meetings in 1973 or 74--before the Invasion. Whatever became of that chain mail tunic, Doug?

Hello, Doug. Glad to hear everything is going so well for you. I know well what Doug means when he says that Tolkien was for a long time for him unreadable. I, too, a few years back discovered that I had bled the poor man white with too many re-readings. I have vowed to not even look at his books until my daughter Lisa is old enough for me to read them aloud to her. I'm looking forward to that.

I'm disappointed, Bill, that you changed your mind so quickly concerning James Hogan. I was looking forward to a Big Fight, lasting several issues. Oh, well, I'll find something else soon enough.

I was kind of surprised about that, too. I mean, after the putridity of Thrice Upon a Time, the pleasant competence of Giants' Star surprised the heck out of me, and the brilliance of Voyage from Yesteryear knocked me off my pins. That's the most startling metamorphosis I've ever seen.

Do you have any plans for attending the 1983 worldcon in Baltimore, just up the road from me?

Certainly. I've managed to miss the last two worldcons--possibly a blessing in disguise, as I get fed up with the whole convention scene--so next year I should be ready to plunge again into all-night roomparties (ugh!). Help out a bit with operations, that sort of thing.

By the way, I am correct on my dates for early lobbying for Phoenix as a Westercon site (Quodlibet 14, page 35, bottom right). I can remember in particular a room party attended by both Avram Davidson and Kris Neville, where I bent several peoples' ears on the subject. However, this was nothing even remotely resembling a "bid," but was more in the nature of preparing the ground for one in the future by making California (and especially LA) fans aware of our existence. At this we were quite successful.

Robert Prokop

True. That resolves an ambiguity, as I remember finding Bruce Pelz and other Angelenos quite surprisingly ready to accept the possibility of a westercon bid and quite supportive as early as 1973. Little did we all know...

rich brown
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Dear Bill,
I'm not going to touch on everything you bring up, for several reasons. In a number of

cases you just don't agree with my assessment of certain of Heinlein's works. Well, that's what makes horse racing too--but there's not much point in arguing personal preferences after we've made them known, unless there are subsidiary points to be made. Ted White was over visiting me a few days ago and said he had caught a few of your errors, so I'll pass on those too. And in some areas we actually agree--it just seems, for some reason I cannot fathom, that you think we disagree. For example, I see no difference between your identification of Heinlein's "strong suits" and mine. Yours is more specific--but since you say specifically what I mean with my generality, I have no objection. Indeed, the technologies portrayed in the futures Heinlein depicts are in place and are not described so much as shown in the effect they have on the lives of his characters. This is what I meant. Through the early forties at least, there were two general types of science fiction--blood and thunder (more appropriately called thud and blunder) and "sugar coated science pill." Lin Carter in the mid-fifties, had a lovely satire of the latter in Inside: His hero, SaM IM4SF+, upon entering a subway car in New York City, sits down and remarks to a fellow traveller, "How fortunate we are to live in this wonderful age, right in the middle of the twentieth century! Why, a man from 1926, were he to be transported to this day and age, would surely be astounded at a vehicle such as this, traversing under the river betwixt the boroughs at speeds of up to fifty miles per hour!" The stranger, turning to SaM IM4SF+, nods in agreement and adds, "Yes, but hould he be transported here not from thirty years ago but sixty, he would probably think us like the gods themselves, since we attain these miraculous speeds by taming the brutal force of the lightning bolt itself!" And so forth. My point was simply that, when Heinlein came along, he depicted his figures in an entirely different way--people don't talk that way in his books, because that's not the way people talk; the hardware is there--usually as a bit of logical extrapolation--and it's taken for granted, as we take for granted our subways, our telephones, our televisions, our word processors, etc., &c., and the only importance they have to the story is the logical importance such things might have on the lives of his characters. I simply don't see where we are "disagreeing" here. (I might be historically inaccurate in this telling of events, since it occurs to me that it's possible Campbell was responsible for this change; he either told his writers to do it that way or, after Heinlein came along, told his writers to do it Heinlein's way--I am really not sure which.)

Our "apparent disagreement comes about because, not being telepathic, I was responding

to what you wrote, instead of what you intended to write. *sniff*

As is evident from the last Quodlibet, Ted did write with his corrections. Those are embarrassing mistakes, because I really ought to have known better. I started trying to hunt up my papers so I could have them handy to check factual information before I put it into print in the future, only to find that the collection has been dispersed through the years. I'm going to have to re-purchase the Panshin and other stuff.

