

QUODLIBET (quōd'-lĭ-bĕt) 19

QUODLIBET 19 is brought to you on an irregular and entirely whimsical basis by Bill Patterson, 537 Jones Street, No. 9943, San Francisco, California 94102. Available for locs, trades, or contribution only. That is, editorial whim, Kyger! OK, I've tried doing an entire 46-page genzine with hand-lettered titles, and I don't much care for the effect. So I'm back to doing it according to my eye instead of TW's. Begun February 3, 1983.

When last we spoke, I mentioned enrolling in a wine club--"The Wines of California." Each month, the distributor sends two bottles of the same varietal, but from different vineyards, for a total cost, delivered, of about \$11.00, varying slightly from month to month. Each box comes with a five-page fact sheet describing the varietal and the vintners. January was my first month, and the selections were Gamay Beaujolais from the Fritz 1979 and Robert Carey 1980 vintages. I opened the Carey immediately and found it to be quite oaky and "passive," the grape flavor become somewhat thin and "melon-y." Not to my taste. A week or so later I tapped the Fritz and was quite pleased with it. The first thing that strikes one with the beaujolais in general is the bitter, slightly musty tastes of tannin or oak. This wine combined the flavors in an interesting way, so that both struck the palate at the same time and intensity with a single flavor at once oaky and tannic. Colored slightly more ruby than I'm used to (the fact-sheet said "ruby with rust around the edges"), the Fritz was quite pleasantly assertive, forcefully reminding one of its close relationship with the pinot noir varietal than I'm used to with a usually light gamay beaujolais.

Gamay beaujolais should be drunk quite young, so neither will ever develop much more "complexity" than it has now, but the Fritz is definitely suitable for cellaring for up to a couple of years.

With any luck, I'll have the second monthly package before completing this issue of Quodlibet.

Fandom Lives! In San Francisco, no less. You've heard me complain numerous times about the lack of fandom in SF. We have the Little Men's and Fanatics in the East Bay, to be sure--and PENSFA in Half Moon Bay. Both are inconvenient and...er...not, shall we say, to everyone's taste. But a kind of "underground" fandom has been flourishing at occasional parties sited from Lower Mission to Milpitas for some time. I see you. You see me. Isn't it great to get together

again, eh? And who is that odd person, quite drunk, in the corner, doing a McKenzie Brother to himself?

Such tutelage as "metro" fandom (I give it this name for our "underground"--Muni Metro) has had has been provided (I think I could have gotten in a couple more "has"s and "had"s if I had really thought about it...) by

Gary and Patty and Patty and Gary Mattingly, whose occasional parties were the talk of our little town. About a week ago, Patty and Gary found Travel Lounge, a quiet, neighborhood bar on Market at Valencia across from the Travel Lodge and, completely coincidentally, only three blocks from my flat. So they called a buncha people and told them to meet there at 9:30 on Saturday--Saturday so as not to conflict with Little Men's Friday meetings. Well, this should be interesting. I promised to bring a backgammon set to supplement the bar's billiards tables.

Saturday was rainy and cold, and I was running a slight temperature (frequently to the terlit. My flat is pre-1910, and therefore our conveniences are not on the American Plan--the WC and the bathtub are in rooms separate, albeit side-by-side). When 9:30 p.m. rolled around, I was wrapped up in blankets and engrossed in Tribes, the made-for-TV movie starring Darren McGavin and Jan Michael Vincent, about the drafting of a "hippy" into the Marines. But I thought I should at least make an appearance to support the effort. So when the movie was over at 10:00, I dragged myself out of bed, cleaned up a bit, and walked the three drizzly blocks to the Travel Lounge, backgammon case in hand.

As promised, there were only five or six "regular" customers there, but the back room was stuffed with people--some of whom I even recognized. Metro Fandom had arrived.

I think everyone tried out the billiards tables at least once. When I arrived, a couple of the bar's "regular" customers were playing Zen billiards--they would lean over and position their cues, then wait for minutes at a time before doing anything, presumably becoming one with the cue ball or something. The fans and fannish conversation milled around them, watching curiously and waiting for a move. Finally, someone scratched the 8-ball, and they left the back room to us. Oh, Patty won both backgammon games. She apologized, as, being slightly drunk already, she had the advantage.

By the time I left at 12:30, perhaps

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twenty-five people had come and (some of them) gone, and the gathering was still going strong. A number of these people I had not met before. I was very pleased that the ambience was as comfortable as that of a long-established group: there were no long silences or uncertainties; people met and combined and recombined easily in conversation or games. The bar has an adequate, if not outstanding, juke box; the drinks are priced moderately; and the owner is pleasantly tolerant (actually, I imagine he's pleased to have the business). Although the bar has no food facilities, there are a number of neighborhood grocery stores and restaurants within easy walking distance, and one exceptionally good restaurant--the Zuni Cafe--only a block down Market. For hard-core cases, there is an all-night (shudder) Zim's at Market and Van Ness.

Patty and Gary intend to hold/host these gatherings bi-weekly, but I feel that insufficient, so I intend to show up weekly at 9:30 or so.

Local fandom lives in SF. Long may it wave.

Y'know, local fandoms are each a unique and precious thing. They offer to everyone the same opportunity for catching-up and engrossing conversation with a wide variety of people on lots-and-lots of different subjects as conventions do without the corresponding disadvantage of being wired with exhaustion or having to rush off somewhere. Furthermore, although the range of personality is necessarily more limited than at major conventions, they're always there to drop in on or not. There is no real time-constraint. If something else conflicts, by all means go to the something else with easy conscience and drop in afterwards--or not. And there is a corresponding advantage to the limitation: you have an opportunity to know each person well, to capture the convolutions of their personality in a way that can only be developed, if at all, through long and occasionally arduous fanzining and convention-going. People, individually, are endlessly fascinating, even those to whom you have no call of affection. I've missed having a local fandom since 1977. I'm glad to find one again.

Only in San Francisco. Did I say last issue that SF was becoming "Chicago-ized"? Well, perhaps not entirely. A couple days ago, I was leafing



through the yellow pages coupon section ("The Gold Pages," a new offering starting this year), looking for a pizza place that delivered, and ran across a coupon on the first page for "\$5.00 discount. Massage-Escort. Aphrodite's. 239-0661." I kid you not. Bemused, I kept turning through the "Free Cataract Books" and "10% off on purchase of shoes" coupons and found on page three "5.00 Discount. Outcall Massage (with this coupon) Adults Only 386-1420." You think I am joking? Not so. I reprint these finds above for your instruction and delectation.

