

quodlibet
twentyone

QUODLIBET 21 is edited and published by Bill Patterson, 537 Jones St., No. 9943, San Francisco CA 94102 at increasingly irregular intervals. Manuscripts and artwork solicited and most welcome. Dated November 30, 1983.

Quodlibet is not available for cash or "the usual," including "editorial whim." If your address label is starred and I do not hear from you by January 31, 1984, evidencing some positive interest in continuing to receive Quodlibet, I am contemplating dropping you from the mailing list. "He's making a list; he's checking it twice. Gonna find out who's naughty and nice..."

Cover Illustration taken from Sam Konkin's Smart Set.

One of the irritating things about magnetic media (specifically the discs on which Quodlibet is created and stored until I'm ready to print a copying master) is that they are exceedingly easy to erase. Twenty pages of text into this issue, I inadvertently left the disc in the machine overnight, and when I turned it on the next day, Quodlibet, the upcoming O-O for ShadowFAPA, and Tenebra were gone, gone, gone. Wailing and gnashing of teeth. Everything must be retyped.

Fortunately, I had almost all of the material on proofsheets, so it will not be difficult to reconstruct--but wordprocessors are supposed to obviate that kind of retyping...

Recently I vello-bound a second volume of Quodlibet, June, 1982 to June, 1983 (eight issues; 190 pages). A respectable output for the year.

That's a quick shot of auto-egoboo for you. Cover page and index, with transparent, plastic covers front and back to protect it from rough handling or the inevitable smudging and folding of pages while it sits peaceably on the shelf.

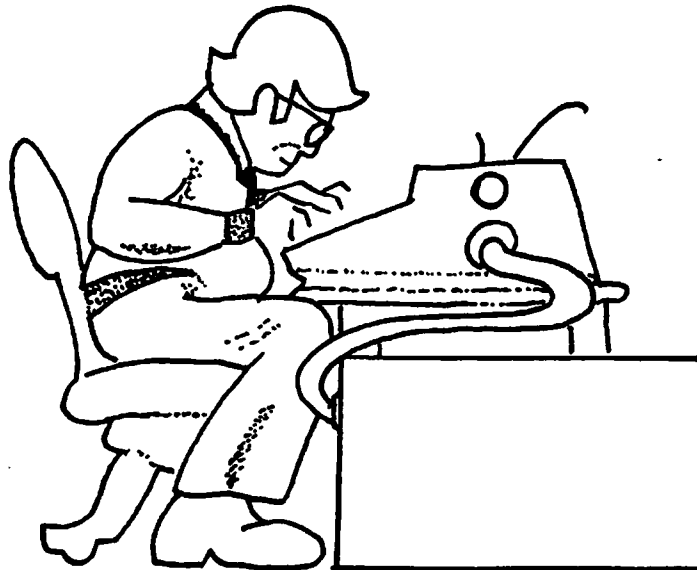
The first volume pulled together the first three years, from May, 1980 to May, 1982 (twelve issues; 85 pages). I also did for it a thematic and topical index, so I could pinpoint in exactly what issue I had mentioned a topic or a particular book or film. But it hasn't been that useful, so I decided against doing it again for the second volume. Too much work.

Ah, reflections. No. 20 was my third annish. Sort of. I published six issues (from May, 1980 to December, 1981) before anyone so much as acknowledged its existence. Suddenly, three locs in No. 7. Last issue, there were ten locs covering twenty pages' worth of material. Not bad.

Well, it continues to evolve. Commencing with the next issue Elisheva Barsabe has agreed to do Art Direction. This collaboration should be interesting and entertaining, as she and I have very different graphics styles and "senses." The compromises we achieve will, no doubt, create a unique "look."

This is probably also the end of the 12-page Quodlibet. I'm finding that I enjoy the loccol too much to skimp it. *Sigh* It's a question, of finding a balance among a number of competing factors.

As of this May, another factor is tossed into the mix, as I am now Number 2 (No, I am not a number, I am a man--a free man!) on the FAPA waitlist. Back when no one was responding I thought I would simply turn Quodlibet into a genzine with mailing comments (salva me, Speer venerabilis) tacked onto the end. That won't work now. Instead I will have to start another zine entirely--Hors Commerce, it will be, and hors commerce it will be. Ghu alone knows how the quarterly production of a genzine will affect



quodlibetal.

Quodlibet's already erratic publishing schedule. (N.B. I received my invitation to join FAPA with the August mailing, but will not have activity in until November).

End of another era. A few weeks ago I happened across a copy of the new paperback edition of Piper's Uller Uprising and sprang upon it with glad cries. I have been trying to find that book since about 1975, I guess, when I briefly held in my hands Jim and Doreen Webberts' hardback copy and let the silicone-molecule diagrams sink in.

And I have been dreading the moment, too: with Uller Uprising I will have read all of Piper's science fiction. And Piper, being dead, is not a renewable resource (I've also read his mystery Murder in the Gunroom). There may be others yet to be found, but I must now commit to dragging my feet.

Piper is an unusual case. His current popularity would no doubt stagger him: he committed suicide in the early '60s, depressed because he believed he couldn't support himself as a writer. But he had already begun to make a considerable reputation. If his agent and ex-wife hadn't been bleeding him, his bankbook would have reflected the fact.

Piper wrote some very fine sf: Lord Kalvin, Little Fuzzy, and "Omnilingual" should stand among the field's all-time classics. I don't think as highly of his Terro-Human Future History as the gentlemen pushing his various books; nor do I think his Toynbeean "grasp of history" so spectacular. He may be read, in one sense, as a footnote to Dickson and in another as a gloss on

Heinlein. But he was also uniquely himself. And sorry to see him go. Good night, and joy be with you all.

The World Must Be Warned, I tell you. He's come--Steven Black, I mean, late of Chicago, has taken up residence in San Francisco and is, at least temporarily, in residence in the room next to mine. Let me tell you--one should choose carefully his friends and thoroughly check out their habits. Our correspondence had not revealed...

Well, for one thing, I've heard of some peculiar hobbies before, but Steven tops them all. He collects, among (many) other things...are you ready? Photographs of other peoples' vacations, other peoples' rejection slips, and airline sickness bags. Quite a collection, too--lots of duplicates. Never can tell when one of those things will come in handy. Perhaps, Steven suggests, that collection would make a useful insert to Quodlibet.

Not content with shaking my conceptual universe, he continues to threaten to (a) get me out onto a squash court (I was willing and even interested until he explained that it involved a

small, hard, rubber ball careering unpredictably around a small enclosure at speeds close to 200 miles per hour. And he does this to himself deliberately??? Shuddering. No, thank you. I feel the same way about that as I do about skiing--or skydiving. Go, friend. Gladly will I come to your funeral, even sit at your hospital bedside and ease the tension in your traction for you. Tennis, okay--handball, fencing, sandlot baseball, football, soccer [well...] and even bowling, yes, indeedy. Bowling, now: there's a sensible sport--you have this large, spherical object which you push away from you. Very sensible, it strikes me), and (b) to photograph me. I have not willingly been photographed since I saw the proofs of my high school graduation picture. I wouldn't let them use that one, either, so there is no photo of me in the Yearbook. No, the camera is much better employed in its Philip Marlowe mode, sitting on a tripod, wearing a crushable black hat, with a cigarette stuck at a jaunty angle under its...chin?...as we play yet another game of Chinese Checkers--a game for which I have no talent at all, as it plays on my biggest weakness--complete lack of a mathematical "sense."

KILLING TIME?

Blackmail has posted itself at the Jones Street complex in San Francisco on the richtering premise "Collections are a symbiosis that helps close the passage of time breathing down the neck and end the midnight pumpkinization of modernity." *Reventive, thy ass!* Now accepting submissions in the form of rejection letters (copies, if you'd prefer to keep the original), motion sickness bags (preferably unused), vacation photos (no matter if they're yours or someone else's), omelette recipes, bottle green bowler hats, anatomical defacements, schismatic diagrams--in short, what have you. The Blacklist of admission is open to any non-toxic reification of belief, metaphor, old fashion or lateral non sequitur. Donate your quotations! References available on request. The worth you invest may be your worst. An equal opportunity collector.



Blackmail :::::::::::::::::::: 537 Jones St. #9156 :::::::::::::::::::: San Francisco, CA 94102

I've been wandering into used bookstores and secondhand shops and finding quantities of Sinclair Lewis books--a fortunate happenstance, as I collect Lewis. My passion for Lewis goes back at least fifteen years (half a lifetime, folks). I believe it was a paperback copy of Babbitt. And now, he's into the hard stuff-- preferably first editions, but I've got ragtag of other editions, including some from the Nobel Prize uniform edition.

My collection grew a few weeks ago by two books--Gideon Planish (1934)(1st printing) and World So Wide (1951)(2nd printing). This latter is Lewis' last book, published, in fact, after his death. The publishers made a point of this by plastering a notice sticker on the front of the dustjacket.

Gideon Planish sounds as if it should be about an Iowa farmboy, but it is not. Definitely from the downhill side of Lewis' career, it is a repetition of Babbitt--as a philanthropic organizer--just as Cass Timberlane is Dodsworth as a judge. And Dodsworth himself shows up in World So Wide, because it's Lewis' telling of his reactions to living in the American colony in Italy.

That brings me up to thirteen of his twenty-two books. It's often difficult to identify a first pressing, because Lewis was tricky about promotion and distribution and switched publishers several times. At the height of his fame he was having special 500-autographed copy editions listed as firsts, with the first trade pressings, in 200,000-copy lots, shown as "second printing," where bibliographic information was included at all. Mark Schorer's biography is of some help in identifying editions, but not much.

For the benefit of the curious (hope springs eternal...) my collection so far consists of:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------|
| <u>Main Street</u> | Nobel ed. | 1920 |
| <u>Babbitt</u> | | 1922 |
| <u>Arrowsmith</u> | sixth trade | 1925 |
| <u>Dodsworth</u> | Advance Trade | 1929 |
| <u>Ann Vickers</u> | Nobel ed. | 1933 |
| <u>Work of Art</u> | 1935 printing | 1934 |
| <u>It Can't Happen Here</u> | first | 1935 |
| <u>Selected Short Stories</u> | first | 1937 |
| <u>The Prodigal Parents</u> | first | 1938 |
| <u>Gideon Planish</u> | first | 1943 |
| <u>Cass Timberlane</u> | first? | 1945 |
| <u>Kingsblood Royal</u> | first? | 1947 |
| <u>The God Seeker</u> | first | 1949 |
| <u>World So Wide</u> | second | 1951 |

Earlier in my fannish career, I was an almost indiscriminate collector, amassing more than eleven thousand books and magazines--hardcover, paperback, and prozines--all of them read and none passed on. At one time I had a complete run of F&SF, a partial set of Astoun-

ings in almost perfect condition, and full sets of Galaxy and lesser magazines such as Other Worlds. As friends began specializing in Arkham House or '40's pulps, I toyed with specializing in the short-lived, small-run magazines--Venture and Vortex, for instance, Space Science Fiction. Science Fiction Plus. That kind of thing.

When in 1976 I went broke through losing two jobs and trying to support three people at the same time (this is the era of the mustard-flavored flour dumplings Teresa Nielsen Hayden has written so movingly about), I had to sell the cream of my collection at conventions and the rest at local bookstores to get grocery money. I wouldn't do that today, simply because there's no sense to it--you get nothing like their value, and there are easier ways to find eating money. But I didn't know that then.

That decimation near broke my heart, and I have never been the same about collecting--which is not to say that I don't still amass books, but I don't invest the same intensity of affection in them. Except for my budding "special" collections.

I got interested in collecting again after 1980, when I took a three-month "breather" trip to Boston and New York. When I got back, I found a couple of unused T tokens and a New York subway token left over from the time I went down to the Village and walked back to 57th & Broadway. They were scruffing around the bottom of my luggage. Contemplating these disjecta membra got me interested in tokens, and I've been scouting around for them ever since. If you run across tokens in your locale, I'd appreciate at least hearing about them. Turns out that, although numismatism is very well covered, there's only one token-collecting society in the States, and no publications devoted to it. There are a surprising number of those things being used--I mean, game rooms, sure. But--let's see: the Northpoint Theatre gives out tokens as parking validation. Collecting that one was easy; I just got in line for the token at the end of a show. A deli on Bush uses a dime-sized token to operate its men's room. Atari does an annual series for its Chuck E. Cheese pizza parlors--which reminds me that I haven't gotten an '83 from them. Three or four years ago, at a games room on Market Street, I ran into a number of odd tokens--astrological signs on one side and sexual positions on the other. After a couple of years of sifting through hundreds of dollars' worth of the regular tokens for these oddities, the games room switched to dime-sized tokens, leaving me with only five signs filled. But the operator kindly told me that the tokens were used by a local porno shop on Turk Street for their peep shows, and I finally managed to assemble a complete set a few days

AAA!