The question of Heinlein's exact influence on SF is a fascinating speculative topic. His influence is clear but almost ineluctable. I suspect the major role in shaping everyone else is Campbell's, because by 1939, when Heinlein began publishing, Astounding had Campbell's style and approach clearly worked out. We know how he worked with Asimov during this period. It may simply be that Heinlein was the best, most natural exemplar of what Campbell was trying to do. But Heinlein seems to have evolved his methods and approach independently. If Campbell intentionally held Heinlein up as an example, I haven't run across anyone's reminiscences to that effect, while the "Campbell approach" is implicit in "Twilight," published in, I think, 1934 or thereabouts.

Of course, there is a larger sense in which it was simply "railroading time." The magazine fiction of the '30's was quite astonishingly good. The impetus toward writing "human" stories was, by 1939, overwhelming. The Campbell-and-Heinlein approach is simply the obvious stfnal accommodation to that cultural, esthetic convention. It's a situation tailor-made for parallel evolution--to mix-a the metaphors.

Well, okay, I made two mistakes about Stranger--it's been a while since I read it. But if you substitute "adult" for "nymph" in the first case my point is not otherwise hard to follow, not is it incorrect. The esthetic question being debated by the Old Ones had to do with the standard to be used in judging that composition about the destruction of the fifth planet--since different standards, as I said, had traditionally been used in judging the vastly different arts composed by Martian adults and Martian Old Ones and the artist had been so involved he had not noticed his discorporation and so continued to work on it while making the transition.

Your parallel between the Martian's esthetic problem and the writing of Stranger is intriguing and amusing. If, as Heinlein says, the book was entirely planned and partly written by the "egg" and completed by the "old one," the parallel is exact and a joke considerably more self-conscious than I'm used to thinking of Heinlein as being. Heinlein is certainly not above this sort of thing, though--e.g., his reference to the

"hermit of Hollywood" in "And He Built A Crooked House." And Lazarus Long of TEFL is certainly Heinlein's thinnest auctorial disguise. Then, too, perhaps the puzzle of the Egg-Old One metaphor is Heinlein instructing the reader not to judge Stranger as either a novel or a romance.

Still, two of your other objections to my comments are simply a case of your not having turned your tin ear in my direction and given consideration to what I said. You said I "make 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." Well, you're wrong. Some are that sort of similarity--the Martians are much the same, and ultimately they pose much the same sort of threat; "water friend" is introduced in Red Planet to mean what "water brother" is used to mean in Stranger, etc. But there are other similarities as well. A scene which disposes of the villain of Red Planet is remarkably similar to a toss-away scene early in Stranger (although what is accomplished by one Martian in Stranger takes several Martians in Red Planet). Willis and Michael Valentine Smith are both used in exactly the same way by the Old Ones--i.e., as innocent "spies" on humanity. In both cases the Old Ones simply "play out" copies of their memories to be used in judging humanity later. These similarities are a bit more than being "set in the same or closely related universes."

But still, you took exception to the comment, feeling I had made "too much" of the similarities and pointing out that it was simply a case of the two books being set in "similar, related universes." In my objections, I pointed out that while they may have been set in similar, related universes, there were other similarities of theme, background, and treatment and that some of the ideas which first appeared in Red Planet showed up again for a similar but different treatment in Stranger.

True. I misunderstood your point before. I may now have a better grasp of what you were saying. So, I would quite agree that Red Planet may be read as an earlier (or at any rate slightly different) treatment of a few themes present in Stranger, for purposes of amplification, in the same way that "Logic of Empire" may be read as a fuller treatment of themes present in Podkayne of Mars and Between Planets. That's not a very good analogy, because the three treatments aren't nearly as close in terms of detail as Red Planet and Stranger. More like the relationship between the Summa Theologiae and the Summa Contra Gentiles.

Related comment: I think you may miss much

in Heinlein if you demand that his allusions be too literal. I find it easier to believe he slips them in casually, to be enjoyed by those with wit enough to perceive them, as opposed to the very deliberate, consistent, and carefully thought-out universe which he adhered to with considerable precision in his "Future History" series. Thus, I can see CAW in Friday and Hazel Stone Meade of The Rolling Stones = "Hazel" of the Stone Gang of The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress as intended connections, despite your logical objections. Particularly in the latter case, since it is hard to believe those similarities in names could have been all that accidental.

But at the same time I must admit the possibility that yours is the correct perspective and not mine. At least, I will concede it's easy to get carried away dealing with them as casual toss-offs. For a case in point, I recall someone pointing out in reference to Arthur C. Clarke's 2001, that you get an interesting result by pushing each of the letters in "HAL" (the computer) forward by one letter in the alphabet--yet Clarke denies this was done deliberately. So such "accidents" do happen, and it may well be the case with the CAW in Friday and Hazel of the Stone Gang in The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress.