I'm reading Albert Jay Nock's Memoirs of a Superfluous Man--came across a copy of the 1943 edition in almost perfect condition at Aardvark Books (come to think of it, that's where I got my Prophet of San Francisco, too. How do they keep turning up these odd books?), and I'm thoroughly delighted with it. Nock's Memoirs is an "intellectual autobiography," comparable in some respects to The Education of Henry Adams. But Nock's prose is both witty and incisive. For instance, speaking about his mixed French and British heritage, he says: "The truth is, I inherited almost nothing on the paternal side, and what little I got is almost wholly by way of external characteristics...The

only internal characteristic that I can identify positively as coming from this side is my unreasoning jealousy in behalf of the appalling vagaries of my native tongue. Nothing else arouses this peculiar emotion; such feelings as I have for other things is wholly a reasoned affair, leading me into no emotional excesses; that is to say, it is fundamentally more French than English. The Englishman holds himself privileged to criticise his people and their most cherished institutions as freely as he likes, but he will not extend that privilege to others; and their assumption of it, even when such assumption is most notoriously justifiable, at once touches off a display of irrational resentment. With the Frenchman (as far as my observation goes) the case is somewhat different. He may be quite as devoted to his Marianne as the Englishman is to his Britannia, and quite as well aware that the object of his devotion has a repulsive birthmark on her shoulder. He will not cover up the birthmark, however, and pretend it is not there; nor will he assure the stranger that the thing is not at all a birthmark but a superbly contrived beauty-spot, and that nothing but envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness prevents the world from accepting and admiring it as such. Wandering around the Poitou at the time of the last Presidential election in France, I asked a worthy Poitevin who the next President was likely to be. He shrugged his shoulders with an expression of the utmost indifference, and replied, 'I don't know,--some old cow.' If he had asked the question, and I had given that answer, he might well have thought my manners were none too good, but ten to one he would have smiled at the sally, and said, 'C'est tout a fait ca.' Hardly so the Englishman.

"It amuses me to see how true to type I run in one particular; I am as unintelligently and absurdly jealous of the injustices, inhumanities, iniquities, of our language as any good Briton is of those inhering in his flagitious imperialism. Like him, I refuse to see them as unjust, inhumane, iniquitous. I insist that they are just, beneficent, and in accordance with the will of God. If foreigners have trouble with them, I agree that it is most unfortunate, but really we can't think of regularising the exquisitely asymmetrical symmetries of our noble tongue merely to accommodate foreigners. Let the foreigner sweat them out himself; it serves him right for presumption in having been born to the use of a language so far inferior. My French blood rises up at this, calling it the bland hypocritical arrogance of l'Albion perfide, la Grande Voleuse. Then, English-like, I am moved to insist in all honesty that it is nothing of the kind. It is merely the humble and pious recognition of certain verities which were

established before the foundations of the world were laid. Since our adorable Creator, in His wisdom and in His loving-kindness, endowed the Briton with the natural right to rule, it was fitting that He should have endowed him with command of a majestic and imperial language. Since He ordained the immeasurable superiority of British character, customs, laws and institutions, the Untouchables of the world must respect the idiom in which that superiority is not only proclaimed but exhibited. It is painful to find this attitude put down as arrogant and hypocritical when we Britons are actually the most simple-hearted of mankind; but what is one to do?

"I must confess that when the English half of my being rears up in this preposterous fashion, the French half laughs most indecorously at the capers I cut. It gently pulls my sleeve, and bids me once more study prayerfully the immortal figure of Homenas praising the Decretals. Fortunately this seldom happens; the French half controls me completely, I think, in every department of spiritual activity save only where this matter of linguistics comes in; and here I am as densely, as impenetrably, English as Palmerston himself."

The temptation is great to quote at length; for Nock continues in this deliciously ironic tone for--well, as far as I've gotten in the book.

I've had a run of quite good books recently. A month ago or so reading palled on me. I borrowed a copy of John LeCarre's A Small Town in Germany and found it heavy going--not that the actual mystery involved was especially complex, but LeCarre spends so much time wading through the protagonist's class-consciousness woes, chewing over the same material again and again that the book wound up lying face-down on the nightstand, not yet finished. Conscience nags me occasionally (it is, after all, a borrowed book), and I pick it up and try to get through another few pages. *Yawn* Then I tried Tom Tryon's The Other, remembering with pleasure the dark and weird atmosphere of Harvest Home. I enjoyed The Other up to the point at which it is revealed that the boy is actually both brothers, at which point I lost interest abruptly. It, too, is face down on the nightstand, and I haven't even the urge of guilty conscience to return to it.

Gail Kolthoff found out that I had never read an acknowledged classic of modern literature, The Loved One, and handed me a copy at work last week. I've been enjoying that a few pages at a time. Waugh's writing is so deliciously malicious and dryly witty--and, of course, there's not a particle of truth in the entire book, so its malice is "safe"--that it has tempted my jaded palate. I chortled through the last page

today (February 8). Perfect pick-me-up.

In the meantime, I've had an excellent biography of the Inklings (which contains, in the acknowledgements, a thanks to Doug Woods when he was a student at Wheaton), as carefully and thoroughly researched as Brabazon's biography of Dorothy Sayers last year but written not quite so heavy-handedly, and a clean-up anthology of H. Beam Piper's "miscellaneous" stories. Unfortunately, this leaves me with only two Piper books as yet unread--Ullar Uprising, and his extant historical novel, the title of which I forget. Eventually, I will have read all of Piper and experienced the last of the particular eclaircissement he is able to give me. Piper was a complex--extraordinarily complex--personality and writer, maintaining a unique balance of irreconcilable political and historical principles. When Bill Tuning and Mike Kurland got ahold of Piper's materials, (For Fuzzy Sapiens and First Cycle, respectively), they tried to respect the materials, but wound up overemphasizing the elements they were each fondest of in Piper's work. The resulting novels had none of Piper's own balance and were, ultimately, just fantasies on themes Piper dreamed up, more ersatz than echt.

Further to SF Fandom: Loren MacGregor has named this gathering very aptly--"Lounge Lizards" we are. He's composed a very witty piece on the first meeting and sent it off to P/T Nielsen Hayden, so it should be appearing shortly in either Izzard (Locus redidivus, if no. 5 is any indication) or the rumored next installment of Telos.

PRINTED WITHOUT COMMENT. I received this peculiar loc, you see...

Scouter Brillo,
134 Harbor Oaks Circle Santa Cruz CA 95062
Actually writing a letter to Squidlibbit.
Hm, this is amusing.
Betcha never though you'd hear from me again.
(appropriate location for editorial "Well, I had hoped....")

I've actually written about four letters to you; generally they aren't finished and then not mailed. However this time I've finally got something to say other people might find of interest.

I just finished reading Spider Robinson's Apology for Heinlein in Time Travelers Strictly Cash and--gullible elf that I am--I was all fired up and went right out and bought Expanded Universe and I Will Fear No Evil...I figured, you know mebbie I have been judging him by old standards (viz., his older books up through Moon is a Harsh Mistress) and I ought to read his more

recent stuff! Maybe too many people simply react to him as if he was still as militaristic and sexist in the 80s as he was in the 50s when everybody was, not taking the time to see that he'd changed. Maybe people were sniping at him solely because he was R-o-b-e-r-t-A-n-s-o-n-H-e-i-n-l-e-i-n and it was the in thing to do. Maybe we were all misjudging the man.

Nope.