"That reminds me... I have to sort through the new shipments..."

ago. Ninety percent of those tokens are Sagittarius or Leo. That just took time. Sometimes it's impossible to acquire a token. For instance, last year, Little Daisy clothing store issued gift tokens--large bronze things. I routinely contacted the company's headquarters and asked to buy an expired or redeemed token, but got a flat "no." I am not licked yet. And occasionally in Chinatown you will run across in souvenir shops modern replicas of whorehouse tokens. I've been inquiring around for the originals--they must exist someplace--but with no success.

I've heard it said that the proper way to collect is to find some, preferably narrow, subject that interests you, whether or not it's a popular collector's field, and devote yourself to it. Tokens fit that perfectly, and I'm comfortable with it. By now, I have a couple hundred and have begun to branch out into commemorative medals.

A few years ago, I ran into a hardback copy of Arrowsmith at a secondhand bookstore and bought it. Sinclair Lewis has always been one of my favorite authors, but I can find so little in paperback that there are still many of his major books I haven't read--e.g., Elmer Gantry (no, I haven't seen the film, either). Finding one I haven't read is An Occasion. When my spirits

had perked up enough to consider collecting again, I decided to make a project of Lewis firsts.

I'm fortunate in that Lewis was such a popular author: his novels from 1920 through about 1939 were printed in the hundreds of thousands. So I've managed to acquire most of these for less than \$7.50. But Main Street and Babbitt will come dear--as will the autographed special firsts. The process can never end, really, because after making a full collection of firsts, there is the complete Nobel Prize uniform edition to put together, the ongoing search for firsts with dust covers, and then, ultimately, holograph letters and copies of the magazines in which his short stories and articles appeared.

It may eventually become tedious effort, because I'll sooner or later run out of finds in dusty and forgotten bins (and stacks) and have to advertise. But that may be interesting and exciting, as well. On the other hand, something goes out of the project when you have to do your selection by mail and live with the scent of brown wrapping paper and postal glue instead of book dust.

This sort of thing has happened with others, too: you run across a very mixed bag of things at used bookstores. Never can tell when a favorite will be favored by chance. A first of Dorothy Sayers' Busman's Honeymoon has fallen into my hands, and I'll be collecting hers, too, eventually. Same for Mary Renault, Chaim Potok, and Robert Heinlein.

The Heinlein collection is rather well advanced, the remnant of the sf collection I would not part with. But it is all currently packed away, and it requires the nagging presence of the book standing lone and accusing on the shelf to rouse my attention and interest.

This sort of thing is rather appealing: I get much more pleasure out of finding a single volume of Lewis to pounce upon with an "aha!" that makes the dusty bookshelves sway and rattle (and passersby look nervously around for a doorway to dive into) than I got from scanning stacks of glossy prozines looking for a May, 1943 that didn't have a chipped corner. It's a pleasant hobby--and one that might, conceivably, be useful.

What more could one ask for, I ask you?

Oh, the shame! While rummaging around in my desk awhile back, after completion of 20, I found a handful of locs for 20 that I had somehow shoved into a drawer and missed the proper folder. So they got left off.

That's either fannish perfidy of the worst kind, or a genuinely sneaky way of assuring a loccol for the next issue. You tell me.

Jerry Kaufman
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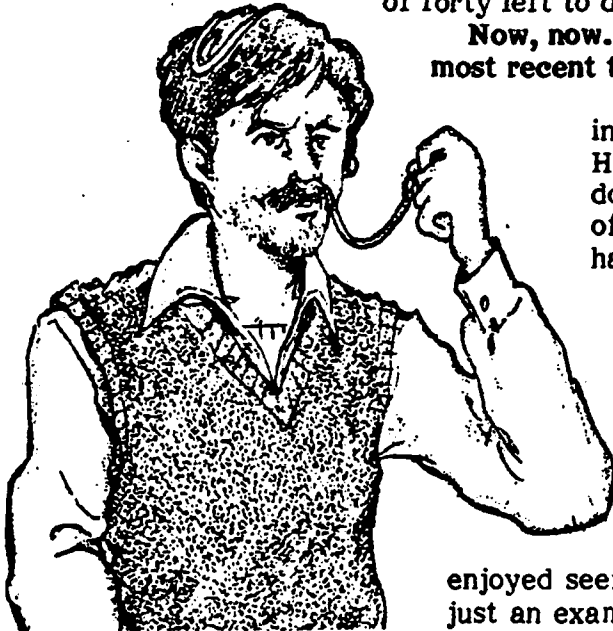
I have a sudden urge to write a few letters of comment, and you are one of the beneficiaries. We've been getting Quodlibet for some time, and it's time you got an acknowledgement of some kind. Of course, we send you every issue of Mainstream, so you must have gotten at least one in all this time. Another is in the final stages of production, now, with only five pages of forty left to do, so you'll have another by month's end.

Now, now. I've locced every issue of Mainstream I've received--as the most recent testifies, net wahr?

I must admit that I've found Quodlibet only intermittently interesting in the past. I'm not interested in long discussions of Heinlein or abortion, for instance, finding both subjects quite done to death. And it has taken me awhile to get some sense of your mind, so not all your opinions of movies and so forth have enthralled me.

That, as they say, is what makes horseracing. Actually, I'm not terribly interested in long discussions of Heinlein or abortion, either, but apparently the readers are, so I float with the tide. Part of Quodlibet's function for me is as a daybook, so it winds up quite a hodgepodge.

But...this issue [18] seems to have jelled quite well, and I found almost all of it very interesting. I haven't seen all of the movies you've seen, but suddenly I found that I enjoyed seeing what you had to say about the year's screenings. This is just an example, and I ought to back up and go through the issue with a little more system.



I'm pretty much a traditionalist with my own fanzine activity, but I can appreciate variations that work. Cheryl Cline's rubberstamp technique is really nice, for instance, although it's still anchored to tradition with the mimeo base. Your use of wordprocessor/xerox looks good, too (although you are right about the irregularly distributed art), though it has taken me awhile to get used to the justification. On the other hand, bad xerox can destroy art, while offset in the wrong hands usually results in pages crammed in with irrelevant art; and wordprocessors or just plain computers that use dot matrix printers produce ugly type.

I understand why people use dot matrix printers: theoretically you can get a much wider variety of typestyles out of the same printer. But the typestyles people then use are so clunky and plain ugly that the dot-quality becomes unbearable. Of course, you can't beat it for graphics...

As I've said before, I'm using wordprocessor and xerox principally because they are the most convenient media for me at this time and place. The main difficulty photocopying presents is that everything comes out visually "flat," due, I think, to the machine's (the one I'm using, anyway) relative ability to distinguish in the output among fine variations in stroke-width. You can get a quality product out of any medium if you put the necessary time and energy (intelligent energy--let's not succumb to the labor theory of value) into it. The difficulty of degrading detail with successive generations of copying is pretty much unique to photocopying, but you can get around it--at least, partially--if you're willing to do the 1980's equivalent of slipsheeting--i.e., devoting attention to each page individually.

For good use of offset I would point to Janus a few years ago, when Jeanne Gomoll was the main designer of the zine, or the last few issues of Izzard. The success of the latter (getting 20 pages of standard text into 8 pages, and still being readable...and saving time while coming out about even in the cost...and looking good) has Suzle and me thinking about going the same route.

Well, Locus has used that type-it-full-sized-and-reduce-it method for years, and I can't say I'm particularly pleased with it. There's a much simpler way of increasing your character-count per page: use a proportional-space type. You could cheaply buy an old proportional-space IBM Executive. Those things were a brief fad in the early '60's, so the machines go for a song--well, a long song. Produces beautifully clean copy, too. The space-saving permitted by letting each character take its own space, rather than reserving a standard 10 or 12 characters per inch is much greater than it seems it ought to be. The typefaces available on those machines are clean and quite attractive, and they are vertically large enough to reduce well if you decide to reduce anyway.

The "Do-It-Yourself Messiah" sounds awfully familiar, and I'm sure they do it in New York, and even

in Seattle. Whatever is special about San Francisco (and I agree that there is something), that isn't it.

Not by itself, true. But the fact that it is fairly typical is. If that makes any sense. I've mentioned the string quartets on the sidewalk and jazz bands at unlikely street corners and the harmonicist playing Chopin waltzes for morning commuters and the tuba player serenading evening commuters. This city is spilling over with music and with flowers. Every city has flower shops and stands, and every city has street musicians. It's the profusion that's unique, I think--as if the entire city were enclosed in Sheridan Square. Put all the oddities together--like the massage parlor coupons in the telephone directory and the other things I've been reporting for the last three years--and SF does come off as something special--somehow more "civilized," in a few respects, anyway. In others... Totally automatic, hey.

I liked Victor, Victoria more than I expected to (since I dislike most of Blake Edwards' movies. For an example of what I liked, take the scene in which Andrews beats the restaurant bill with the cockroach. Chaos ensues; this is predictable. What worked so well was shooting the main action from outside, without the sound. Imagining the aural carnage was much funnier than hearing it would have been. (What I didn't like was the inept detective: this is exactly the sort of overdone slapstick I don't like in the Pink Panther movies, and by and large it worked at a different level of humor than the rest of the picture.

Quite agree. The Clousseau-clone fell even flatter than in the Pink Panther movies--I thought--because it was a different type of comedy than the rather dry and witty approach used in the rest of the movie. Truly, though, Victor, Victoria would have been just another pretty farce in the crowd if it hadn't been for Robert Preston.

I'd like to hear your analysis of Bladerunner: what were the three stories that Scott tried to tell? Are you referring to (1) Dekker hunts androids (2) Dekker loves Rachel and (3) (I can't make out another subplot...er, androids learn to have emotions?), or something else? The novel had even more subplots, and I'm not sure if they hung together, either. (Since in the book Rachel is just as much an inhuman android as the others, the "love" does not work, and in that sense, Rachel turning out to be another android to hunt, the subplot (2) does tie into subplot (1) with (3) being a no-show.

Briefly, I reviewed Bladerunner in Quodlibet 14. Might as well reproduce the whole review, as it's rather short: "Blade Runner promised to be interesting, and it kept its promise. It was an interesting failure. Directed by Ridley Scott and based on Philip Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, it was a collage of images and ideas that tried to reflect Dick's kaleidoscopic approach and didn't even come close.

"The film's biggest problem is that it has three strong stories and tells none of them: it could have been a story of a time and a place as compelling as that of Make Room, Make Room/Soylent Green; it could have been a story of a man breaking out of a conceptual mold; and it could have been a political story of oppression and prejudice. Rutger Hauer's character is potentially as compelling as anything on the screen. Instead, Bladerunner is a mishmash of fragmentary treatments, botched by poor continuity editing from place to place. Vangelis' score was obnoxious, overly loud, and intrusive.

"Well, the bones were good, but Scott made a serious mistake in fleshing it out."

Having seen the movie again, I will stand by everything except, perhaps, ascribing to Scott the attempt to reflect Dick's off-the-wall approach.

It struck me the second time around how very powerful and moving is the androids' plight. There is something of Camus in it, in that they are inherently "absurd" machines, as Camus uses the term, and yet they continue to superachieve, as Camus did. But there is also a strong flavoring of the great Romantic, Victor Hugo. If the image of the Hauer android owes anything to another creation, it is to Jean Valjean. This is literary and emotive gold tucked in with the sappy and soap opera-ish dross of Dekker's affair with Rachel and the overused and logically incoherent moodiness of the settings. The personal-political story of the androids grows in the memory and overbalances the rest of the picture. It overwhelms the other, rather ordinary, imagery.

Interesting comments you make on San Francisco malls and politics. Also found your outline of cheeses to be interesting, and I think I actually learned from it.

D and Doug were both interesting. I remember when I once appeared in the Emperor Norton SF Hour (a long time ago) but I was never in Taipei.