No, I think you're right about Hazel Stone. I quite agree that her presence in TMAIHM is a deliberate construction, a deliberate self-reference. My point is not that they are not the same person, but only that the two were not the same universe. This is not a trivial or moot point, because you read the relationships differently if they are in the same universe than if they are in alternate universes. Allusions in, say, the Future History series are direct, cognitive links, an additional comment made on the entire context of the preceding, so the effect is cumulative--much as Piper wants you to read his entire corpus as enunciating a theory of history (likewise Dickson in the Childe Cycle) in a single, unified work. But allusions made in an alternate universe setting comment on only the particular detail adopted out of the other work, so there is something separated from consideration in this kind of allusion. Often, this makes a lot of hard, detail-comparing work for the reader, which is why I spent so much time aducing exactly what Heinlein was referencing by putting Baldwin into Friday, just so the interpretation shouldn't go too far awry. By putting Baldwin into the story, Heinlein can bring back the context of the "superman" treatment and develop it with marvelous economy by a very few statements. Baldwin's passionate refusal to finance a migration to the planet where "those supermen migrated" speaks volumes about the idea Heinlein is developing.

This kind of thing is often an instruction to the reader.

The last sentence was written eight hours ago, but I just did two cold Tarot readings and came across an example of this very point. The second reading turned up the High Priestess, the Star, seven of Cups, the Moon, and the Empress. Ordinarily this would represent a highly-charged involvement with the occult or some mystery, but I happened to know that the person for whom I was doing the reading was a psychiatrist. As the unconscious is another level of the symbology in those cards, I read them as indicative of a strong, personal identification of herself with her work, instead—which turns out to have been perfectly on point. Attempting to read the cards in terms of their hermetic meanings would have changed the reading dramatically—perhaps even made it incoherent (I prefer to work with the question unknown to me and allowing the querant to do the actual selection of the cards).

I just realized that if you aren't familiar with Tarot symbology and method, the above will be gibberish to you, but the point was too apt to pass up.

On the other hand, someone once pointed out to Freud that his cigars were, under his theory, phallic symbols with unpleasant psychosexual connotations. Freud is reputed to have fixed this person with a stare, settled his cigar in his mouth, and said, "but sometimes, a cigar is only a cigar." Which is very true. The other, equally important, reason for putting in this kind of allusion, is "play," "amusement," a reason which is sufficient to itself. Sorting out which is *Significant* to the conceptual line of the story and which is play, sufficient unto itself, is a delightful problem left to the ingenuity of the reader.

I had not intended to be quite as dismissive of the similarities you remark between Stranger and Red Planet as you seem to think I was. Tim informs me, incidentally, that Heinlein has said that he put the early ms for Stranger, completely planned out, aside in 1950 or 1951 because he couldn't see a market for it then. I fail, myself, to see how the publishing climate was so much more improved in 1960, but this may be myopia on my part, and Heinlein was, after all, there. At any rate, Heinlein has spoken, and he supports neither of us. As a side comment, I think the disjunctions between the sections are not so much a reflection of the ms being completed at different times (as Panshin apparently does), but as something he later saw he could get away with as a result of the success of Citizen of the Galaxy. It's interesting to note that Huckleberry Finn contains exactly the same kind of disjuncture (the riverboat crash). Twain

has had a bigger influence on him than Heinlein is willing to admit.

As I think I've gotten lost among the welter of points and counter points and subsidiary points (my god, it's a limestone cavern in here sometimes, stalactites and stalagmites in profusion...), let me make a stab at summarizing. We don't really have a disagreement here, so much as a series of comments expanding on each others' points. You appear to find the allusions primarily interesting as play, while I often find them more interesting as cognitive links, but I think we both acknowledge that they are useful both ways, right?

You also tell me "that reference to taking Friday to church is not strong enough to identify it to the Church of Foster." You dispose of that so easily, it certainly makes me glad I never made such a silly assertion! What I said was that Heinlein had made an oblique reference to Stranger because "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." Uh, you did read Friday, didn't you? Recently? I probably should have explained my reasoning but, under the assumption that it might still be fresh in your mind, I didn't. If you had stopped to think why I did not assume it was the church of Nehemiah Scudder, you would have realized that the same reasoning could in fact be applied to the Church of Foster. The two who make pointed reference to taking Friday to church are liberated, involved in an open and caring (not merely sexual) family structure with other intelligent and sensitive individuals, and both make these references after Friday has become sexually involved with someone with whom they are also involved. Their reaction to this involvement is neither the craze one might expect from the more fundamentalistic type of individual who would be found in the church depicted in Revolt in 2100 nor the revulsion against "sinning with one of the unconverted" which would surely be the case had they been fosterites. If you can't, from this, figure out what church in Stranger I was referring to, I'm afraid you'll just have to buy that Kewpie doll--you'll certainly never win it.