I must say that I Will Fear No Evil is perhaps one of the worst books I've ever read. I am struggling to even get into it, trying to give the author a fair shake. I've only managed to get to the point where Boss has had the operation transferring his brain to another body (which--surprise! smells suspiciously like it'll be Miss Blow-Job, the secretary who has nothing better to do than display herself for a doddering geezer's jollytime.)

Don't know about any of you out there in Quadlummoxtown but I find Mrs. Branca not only utterly unbelievable as a human being but thoroughly revolting as a representative of women. To my mind she is the stereotypical Heinlein female character, not the "strong, intelligent, capable, independent, sexually aggressive women characters" Robinson prates about but women who would be equally at home in a beauty pageant or the pages of Playboy; not women who are "smarter, more practical, and more courageous than men," but instead chicks who fall into the nearest man's arms whenever danger threatens--in exemplum: [there follows a long quotation from I Will Fear No Evil, the moment Jake Salomon and Eunice Branca are attacked in Smith's armored limousine.]

Not only is that the exact opposite of what Robinson seems to see in Heinlein Heroines it is an example of some of the worst writing I've seen in a published novel. He leads off with such classics of moving diction as "stitched the length of the car" and "the din was ear-splitting," segues into that smooth section where Salomon actually allows Mrs. Branca to use the familiar with him--such an honor for a mere secretary to an attorney!--and Heinlein then throws into this mess some of the clumsiest empty complimenting and sexual hinting I've seen (innuendo and out the other, as they say) such as "Your arms are so strong," "feel safer in it if you hold me," "you seem ever so much younger," and of course the omnipresent "little snuggle puppy." Jake. Dear Jake. Sweet Eunice. Jake! Ja-ake! Eu-uu-u-nice!!

Check out Betsy in Star Beast. I can't imagine her doing anything but standing petulantly with a hand on her hip wagging a finger at whazisface and nagging. Throughout the whole book she practically "oh-you-silly-men"s him to death. Consider Pee-Wee and the Mother Thing in Have

Space Suit, Will Travel. The Mother Thing--is exactly that. A powerful furry mommie, her loving motherly instincts rising to the rescue; and as for the other, what can you say about the depth of a character who will answer to "Pee-Wee," for Rhiannon's sake?! Admittedly Moon is a Harsh Mistress has some nice female characters (all the older women in the marriage) but none of them had the literary stature of Wyoh, and she was a lifeless wimp. It was a hell of a change from the previous books to have any recognizably human females at all! In Stranger we are treated to the performance of Jubal Harshaw's Wandering Harem who dote on his every word as if he were Christ Incarnate (which role was of course taken by Mike, who could do anything to anybody anytime anywhere--rather a dull character). Their function (collective) seems to be to advance the plot by making advances to every three-legged that didn't move too fast. "Oh my life is fulfilled! I can sleep with a Martian!"

As to militarism you only have to read (in quick succession) Starship Troopers and The Forever War (Haldeman). This will give you a fair idea of some of the aspects of war and militaristic societies that Heinlein glossed over without so much as a reference (societies where not only can only veterans hold office or vote, but only vets can teach History and Moral Philosophy--presumably on the grounds that only the military has a moral philosophy. But I quire agree...a society run by veterans probably would allow only vets to teach that.)

Moon is a Harsh Mistress: a small cabal of elites get together and decide they will force a revolution down the people's collective throat for their own good. Everything's rigged so that by definition this is a Good. They plan it and do it. Lotsa people get killed with never a qualm. At the end do they free the people? Nah, they set up another government. Luna no longer a controlled penal colony...now it's a free penal colony. I see little difference between the de la Paz's and the Sandinistas of the world.

Heinlein doesn't convince. He pronounces. He doesn't examine questions. He explains them. This is so, and this, and this...now do you understand? I looked up and read parts of Alexei Panshin's Heinlein in Dimension, one of Robinson's biggest bugaboos--"I have...heard one too many talentless writers...take potshots at the man who made it possible for them to avoid honest work," Robinson says, but the only writers he mentions are Tom Disch, Alexei Panshin, James Blish, Fred Pohl, and Robert Sheckley none of whom I can regard as talentless and several of whom I think are better writers than Heinlein (wouldn't be hard). Expanded Universe is little better than I Will Fear No Evil in my

struggles to read it. The early stories are often easier to read without gagging but the commentary in between is worse, for it is Heinlein not a character speaking. He says "I had some doubt about republishing this ("Blowups Happen") because of the current ignorant fear of fission power, recently enhanced by the harmless flap at Three Mile Island."

Jesus fucking christ on a tricycle! I'm surely joyed that he wasn't one of the physicists or techs working on the problem at the time! All of them were scared shitless, and in Congressional testimony they've admitted there were times when they were honestly afraid it was going to blow-up--not just melt down--because of the hydrogen bubble. There were numerous safety system failures, but the most crucial was that the technicians freaked and didn't react properly. These people had the best of training--it didn't work. Since then the NRC has shut down somewhere between fifteen and twenty nuclear power plants, generally because of falsified security and safety reports--often the plants hadn't even had an inspection for years and just kept filing forged or bribed passing papers with the NRC. Pipes that were expected to last fifty years have corroded almost through in only fifteen or twenty, reactors have cost twice to four times their original estimates, and sometimes are never finished at all and their multibillion dollar cost passed directly on to the customers with no return whatsoever--this so the poor beleaguered stockholders in PG&E and Illinois Power don't have to lose money.

But the most telling factor is this: in "Blowups Happen," the company that runs the plant has some (debatable) computations which show a blow-up wouldn't be so bad. They stick to them. Even when an engineer from the Naval Observatory (note: not a mathematician from Princeton or a Physicist from Berkeley, but an engineer from the Navy) shows that the calculations are incorrect, the company refuses to listen...profit is more important to them than the destruction of humanity. They will continue to falsely reassure people that all is well regardless of whether all is well. Heinlein in 1940 understood corporate ethics.

There is only one group of people associated with Three Mile Island who refer to the incident as a harmless flap: Babcoxon & Wilson and Metropolitan Edison (of GPU), who built and owned it respectively. None of the technicians, engineers, scientists, judges, NRC officials, politicians, or residents thought it a harmless flap. To be sure some members of the public did, but they weren't directly involved and their opinion--colored by bias--is of little consequence. There is only one group of people

Heinlein could have gotten that little titbit from...the Company. Apparently his understanding of corporate ethics did not survive the thirty-nine years between "Blowups Happen" and the blowup happening.

"Three Mile Island was a serious problem, but I still think on average fission power is viable because zabba zabba zabba..." would have been an opinion, an argument, worthy of examination and response. "A harmless flap" is so asinine as to be beneath notice. The fact that there wasn't much radiation released is irrelevant: the possibility was strongly present. On this principle the Gunpowder Treason Plot was a harmless flap because they caught Fawkes before he lit the fuse to blow up Parliament and all the ministers and royalty. The cyanide poisoning of the reservoir in the midwest was a harmless flap because the lunatic didn't use enough cyanide to kill anyone and the coppers were able to find out quickly it had been done.