I am sceptical of Robert Prokop's claims for The Soul Eater, but I may try it sometime, anyway. I read a James Hogan book once just because some near-stranger recommended it. (Of course, I thought it a terrible book, but I'm willing to try).

That wasn't, by any chance, Thrice Upon a Time, was it? That book was awful, indeed--an insult to the readers' intelligence. But when Bob continued to recommend him as one of his favorite new writers, I dipped into Voyage from Yesteryear (his 11th or 12th book) and found it excellent in its own way. And I have since read five or six others. There is a simplicity to Hogan--because he really

hasn't the faintest idea of how people work--that can be charming when there are compensating factors.

D's art is more the sort of thing I would expect to find in art shows, but I am most impressed by it. I should ask her about doing a cover or something for Mainstream sometime?

Join the rest of us. D--who has just changed her name to Elisheva ("Shay") Clare Barsabe-- insists on hiding her light under a bushel. But the beam warns ships at sea, anyway.

rich brown is very sincere, isn't he?

Umm...

Fortunately, Quodlibet reminds me in no way of Herb Caen. The guy's ok, sure, but you'd have to fill Quodlibet with lots of short, atmospheric phrases separated (or joined) by ellipses, and lots of dumb jokes archly told and lots of gossip.

Hey--that sounds like...like...a fannish fanzine!

I liked the Simon Agree work, too--p. 12 is the self-portrait, p. 13 is Cy Chauvin, and p. 14 is Jon Singer, right?

Hmmm. Well, Simon?

Lucy Huntzinger
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Many thanks for the cherry pie and the cheeses on Saturday. I was in as bad a mood as I can get and thanks to your cheerful conversation and Phil's interjections I managed to have fun.

I thought it was the other way around--Phil was conversing, and I was making interjections. See what a little cheese can do for you? In a situation like that, the Jewish mother in me comes out in full force: "Ess, mein Kind, ess!"

You may not have been able to tell, but it helped considerably. I simply despise being poor. I am proud, middle-class as all hell, and I didn't picture moving to San Francisco so that I could go on the dole. Ugh.

Hey, I've been there. We've all been there.

I should mention, for the benefit of out-of-city readers, that this situation (and the address above) no longer obtain(s).

I know that everybody has their own version of how our Saturdays at the Lounge got started but I really must disagree with yours. Loren Macgregor's version is accurate (see Izzard #6) in that it was quite a combination of people who started the ball rolling. First, I bitched about no regular meetings in town to Gary, Rich and Bruce. Then the subject was brought up after Larry Rehse suggested the Travel Lounge. Rich persuaded Gary and Patty to take charge of publicity for it. You may have first heard of it when G and P sent the flyer but it cannot be said to have strictly originated with them and while I'm all for egoboo I think it ought to be fairly assigned. The meetings are not hosted at all. I think it's working out nicely and I intend to show up each Saturday regardless of "regular" Lounge Lizard night or not. Metro Fandom is a cute name. Hope it catches on but I think Lizards are more descriptive. Who cares? Let's have a name contest or something.

I stand corrected. All I knew was that Patty called me up and said "Hey, we found this great place..." No, "Lounge Lizards" is perfect. It/we could be naught else, even when we no longer (de)base ourselves in the Travel Lounge.

Ghod, I'm never going to Zim's at Market/Van Ness again. Larry and I went there after a show last week, and it was like the worst movie I've seen. The host wouldn't let poor Larry use the restrooms until our food had been ordered and served. What a nightmare. The clientele was a charming combination of late night sleaze and early morning dregs. We were sorta both, I guess. To the unsuspecting it looks like a decent place. Maybe in the daylight, but let me tell you it is no place to turn on your third eye, not karmically good at all.

No, not even in the daylight.

Legend has it that once upon a time Zim's was a decent place to eat. I have a friend in Los Angeles with whom I share the Search for the Perfect Burger. She has raved for hours (minutes, anyway) over the Zimsburgers of 1967. I shake my head groggily.

Enjoyed your "cooking" show on the ENSFH last week. It's hard to maintain composure on live tv, isn't it? I know that when I hosted the show I had a hard time not laughing at the crew who were trying desperately to tell me that we were "on," I should talk now. Oh hell she doesn't know what camera she's on, aaaargh! It was quite enjoyable and I have no intention of seeing the tape. I prefer



to think of my performance as flawless, witty and utterly suave. Sense of wonder indeed.

Well, it was pretty good, as I recall, although Grunt, it must be said, stole the show. I have trouble with timing on that show: I rehearsed the sequence (for the benefit of those Not In The Know, Jim Jones decided, for Ghu alone knows what reason, that ENSFH needed a cooking segment, so he asked me to do something. I decided to do a chicken liver pate, since it could be faked without cooking) at least three times--even got timing cards made up and had someone stand there and wave them at me--off-camera, of course. But when push came to shove, the carefully measured time tried to double itself--no yeast, yet. I lost sight of the time cards, and I couldn't tell what camera I was on either. At one point I had to ask on the air. Life is tough, eh?

Meant to give you my last loc but it's not worth it so will just have to mention that I totally admire D Carol Roberts' talent, both art and writing. She's one talented lady and her article was fascination itself. I enjoyed your list of movies and am amazed at the number you've seen. Can't claim to have seen more than ten or so, myself. I've probably read that many books, though (in 1982). I prefer the printed word although I'm a sucker for movies about the future. I can't stand Horror movies; have seen Poltergeist and shredded the armrest all the way through. I thought it was pretty good but it ruined ET for me since I recognized most of the Spielberg tricks (saw the movies a week apart).

[Editorial Aside to the Readers: You can tell how long ago this letter was taken by the fact that Elisheva Barsabe is still referred to as "D Carol Roberts." Through a peculiar and, I hope, not to be repeated set of circumstances, I haven't issued Quodlibet since May, 1983. The Editorial this issue was written in September, and I am finishing the production at the end of November. Time-binding, indeed.] Seems to me that the ratio I worked out last year for movies to books in my viewing/reading (120 films, not counting television, to 192 books) still holds, although movie viewing will be severely down this year. Typically I budget for six films a month and see nine or ten, what with double features and so forth.

See you Saturday, I presume

One can also tell, he said with some annoyance, that this is an antique letter by the fact that Lucy is currently held in durance apparently less than vile in Falls Church, where she is actually pubbing ishes with some frequency. F.D.S.N.

Darroll Pardoe--11B Cote Lea Square--Southgate
Runcorn--Cheshire WA7 2SA United Kingdom

Thanks for sending me Quodlibet. I especially liked the part about cheese, since I'm a great fan of the stuff myself. Cheddar is the most popular type of cheese here, too: the "cheddaring" process consists, I believe, of storing the curds in the warm in a stack, and folding the sides in now and then. This is supposed to get rid of a lot of the moisture as the cheese forms.

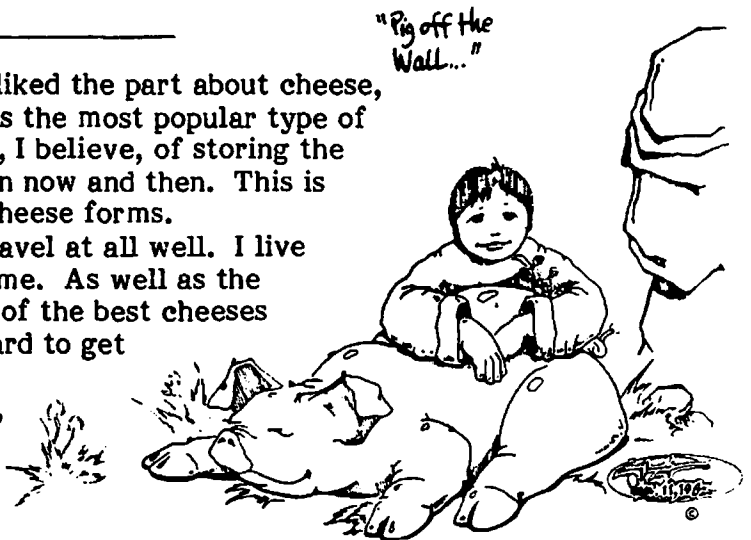
It's true that a lot of excellent cheeses don't travel at all well. I live in Cheshire, the home of the cheese of the same name. As well as the ordinary white variety there is a blue cheshire, one of the best cheeses of all time. But it is a very bad traveller, and it's hard to get anywhere except here--even in London. Likewise Lancashire: a white cheese which is a good toaster, but also hard to find away from its native haunts.

Really? There are several cheese shops here offering Lancashire about once a month or so. You'd think that, with transportation as rapid as it is, even the freshest local cheeses could be marketed elsewhere. I suppose the erratic nature of the demand does in things like that.

But the cheese country par excellence must be France, with over 300 distinct varieties currently on the go. I haven't sampled all that many of the 300 but I have some fond memories of--say--Cantal or Bleu d'Auvergne.

"Distinct" is a question-begging term when you're talking about the cheeses of France, I'd say. You can find twenty or thirty semi-soft varieties, but after the tenth tasting, they are all so much alike. My own favorite is an olive-studded Provence, although I don't generally care for flavored cheeses. It's a kind of cross between cream cheese and ricotta in texture, but with a strong "bite" that complements the olives.

There is a new English cheese about, first marketed only last year, called "Limeswold." I haven't



actually tried it yet, but the amusing thing is that the French have really taken to it, in spite of all the locally produced cheeses they have available, so almost the whole production is exported to France and it's often hard to find Limeswold in the shops here.

Haven't come across it here, either. Do try it and give us a report, will you? We turophiles may be few, but we are mighty.

When I was young we had a wonderful cheese store in the town where I lived, a lovely old-fashioned place the like of which has vanished from the earth, or at least from my own experience. You went in and there were whole cheeses all over the place, waiting for you to purchase as much or as little as you wanted. They just cut a slice of the appropriate size with the traditional wire. But the best thing about the place was that they were perfectly willing to provide samples for customers to taste. You could wander all about, asking for a bit of this cheese, or that cheese, and they'd cut a thin slice of any one you asked for so you could try it. Even if you ended up only buying an ounce of cheddar to put in a sandwich, or buying nothing at all, they didn't mind. Unfortunately, the store is long gone. There's a bank where it used to be. But it brightened up my youth, and got me hooked on cheese.

Sigh. Phil Paine tells me of a store in Toronto where they thrust huge knives with pieces of cheese and shout at you to come taste. That's my kind of cheese store. Unfortunately, all we have here are dainty and reservedly businesslike little shops. They do let you taste--how else?--but you have to ask, and the process is tedious. In the leaner part of my salad days, when things got really desperate, I could go to a local shopping mall and find an obliging Hickory Farms. Between the cheese samples and the flavored cracker samples, one could make quite an adequate snack.

Bob Webber--16 Oakburn Place, No. 5
Willowdale m2n 2t1 Ontario, Canada

Thanks for continuing to send me Quodlibet for so long in the face of apparent non-reaction on my part. I've been both interested and too busy to write for quite a long time. I'm back in University, as I may have mentioned in advance, and spent last term running around studying and getting married. All of these activities have been very time consuming. This term I'm taking a 115% normal course load, so I'm still pretty busy.

I beg to differ with you about some details of mimeography. The recent "advances" in mimeography's colour registration ability have been as much advances as pollution control devices hung on conventional Otto cycle engines. In both cases, the so-called advances merely add unnecessary complexity to a design whose original value was simplicity. Any Gestetner 466 owner can probably tell you horror stories about sticking registration systems which resulted in time lost, service calls, and ruined paper.

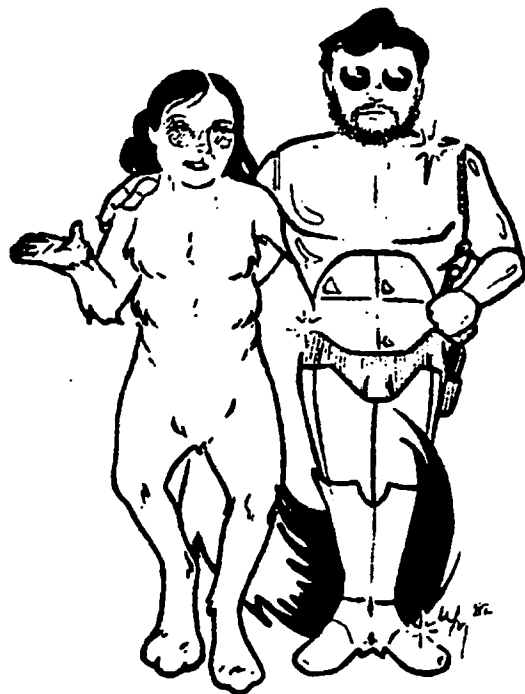
In fact, almost all the "advances" are of this type: attempts to make mimeo "offset-like" and competitive with cheap photo-litho systems. This is, however, a rearguard action by a technology in retreat: counting in typing time, master preparation time (if this is a separate operation) and finished copy quality, office mimeo cannot compete with office offset.