Oh. You run rings around me logically. I beat my head against the wall: "dummy, dummy, dummy!" Of course.

But, I still don't think the reference was strong enough to make a positive identification. I will pay particular attention to that point when next I reread Friday (currently it's fourth on my list of Things To Do, and the book is sitting on my desk waiting for a free moment. Perhaps after

finishing Shout!). The identification surely didn't strike me the first two times I read it, possibly because I'm used to interpreting "that kind" of reference as a informal way of signifying that one has been adopted into the family--e.g., Wyoming Knott's introduction to Manny's family in TMLAHM. Oh, well, I suppose one can't be completely in focus all the time...

I can't speak for Alexei, but let me herewith acknowledge Stranger as a Menippean satire. While I'm at it, let me add this: if those multi-page digressions which you say are supposed to be characteristics of a Menippean satire are supposed to be dull and boring, then I must say Heinlein has succeeded in his attempt beyond what may have been even his wildest expectation--but if they're supposed to be amusing, or entertaining, then for me at least he has failed.

The multi-page digression is a characteristic form of the Menippean satire (cf. Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel, "The Digression of the Nose," Barth's quotation of an entire play, a modern-verse transformation of Oedipus Rex, in Giles, Goat Boy, Swift's dissertation on politics in Lilliput in Gulliver's Travels, and others), but I do not rise to your bait. Suffice it to say that I didn't find them boring and dull, and I think Heinlein achieved his purposes admirably, hitting directly on the point he aimed at. The Menippean satire is a genre in which, if you'll pardon the pun, "the play's the thing." Verbal play, Sufi-style conceptual wrecking, auctorial comments (poo-tee-weet) on the action, circular reinforcing structures, mirror inversions of characters and events, and so forth. If the reader enters honestly into the implied contract generated by reading the work, he is expected to follow along and get the same kind of enjoyment in this verbal and conceptual play the author put into the work. If you don't enjoy it after attempting to fulfill your part of the bargain, well, it's de gustibus and doesn't really bear

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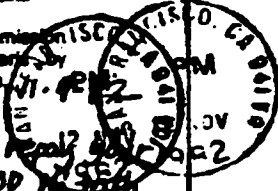
Simon Agree sent in this delightful postcard, and I couldn't resist publishing it whole for our various entertainments.

SIMON A. 532 BRIGHTON BLVD 94102

PAUL DUNLOP "L'Entrepose, Paris"
Watercolor, 28" x 40", 1980
from "Cafe Casino Suite," commission
to paint the neon lights of Paris
Cafe Casino, Beverly Hills, California

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arguing. But in any case, that's not a flaw of the book so much as an incalculable diversity on the part of the readership. So you're one of the people who didn't enjoy it. *shrug*. This is a fact, certainly, but not a legitimate criticism of the work.

While I think I appreciate your "defense" of Jubal Harshaw, nonetheless your final line sent me off into a severe case of the whoops: "Take him for all and all, we shall not see his like again." Oh, but Bill, of course we shall see his like again--and again and again and again and again, so long as Heinlein keeps on writing novels. Jubal Harshaw is Woodrow Wilson Smith a.k.a. Lazarus Long is Kettle Belly is Ruffo is "The Old Man" is Delos David Harriman is...well, all of those cantankerous eccentrics with at least two doctorates (or their equivalent in technical or engineering experience) who go armed and are usually also the best hand-to-hand fighter around and who are always ready to tell you just why it's a survival-of-the-fittest universe in which we live and how glad he is it's just that way and... What's in a name? An uncovered garbage pail, by any other, would smell just as bad.

rich brown

I'm glad you got some amusement out of my

defense of Jubal Harshaw (see—you've just justified his existence!). Seriously, I don't have much difficulty distinguishing among those characters of similar type—indeed, you can't read Heinlein with any enjoyment unless you can thread your way around types, because that's his principal mode of characterization. What you seem to be saying is that you don't like that type, whereas I'm saying I like some of the characters better than others. I like Jubal Harshaw and don't much care for Lazarus Long. Ruffo is a cypher, and Kettle-Belly Baldwin I dislike in either incarnation. And you forgot Hugh Farnham (eh—I don't think I'd care to speak with him twice) and Col. Baslim (who I like immensely), Mr. Stone (not nearly as interesting as Hazel, Dr. Stone, or Buster), and Deacon Matson, about whom I am ambivalent. Occasionally wearying but bright and likeable.