[Circa 770 words deleted on the subject of social utility of abortion]

Censorship: Alexander Mikeljohn has pointed out that Freedom of Speech is actually two rights--the weaker form is the right to say what you want, the stronger is the right of the citizen to hear what someone says. Thus by restricting information, the Texas school system is fundamentally attacking the First Amendment, even if they let the children say anything they want. They aren't allowing them to know their choices, they aren't allowing them the most crucial exercise of their freedom of speech--the freedom to hear. Sure the jesoids have the right to say whatever they want--and we have the right to choose whether to listen. But they can't stop you from hearing without breaking the most basic trust a free people must have in its government, which I think the Bill of Rights represents--the right to think and be different.

Interesting that just as I picked up Queered-vomit 17 and read about Anna Hastings I had just finished Spinrad's Iron Dream, a fictional novel (not redundant in this case) by Adolf Hitler. Incidentally that's a great book for anybody who enjoys psychoanalyzing writers by their fiction; Spinrad tried to write it as Adolf Hitler would have had he quit radical politics in the twenties and emigrated to the U.S. and become a Sci-Fi writer in the Golden Age. Probably would've been good friends with Heinlein (having looked up the dictionary definition of fascism I am convinced a) that Hitler was a fascist even though Mussolini started it, and b) that Heinlein's books are often fascistic. ((despite the fact that I have read many of the works of Heinlein, am not woefully ignorant, and the inconsistency of these three conditions as expressed by Spider Robinson)). [Sic]

(Well, okay, I'm "woefully ignorant" in the sense that I've read the Bible and still don't believe in the Church, but that's not what I meant.)

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaag! Urgh! Earth in Upheaval! First to read the words LA fans and then Bruce Pelz on the same page! I'm sorry, you must forgive me; in my formative years I was a sci-fi fan and hung around LASFS entirely too much, learning great loathe for B.P. &c.

Hm. I dunno, back to Heinlein, maybe I'm just burned 'cause after reading Robinson I expected so much of the old buzzard. Did I just get a bad book? Or is I Will Fear No Evil representative of his recent works? If it is he's a lost cause as far as I'm concerned--and if a lot of his women characters are based on Virginia then either she's a pretty bizarre person or else they're pretty bad models. Wait! I think I've got it--boring old fart--makes pronouncements--multiple degrees yet still an idiot--chauvinistic--militaristic--libertarian of the "l.k.a.e.t.p." breed ("let's kill and eat the poor!...a small subclass of libertarianism)--I figured it out...Jerry Pournelle is a Heinlein character!

Incidentally he and some other sci-fi bozos are in my newest story my best (and longest) so far: "There Arrives a Personality Cold and Black, From the Totality of its Tiny Shelf." The title is undecidable as to whether it has meaning. So is much of the story, I hope. Very influenced by Robert Anton Wilson John Sladek Thomas Disch Phil Dick and I doubt in that league but showing strong signs of relationship. My writing style isn't like any of theirs thank the Lady--I don't want to be imitative just influenced--but I dig their ideas of a) structural importance where the medium is consciously part of the message [sic], b) nonlinearity (esp. Sladek and Wilson), c) undecidability in a mathematical sense--viz., things can simultaneously be true and untrue, meaningful and meaningless, &c., &c. Have you read much of Wilson and Sladek? (I know you've probably read every book by the latter two).

Well I should terminate (good place for editorial cement: how thoughtful of you!) before I start rambling like Jubal Pournelle. One point responding to previous response: everyone has "lacunae" in their educations--for instance I bet I could run rings around you mathematically--but references which will probably be obscure to most people (and early history of the International Workers of the World certainly falls in that drawer) should still be explained. If I referred to the orthogonal curve or Hblder's or Minkowski's inequalities I would assume they required a bit of referencing--such as mentioning that the above curve, if you take any four points along its length say a b c d, then the line from a to b is at right angles to the line

from c to d (imagine a spiral wrapping tighter and tighter) and that Hölder's and Minkowski's inequalities say respectively that if p and q are real numbers such that $1/p + 1/q = 1$, then Σfg is less than or equal to $(\Sigma f\text{-to-the-}p)$ to-the- $1/p$ for any functions f and g which are measurable (integrable) and $[\Sigma (f+g)$ to-the- $p]$ to-the- $1/p$ is less than or equal to $(\Sigma f\text{-to-the-}p)$ to-the- $1/p$ + $(\Sigma g\text{-to-the-}p)$ to-the- $1/p$. This is true not only on the real and complex lines, but on any measure space, any space which is integrable. Notice on the Minkowski Inequality that if $1/p + 1/q = 1$, $q = 1/(1-1/p)$, which is solvable for any p greater than 1 (neither p nor q is allowed to be negative) and so Minkowski's is true for any real p greater than 1, as q doesn't appear in it. There see? I didn't berate you on your "lacunae" I just realized it was a specialized field and explained by references. Otherwise you're just being a smartass, like writing key phrases of a story in Greek on the assumption that--"why, any properly educated fellow knows his Greek!" and then looking pained and surprised when people say they don't. Unless maybe you were joking in which case might I take this opportunity to point out as Bill Warren often has to me that tone of voice doesn't translate well to paper.

Oops getting longer by the second (he said), should rush and mail before it gets too long to send through the Post Awful and I have to split it up into smaller pieces to stuff it in. Chow.

Scouter

And there goes my last chance of keeping this to six pages. Oh, well, as long as I'm about it...

Victor Reppert
508 E. Broadway Ln.
Tempe AZ 85282

Dear Bill,
....There are quite a few people who find it difficult to believe

that there really are any anarchists around who are serious about their doctrine. My father thinks no anarchist really means what he/she says, they only mean to destroy an existing government for the purpose of getting one more to their liking. Part of the reason I've asked you all those elementary and perhaps wearisome questions (in our correspondence outside Quodlibet) is that I have a lot of trouble explaining anarchism to people like this.

Join the crowd.

I realize that just because it's difficult to imagine how one could hold a certain view it doesn't necessarily follow that the view is wrong. I would be equally difficult for an Elizabethan to imagine what it would be like to believe in democracy: the idiocy of letting the people rule would be taken as axiomatic.

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A problem concerning anarchism does occur to me. Anarchist societies like the one on Luna (in The Moon is a Harsh Mistress) rely on an unwritten legal code which does the job of the written code in preventing chaotic or intolerable state of affairs. Note that the institution of the family, unorthodox though it is on Luna, is strong and healthy. In more primitive cultures, a powerful unwritten code maintains stability and governmental machinery is unneeded. One does what has always been done or isn't around long. In our culture nongovernmental institutions like the family are in sorry shape. No traffic in child pornography could possibly go on in a society with a strong family. If anarchy were to break out in this country tomorrow, would our nongovernmental institutions be strong enough to take up the slack?