Not to say there's no reason to use it. What a good fanpublisher can do with mimeo is quite astounding, and fanpublishers, like any other artists, are free to choose their techniques and media to suit themselves.

The great advantage mimeo had, as far as fanpublishing is concerned, was that it was a cheap, in-home system that anyone could run reasonably competently with a minimum of trouble. Spirit duplicator has the same advantage, of course, but maintaining copy quality is an arcane art. When the cost of a new mimeo jumped to over \$1,000.00, it lost its single, overwhelming advantage and has to compete with offset on very unequal terms.

But the look of mimeography is unparalleled for fannish purposes. Sigh.

My god, Tim Kyger in mundane politics. As if we didn't have enough problems...



Most of your comments on television are about current stuff, which I haven't had time to watch, or stuff from when I was working nights or trying to avoid addiction, so I can't say too much. Anything would be too much.

Boy, you go to a lot of movies, don't you?

Airplane II made me laugh, but only against my better judgment. Somehow, I didn't get a good feeling about the things I was laughing at (with the possible exception of the communicator screen near the end of the film), unlike the original.

Well, the William Shatner role was a lot of fun. Otherwise, I thought they were simply rehashing material they had done very well in Airplane. But once was definitely enough.

It sounds as if the Crocker Centre mall is designed after the Citibank Centre mall in New York. The mall as a whole suffers from the same shortcomings. I couldn't really say about the fast-food operation.

There are a surprising number of recycled Toronto buildings--at least two--in San Francisco. Phil Paine keeps remarking on it--and on the prominence of Canadian banking institutions in the downtown area, too.

The same thing happens to me as to you. Um, explanation of the foregoing: people stop me and ask me for directions quite frequently, even when I'm just wandering around trying to figure things out myself. I suspect that the subliminal body language involved has something to do with one's feeling of knowledge and/or competence. This does not, of course, account for the tendency of panhandlers (I just got a sudden sinking feeling that that's an ethnic slur) and cigarette cadgers (in your case) to accost one. Maybe related to the same thing, though.

On the other hand, maybe it's just that you look "approachable," whatever that means. "The boy has a kindly face." Maybe you don't scowl at home as much as you do at conventions, eh?

Incidentally, I've noticed an alarming increase of the "incidence zone" for panhandling and cigarette-cadging within the last two weeks. It used to be pretty much confined to the blocks between 6th and 7th Streets and Howard to Market, where routinely one would be hit up three or four times per block (these are "long" blocks, five per mile east-west and eight per mile north-south). In the last couple of weeks, I've experienced that same incidence as far north as Eddy and as far east as the financial district. Curiously, although '60's "hippie" costume has begun reappearing in earnest, the number of people sleeping on the streets leveled off and has started to decline. At the same time, the newspapers are reporting the recession as over. On the other hand, maybe this is simply a function of the season? I don't know how to interpret these facts.

By the way, Chicago is extending a rapid transit (subway) line to their airport. You may not be able to escape becoming "Chicago-ized."

We tried that in 1957, as part of the BART plan. But the airport is actually situated in San Mateo County, and SM didn't approve the necessary bonds. Personally, I think SF should buy the right-of-way and build the extension to the airport, anyway. Ghu knows, we need a good transit system going to the airport, but the taxi and bus monopolies are agin it.

I'm not sure about Britain being a real shit in world affairs--or at least about Britain being a worse shit than anybody else at the time. If one compares British actions in their intensely colonial period with the actions of, for example, the German, Austro-Hungarian, French, Belgian (particularly), Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Ottoman, Italian, or U.S. colonialist/imperialist states during the same time, or during corresponding times in their individual development, one is apt to find the British faring no worse than most and far better than many.

Likely true. The point was made in reference to the myth of the UK as a place of particular civility and refinement that seems too pervasive here.

Actually, I think the process that's going on now in the U.S. (in particular) is a matter of the exaggerated Anglophile ideas of many people being demolished. That's fine by me, so long as it doesn't result in a transfer of the selective blindness of the Anglophile to some other state, foreign or domestic. From out here it seems like U.S. nationalism/patriotism/militarism/statism is making a comeback.

Well, yes and no. The reactionary backlash is on, to be sure, but it's still pretty pathetic. No really successful evocations of the Elmer Gantry, yet--although Jerry Falwell puts on airs. I wonder what it is about American and European (Protestant) Christianity that makes it so susceptible to pseudo-Naziism?

We've got a peculiar tv evangelist on cable, now: Dr. Gene Scott. He seems to be everywhere. Very peculiar theology, taking a bit from the Charismatics and a bit from the old-time fundamentalist sects and a mishmosh of pseudo-Blavatskian ideas. The whole thing sounds a heck of a lot like the Church of Foster.

We're in a peculiar position now, it seems to me: our "liberalism" is frozen solid as of about

1965, while the "conservatism" of that period seems to have disappeared, to be replaced by a strange beast, indeed. Some of the rhetoric is the same, but the conservatives had to adopt some libertarian positions, and it's all very confusing.

And just by the way, what do you figure is the grounds of your "natural" sympathy for the Irish? The only thing the Irish people seem likely to get by chucking out the "foreign oppression" is its replacement by (admittedly different) domestic oppression. Well, I guess that's not so bad as it was: it is, I believe, legal to own contraceptives in the Republic now. Importing or selling them, though...the place seems the worst kind of theocracy!

Well, the "natural" sympathy I spoke of comes from the deep and on the whole affectionate place the Irish have made in U.S. urban folk-mythos since 1845. As to the other point..."'tis a poor thing, sir, but mine own" may conceal a fierce pride. The issue has been presented to the American people as one of self-determination--and that's bound to win sympathy.

I think I may have finally gotten to the point where I don't care whether or not something is "fannish." Abandoning that criterion for quality, I am reduced to my own resources, rather than the opinions of those more qualified to determine fannishness (the fannishness coefficient?)--after painstaking examination of the problem, I have come up with two ways of judging the quality of any activity, concrete object, or abstract notion. These are: (a) objective criteria, such as accuracy (if fact is involved) of depiction, size, weight, etc., and (b) subjective criteria, such as interest for me, amusement value for me, etc.

Applying these criteria, I can say that the letter column was nine pages long, frequently amusing and interesting and occasionally not of interest. I couldn't say whether it was fannish, and that, frankly, is the sort of thing I find not to be particularly of interest.

The issue was interesting as a whole, however.

Well, thanks...I guess. Scratching of head. I reached much the same conclusion (about the fannishness coefficient) some time ago and decided that if I couldn't appeal to the fannish arbiters (S,AS), I would be left with only what I am, which was good enough to satisfy me. And, of course, I'm the only person, really, that I have to satisfy. Smug, self-congratulatory bastard that I am.

Still, there's fannish and there's fannish. And one aspect of fannishness is "whatever a fan does to realize himself in the respect that he acts as a fan." Twapped!

Lord Jim Kennedy--368 Second Ave.--San Francisco CA 94118

I've resisted the occasional impulse to respond to your Quodlibets in large part to avoid engendering any confusion over my very secure and content gafiante status. However, when the subject of anarchism comes up, I feel I must break my vow of silence.

Although I know your heart is in the right place when you propound antistatistism, I think you do a disservice to all who oppose political authority when you try to make it sound so easy and so easy to foresee life in an anarchist society.

The fact of the matter is that any such prediction would have to take into consideration such a vast number of chain reactions (which institutions and traditions would fill the space left by government? What would oppose them? What would be the outcome of those conflicts? What would be the culture's reaction to that outcome?) that one might as well (and as accurately) predict which cards will land face down when one tosses a deck of fifty-two into the air. With decades of experience in studying market trends, marketing experts still have only marginal success in predicting "what the public wants" in books/films/television. How can anyone pretend to know "what the public (would) want" in a situation in which there is virtually no experience to study? Such experiments as there have been in non-authoritarian/anarchist "states" have been notable for their very small size and, in nearly all instances, very short "longevity."

"Too facile" (as you say later) is not strong enough by half. Reading your letter, I could kick myself. There are reasons and rationales for what I said, however, that are not completely inconsistent with what you have written.

You are quite right when you say that I shot my mouth off. But, what I said was not completely unsupported, either. Rather, it is at the end of a long line of arguments and qualifications, only skimmed in the response to Victor Reppert in 18.

What I was aiming at--what I see as the greatest need faced by anarchist theorists--is the putting to rest once and for all of the automatic reaction "we'll all be murdered in our beds!" that people have when someone says "anarchy." The greatest obstacle the anarchist faces in relating to the rest of the world is the automatic assumption that social stability depends on the political and territorial integrity of The State. Never mind that it's a stupid assumption, invalid on its face. It's a

widely-held opinion. And, on the most particular level of day-to-day living, my statement is perfectly true, irrespective of that unfathomably complex chain of political and social reactions to the removal of the state: people will rise in the morning, try to decide what to wear, begin working, talk to co-workers and friends, spend time deciding where to go for lunch and what to have, or what to do after work. People have been doing that since Jericho, at least, when there is sufficient leisure to permit the questions to rise in the first place. The particulars will be incalculably different, to be sure. And I make no attempt to forecast them. But most of the patterns of urban existence are not a function, particularly, of the existence of a state, and, however much an anarchy might modify them, I doubt very much that it would abolish them entirely.

A further consideration: too many anarchists, themselves, have the silly, millenialist notion that, "comes the revolution," humanity will instantaneously go through a transformation and achieve moral perfection. Nonsense. Unless you live in substantial conflict with the state in your day-to-day life, there is no reason to believe that the perception of life-texture will/would be substantially different from that you have now--principally because that perception is a matter of an individual's character and personality much more than the externals he's dealing with.

Now, this does not mean that such a world is only "subtly" different from a state-infested world: the release of monies now eaten up by taxes, hidden and overt, and the abolition of the Patent Office and FDA alone guarantee that it would be wildly different in the sheer number of choices available to anyone. My point is simply that social conventions continue to operate whether or not there is a general in the Pentagon assigned to plan nuclear war on Canada. And I still think that a valid and important point.

The anarchistic communities that have occasionally appeared in times of "peace" have benefitted from the order maintained by the states within which they have existed (i.e., have never had to defend themselves from barbarian invaders or empire builders); those that have appeared in the midst of revolution or civil war (French/Russian/Spanish) have all suffered complete annihilation. There is little in history that can be applied to any predictions of life in an anarchist "nation" or world.

Well...that's not, perhaps, strictly true--in that every time a community springs up without a statist political structure (and there are many non-statist political structures), we learn something about the techniques and methods of anarchy. But there are, admittedly, no "pure" examples we can look to without further analysis. However, there are a few, badly documented, frontier settlements in the 18th and 19th centuries, before the major waves of settlement, which appear to contradict your thesis.

Having said all that, I don't suppose it would be appropriate for me to describe my concept of a world without political authority. I will say, however, that I cannot for a moment imagine one nearly indistinguishable from the world we live in...as you suggest.

Anarchist thought is highly rich and varied. Great anarchist thinkers like Proudhon and Kropotkin have attempted to work out functional anarchiates on paper (and in practice). Even when one can spot holes in their arguments, it causes one to think. When you confidently state that a large-scale anarchiate would be only subtly different, a little nicer, than the extant world, you are being too facile. You don't sound as though you've given the subject any thought. You won't convince anyone who doesn't already share your philosophy. You won't even inspire anyone to consider the possibility of life beyond the thralldom of government.

That's a very cogent analysis of a strategy that turns out to be injudicious. Fine. I would be especially interested, though, in seeing a suggestion--or at least a discussion--of better strategies for addressing the critical propaganda and public education need I outlined earlier while at the same time satisfying the demands of accuracy and reasonableness.

Otherwise: my compliments on your zine. Of course, I disagree with almost everything you say when you veer into opinion (and wish you made more distinction between fact and opinion), but there's a lot of good thinking in your cluttered pages.