Heinlein's use of types is interesting. Very few modern authors use that mode of characterization, so I wonder where he got his models. Panshin's proposition that all his characters are a continuum of a single type is facially attractive, but I don't think it accounts for the phenomenon.

Robert Prokop Dear Bill,
1717 Aberdeen Cir. Tim Kyger's loc in
Crofton MD 21114 Quodlibet 15 was great!
The last lines on page 7
were especially interesting. How I know the feeling! I have had a life-long case of writer's block, so I can readily empathise with the effort involved in writing a loc. I have a good analogy for it-- about a year ago, I took up weightlifting for a winter exercise. When I'm at about the halfway point in my daily routine, the real pain begins and the will to finish is long gone. I have no idea what keeps me going at that point. That's what even starting to write is like for me. I am often astonished that I have locced Quodlibet as often as I have managed to. You have to give me credit. People were always asking me to write something or other back during the OSFFA days. And I never delivered.

You're in excellent company there--Gary Farber, to name but one of many significant people who rarely deliver. Eh?

I HATE to write. Thank you, Tim Kyger, for expressing so eloquently the anguish that the non-literati among us are so familiar with. Richard [Prokop] says se should be shot. I say, No, he should be praised with great praise. To you, Tim, I say Bravo. You have given words to the wordless--thoughts to the thoughtless--locs to the...? Locless? ... Whatever. And to Bill, I say Thank You, for having the editorial courage to print Tim Kyger's primal scream.

I fwow up.

The contributions to Quodlibet can so often be rather aetherial (I know my own can get "dry as dust"). It's a welcome addition to its contents to have such a sincerely spoken cry from the heart.

I fall over, kick twice, feebly, and expire.

On one (admittedly minor) point, I must register disagreement, however. E.T. is not a french-fried muppet. Doesn't Tim recognized sauteed when he sees it?

Bob Prokop

I seriously doubt it.

Thanksgiving happened recently, and as it's been awhile since we did a full menu in Quodlibet, and as at least one person on the mailing list appreciates such things, I thought I'd give you the menu and schedule I used for Thanksgiving dinner this year. As the turkey dinner menus is popular, it might be of more than passing interest.

A few comments before going into the menu, recipes, and schedule. First, I invited seventeen people this year, so the quantities reflect this fact. However, virtually everything can be scaled down by simply dividing the quantities. Second, this is a holiday feast menu, so I'm going to be doing some fripperies one might not ordinarily do. They are all tried-and-proved recipies, however, and I recommend them to all and sundry.

Third, I'm using a somewhat unusual method to cook the turkey--a total of forty hours at very low temperatures. Let me assure you that this is not only okay, it is the best way to prepare large roasts of any kind. The object of cooking is to get the center of the roast to 140° F. You can do this with high heats for a short period or low heats for a long period. So long as the center of the meat becomes 140° F, it does not matter. But, there is another aspect which does matter. Cooking at high heat causes the proteins to contract violently as they coagulate, squeezing out the meat's juices and toughening the meat. If you've ever had a fried egg you could hardly cut through, you know exactly what is meant. Cooking at low temperatures allows the protein to coagulate slowly, keeping the collagen-bearing juices inside the meat. So you get a moister and tenderer cut of meat, with much less shrinkage, and more flavor (because those collagenic juices are retained inside the meat) if you cook it very slowly. And, incidentally, for both gas and electric ovens, it is considerably cheaper to run the thing at low temperature for a long time than at high temperature for shorter time. Smaller roasts require a third the time this turkey takes, but it's a 23 lb. turkey and must be cooked longer.

For the usual 12-18 lb. turkey, eighteen to twenty-four hours at low temperature ought to do it.

And fourth, although I genuinely prefer meals made "from scratch" wherever possible, it's just not practical for a working person using an ordinary, domestic kitchen to try cooking a meal for seventeen people at one sitting. Consequently, I've been forced to find ways of using prepared foods in such a way that they do not taste like prepared foods. You will note in particular that the potatoes start out as instant flakes or buds. I guarantee they do not wind up tasting as if they were instant. So, at various places along the schedule, which includes the recipes, I'll stop and explain things. The schedule I used to make this was considerably shorter--a kind of memorandum list to jog my memory.

And with those comments out of the way...