That isn't a "problem" of the anarchist system of thought--it is the strongest positive argument for the system. Look around you. Even though we exist in one of the most pervasive states in history, still well over 90% of our daily transactions are completely ungoverned by statute and governed instead by our own unwritten codes of behavior. This allows me to say quite truthfully that living in an anarchy would be, on the whole, "just like" living in the circumstances you're living in now, except that a lot of annoyances would be removed, some activities might be slightly more complex than they are right now, and you'd have a greater disposable income. Your newspapers would hardly ever refer to Washington, D.C., as very little of any real importance ever takes place there, and so on. Foreign imports would be incredibly cheaper and more diverse. Technological advances in domestic applications would be much more rapid. Details differ, but the substance remains the same, because the substance of one's life is determined on the particular level, while statute, by definition, is applicable only to the general.

Anarchy works, as a social philosophy, because there exist social institutions capable of taking up the slack when formal, political institutions break down or relax. If you don't have strong social institutions now, you will get them very quickly.

Of course, this is not to say that social institutions are always Good Things in themselves. The clan organization can be as thoroughly corrupt and restrictive of individual freedom as any other organization. The difference is that in an anarchy there is someplace else to go if you don't like it where you are.

I was amused to find the kind of paradox that leads people to anarchism in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, in the chapter in which

he discusses friendship, saying that states are properly distrustful of friendships because they put behavioral criteria outside the reach of the state apparatus. Some people opt for the state apparatus. I opt for friendship.

A couple of weeks ago I had an outstanding result in the Master-Expert section of the Arizona Class Chess Championship--in fact, I won the thing. That should put me solidly and irrevocably in the expert range, a goal I've been trying for for the last eleven years.

A word of reaction to Richard Prokop's critique of Wrath of Khan. I didn't find it an inconsistency that Kirk eulogises Spok as "human," even though Spok through the series has rejected such a description as insulting. Remember, Spok has rejected Kolinahr, the total logical experience of his own race, and has realized that logic without emotion is barren. We often use the word as an adjective for members of our own species, even though taken literally it is vacuously true. I think the meaning here is that Spok embodies what is best in our own race; he is fulfilling what it is our nature to be. At the stage to which Spok has evolved in Wrath of Khan, he no longer would superciliously reject such a description as insulting.

Well, I suppose that exhausts my efforts for now. I continue to look forward to future Quodlibets.

P.S. Bob Prokop sure contributes a lot for somebody who hates to write.

Victor Reppert

Teny Rule Zuber
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Norwalk CA 90650

Dear Bill,
I want that this should qualify as a loc to Quodlibet.

• I shall rave about the food fare in Seattle. I was there for SF X-PO in mid-January and took a bit of a knife and fork tour with the help of Portland fan Mike Weil. Mike appears to have a sixth-sense when it comes to sensing the right restaurant to try out.

Well, the first restaurant that we tried was Enoteca, which as the name suggests is a wine shop that serves light lunches. I had a delightful pasta salmon salad with a somewhat undistinguished glass of chardonnay. What I found very interesting was Dry Creek Zinfandel 1979 that Mike ordered. He was already familiar with it, but had never tried it before. I know nothing about wines except that I liked it and I don't generally like a red wine. It's available at Trader Joe's for \$6 a bottle.

We next went questing for a bar that served Lillet so that I could introduce Mike to it. At the very least I wanted a bar that served Courvoisier VSOP, and he wanted a Coors. Well,

the first one that we tried didn't have either and the next did have the Coors but only VS. Of course, neither had the Lillet. But the bartender led us to McRory's. I have never seen a bar with such an extensive selection. It features 100 different brands of bourbon and 100 different beers. It even had a real moonshine guaranteed not to be more than thirty days old. Needless to say they had the Lillet. They asked if I wanted light or dark. I didn't even know until then that there was a dark. So, needless to say I had one of each. Mike ordered a scotch (can't remember the name) that he said only one in a hundred bars would have. And, by Gawd, they had it. It was a wonderful sipping scotch, and I'm not a big scotch fan.

Probably Glenlivet or Glenfiddich or one of the other unblended uigebeathas. The flavors on those things are incredible.

We decided to have dinner at McRory's. They feature beef that is aged 21 days. I had a steak (can't remember the cut but not filet mignon or coulotte) that I could cut with a fork.

The last restaurant was the Georgian Room at the Four Seasons Hotel. The cuisine is French Nouvelle. We were waited on hand and foot by three or was it four waiters. I had the most distinctive lobster bisque. There was something definitely other than sherry that was in it. I don't know what it was but it was the best lobster bisque that I have ever tasted. My main course was sweetbreads that were very delicately handled.

That reminds me. I often run across historical references to "Sweetbreads Financiers" as the dish of the 1860's and '70's for the awfully-well-to-do. But I've never seen a recipe--or even a description of what was in the dish.

Surprising that sweetbreads isn't more popular. We (Gail and I) found that Polo's in the Tenderloin has a very nice sweetbreads dish (the gland is cut into pieces and lightly sauteed then napped in a rich but only lightly thickened brown sauce and served with fetuccini. Delicious.

The last thing that I want to mention is the food arcade in the basement of Frederick & Nelson's department store. The selection of pates is lush. I bought a can of Louis Martin Pate de Foi. Light, fluffy, and sumptuous.

Ah, Frederick & Nelson. They make a marvelous candy there--particularly the rum-flavored ones. The J. Magnin store on Union Square carries them in its basement store, and they are a very special treat around the office. On off-days, we make do with Godiva chocolates, as they have an outlet next door in Crocker Center. But, as Godiva is about three times as good (and only twice as expensive) we have no off days, heh, heh.

Oh, and bye the bye, the SF X-PO was very

much worthwhile not only for business purposes but also for some new perspective on Harlan. There was a banquet for guests only at the Space Needle. Mike and I sat at the same table with Harlan. And it was a very nice experience to see and communicate with Harlan off stage.

Harlan is an awe-inspiringly complex and erudite and just plain "good" person. Not very many people inspire awe in me. Harlan does.

There isn't a whole hell of a lot to say about the con last weekend in Ft. Lauderdale. It was good, profitable, and the weather was wondrous.

Teny Rule Zuber

Ah, the felicities of browbeating one's mailing list...

D. Carol Roberts
368 Second Avenue
San Francisco CA 94118

Dear Bill:
Gee, I'm glad you appreciate my drawings, but I think you

rather overdid the praise. Still, it's always nice to hear such.

I certainly do not agree with Ted et al on the production of fanzines. Twiltone and mimeo are fine if you have no alternative. However, fanzine publishers would do well to notice the advent of inexpensive photocopy machines.

Now, the best photocopy machines are Kodak and Xerox's 9200 and 9400. The Kodak is, however, the prime choice. Not only does it reproduce solid black and fine stippling but you can run nearly any paper through it. (My paper choices usually being buff, ivory, and gray Cambric, and ivory and tan India. Both 20 weights, although the Kodak does a fine job with 16-pound paper.) To get two-sided copying on the Kodak, you must run your page through twice, which is only a bit more time-consuming. The latest Kodak models collate, although earlier models did not.

By the way, you could, of course, run Twiltone through the Kodak--how long would it take Ted White to guess what you were up to?

