

Is it really April already? Ghasp. I'm so far behind I must be ahead. Last year, I put out less than half as many issues as the year before, and this year...I don't even want to think about it.

A number of things have changed in my life over the last six months or so. For one, I'm gutting my job with Alioto & Alioto at the end of April, so I won't have this cantankerous wordprocessor to play around with. For this reason, I'm going to try to rush through the by-now stale correspondence I've got on disk before I have to retype the whole megilla manually. Back to the Proportional space and straight, 2-column format. I'll also have to leave out my year-end (1983...remember 1983?) review of films that was scheduled for this issue. Perhaps I can pick it up later.

No, I'm not looking at more legal secretary work. Rather, a friend and I are looking for capitalization for a business venture, about which I don't want to talk at this point. Perhaps later, when the publicity starts coming out...but not now.

And without further ado, let's pick up on that antique correspondence:

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Thank you most kindly for continuing to send Quodlibet in my direction (note also that the direction itself is changing to the above Melbourne address as of January 6th). Quodlibet 21 arrived this week, and made fine reading. You have a particularly good lettercol this issue.

Mind you, my first shuddering halt came in your "Quodlibetal." While I consider myself rather fond of Piper, I certainly didn't feel that the re-printing of Uller Uprising was anything to cheer about. True, I can now say that I've read it, but, along with that there's the instant qualifier --but I wouldn't recommend that anyone else read it. Certainly it is a wonderful reconstruction of the jingoistic mind-set, in much the same way as The Iron Dream is a wonderful reconstruction of Hitler's mind-set. The trouble is that I get the impression that Uller Uprising really does promote the sort of colonialist philosophy that one finds within its pages. (I'm in the middle of re-reading First Cycle and, though it too is very preachy, I find it easier to read than I did Uller.)

I quite agree. The occasion for mentioning

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Uller Uprising was simply that it was the last of Piper's sf I would ever have the opportunity to read for the first time--barring discovery of previously unpublished mss, of course--the other writers' recensions of Piper's material don't count.

Like you, I was unfavorably impressed by the British-colonialist attitude, but I was favorably impressed by the quality of Piper's recreation of that mind-set. It doesn't seem to work very well as original sf--but as a recreation of the British weltanschauung surrounding the Sepoy Mutiny, I think it worked rather well.

F.M. Busby's letter was interesting, especially with regard to his comments about Friday. I read Friday and Rissa Kerguelen in the same week, and though I enjoyed Friday, I came out of Rissa Kerguelen feeling that it was the book that Friday might have been. I certainly prefer RK to most of the sf I've read of late, despite, or perhaps because of its pervasive happy ending. (You'd think that Busby could have killed off at least one of the major characters, but I suppose, with such a nice bunch of characters, it would be difficult to kill them.)

I haven't found Rissa Kerguelen yet, but the bookstores are full of new pressings of Zelde M'tana, and I'm reading that now. I concur with Butler's assessment. It's an amazing achievement for a middle-aged WASP to have written. Makes me want to go back to Butler's Kindred and compare treatments.

I'm another Quodlibet reader who thinks that The Number of the Beast is Heinlein's all-time worst--narrowly pipping at the post I Will Fear No Evil and Sixth Column. I can understand, I think, Heinlein's motivation. He wanted to introduce all of his characters to one another before he died. Well, he didn't die, but the book certainly did. It has to be one of the worst pieces of editing ever to disgrace a Heinlein novel. On the other hand, Time Enough For Love ranks as one of my favourite Heinleins. It's not the preaching that bothers me in Heinlein, but the stories. Friday and Time Enough for Love are good stories. Number of the Beast isn't.

[Responding to Robert Prokop's laudatory comments re Number of the Beast] The trouble with stirring for stirring's sake is that the person who does it puts themselves in such a position that no one can tell when they are being serious. If this is what Heinlein is doing, as Robert Prokop suggests, then I figure Heinlein's being bloody stupid. He should have learnt better by now.

Well...speaking from experience, the temptation epater le bourgeoisie gets awfully strong from time to time. Who can really blame a

writer too much if once or twice in a career he gets really carried away...?

Hmmn. Xmas approaches, and I've still got to go out and face the final bit of my Christmas shopping in 38°C heat. True, it was probably close to that warm in Jerusalem at about that time, but it doesn't feel like Xmas, even though I've lived in Australia for twenty-two years now.

Take care, and my greetings to Elisheva the next time you see her. I loved your comments about her own opinion of her talent. Excessive modesty is as bad as Imjs, though more forgivable.