(Which does lead me to one final criticism: I do share D's opinion that you should pay a little attention to the appearance of your zine. I know that the presentation of information is your primary interest, but it is still only half the experience of a publication. Not only does your publication ignore its potential as a total experience for your readers in eschewing graphics and paying so little attention to layout, but the large masses of solid text are psychologically intimidating. Of course--again--I can speak only for myself, but I find it takes an especial effort to more than very quickly skim Quodlibet: there are no corners and ledges for the eye to light on. If you don't want to do more with graphic design, perhaps you would consider publishing it in folded-over "digest" format (8-1/2" x 5-1/2"), wherein the mass of text would become less imposing.

Hmmm. Clearing up a couple of misconceptions: I can only make sense of your comments if I read them as "I do not like the choices you have made," because Quodlibet's graphics package is, for

the most part, carefully planned and executed with painstaking attention to detail—as the section on technical aspects of production in 18 should have told you. Terms such as "you should pay a little attention to the appearance of your zine" make no sense, given the amount of time and attention I have been spending on those aspects. Rather, I take it you mean that I should look to different design ideas and execute them just as carefully. Incidentally, had you given any thought to the idea that perhaps that "density" you complain of is an integral part of the "total experience" of Quodlibet?

Well, there aren't many positive words in these pages, but then I'm long out of practice as a "loc" writer. Do consider my opinion of your zine as a job well done...with reservations. And I thank you for your diligent efforts.

Robert Prokop—1717 Aberdeen Cir.—Crofton MD 21114

Thank you for sending me an advance copy of Nicholas' criticisms of my letter in Quodlibet 18 about The Soul Eater. Nearly every problem he had with what I wrote could be cleared up instantly by removing a single, crucial misconception. I never wrote a review of The Soul Eater. I wrote a loc to Quodlibet, the subject of which happened to be my reactions to reading the book. Most of Nicholas' objections were technical ones, concerning how a review should be put together, and what should go into it. Since I did not write a review, I see no point in responding to Nicholas' criticisms point-by-point. They are irrelevant. Think of what I had to say as a lengthy cover blurb, and it will read much better. It was an advertisement, if you will. "Editorial Whim" decided to present it as a review. Which is fine with me. I have no quarrel at all with that. Quodlibet is Bill's magazine, and he can do what he damned well pleases with my locs. He can print them upside down, or encode them as a binary stream, if he wants. (Just keep the boldface coming, Bill. That's why we send them in.)

Feh, and double-feh! I still think it unreasonable that all reviews, reports, and critical analyses should conform to a single formal structure.

There are a few other points in Nicholas' letter, however, that deserve specific reply. I had a good laugh when Nicholas assumed I had never heard of Moby Dick, because it's long been one of my favorite novels. I even took a trip to New Bedford once, specifically for the purpose of seeing some of the old whaling sites. Perhaps my longstanding affection for Moby Dick attracted me in the first place to The Soul Eater. I didn't mention the similarities in my letter because I thought they were too obvious. Although now re-reading what I wrote, I can see that I was not clearly expressing myself at all on this point, so Nicholas is excused for coming to the wrong conclusion.

Far more serious are his disparaging comments on the Campbell Era, SF classics, and the "good ol' sensawunder." If I am not mistaken, and Nicholas does regard the Sense of Wonder with more than a little contempt, then I truly feel sorry for him. The S.O.W., simply stated, is SF's basic stock-in-trade, its finest quality, its greatest contribution to world literature, its supreme achievement, and just possibly its very reason for existence. It's why I love SF. Without it, I wouldn't bother reading the stuff.

Well...not really. That's true of one, narrow variety of sf, perhaps, but not to the whole of the literature. And, comes to that, sensawunda isn't the exclusive patent of sf, either. I find it in Hugo's monstrous romances and Davies' Fifth Business (take a copy of that and shake it at the next person who complains of favored genders relegated to "supporting roles") and The Rebel Angels, for example. Sf has a lot more to offer than "mere" sensawunda, delightful though it is to experience that frisson, to have your breath taken away. Which leads me, ruminatively (chew, chew) astray for a moment...

I am quite tired of hearing people insist on the one hand that sf ought to be devoted only to the genre of romance or on the other that it ought to be devoted exclusively to the novel genre. Or social satire. Whatever. Sf, it seems to me, is a mode of expression and, I think, a methodology for approaching one's materials. It has to cross genre lines, and when a story works within the formal criteria of one genre, it uses the conventions of the genre. Silverberg, for example, is particularly fond of novelistic sf, so he writes sf novels. This does not confine Charles Sheffield or Larry Niven to the novel; nor does it confine Silverberg to the novel.

Sf is not monolithic.

As for my taste for E.E. Smith--no apologies. The Lensman series will be read and enjoyed long after Joanna Russ, Barry Malzberg, and Harlan Ellison are dust and long-forgotten. If Nicholas can't appreciate him, it's his loss.

On other matters, last night I saw my second movie for the year, Octopussy (the first was a few months ago and was Tootsie). I'm a sucker for James Bond movies, and I think that the last three or four have been the best ever. Let's see, the series really took off with The Spy Who Loved Me. Then there was Moonraker, For Your Eyes Only, and now Octopussy. I hope they don't stop making them

now, because lately each one has been better than all the others that came before it. (Now Nicholas must really think I'm hopeless. First Doc Smith, and now James Bond!)

I used to enjoy the Bond movies for their kitsch value, but since Sean Connery stopped doing them and Roger Moore took up the gauntlet, I haven't enjoyed them much--too glib, flash, and campy for my taste. But the production values have enormously improved of late. Uh--Never Say Never Again was kinda fun.

By the way, am I the only reader/contributor of Quodlibet that actually liked The Number of the Beast?

Probably. Further Deponent Sayeth Not.

I know this is treading on thin ice, considering the unanimous condemnation it has received in these pages for the last year or so. I'll concede that the plot was disjointed, and the moralizing on the heavy side, but it was kind of fun to meander through Heinlein's opinionating--even (as he so frequently is) when he was dead wrong. I'm beginning to suspect that he sometimes throws in some of his more outlandish statements on purpose--to make sure that the reader is sitting up and taking notice.

Well...I admit to a moderate fondness for the sections in which they are wandering through Heinlein's favorite fantasy universes--aside from the tedious negative elenchos of the "lifeboat" problem--and I rather enjoyed the evocation of E.E. Smith--was it Triplanetary or First Lensman he was evoking? But that's about it.

I was pleasantly surprised by all the media attention given to Pioneer 10's crossing of Neptune's orbit. I had expected only the most cursory mentions of the event. But there were front-page articles on Pioneer two days running in the Washington Post, and all three networks gave Pioneer the lead story spot on the evening news. U.S. News & World Report (the only news magazine I get) devoted a two-page spread to the spacecraft.

I know. Despite the inherent romance, that kind of coverage is always amazing to me. Newsweek gave Sally's Ride six pages and covered the Space Station Initiative in a page-40 sidebar. Local news did an excellent spot on the Space Station Initiative during Sally's Ride--three minutes at the end of the broadcast. Either there's a vast amount of public enthusiasm which isn't really making itself felt otherwise, or else the media is heavily loaded with space freaks. Take your pick. Of course, the Space Station Initiative is designed to test the former proposition.

By the way, did you ever find my lost illustration? Perhaps a song should be composed for the occasion--the "Ballad of the Lost Illo-o."

Urk. No, I've lost it completely. But I'm hanging onto your illo of "Eyeball" for the piece you queried on your universe design. It will, no doubt, appear in the same issue as Ruby Sheffer's New Zealand article and your brother's lifestyle article...

F.M. Busby--2852 14th Ave. W.--Seattle WA 98119

With a cheery hello to Tim Kyger: birthdate of RAH is not any something-ought-three but 7/7/07. I like Tim's point that Heinlein has tried a lot harder to do Real Women (Star Beast and Have Spacesuit, Will Travel and Door Into Summer) the man has characterized younger girls superbly. And I think I know why. Strikes me that he can still tap the vein of feeling that goes back to childhood, and despite modern medical knowledge most people think of prepubertal children as essentially sexless, so a child is a child is a child and RAH writes young female kids great.

The subject of Heinlein's female characters is quite complex--in many cases, they are, admittedly, stock characters; in others, they fit into the unusual and highly effective method Heinlein has evolved using "types" for characters--symbols both larger and smaller than reality. In still others, they are highly individual, or a combination of type and stock or type and individual. Female characters are quite important in Heinlein's corpus, and he has gone out of his way to define them--but the criteria he is using belong to older, historical waves of feminism, dating from about 1880 to 1945. There was a bit of consistency in that line of development, but the post-War wave of oppression created a hiatus. The most recent wave takes off from different premises, and Heinlein doesn't seem ever to have caught onto the reformulation of ideas involved in this last go-round. The historically-ignorant feminist finds the ideas alien and assumes, quite wrongly, that they are anti-feminist. The shutters of the mind go down. Bang. I don't know that I'd agree as to his young, female characters. The tomboys certainly ring true, but the kittenishness of Paddy Fries and Puddin' are often cloying. The syndrome, it strikes me, is a little better under control in "The Menace From Earth."

Friday is happily what used to be called a "rattlin' good story"; any competent nitpicker can find

holes in it, and what else is new? (I was disappointed when she took up with the rapist instead of working the coincidences by finding the other Artificial Person from earlier). It's the best story RAH has done in quite a time. I caught jollies when first I wondered how Heinlein could have known of SF writer Joe Green so as to Tuckerize him in "Gulf" circa 1949, and then a few pages later remembered that story better: "Hell, yes; Kettle Belly Baldwin!" And all that, the whole bit; a little extra pizzaz for the oldtime reader.

Early Heinlein works influenced not only my writing but my overall attitudes. So it felt a little weird to seem to recognize in Friday echoes of my own first in-the-head female protagonist. Well, if I did achieve a little subconscious feedback (which is by no means certain) I'd be very pleased. Maybe a great debt, slightly repaid.

I'm only fourteen years Heinlein's junior, but except for one editor whose standards I never did figure out (circa 1972) I've never been accused of running a whole lot behind the times. Possibly this is due to being exposed to fandom over a bunch of years, and paying heed. The way I do female viewpoint is that people are human first and gender only when it matters. It seems to pay off, because female readers tell me that Rissa Kerguelen and Zelde M'tana are Real Women; it is mostly male critics who take the opposite view. And one of the greatest feedback kicks I ever got was when Octavia Butler gave me a Nebula recommendation for Zelde M'tana, with an in-the-head black female protagonist. I knew it was the toughest job I'd ever tackled, and Butler's nod told me that I had to have done something right!

You, sir, are a brave man. Or possibly a foolish man. The mere thought of laying one's neck on the block by even attempting a female protagonist makes me shiver. Not that one may not do a good job, but it's a no-win situation, given the current ideology. Well, almost no-win, apparently, as you did win free...

Loved Robert Prokop's night sky description. The thing is, I've had those too, and trying to get them across in print is frustrating. Like Seward, Alaska, down at the dock alongside Alaska Steamship's Denali. And up there in the black sky, ripples this crackling luminous curtain, whipping back and forth, colors constantly changing, pulling up or dipping down toward the horizon, and no way to describe this experience in mere words. Well, you could almost hear it, and a few years later I got the same feeling from a piece of stellar artwork.

Teevy: before Barney Miller I never saw anyone do a 3-ply plot. Herenow we truly enjoy Remington Steele and I like Gold Monkey a lot; I keep expecting Clark Gable and Wallace Beery and Jean Harlow in that great dress to come walking up to the dock; it's so 1930's, done lovingly. Cheers is fun, and sometimes I see a Soap or MH, MH rerun.

I seem to recall that All in the Family used multiple story lines. Of course, they had each of the four major characters and the two marriages to work with--to say nothing of the neighbors, etc.--so that kind of thing came naturally. Trouble is, I can't recall whether that was concurrent with or prior to M*A*S*H and Barney Miller...

I wish you all best luck with the Space Initiative.

Marty Cantor--5263 Riverton Ave. #1--No. Hollywood CA 91601

"...I had reason to hope might escape the aura of semi-literacy with which Cantor invests everything he touches." Gee, Bill, it is to be assumed, then, that you do not want to ever shake hands with me, otherwise you would acquire an aura of semi-literacy which would replace (or, ghod forbid, enhance) your aura of pompousness.