I did the first issue of Quodlibet--back in 1980--in exactly that way, but using another copier that couldn't handle the extra friction. Printed beautifully, but I had to intercollate the twiltone in the copier's paper tray with a sheet of white bond--so I got two pressings out of the effort, one on canary twiltone, the other white bond. I threw away most of the bond and saved only the twiltone.

Which brings me to two criticisms of the production of Quodlibet: first, black on white photocopying has too much contrast to read comfortably--you would do well to use ivory or buff paper; second, although it's very nice to get

1,200 words on the page, your pages might look better with more white space, that is, larger margins all around and between columns--a spread like that shown on pages 38 and 39 [of Quodlibet 18] is intimidating, even to die-hard readers like me. Of course, lack-of-margins is extremely fannish, if the zines I've seen lately are any indication.

A number of your comments re the production of Quodlibet are very well taken, and some of them had occurred to me before. I tend to prefer either vellum- (or, in extremis, linen-) finished ivory (in the brownish range, rather than the yellowish range) 20-# rag bond or equivalent twiltone, myself, with second-favorites being the pastelled mint-green light card stock. Unfortunately, I have a deal by which I can do all the production on the fmz at work for gratis, balanced against trivial overtime. So I get the production of the fmz for free if I stick to office-available supplies.

I didn't know, though, that the Kodak will take twiltone--the last few copiers I tried it on couldn't--the friction was too great for the feeder mechanism. I'll have to bring in a couple reams of the canary twiltone I have at home and experiment.

You're quite right that the page layouts could be designed better--for the most part, I give no thought at all to graphics design. This is not so significant in the 12-page version, but it becomes so in the larger ones. I have a feeling that I won't be doing any large Quodlibets from now on--although I'll clone off another magazine for FAPA when membership comes due and do only genzines there.

This last production note is for your information: every readability study done so far shows that ragged right margins are most readable. I know they don't look as neat as right-justified margins, but ragged right is easier to scan. Take a look at the latest computer manuals (especially those done in small formats, such as IBM's).

I don't know about the "readability" of unjustified text; somehow, the line-lengths never seem to match up to my scanning patterns. With justified texts, I make a standard two looks per line with no problem. As to the relatively small margins, that's partly due to an esthetic choice on my part, partly due to practical considerations, in the sense that those measures are the maximum for intelligible and neat use of space, and partly a compromise among many other considerations. I try deliberately to keep the text as dense as possible so that related items can be placed physically close to each other, so it's easy to refer back to something that went before. I do this a great deal--comparative re-reading of texts to squeeze the

exact usage out of the words in the context.

As to content--well, I enjoyed it all, especially the ramblings about cheese, what's happening to San Francisco, and films.

The Red Lion is going to be a problem, all right; but we'll just all sort of mush together I guess. ENSFH will be holding a video workshop and doing live (call-in, I hope) interviews over the hotel cable station. These goings-on were approved this month by the Westercon programming committee.

I don't have the foggiest notion of what is fannish, sercon, or nonfannish in the way of writing. However, if anyone else tells me that to be fannish all writing must be humorous, I'll slap her/him/it with a dead carp.

Letting the punishment fit the crime, eh?

As you know, I am a member of AWA and FAPA (and DAAPA, but let's not count that right now). The writing I do for these apae tends to be rather intense--so what? And by "so what," I mean that I am not operating in the context of a popularity contest. I state the issues that concern me (usually issues of language and experience along the lines of Jabes and Levinas) and I get damn few responses. But such quality of thought in the responses I do get! (Usually in letters, not in the apae).

Jabes teaches that the act of writing is a sacred motion.

The act is sacred: in other words, write well--whatever your purpose in writing. And remember that the sacred easily ranges from the magnum mysterium to utter clowning. But to censor the writer's purpose--that's foolishness; and yet, that censorship is what I see in current criticisms of fan writing.

Restraining the censorship of purpose does not preclude debates over content or effectiveness. This censorship exists, rather, as a limitation on content and on style: silly at best, stupid in its moderate phase, and dangerous overall.

D. Carol Roberts

Robert Bloch
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Dear B.J.:
Don't ask; I don't know...

Quodlibet 18 is quite a performance (if you'll pardon the expression) and you did yourself proud with the editorial natterings. Many thanks for the privilege of seeing it!

Robert Bloch

Now, what did he mean by that...?

Redd Boggs
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Dear Bill:

I'm sure that Frances T. Laney would be startled to learn that

he is "That Most Accepted Authority of Fanzine Orthodoxy," according to your pronouncement in Quodlibet 18, since he was an anarchist at heart and went from publishing the deadly serious HPL fanzine The Acolyte to publishing his casual and irreverent fapazine Fan-Dango with an accompanying change of heart that was quite complete. (One could analyze at length the reason for this change, but the major reason must have been his removal, during WW2, from the hinterlands of Washington-Idaho to southern California, then as now the fabulous Shangri-La of the world.)

Oh? What a peculiar universe you must live in...

FTL, like Ted White, might prefer fanzines whose words and illustrations were banged into wax stencils and turned out in oily mimeo ink onto Twiltone, but I suspect that he would be experimenting with newer forms of fannish duplication if he had lived and stayed in fandom all these years.

Actually, so do I. Which makes it all the more nonsensical to talk about "holding the line" the way Ted has. I would have applauded and made the rafters ring with "here-here"s if Ted had limited his fulminations to "if you're going to do it--do it right." But as it is...

I agree with Ted, for the most part, about "a fanzine's graphics package," although I was forced in 1979, 1980, and 1981 to publish my minimal FAPA activity by way of offset. It was mostly a happy experiment, but it was with some relief that last summer I was able to unleash my Gestetner once again--for the first time in damn near five years, it was. I fear that you are overdramatizing the difficulties with the "orthodox" methods of fan publishing: "We cursed and struggled with template and stylus..." These tools are treacherous, and take a lot of practice to use properly, but if you have the right equipment, the best templates and styluses (I said styluses, not styli), you can do a beautiful job, as Ted White has proved for many years. And there is a certain pleasure in it, as in other artistic endeavors. Watercolors, brushes, and paper are treacherous, too, but I can't see a Japanese master deserting the craft just because it seems outmoded in 1983.

Here-here. I never intended to encourage the abandonment of the medium, for I have great affection for mimeo'd on twiltone, too. I was just a little leery of getting into Procrustes' bed. There is plenty of room for people to stretch out in fanzines.

Possibly the use of a wordprocessor is the

most revolutionary development in fan publishing to come along since the mimeograph. That you could use a wordprocessor to even-edge your letter to me of a month ago is certainly mind-numbing to one who has laboriously even-edged his fanzines (never his letters) by the dummied process since 1947. We have come full circle, I guess. Most of the earliest fanzines I ever saw, late in 1940 or early in 1941, were even-edged, and when I started publishing, after WW2, I naturally did the same, although by then the practice was largely abandoned. I've persisted all these years, one of the very few to continue even-edging over thirty-five years and more. And now you and others are doing it too, with a precision and ease that makes me abashed. I have been thinking of abandoning justified margins at last, just for that reason!