THANKSGIVING DINNER (for seventeen)

Menu

Green salad romaine
Turkey
Mashed Potatoes
Stuffing
Green beans almondine
Candied Yams
Giblet Gravy
Cranberry sauce (medaillons of cream cheese)
Pumpkin pie
Chocolate mousse
Hot rolls
Butter & Strawberry preserves
Coffee (Guatemala-Antigua)
Chenin blanc
White Zinfandel
Cognac

Schedule

Monday, November 22, 1982

1. Shopping

1 lg. bag cornbread stuffing	pt. sour cream romano cheese
1 lg. bag whole wheat stuffing	8 oz. cream cheese
bakery rolls	1/2 gal. whipping cream
1 bunch celery	23 lb. turkey
6 medium onions	1 lb. link sausages
Romaine lettuce	2 lg. pkg. french-cut green beans
Boston lettuce	2 cans frozen orange juice
Tomatoes	3 Mrs. Smith's frozen Pumpkin pies
1 doz. eggs	
2 lbs. butter	

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1 lg. box mashed potatoes	Unsweetened chocolate
2 lg. cans yams	Vanilla extract
can lg. black olives	slivered almonds
2 cans cranberry sauce	chenin blanc
1 box chicken stock	White Zinfandel
1 lb. granulated sugar	Champagne
1 lb. brown sugar	Coffee
	Cognac
	Amontillado

2. Leave turkey out to thaw 24 hours.

(NB: This assumes you have the appropriate spices--nutmeg, sage, marjoram, thyme, basil, oregano, garlic, salt, pepper, etc. at home)

Tuesday, November 23, 1982

1. In the morning, before leaving for work, take out cream cheese to soften while at work.

2. During the day, pick up fresh supply of ground coffee. I've got half a pound at home, but we go through gallons of coffee.

3. Make stuffing. This is a real complicated procedure. Dice 6 onions coarsely. Dice 3 or 4 large stalks of celery coarsely. Beat four or five eggs with a cup of sherry. Make a gallon of chicken stock. (This is much more than you will need for the stuffing, but it won't go to waste: you're not getting as much drippings from the turkey as usual, so it will help fill out the gravy later). Dump the two bags of stuffing mix into the pan you will be roasting the turkey in. Add the diced vegetables and the eggs give it a preliminary stir. The object at this point is to let the bread start soaking up the liquid. Then season. This has to be done by eye and feel, as the quantity is so variable. In decreasing order: sage, garlic, oregano, basil and marjoram, salt, pepper. Give it a second stir. The mixture will be slightly moist but still quite lumpy. Then add in chicken stock to make it slightly damp, but still not wet. The bread cubes should still be cubical. If you overdo the moisture, dice up some bread and toss it in to keep the mixture fairly dry. Add black olives and sausages, if that is your taste.

4. Clean and dress the turkey. For frozen turkeys, this is simplicity itself. Unbag it, take the giblets out of the neck cavity, and rinse both neck and body cavities with cold, running water. Then rub the cavities with salt and garlic (the commercially-available garlic juice is very well adapted to this process--use a brush or be prepared to rinse your hands in vinegar afterwards). Put the bag of giblets back in the refrigerator (but not the freezer); you will use them later.

5. Stuff turkey, starting with the body cavity. Carry handful of stuffing to the back of the cavity, deposit it, then work on filling the rest of the cavity. Remember not to pack the stuffing too tightly, as it will expand during cooking. The neck cavity is smaller than the body cavity, but there is a large bag of skin which can cover the dressing.

There are two schools of thought about what to do with leftover dressing. The first says to pack it around the outside of the bird to prevent surface evaporation. The second says to cook it separately. The first method works fairly well but leaves the skin of the bird pale and somewhat unattractive at the table. It also produces a somewhat unappetizing crust. Further, the packing retains too much heat, so it's best to cook the remaining dressing separately, in a sealed container so it becomes steamed rather than roasted. The dressing can be refrigerated, as it does not require the same slow cooking the turkey is taking. Put the bird in your roasting pan, breast up.

And then there is the matter of lacing up the turkey. In the olden days, you had to sew the flaps of skin together, but this is unnecessary now. Most commercially-prepared birds come with an odd-shaped wire holding the legs together in front of the body cavity. It is necessary to unhook the legs before you can stuff it. If you leave the wire in the bird and slip the legs back under the wire when you've finished, you should not need to lace the turkey. When the bird is done, you can take the wire out of the bird. However, the flap of skin covering the neck cavity may require trussing. The simplest way I have found to take care of this stuffed cavity is to get one long skewer through the flap of skin and into the skin of the bird's back and out again on the opposite side of the back to hold it in place. As the stuffing expands, it produces a nicely rounded bag of stuffing which can simply be sliced.

6. This turkey is going to be basted with a sherry-orange baste. Partly to protect the skin from drying out during cooking and partly to start the basting process, slice four or five oranges as thin as you can get the slices and still retain their integrity. Macerate them briefly in sherry--dry, but only medium dry. I have a dry Spanish amontillado which is perfect for this sort of thing. Then balance an orange slice on the center of the bird's breast and, using toothpicks, tack other orange slices to the first one all around. Do the same for each of the new slices. What you are doing is stapling together an orange-slice "blanket" to cover the turkey. It may be necessary to tack the orange slices to the skin, but try to avoid this, as pricking the

skin makes it unsightly. When the cooking is done, the orange slices will be quite hard and glazed, if not caramelized. The blanket can (usually) be picked up as a single piece and discarded.