Or, put it another way: whilst I often prefer to use a somewhat archaic English (which includes the proper English spelling) and you prefer to sprinkle your English with foreign words and phrases--do not said idiosyncracies merely betoken taste and style? "Semi-literacy" and "pompousness" are, after all, merely negative judgments of an entirely subjective nature, reflecting neither accuracy of perception nor veracity of acuity on the accuser--also, of course, creating unnecessarily bad rapport 'twixt subject and object. Possibly we should both forget these appellations.

Oh, my. Q.E.D. I decline the field without conceding it. While I admit to cringing at your affected use of "whilst" and (here) "'twixt," I probably wouldn't have commented on that. I believe, rather, that I was objecting in a roundabout way to your practice of re-writing your contributors' locs, suppressing their rhetorical styles and replacing them with your own. Just for the sake of clarity.

Not to be forgotten, though, is the denigration of my wife as "faithful sidekick." Robbie is in every meaningful sense of the word, as much a co-editor of HTT as anybody could possibly be in a situation of joining a founding editor after a publishing enterprise has been going for several years. Whilst the continuing production of HTT has found the two of us gravitating towards different parts

of the production, the editing of the zine is a fully equal situation. Material must be accepted by both editors; and, whilst rewriting (if necessary) of various submissions is usually handled by one or the other of us, usually it is done with consultation and the two of us have input on any changes. Furthermore, basic layout of every issue is done in what can only be called (in an overblown way) a conference. As you have by now guessed, both Robbie and I take umbrage at the connotations of your seeming denigration of her by calling her my "faithful sidekick."

Criticism accepted. Apologies offered. I had intended the reference only in respect of the particular letter I was mentioning, but see how it could be read as a general comment. Don't recall whether I mentioned it in my loc, but I find Robbie's writing quite refreshing, with great clarity and a charmingly light tone. I appreciate her contributions to HTT.

Here is a small dollop of input into your discussion with rich brown on the topic of fanzines, their look, and how same affects the package. Etcetera.

When I started HTT I publically eschewed a multiplicity of illos in the zine because I did not want to get involved with much cutting and pasting. It did not take me very long to realize that my conception of a genzine required lots of illos. HTT, as a consequence, became a zine which presented to fandom more illos per year than any other fanzine.

Economics, though, has forced upon us some modifications. The first change was to go from a schedule which was quarterly to one which is thrice-yearly. As the optimum size of the zine seems to be around the 80 page mark (optimum being defined as a combination of cost and "feel" or "impact"), the growing amounts of good written material which we are receiving is slowly taking over space which would otherwise be used for illos. As we feel that reducing the number of illos much more than we have already done will change the "feel" of the zine in a way we would not like, we may very well see HTT show some more growth in page-count (which, with Robbie now having a permanent job [thereby providing us with more money to squander on this ridiculous hobby] is probably [in our eyes] the least objectionable way we would like HTT to change).

My problem, more than the economics, is that I dislike the mechanical aspects of production. In this I am probably atypical among publishing fans, as many of them seem to have endless (and incomprehensible) patience with refractory mimeographs, tables turned into collating racks, and staples, heavy-duty and otherwise. The production process bores me. Every time I finish an issue of Quodlibet--particularly a 24+ page one--I look at the six hours of photocopying, folding, and mailing time ahead of me and sigh wearily. Brother Ass is getting uppity again.

I have been fortunate, indeed, in having both of the machines which I have used for repro purposes costing me comparatively little money. My first machine was a Heyer ditto--I purchased it for \$30 from the Nivens (the price included many reams of paper). This machine I eventually sold to APA-L, doing so when I purchased from the Trimbles a Gestetner 300T machine, the mimeo which I still use. This machine came with 12 tubes of Gestetner ink. I do not have access to free mimeo at the LASFS; however, as that machine is always in rotten shape due to too many inept operators always fooling with it, the \$150 which the Trimbles' machine cost me was money well spent (even if I do have to hand-crank over twenty reams of paper every time I put out a copy of HTT). Well, nowadays Robbie and I share that job.

Contrary to what so many people outside of America seem to think, our federal government does not have policies designed to help American companies prosper abroad--except for a nagging advertising campaign exhorting companies to try to sell abroad (so as to help our balance of payments problem). (Actually, the present administration may be an exception to policies adhered to by recent administrations). Businesses in many other countries operate with/by covert and overt bribery (as do many government officials). Our National Conscience is so bothered by this that we have a federal law which punishes companies and their executives when they are caught in bribes and bribe attempts in other countries. This law has hurt American businesses attempting to do business in many third world companies as competing businesses from other countries which do not have this kind of law (Germany, Japan, etc.) can move into these markets and bribe away without fear of domestic legal consequences in their own countries. Hmph. Considering how this is germane to the American Cultural Imperialism argument now going on in my zine I shall cease boring you with the topic here.

The rhetoric of a Revolution is not always the same as its reality. The American Revolution was somewhat more conservative than its rhetoric--I refer you to its designation of a slave as three-fifths of a person for census purposes and its establishment of property-holding as a requirement for the franchise. (Um--I am skipping ahead from the Revolution to Constitutional times--well, no matter, it was only about a decade).

And 1966 to 1976 was only a decade, too...

The rhetoric of communist revolutions (the Russian communist [not Kerensky] or Cuba) is great on liberal rhetoric and just as great on profound conservative reality (with conservative in this

instance meaning the fastening on the "liberated" populace a dictatorship just as oppressive, if not more so, than that of the overturned government).

When you say that the American Revolution was the Confused Revolution you are not far wrong. Most revolutions, as they can in no way be considered neat affairs by any but those not too clearly looking back from the viewpoint of history, are Confused Revolutions. Lest some forget, what we are doing now is history to our descendants.

Terry Carr—11037 Broadway Terrace--Oakland CA 94611

Well, okay, your admiration for St. Elsewhere's later episodes as opposed to the first couple which we hated induced Carol and me to try the show again last night. It was the one in which a pregnant woman invades an OR with a gun, demanding the doctor who supposedly did a failed vasectomy on her husband (plus other plots, of course). I'm afraid we still thought it was nothing more than average tv fare, which of course means pretty poor: the situations were contrived and the characters not very interesting (especially the bogus aunt, who was all too obviously imitating Ruth Gordon at her worst). We have no desire to watch the show again. Was this one that you liked, or did we hit another trough and should try again?

No, that episode was about at the show's median level, following its poor openers--not the best, admittedly, but a little better than a placeholder. So it is the show itself that you dislike, and not the episodes you'd seen. There are some very fine episodes which, I feel, take the show as a whole well beyond anything one could reasonably expect of television fare.

I'm doing my best to get a line on your tastes as expressed in Quodlibet, but it's difficult: you seem to be well-read, etc., but your tastes in sf are by no means wonderful. Haldeman, Butler, Gilliland, and Kingsbury are all good writers of the second or third rank (except Kingsbury, whose work I've championed from the start), but your dislike for Gene Wolfe and admiration for Heinlein makes me wonder, and conclude tentatively that your tastes and mine diverge quite a bit.

Well...I keep forgetting that not everyone on my mailing list has been with Quodlibet since Hector was a pup. That particular list harks back to a comment I had made earlier about finding particular pleasure at the moment in works displaying a complex synthesis of materials. The list does not refer to my preferences overall (I mean, neither Delaney nor Ellison were on the list. Come on, now...) Haldeman, for instance, is on the list in a very tentative fashion because I enjoyed Worlds. I don't think I've actively disliked anything of his I've read, but generally he hasn't excited me. I'm looking forward to his next few works to see whether he reverts to his earlier, rather monochromatic treatments. Gilliland's Rosinante books are, admittedly, not of "stellar" quality (sorry, Alexis), but I very much enjoy their quirky humor and, again, the complexity of the materials he's working with.

I most strenuously disagree that Butler is a second rank writer. She routinely creates structures and characters of significant subtlety, reinforced with conceptual harmonies on many levels. I think Octavia Estelle Butler is a major talent. As far as I'm concerned, she earned a First with Wild Seed, and she wants only time, persistence, and, perhaps, a slightly more "conventionalized" approach for the rest of the field to catch up/on.

Kingsbury. I've seen nothing of his but Courtship Rite but was very pleased with it. It seems to me that he is breaking on the scene already a technically matured artist. As to his "ranking," I prefer to wait for future developments. He may, after all, turn out to be like Daniel Galouye--making very good showings but never quite coming up to the mark again.

I think Wolfe is one of sf's very best ever, and though Heinlein has done excellent things in years (not Sixth Column: I do agree with you there) I think the key to his popularity was mostly that he has the ability to make complex issues seem simple--which is a falsity in itself, precisely the sort of "virtue" that made many sf writers seem better than they actually were.

Well...I don't know whether I quite agree with that formulation or that analysis. A didactic writer, after all, to make his point must clear out the confusing mass of details and leave clear the key ideas. What is central to the mode cannot logically be a failing of the writer. In any case, Heinlein shows up in these pages so frequently because the readers want to talk about him. A casual mention early on that Starman Jones could be salvaged by a minor re-write provoked a series of correspondence that went on for months. And we're still working on the third generation of comments from that one and the additional remarks I made reviewing Friday in 14.

I strongly disagree with Joe Nicholas, though, that Rocket Ship Galileo began RAH's downfall: RSG was indeed a lousy novel, and Space Cadet wasn't much better, but they were obviously intended as introductory sf novels and RAH's later "juvenile" novels were excellent, especially Have Space Suit, Will Travel and The Rolling Stones, which broke new ground (Keith Laumer and Rosel George Brown's

Earthblood simply reprised most of HS,WT).

Actually the divergence in our sf tastes appears to be along lines of you preferring the technological type of sf for the most part (though Octavia Butler doesn't fit this mold) and apparently not liking the more "literary" brands, which I tend to prefer.

Not so, it's simply that I have the nasty habit of sticking to the subject, which confuses people to no end. And you must be doubly confused at the enthusiasm expressed for The Rebel Angels, Theophilus North, and Giles, Goat Boy, if I'm supposed not to like "lit'ry" sf...

Actually, of course, the ideal sf combined both sides, as I'm sure we'd all agree, possibly even Robert Prokop, whose list of favorite recent sf writers slightly horrified me: Sheffield at least is a decent writer, and Joseph Delaney is fairly amusing...but James P. Hogan? Even his most staunch admirers seem unanimous in recognizing his deficiencies in prose and characterization. Much the same goes for Robert Forward. I'll be curious to see what you and/or Prokop think of, for instance, forthcoming stories by Carter Scholz in next year's Universe and his novel Palimpsests--both of these deal with science on a sophisticated level, but even more so with the philosophy of science.

Teevee again: I didn't watch V, since it sounded like it would be just another cheap sf melodrama and I hate most sf films anyhow; Carol did watch the first half and said it was awful. I did watch An Englishman's Castle, and admired it a whole lot: too bad that one sort of sneaked onto U.S. tv and was apparently seen by very few sf fans: it's a good example of what alternative-wold sf stories could and should more often be...In the non-sf stuff, I avoided The Winds of War (Carol watched it and said the book was a helluva lot better), but for some reason I watched all of The Thorn Birds, lousy as it was. I guess it was on during a week when I'd been reading too much and would do anything to avoid reading more of anything; it was poor from the start but I stuck grimly with it to the end, taking it as some sort of challenge ("This series will not defeat me!"). Chamberlain has never impressed me as an actor--never mind that he's reputed to have been excellent as Hamlet; hell, even Robert Vaughan got good notices when he did the role--and the series seemed to be built on people's desire to see a priest make it sexually with Rachel Whoever; when that scene came, they played it to the hilt, including the typical shots of crashing surf, etc. Wot crap.

Enough of my ad hoc descriptions of my own tastes in fiction and such; after a short while they bore even me. I loved your reply to George Flynn re the SF yellow pages separating "Massage" and "Marriage Counselors" by three pages of "Martial Arts" listings. "Top that" indeed. Also loved your line about exposes of corruption in U.S. foreign affairs making their impact "in a vegetable-empire kind of way." Quite so.