Hey! I've paid my dues. The first fanzines I did, in 1972 and 1973, were justified in the same way--that is, I dummied the first one, laboriously counting the spaces needed to make the line come out even. Then I ran into J.J. Pierce who taught me a method of justifying working only with the right-hand edge of the column. That method was clumsier, but it was less time-consuming than dummied and retyping. As to why one would justify typewritten text...I just prefer it. Perhaps it just looks "forethoughtful" to me. But by no means abandon your justification--it, along with your impeccable production, is one of your trademarks, you know.

Is "ad libidem" anything like "ad libitum"?

Depending on what source you look up, they are the same thing.

You remind me, at any rate, that I once half-published a fanzine for SAPS called Ad Lib. I believe it was intended for SAPS' first mailing, but was not finished in time. When I did publish in SAPS I changed the title to Hurkle. The title Ad Lib came only indirectly from the Latin, but derived from golden-age radio, where it was a common term in those days. One doesn't hear it so often anymore, although it is not so archaic as the title of Jack Speer's one-time fanzine Sustaining Program, a radio term that must be cold forgotten by now.

Or adopted into computerese...

The "Do-it-yourself Messiah" may be fun for the participants and therefore quite justified, but then so is painting-by-the-numbers. If you go to a Goodwill store you will find some of these paintings, but who wants them? And why should KQED broadcast the "Do-it-yourself Messiah"? Oh well.

Well, lots of people love to sing, and there's very little opportunity to do so for people who aren't willing to put hundreds of hours into professional or semi-professional music. I was

tempted to go the first time, except that the idea of paying cash-money to be allowed to sing my favorite oratorio graveled me. So when KQED simulcast (simulcasted?) it the first year, I got out my score and sang along as well. Since then, I listen to it every year but rarely sing along. The tonal quality of the entirely non-professional choir is astonishing--very rich, much richer than professionally-made recordings.

I enjoyed your lengthy report on the films of 1982, but I guess I didn't see a one of them. From this you can easily figure out that I'm hardly a fan of modern movies, although I do see a fair number of older movies, usually at the UC Theater in Berkeley. In 1981 I did see at least one current movie, Raiders of the Lost Ark, through the courtesy of Roy Huntington, who persuaded me to go and paid my way as lagniappe. I must report that I thought the film was stupid, repulsive, and boring--I nearly fell asleep and had to rouse myself in order not to disappoint the enthusiastic Roy. But as you can see, my tastes don't resemble current tastes at all. The one film I considered seeing that--I thought--was released in 1982 I don't find on your list. Maybe I misremember the title, but I thought it was Six Weeks. From the reviews I take it that it was even awfuller and more repulsive than most modern films, but I have this love affair with Mary Tyler Moore. In 1983 I will probably see one new movie, at least, namely The Sting, II. That's because the oldest friend I have in the world (forty years, this year), Larry Green, has a small part in the picture. Look sharp or you'll miss him, I suspect. (He was also in other pictures, including The Jerk, but I missed that one. Not that I regret it!)

I believe Six Weeks was released in mid-December, but it may not have had a critic's screening. I always miss a few films compiling the list that way, so this year I've started saving the theatre guides from the Sunday pink sheet. A bit more reliable than searching through notebooks for critics' screenings. One other film I've discovered that's not on the list in 18 was It Came From Hollywood, a truly awful film without much in the way of kitsch value.

Since I didn't see issue 16 or whatever it was, I don't know why you think the San Francisco handgun ban was "moronic"--whether the law itself or the principle--but I'm impressed. Everybody I know, even supposed radicals! seems to be in favor of banning handguns. Handguns are dangerous, but so is living without handguns, at least sometimes. Gretchen told me before we took up together that in strange places she slept with a pistol under her pillow and related how she once nearly shot somebody in Laredo when she woke and heard somebody trying her hotel

room door. She desisted just in time to realize that it was merely a drunk trying to find his own room. That worried me, and I successfully persuaded her to leave her pistol back in Albuquerque--but there were times when we lived in South Campus in Berkeley during the troubled '60s that I wished we had it to hand.

Well, I could shout slogans, but you know how meaningless slogans are. Oh, well, one meaningless slogan couldn't hurt: "The right of the people to bear arms shall not be abridged." That didn't hurt, did it?

D. Carol Roberts' report about the Emperor Norton Science Fiction Hour was fascinating, although I never heard of Channel 25 before. However, reading over the list of people who have been interviewed, I find that I never even heard the names of about half of them. My god, I must be far behind the times. Obviously some of those interviewed, like Leiber, Sheckley, Sturgeon, and Silverberg are important figures, I wonder by Morrie Dollens, Alva Rogers, and Don Simpson were interviewed.

Channel 25 is the public access channel of Viacom Cablevision, which operates only on the northern SF peninsula. I don't think it operates across the Bay. I believe Morris Scott Dollens was interviewed because he became briefly prominent in the science fiction professional art community about six years ago. Alva Rogers was interviewed as a co-publisher of Pennyfarthing Press; Don Simpson is a local fanartist personality of some reputation.

The World's Fair in San Francisco was not in 1935.

Quite right. I misremembered the date. According to the San Francisco Almanac, pumping began for the construction of Treasure Island on February 11, 1936 and ended on August 26, 1937. The Golden Gate International Exposition opened on Treasure Island on February 18, 1939.

Robert Prokop's review of The Soul Eater was excellent, and it sounds like a book I might even enjoy, although I am pretty cautious after being burned by such things as The Mote in God's Eye, if that was the title, and a few other modern examples of sf. (No doubt you will gape at the term "modern" since The Mote must be all of eight or ten years in the past, but that's about the recentest I have read, aside from some of MZB's pleasantly romantic novels.) One of the things about modern science fiction that I usually object to is that most novels take place "on the interstellar frontier" and are manifestly impossible stories about purely imaginary places. I can stomach such things sometimes, as in Mission of Gravity, but most of the time I prefer sf that deals with Earth or the visible planets and moons, imagination kept in bounds by the

fact that real places are being dealt with.

The letter from rich brown was one of the best things in the issue--but surely he is wrong when he says "Death will not release you" refers to the LASFS. The remark was usually a question, usually formulated as "Will death release you?" though not originally, and it referred to the NFFF. The NFFF gave some fan awards in the mid-1940s and early '50s, bestowing free memberships to winners. Laney and/or Burbee received such memberships and attempted to resign, but their names still appeared on each succeeding roster of members. The same thing happened to me, circa 1948. So far as I know, the LASFS isn't famous for never removing any name from their membership list. I believe you are a member forever, but they are not crazy in adhering to that rule. I am, or was, a LASFS member (since 1963) and still have my membership card tucked into my wallet, but that's my only link with the club. I have not received any word from them, from organization to member, for at least nineteen years.

That's the story I had heard, years ago, but rich may be relating a True Story nonetheless, if the anecdote were current in the mid-fifties. In any case, I believe he is correct about the rejoinder "Even if you die."