7. Start the turkey in the late evening at 140° F. If your oven controls are inaccurate, you can buy an oven thermometer or, even better, a meat thermometer. (NB. It is not really necessary to begin cooking the turkey this soon. If I didn't have to go to work, I'd start cooking it at 140° F in the morning. There is negligible danger at this point of incubating pasturella or salmonella bacteria, as the temperature goes through the optimum culturing curve fairly rapidly, and what danger there is is partially offset by using fresh eggs, lots of garlic and onion, and cooking at this higher temperature to destroy the bacteria before they can produce toxic concentrations of poisons. 140° F is comfortably above the coagulation point of protein, both the turkey's and the bacterias'. One may take consolation from the fact that it is impossible to "overcook" the meat at this temperature, no matter how long it is in the oven. And it is somewhat more dangerous to leave the stuffed bird at room temperature).

8. Make cream cheese molds for cranberry sauce. I left the cream cheese out to soften. Sometime between making the dressing and stuffing the bird, put the cream cheese in a large bowl, sweeten it, and grate in orange rind and/or pulp. Beat the cream cheese with a whisk or electric mixer. When the mixture is smooth, put it into butter molds (you don't have butter molds? Try bottle caps or anything that will make a mold about half an inch on a side) and freeze it long enough for it to get its solidity back. As each mold chills, you can dump the pieces of cream cheese on a plate and cover them with plastic wrap to keep them from drying out and discoloring. Eventually you're going to put them on rounds of jellied cranberry sauce to provide a contrast and make it noticeable. Otherwise the cranberry sauce gets neglected, I've found.

(NB. This whole procedure should not take more than two hours. Also, I've added a pint of sour cream to the dressing in the past. Tim Kyger approves--which is virtually the ultimate accolade.)

Wednesday, November 24, 1982

1. Make triple recipe of chocolate mousse. This is, again, simplicity itself. Exact amounts of sugar, vanilla, and chocolate are not given, as

they should be done to taste, and everybody's taste differs.

First melt chocolate with cognac and sugar. Stir briskly until the solution is smooth and glossy. Allow to cool. Beat three or four half-pints of whipping cream with sugar, vanilla, and cognac. When it is glossy and forms soft peaks, set it aside in the refrigerator. Melt four packets (about one-and-a-quarter tablespoons per half-pint of cream) of unflavored gelatin in warm water, stirring until the gelatin dissolves. Take about a dozen egg whites. (Eggs are very easily separated--hold your hand over a clean bowl so that the fingers are almost touching each other. Break the egg and allow it to fall on your fingers. The white will drip into the bowl, leaving the yolk sitting on your fingers. Put it in another bowl and think pleasantly anticipatory thoughts about hollandaise sauce. Unlike other procedures for separating eggs, this one can be repeated very rapidly, with two or more eggs on the hand at one time). Beat the eggs until they are stiff. Fold in the gelatin mixture.

Now you must work rapidly, as the egg whites will start separating the moment you stop beating them. Fold the refrigerated whipped cream into the egg whites, then the cooled chocolate. If you are using individual glasses (which I am not, as I don't have seventeen of them), this is the time to transfer them into the glasses. Otherwise, pour the mixture carefully into the bowl in which you will serve it and refrigerate overnight to give the gelatin time to firm up.

An interesting and not quite so delicate variation on this technique is to not separate the eggs and beat the whole eggs together with sugar and chocolate over boiling water at high speed. This produces a foamy, very smooth egg mixture which is the basis for the Cabinet Pudding Bavarian and the Italian dessert called Zabaiglione. As the egg mixture does not separate, you can work in a more leisurely fashion toward the end. The only problem with this is that you need a large double boiler and an extension cord that will allow you to take the hand-held mixer to the stove.)

2. Refrigerate cranberry sauce.

3. Bake pumpkin pies. This will save wear and tear on the oven tomorrow, if you can fit them one at a time in with the bird. As pumpkin pie is basically a custard, the same comments apply to it as to the cooking of the turkey. Or, if you are less patient than that, you can take the bird out to cook all the pies. It will only take an hour, and the bird won't suffer for being out of the oven for such a short time. A third alternative is to cook the pies on Tuesday night

and leave them to season in the refrigerator. Like a lot of highly-spiced, blended foods, pumpkin pie is best when it has had a couple of days in a cool place to mature.