The whole 63F mess just amazes me. Are so many people really so averse to the concepts of standards that they must nitpick endlessly and bring in irrelevant or unreal arguments? When I think of it in overview it seems laughable that anyone should argue against the idea that fanzines can and should be judged on the basis of quality-standards in general, which is really all that Ted White et al have been saying. On what basis can fanwork be judged differently from anything else? Apparently the sticking-point is the idea that fanstuff is more for communication than anything else, and thus content even if it's minimal should take precedence over quality of presentation. (Even Eric Mayer, no mean writer himself, seems to believe this.) I think the ultra-democratic youth movement of the last fifteen yeras, with its supposition that anything anyone did before us ("us" being whoever's writing currently) is just ancient history and thus irrelevant, is the moving force here, and the self-congratulation and hubris of this seems embarrassingly evident to me. But on reflection, this same sort of argument has been going on in fandom for decades, in earlier cases mostly been fans who concentrated on mailing comments in apas, opposed to more formal or "serious" writing that tried to be something more than off-the-cuff opinionating. But why should we pay serious attention to just anybody who rattled out first-draft comments without the trouble of incorporating them into a considered philosophy? At the very least, it seems to me, such comments should be written as well as possible--and writing well includes not only clever turns of phrases but also thoughtful bases for opinions. To me this seems terribly obvious and I can only shake my head and laugh when I see people trying to dispute it. Whether or not Willis or Burbee or Boggs would agree with a given opinion, or whether or not they said something about it thirty years ago, is completely irrelevant; the question is, did they think it through more completely or say it more clearly? In too many cases, they did, but today's fans usually haven't seen what they did and wouldn't care if they had.

And part of it, too, is the vanishing ability to recognize quality writing and to distinguish among substandard, decent, literate, and exceptional writing. Do we really want to exhume the corpse of Diminished Educational Standards Past? I thought not...

Today's fandom seems to me to be filled with barbarians who assume new waviely that the past exists only to be destroyed. This assumption, unconscious or overt, seems to me terribly stupid. Sure, most current fans don't have much access to what's been done or said before in fandom; but

they also don't seem to want to know about the past. I claim it's impossible to "stand on the shoulders of giants" when one steadfastly refuses to believe that such giants ever existed in the first place. The 63Fers who are on the negative side seem to see consideration of the past as antiprogressive, but how can one progress by starting, in every case, from point one (some fifty-plus years ago now)? No one person, no matter how talented or intelligent, can mentally recapitulate all of fanhistory before adding worthwhile things to it, except by the occasional accident.

Science fiction itself, fortunately, doesn't have this problem, because there are so many reissues of earlier sf books that any new sf writer or critic probably has a decent knowledge of past achievements. But fanzines of the past are much more rare and hard to get now, so current fans exist in an increasingly large historic vacuum. Well, maybe fandom can be invented over and over from scratch, and the many talented current fans can do fine things in such a situation...but migod, how much better they'd do if they knew where they're coming from! So I see things like Warhoon 28 not simply as documents out of a dead history, but rather as primers for fanac. I wish there were many more reprints of past fannish work than they are, but faanish fandom doesn't offer the continuing supply of past work that professional sf does, so we have to go through this crap every few years. Imagine a fandom in which the fannish equivalents of Heinlein's novels, and those of van Vogt, Clarke, Bradbury, and Pangborn aren't available, and you'll see a dismal situation. That situation, unfortunately, is precisely what current fannish fans have before them, so it's a wonder that today's fanzines are as very good as they are.

"Primers for fanac." I like that. Or, perhaps, crestomathies. I know that one of the things that struck me, looking through Warhoon 28, was the ingenious solutions Willis came up with for expressing concepts and creating structures. Broaden's one's mental horizons, wot?

Joseph Nicholas--22 Denbigh St.--Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER UK

Many thanks for your letter of 31 May and the enclosed copy of Quodlibet 14, which actually arrived about ten days to a fortnight ago; the delay in responding due entirely to um er circumstances beyond my control rhubarb rhubarb sort of. (I see that my glass is almost empty; this is why the excuse is not as triffic as it could have been.) And now I'm racing to catch up on my correspondence so that I can spend every evening of next week and probably the following weekend as well typing out the masters for the August issue of the BSFA's Paperback Inferno (of which, as you may have heard, I'm the editor--I used to be the reviews editor of Vector as well, but Differences Of Opinion led to the termination of that post); this letter, therefore, will probably be rather shorter than it should be.

Anyway. When I said I'd never liked Heinlein, and gave the reasons why, I was attempting to show that it was not so much "an incalculable diversity on the part of the readership" that's responsible for the dislike of Heinlein that exists in certain quarters as to overthrow your contention that there is or has been a specific point in his career at which people have gone off him. "There's not much difference between the two," I can imagine you saying, and considering your claim that the point at which people go off Heinlein depends very much on the individual it could be that there isn't; but underlying this, however, is the notion that people (to a certain extent) grow up with Heinlein, and then outgrow him. My point, on the other hand, is that if you come to him late there's nothing to outgrow because he's childish anyway, and obviously so. I wasn't talking solely about Stranger in a Strange Land, after all, but dealing with his entire career since the late forties; and all his novels from Rocketship Galileo onwards (was that the first of the post-war juveniles? Well, whichever one it was, then--as I said, I haven't actually got any of his books) have fallen into this childish mould inasmuch as they present a view of the world which purports to be adult but is in fact equivalent to that of a five-year-old: "if I can beat everyone up then I can have anything I like, so yah boo sucks."

Woah. Let's get a few facts untangled from the mare's next you've created. First, I am not contending that "there is...a...point in Heinlein's career, etc." Ted White alleged that Heinlein went permanently off his feed with Starship Troopers (1959, I believe); Malcolm Edwards responded that it was more likely that people begin to go off him at one point or another. Agreeing with Malcolm, I'm arguing that at various times in his career, Heinlein has taken off in different directions, at each of which a certain fraction of his readership becomes displeased with the new direction and ceases to read him. Meanwhile, the rest of his readership--by far the majority, as far as I can tell--continues to enjoy the new work as well as the old, or, occasionally, find the new more rewarding than the old. I was trying to show that Ted's contentions make no sense, because people set That Point at different books. The four books most commonly named (Rocket Ship Galileo, Starship Troopers and/or Stranger in a Strange Land, and I Will Fear No Evil, in chronological order) are clearly division markers of

some kind--or passages from one watershed to another. This is evidenced, aside from the actual content of the works themselves, by the fact that people who think the "fault" lies with Heinlein overwhelmingly choose one of these four works.

The notion that Heinlein is "fundamentally" a juvenile writer, and readers grow into and out of him has a sort of facile, simplistic charm and provides the additional benefit of allowing one to feel superior to the rabble.

One may, of course, define Heinlein's readership as ipso facto immature, thereby relieving oneself of the necessity of dealing with messy, factual details and obviating the problem of finding out what's going on in the real world.

As for your claim that Stranger in a Strange Land is comparable to The Sot-Weed Factor and the like...I have to say that words fail me, almost. You're joking, yes? Okay then, so you're not, but--I mean, The Sot-Weed Factor isn't the most brilliantly-written novel in the world (and John Barth isn't the world's most brilliant writer), but it's streets ahead of Heinlein. Heinlein is not one of those who regards prose fiction, or at least the prose fiction he produces, as an art form, after all; he regards himself as a storyteller, in consequence of which the language he uses is so plain, ordinary and unexacting as to be downright drab, lacking in any life of its own at all--whereas Barth's prose, for example, is highly mannered, highly self-conscious, almost baroque in the effects it strives to create, and hence much more interesting and rewarding to read. Compared with Barth, et al., Heinlein is simply a Bad Writer.

And I compared Stranger in a Strange Land with Conrad's short stories because (apart from the fact that Conrad is one of my very favourite writers) both are concerned with politics--not the narrow-minded garbage of party manifestos and conference motions but the day-to-day interactions between groups and/or individuals as each struggles to manipulate the other--and I think Conrad accomplishes more, and with more insight, in a single one of his stories than Heinlein manages in the whole 300-odd pages of his novel. Apart from which, addressing the wider question implied by your remark that I was "try(ing) to evaluate two very different works by the same criteria," I'm afraid that I just don't recognize such distinctions between works of fiction: if they exist, they are differences of emphasis, not of kind, and in this regard all may be judged by the same high standards.

Oh, my. First, I said that Stranger belonged to the same genre--Menippean Satire--as does Giles, Goat Boy and Sot-Weed Factor. The only comparison instituted was to say that in terms of the satiric structure, it comes off rather well by comparison with other works in the genre, including its most obvious inspiration, Huckleberry Finn. The subsidiary point I was trying (ever so gently) to make is that "fiction" is not a univocal term, as you are using it. You are led into nonsensical statements (e.g. "differences of emphasis, not of kind") from time to time because you persist in the silly notion that fiction is fiction is fiction. The fact that Barth may have attempted a synthesis of novel and satire in Sot-Weed Factor and Giles, Goat Boy and may or may not have used novelistic methods and techniques well is quite irrelevant to any legitimate approach to the books. In fact, Barth's use of novelistic methods and techniques is something of a curiosity, and narrow-minded lovers of satires may find the books therefor defective--in the same way, but to a much greater extent, that Roth's The Great American Novel may be regarded as "defective": it masquerades too effectively as a novel. In its purest form, a satire is a work of whimsy and invention, and Barths' clever use of the University microcosm/macrocosm, and his circles-within-circles structuring of the Oedipus story in Giles, Goat Boy count for far more than whatever novelistic "realism" he may have invested Giles with. Novelistic realism is not a standard properly applicable to the satire. One should judge by high standards, of course: but judging, therefore, by the "same high standard" betrays a fairly serious insensitivity to the material.

Given this perspective, I think you can see why I don't take terribly seriously your argument that Barth's writing is vastly superior to Heinlein's in Stranger. It happens that I think so, too--but for entirely different reasons than those you adduce. Yours belong to another universe of ideas and have no bearing on the subject at hand. For example, terms such as "highly mannered," "highly self-conscious," and "baroque," as applied to prose style, are more commonly terms of opprobrium as applied to the novel, but approval as applied to the satire.

Well, this has all come across as rather more curt than I thought it would; the result, I guess, of writing in a hurry. And now I'm falling off the page...

Why, so you are.

Oh dear, Joseph won't be pleased; I entirely forgot I was still carrying about your letter and his reply to the points you raise. I thought he'd gone and posted it without waiting for me to put my penn'orth in. And here I've been, with it lost in my "things to do at lunchtime at work" file.

And we, naive children that we are in the US, thought only that the international mails were slow...

The qualities you say you look for in what you read--"complexity, a quality between myth and archetype, a vision possibly dark but not squalid, and a thoroughness of synthesis"--sound very reasonable to me, and what's more, they sound like the sort of qualities I found in the books I mentioned in my previous letter to you. Is the melancholy the names of their authors evokes in you based on reading previous novels of theirs? Since I haven't read either of the two examples of books you like, I can't comment on what they might suggest about differences in our interpretations of that list of admirable qualities a books should have.

Or perhaps we have different tolerances for squalor--but, no, retracting the claws: please note the response to Terry Carr. It defines a little better why I thought highly of my list-of-the-moment. As to yours, well--I ran across most of the writers you mention in the early '70's, when I was following the field fairly closely. I don't recall being impressed with any of them--in fact, although I recognize titles I have read by Bishop and Wolfe and others, I can only remember details from some of Aldiss' work--and I wasn't pleased with that, either. "[M]ore vert than verite" is the way I expressed my feelings at the time. Such impression, all that remains after ten years or more, does not encourage automatic following-up. On the other hand, I recognize that people can change a lot in ten years, and if anyone of my friends takes it into his head to recommend something strongly, I'll probably read it. On the third hand, this does not mean that I will be instantaneously converted: on a friend's recommendation I recently read Camp Concentration and found it unappealing. There are a few Disch stories I have enjoyed--"Descending" and The Genocides rise to mind--but, on the whole I find him still an intellect yet green, confused, disingenuous, false, and showing no particular promise of developing into something worthwhile. Confusion of values does that to me. My hands are crossed. You may drive in the nails at will.