What's so surprising about "offstage sex"? Almost any story, aside perhaps from a few stories about childhood like Penrod, presupposes the existence of active sex somewhere in the background, just as it does defecation, etc. Some sexual activity must have been going on in the Ship in "Universe," for example, since many generations have passed since the launching. Not that I think Heinlein's discovery of sex was a good thing. In fact, it was surpassed as a disaster in sf only by Doc Smith's discovery. I remember John Trimble telling me how he met Doc's son, years ago, and asked him, "What's your father doing now?" and the son replied, "Dad has discovered sex!" He was referring to The Galaxy Primes, the nadir of Doc Smith, in any case. Sometimes I feel, not prudish, but old-fashioned enough, to wish that sex were relegated to the background again, as in the past. The only sexual activity I am really interested in, after all, is my own.

Redd Boggs

Well, Galaxy Primes was certainly an embarrassing nadir of some kind, but considering the stuff Stephen Goldin and others have come out with recently, I doubt it was Doc Smith's. That probably has yet to be reached.

Let's see--after going on at length about how it is possible to do neat and exacting work with

wordprocessor and photocopier, fate and the Kodak conspired to make a liar of me. A number of pages printed crooked on most of the copies, some of them very badly crooked. Well, ours is an old and worn Kodak, and I suppose some allowances must be made, but still...Take my word (ours, actually, as D has seconded) that you can get triff stuff out of a photocopier. You won't find the convincing evidence in last issue, though.

It's fairly rare to find a profound and useful truth on a television program, but I think the last two minutes of yesterday's (March 1) St. Elsewhere qualifies. The scene is a black doctor and a white doctor talking in the locker room about the racial violence that has descended on Boston:

(Black): There are things you'll never understand about me, because you're white. There are thing you'll never understand about your wife, because you're a man.

(White): (beat) That's true. But she's still my wife--and we're still friends. (beat). You wanna ride home?

(Black): Are you sure you want to risk going into my neighborhood?

(White): Yeah. I think I'll risk it...seeing as how you only live two blocks from me.

Now, that's neatly and elegantly put--an extraordinarily complex, high-level abstraction put into a very few words and then bound together with reinforcing images. The ineluctable differences of our experiences, all equally valid, are not more important than our ability to reach through those differences, accepting them, and being friends and lovers. And, after all, do we not all live within the same neighborhood, as moral beings?

That's the art of writing at its absolute peak. If M*A*S*H is gone--and Lou Grant and Barney Miller--we have yet St. Elsewhere and Hill Street Blues to tide us over this long, dark night of the network soul.

Speaking of M*A*S*H, I was a touch disappointed with the final episode this Monday past. The notion of Hawkeye Pierce having a traumatic nervous breakdown was quite unpalatable--not that I'm especially fond of the Hawkeye of the TV show (or the movie), but the Hawkeye of the books was capable of giving me a chuckle now and then.

I've been cherishing for the last two years (since the announcement was made) a fugitive hope that the writers would bring the show so that it could segue into Hooker's series of books. Only two or three of them are generally available, but probably half a dozen or so have been written, taking the group, somewhat shrunk

but still together, into the '70s. Hawkeye went back to the states, did his residency in New York, and moved to Crabapple Cove. Eventually, his sponsors gave him a clinic, for which he imported Trapper John, Duke, and Spearchucker Jones. Over the course of the years, he ran periodically into Henry Blake, Frank Burns, and even Margaret Houlihan. I think Burns got into proctology or something similar. Margaret Houlihan had an interesting story: she ran off to the jungles of, I think, South America (it's going on ten years since I read the books), married a minister, and founded her own, schismatic sect in San Francisco, ministering to the gays. I think Radar O'Reilly became an Irish Stew magnate and stayed a weird sumbitch. Of course, there is no Col. Potter or Charles Emerson Winchester, III, and few of the subsidiary characters in the tv series made it into the books. There is a kind of continuity between Altman's movie and the books, although Sutherland's Hawkeye was a little meaner than Hooker's, and no continuity at all between the tv series and the books.

The last episode was the occasion of considerable furor. "Farewell to Arms" parties were held all over the country, and, according to the Chronicle's statistics, viewershipo for that episode has topped all records, beating out the "Who Shot JR" episode of Dull-as... a few years back. By the Chron's count, it had a 60 share--which tops even Roots, Shogun, and Winds of War.

In the normal course of events, this would call for an epitaphium, a summing up ave atque vale, but I can't think of it as gone, as long as Hooker's books are around--and the syndicated reruns are rerunning and rerunning and rerunning.

I particularly can't think of it as gone with that episode, for it becomes more unsatisfactory the more I think of it. Fragmented, veering off, again, and settling for hokeyness and its own characteristic brand of comedy when it could have touched on the fundamentals. Barney Miller did a much better job of it--building over an entire season with signposting and foreshadowings, then two one-hour episodes of straightforward, coherent dramatic development, ending with a sigh and a tear. Much better job of it. Now Ron Harris is a Black Felix Unger; Dietrich plays Carson occasionally; and Barney Miller is, most recently, an aerospace engineer much given to flashes of intuition about problems he should have solved on the drafting board years before. I've heard a great deal about ensemble regarding M*A*S*H and Taxi, but none of them have it the way Barney Miller had it; for in that show Hal Linden acted, consistently, better than was in him, and the synergy of the situation lifted quite mediocre talents (Max Gail, Jack Soo, Abe Vigoda) to a level of polished

perfection, and put a luster on Steve Landesberg I don't think he will ever achieve again.

Well, what do you know: it became an epitaph for BM.

Sighing of sigh, and wiping of tear.

At any rate, we are not completely abandoned to jiggle shows and moronic Norman Lear clones: we have yet Hill Street Blues and St. Elsewhere. This series shows every sign of developing exactly the same ensemble-synergy as Barney Miller had, and more power to it.

Speaking of publicity-hype (I was speaking of publicity-hype a few paragraphs ago...), Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain is in town, and the media-mill is dutifully grinding out a tired brand of enthusiasm not reflected in the conversation of the citizenry. Probably the most demeaning of this grist is the barrage of references to Her Majesty as a "pretty woman," which she is not and never has been. About the only sign of popular notice is the sudden proliferation of

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"Free Ireland Now" posters in the streets--an exhortation to a sentiment somewhat similar to those cards Yoko Ono used to hand out reading "breathe." Coals to Newcastle.

Her Majesty arrived last night. Today, Golden Gate Park is cordoned off by policemen in full riot gear--anticipating a reaction they are causing. It is precisely this kind of thing that gives rise to the quiet contempt most of us seem to have for The Event. John Bull Go Home. Royalty Not Wanted Today or until further notice.

I was in a coffee shop in Sunnyvale last week, having coffee and talking with a friend, when I noticed the Muzak. I cannot help but notice the Muzak. It is playing a string-orchestra transcription of "Don't Stand Too Close To Me," the Police's hit of last year.

And on that surreal note...

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QUODLIBET 19

FIRST CLASS

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