4. It might be a good idea to start your giblet gravy at this point. Take the bag of giblets you reserved from the turkey and cut each of them (including the neck) into tiny chunks. Cover them with water in a big pan and start simmering. You will simmer it and simmer it and simmer it. This is just the beginning of the gravy. It will eventually be bulked out with chicken stock and take the drippings and remainder of the baste (sherry and orange) before it's thickened.

Thursday, November 25, 1982

9:30 Make yourself a good breakfast--it's all you're going to have time for until 2:00 p.m. It's also helpful to go around and clean up at this point, because utensils tend to become buried under heaps of cooking things.

10:00 Start creamed potatoes. As you are making instant potatoes, this means boiling as much water as you will need. While you are waiting for the water to boil, grate a handful of romano cheese (or parmesan if you prefer; romano has a milder, richer taste to my palate), and slice one or two medium onions as thin as you can get the slices. Do this by cutting the top and bottom off the unpeeled onion, stripping the outer layers away, and cutting the onion into two symmetrical chunks from the top and through the middle. Then lay the hemispherical chunks flat, cut side down, and slice rapidly from top to bottom. This will give you thin half-sections of a semi-circular shape. Break the onion into slivers--if you crumble it in the fingers, that's enough. When the water comes to a boil, measure in one-and-a-quarter times as much instant potato as the recipe calls for. Then add one whole egg for each two cups of potatoes (or the egg yolks you have saved from the mousse). Stir everything together with additional butter and the entire tub of sour cream. Cover the potatoes and set them aside until you turn the oven up to brown the turkey.

Somewhere in the middle of this preparation, you need to start making your sherry-orange-butter baste. Do this by taking the frozen orange juice concentrate and putting about half-a-cup into a saucepan with a quarter-pound of butter and a cup of your dry sherry. Just allow it to melt and stir it together, leaving it on the stove but not on a burner. You don't want it to cool completely, but you don't want to reduce it,

either.

11:30 Start green beans. This means boiling more water for your frozen beans. When the water in which you are steaming the beans reaches a boil, dump the beans in. When it is significantly reduced, replace it with a couple cups of a dry, white wine--preferably the chenin blanc you are serving. Grate in an appropriate amount of nutmeg, add a pinch of sugar, some pepper, and a sufficiency of butter. Turn the heat down and continue steaming until the beans are no longer "woody."

11:30 Make the salad and begin chilling it.

12:00 Take the bird out of the oven and remove the orange-slice "blanket." Turn the oven up to 350° F. From now on you will be watching it closely and basting it with the sherry-orange sauce every five minutes or so until it is brown.

You will need to make room in the oven for the potatoes. When the egg-onion-cheese-and-sour cream has been mixed in with the potatoes, season them, dot the top with butter, and put the container into the high oven to bake for 40-50 minutes, until the potatoes are slightly puffed. At this point, they can be removed to a heating tray.

12:30 Assemble cranberry sauce by turning the chilled sauce onto decorative plates, slicing it into 3/8" rounds, and placing a frozen cream cheese medaillon on the center of each round. The cream cheese will become soft very rapidly whether you leave the plate out or return it to the refrigerator.

1:00 Your helpers should begin setting the table.

1:30 The turkey should be done. Remove it

from the oven and put it on your serving tray to cool. Add the pan drippings and whatever remains of the baste to the giblet gravy. Remove the chunks of meat with a slotted spoon or strainer. Put the gravy on the heat and bring it to a slow simmer. Dissolve one heaping tablespoon of cornstarch per cup of liquid into enough water to form a stirrable liquid. Pour the cornstarch mixture into the hot gravy and whisk rapidly. At first, the gravy will be cloudy and white, but it will rapidly become translucent and glossy. Turn off the heat at this point and cover the gravy.

1:50 Rolls go into oven to bake.
Do any necessary reheating of vegetables

2:00 Serve dinner. If you are serving ice cream with the pies, take it out of freezer to soften while you're eating.

You actually have a bit of leeway at this point for things to go wrong. Serve the salad as a separate first course at the table. That will give you fifteen to twenty minutes to bring everything else up to speed, if necessary.

I served this using a large and small dining room table to seat people, and a six-foot library table as a buffet. By placing the salad on plates at the table, I got everyone away from the sideboard long enough to bring everything in without being picked at.

The pumpkin pie should be brought out on the sideboard for the immediate post-prandial dessert. At 4:30 or so, take out chocolate mousse and serve with champagne to finish off the meal.

It's also a good idea to start water boiling for coffee immediately before you sit down and plan on interrupting your meal long enough to make one batch of coffee and start another. Post-prandial coffee and conversation often goes on for hours.

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