But would you assert that Heinlein's writing shows any of these qualities? Like Joseph, I never, ever, liked Heinlein at all. I do recall finishing Man Who Sold the Moon without any urge to throw it violently against the wall, and found Farmer in the Sky less objectionable than most, largely because in it Heinlein quite honestly showed his twelve-year-old attitude to women--"girls just get in the way." But in every other Heinlein I've been urged to give a try, the first appearance of a female character has been so plainly about some sort of alien, perhaps an inflatable plastic doll animated by the sort of computer programme Heinlein himself might write, that I've completely turned off. So, with Friday, after that first rape scene, when Friday does tell herself it's not so bad as long as they don't have bad breath, I simply threw down the book. It's always rather puzzled me that those who tell me that my reaction to Heinlein is just sexist, and that I should disregard his utilitarian view of women as simple plot conveniences, are those who object most loudly to Joanna Russ doing the same thing to men. Those who say that Heinlein's men are pretty shoddy cardboard too, undoubtedly have a point; but the men though dull enough are less absurd than his women. If you're reading the story as a story, then at least adequate characterisation is desirable. If you want to read it as Menippean satire, shouldn't you at least demand some fidelity to the real life and attitudes being satirized? Not to mention some idea content beyond mere gung-ho frontier adventure?

***Sigh* There is a point at which two viewpoints are simply so alien to each other that discussion cannot be fruitful; there are too few points of agreement to begin from. Acknowledging that divers readers see a much of value in Heinlein's work--and they can't all be sexist shits, can they? Or can they?--I think it might be profitable simply to acknowledge a "blind spot" and let it go at that.**

On the Bova/history matter, I don't quite see how your comments relate to what I said. Certainly, Bova is talking about the sf market as quite distinct from any other market for any other sort of books, and you seem to be accepting this distinction as legitimate enough. For pulp, or "genre" works it is of course a fact of life. But once you start talking in terms of literary quality, surely you are looking for the sort of qualities you found in Robertson Davies' The Rebel Angels or Thornton Wilder's Theophilus North, and can't simply confine your attention to what's published "in the ghetto." And once you start to look outside the ghetto, the time-span of "older" works in competition with new books stretches back way beyond the 1930's.

I'm a bit confused. My point was that Bova's petulant statement was improperly addressed to the readers of Analog--and, incidentally to fandom--as if they were each personally responsible for the

heinous crime of letting mediocre fiction drift into obscurity. (It is fatal, in a popular medium, to fail to appeal to one's public.) The assumption that fandom has any impact at all on the market irritates me. Once, possibly--but not for decades. The petulance also irritated me.

Bova's remarks concerned a discrete market; so did mine. Your comments seem to me to say that this market obeys the same "natural laws" as the broader literary markets. The argument, though, seems peculiarly structured, and I don't know, at this point, whether I'd agree or not. There is some contrary evidence--for example, the fact that the availability of so-called "great literature" (aside from college editions) is almost entirely subsidized by flash bestsellers and topical nonfiction. Cogitate, cogitate. I appreciate the crunchy irony that Jacqueline Susan and Harold Robbins are underwriting new paperbound editions of Jacobean revenge plays, for example.

On then to world affairs: it's heartening to see you come out and say "the US is equally a shit in world affairs," because I suspect there are a lot of your compatriots who would feel bound to assert (as, for instance, Marty Cantor has done in recent Holier Than Thou) that the US doesn't engage in anything that might be called "imperialism," neither cultural or economic, as if they believed its record pure as driven snow.

Well, I can see why the attitude arises. I remember in high school (1969) we had an exchange student from Ecuador who accused the US of imperialism. The entire class--the advanced track--rejected the accusation because the examples she adduced didn't fit the historical definitions we were working with. And it's always difficult to sort out the non-imperialistic effects of having a gigantic economic power on your backdoorstep. Those have to be taken into account, as well. But after awhile, after a little exposure to people who grew up under the US' figurative thumb, one begins to become aware that imperialism is not something the US went through at the turn of the century and abandoned, but is a force as alive now as ever. The shoddy, unsanitary doctrine of mercantilism still dominates. Certainly the speculations kicking around about Oman and the oil resources question during the startup of the Afghanistan crisis were a clear indication.

Returning to the point, you have to remember that public education in the US is a peculiar animal. Through grade 12, one is taught a staggering blend of myth and inaccuracies, on the theory that the system is supposed to be outfitting one to be a part of "popular culture." With rare exceptions, the school system does not expose children to difficult concepts, but simplifies, perpetuates archaic myths, and generally fits one to view television fare. Education is not expected to begin--if ever--until one enters college in some field in which some degree of intellectual awareness and involvement with the life-flow of western civilization is necessary (this specifically exempts the engineering, scientific, and business courses, and there's precious little left). Formulated this way, the cause for the failure of US public education at all levels is quite clear: the system makes no pretense of preparing the mind for life but exists as a kind of disreputable propaganda machine until, quite suddenly, it demands that you forget all that trash and try to sort through a mishmash of analytic work with no preparation or training in critical thinking. One gets the most amazing salmagundi of nonsense out of the system. One spends a minimum of twelve years under the tutelage of Comprachicos and comes out constitutionally crippled.

If one is not terribly lucky--or foresightful enough to realize early on that one does not acquire an "education" within the school precincts--unless one has, innately, a passion for the life of the mind--one is ejected from the schoolyard jail into the real world entirely unequipped to see the obvious: the foundations of the intellect have been laid at odd tangents, monstrosities created to fill mass-marketing requirements. There are, definitely, people blind to the obvious: that the US is, at the very least, cooperating in the perpetuation of the slave trade, in the deliberate oppression of Third World populations, in the suppression of liberty on a gigantic scale. That particular naivete--expressed also as the amazing willingness to believe that Nixon got a raw deal--is carefully engineered.

But it is also true that these things are known, and talked about, publicly. One heritage of the 1960's is that we must be aware of it--even if only in denial.

Yes, having specific cases put forward--recently, for instance, there's the "military advisors" in El Salvador where it seems clear that neither side is entirely "the goodies" but that the current fighting is simply intensifying the disastrous situation and killing a lot of people into the bargain. Or there's the economic sanctions against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, which may be leftist, but since it's brought illiteracy down from 93% (or so) to about 12%, and virtually eliminated malaria within the space of a year, it seems like one of the better governments in the area and more worthy of support than opposition.

No doubt production of tractors is up 23%, as well. While I misdoubt the statistics, the point is well taken.

I've been following Reagan's recent Latin American maneuverings with a particular horror. The

man simply cannot not know what he is doing.

Having kept this reply to you hanging so long, I'd better resist the temptation to say more, and dash off to the post office to get this on its way to you.

Mike Glicksohn--137 High Park Ave.--Toronto m6p 2s3 Ontario

Quodlibet 20 arrived yesterday and I blush to admit it was the first of your fanzines I've read completely through. (It was also the first to arrive here while I was off work but that's merely a rationalization for my incipient near-gafiation.) As a result, I wasn't too familiar with some of the burning issues under discussion but despite that I enjoyed the issue and can see why it is developing a reputation as the liveliest discussion-zine since Mythologies. It is definitely the most dense fanzine I've read lately (in the mathematical sense, of course!)

Coincidentally, Marty's latest HTT also arrived yesterday so I read some of your comments twice. As I told Marty on his last issue, I think the whole 63F brouhaha has run its course and I have nothing more to say about it (and really don't wish to read anything more about it either) but fanzine timescales being what they are I keep receiving fanzines that continue the discussion as if it were still (or ever) relevant. And while the matter of fannish standards is at least an important and meaningful topic (unlike the 63F mess which was, primarily, a tangle of personality clashes) I think it too has pretty well run its course over the last few months. Your quotation from 1794 would seem to indicate how much chance we have of actually resolving anything so far as I'm concerned we can drop it. Anyone who hasn't yet accepted the fact that fanzines should be done well, if possible, is probably uneducable and rich brown's analysis of just what the standards can be (in HTT) sums everything up perfectly. In fact, I think the evidence has been presented so well that it'll probably be less than a year before fanzines find something else to talk about...(Pardon my cynicism.)

I've occasionally stated that I prefer one type of fanzine format to another but that's entirely a matter of taste. (Perhaps those who say certain formats are "appropriate" to certain fanzines really mean "traditional" and/or "comfortable.") For example, there's a sterility to the appearance of Quodlibet that makes it difficult for me to think of it as a fanzine, even though I accept that by any sensible definition of the term it is one. On the other hand, the spartan appearance is suitable for the content which almost verges on the academic at times. If Quodlibet were filled with Burbee anecdotes, Willis humour, fanhistory and Steffan cartoons and still produced the same way I doubt I'd feel too comfortable with it. But it would still be a fanzine, of course. It appears to be a matter of what you like along with what you've come to expect and I suppose my mental horizons aren't as broad as they should be in this area.

Tendrils getting sluggish, eh? Corpus callosum growing back together, eh? I think of Quodlibet as a room party committed to print--"personal" only in the sense that it is a reflection of a person, of my own interests and ideas, sometimes holding forth on whatever catches my fancy, at other times, simply talking with people who have joined a conversation and have interests of their own to express. I have no great affection for the trucs most people use to give their fmzs a "handmade" look. If they do it well, then I appreciate the achievement; but my personal preference is for the "finished" look. I wouldn't buy a piece of crystal stemware the maker had deliberately left lopsided or uneven; others go crazy over that--and buy books with fake hubbing on the binding, too. Bludgeon their acquaintances with Status.

Lots of talk about TV and movies, eh? My own TV watching has increased somewhat since Canada finally got pay-TV five months ago. Now I watch quite a few movies each month (only a handful of which are truly good but most of which are at least competent and it's worth it for the occasional gem such as Come Back To The Five & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean which I'd somehow managed to not even hear about until it popped up on pay) along with quite a bit of sports (mostly baseball in the summer) and the occasional hour of mindless entertainment pabulum when I'm too tired to do anything more mentally demanding. When we get out of reruns, only Hill Street Blues is on my list of "must see" shows (I've never seen St. Elsewhere but that's a personal bias against hospital/doctor shows and from all reports it's well worth watching. So it goes.)

I highly recommend the series of Fairy Tale Theatres Shelly Duvall is producing for Showtime. The cast has great fun with the stories, and the production designs are sometimes startling and sumptuous. "The Frog Prince" was the first story produced for that, and they used a lot of Parrish--the quirky, humorous Parrish, not the ecstasy-of-pastel--for costuming. Great stuff.

When it comes to movies, I'm very uncritical. I loved ET even though I knew I was being manipulated; I thought Blade Runner was a mediocre film with some marvellously gritty and realistic backgrounds; I accepted Jedi as first-rate entertainment despite its maudlin ending; I found

Wargames far-fetched but great fun; on the other hand, I thought Supes 3 was inconsistent, totally illogical and the worst of the three films (despite its hilarious opening) while my girlfriend enjoyed it most of the three because it deviated least from the comic book Superman. You pays your five bucks and takes your chance, I guess.

Once I recognized Superman III as a burlesque, I relaxed and almost enjoyed it--which is doing pretty well, as I can't (generally) stand Richard Pryor. I hadn't enjoyed Superman II at all, although I have a certain, corny affection for the first.

Many thanks for the issue. Much of what you print is material I don't feel qualified to comment on but it was a good read.

Andy Thornton--1838 E. 7th Ave.--Long Beach CA

Why have you not sent my Quodlibets? Do I have to do everything myself???

In the issue you reviewed Memoirs of a Superfluous Man by Albert J. Nock, you forgot to mention that it was I who recommended the book and you thereupon fell upon your knees, groveled and wept that I would deign to notice your humble self, and immediately bought the book. Your total loss of memory in this instance is all the more unforgiving since I was in Frisco (heh-heh) at the time and should have been forever burned into your memory.

Indeed. It is so. And you are, indeed, burned in my memory--uh, what did you say your name was???

For those of you who have not visited Frisco, or California, the proper pecking order should be communicated. Northern California exists only to (1) provide water for SoCal (Southern California) so we can clean our driveways and (2) provide trees to make sets for the Movie Industry. Naught else is it good for; thus it is written, thus it shall be.

A lot of us have suspected that for some time now...

For those of you who haven't met Bill I would like to correct the foolish information he has been spreading. First, he only eats Velveeta American Processed Imitation Cheese-like Food. Secondly, the only wine he drinks is Mogen David Concord Grape wine. Thirdly, this fanzine is edited and ghost-written by an ailing encyclopedia salesman who looks everything up in the 1973 Encyclopedia Britannica.

Thus you are become Thornton, Shatterer of Illusions...

There. A loc has been written Mr. Patterson. So kindly continue to send Quody down to Long Beach as we still have some land to fill.

I can think of a certain apartment right off...Last time I got a letter like this, it was signed "Theo Krummel"--no, come to think of it, that was more coherent...

WILLIAM H. PATTERSON, JR.

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