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Thanks for Quodlibet 20 and your accompanying letter of 2 August, 1983, lengthy and somewhat off the point though I think the latter was. This stuff about the various changes of direction in Heinlein's writing throughout his career is all very interesting, but what does it prove beyond the fact that there have been such changes and that in consequence his novels tend to fall into more or less discrete thematic groups, organized chronologically? You'd expect the same of anyone else who'd been writing as long as he has--and, similarly, you'd expect the changes of direction to alienate some readers but attract others. But this, if you don't mind me saying so, has very little to do with the point I'm trying to make--which is, essentially, that although Heinlein wants to be taken seriously, as a major literary figure with important messages to deliver, he is really not that interesting. Your response(s) ignore this; you proceed from the assumption that he is important, that he is worth taking seriously, and engage in a detailed analysis of his work without once stopping to question that assumption. You may feel that your assumption is justified, but if so you really ought to state why--otherwise those, such as myself, who don't agree with it are going to feel pretty shortchanged by your arguments; are going to feel, to paraphrase Malcolm, that you're being rather dogmatic about the whole thing.

Sigh I sent you a sketch of Heinlein's career because you indicated that you knew nothing about it. So I outlined the various ideas and themes he's been concerned with for the last forty years. Now, if you wish to continue to make rash and uninformed statements, at least you have some material to draw from instead of making your accusations up from whole cloth. I happened to have that material on hand, so to

speaking, because I think his work has some importance to it, and I've stated elsewhere what some of those important elements are. I don't feel that I have to re-create the whole argument every time someone new chimes in.

As to your "points," that Heinlein wants to be taken seriously as a major literary figure is not in evidence. That he feels he has important messages to deliver probably is. Whether or not he is "interesting" is a question for each reader to resolve individually. You resolve it one way; I resolve it another. That point cannot be profitably discussed, because it is intensely personal.

As an aside, I don't quite understand why, if you find his work uninteresting, you are so insistent on discussing it in these pages. It makes my task very difficult--trying, metaphorically, to discuss color with a blind man.

You move into more fruitful territory, however, when, responding to my letter on Page 15 of Quodlibet 20, you point out how "intensely American" Heinlein is, and wonder how he's received in the UK. Well, I obviously can't speak for anyone but myself (although, of course, I'm about to do just that), but I think that, in general, British readers are likely to find little in his work with which they can identify. He sells, certainly (but how well I know not), and he has a loyal coterie of readers (but, here again, their numbers I know not), but I doubt that he's admired as much as, say, Arthur C. Clarke--who, for the average reader-in-the-street, is very much the British science fiction writer (despite his somewhat trans-Atlantic preoccupations--the space programme is an American invention, after all). Perhaps even the science fiction writer, fullstop. He's known to millions, his books regularly make the best seller lists (in both hard- and paperback), he had a prime-time popular TV series about a year or so ago...compared to Clarke, Heinlein is an absolute non-entity. Come to that, so is every other English SF writer, probably because (as far as the mass mind is concerned) they've yet to break out of the SF category (which Clarke has managed). J.G. Ballard, Brian Aldiss, Chris Priest and Michael Moorcock may now write novels which fall outside strict genre definitions (of any genre), but the Great British Public no longer reads non-genre novels. Bob Shaw is probably the most popular SF writer after Clarke, but even he has yet to "break category". (Eric Frank Russell, incidentally, doesn't count--he died in 1978, his books have been out of print since some years prior to that, and many people probably don't realize he was British anyway). But all this raises an interesting point:

viz, how well does Heinlein sell in the US? Is he perceived solely as a science fiction writer, with a limited though large following, or has he too managed to "break category"?

Heinlein's current following has not been limited to "genre-readers" since Stranger became a religious icon in the 1960's, and I believe, although I can't cite chapter-and-verse to verify what I've heard, that his last four or five books have gone over the million-copy mark. Everything Heinlein has allowed to stay in print is in print and has never gone out of print.

Aside from his sf writing, he has done a great deal of traveling and public-appearance work in the last few years for his pet projects--the space program, of course, and his blood drive project. American newscasters seem to view him primarily as a good quote-source in space-related coverage, but I think this is primarily fueled by his astonishing popular acceptance as the "dean of science fiction writers," the ne plus ultra of the field. So he has, apparently, achieved public note by other means than "breaking category." Of course, it also helps that the US is currently wide open to sf--both a blessing and a curse, in that a lot of good stuff is being reprinted, and a lot of awful trash is seeing print for the first time.

Which brings me back to your letter. Why, you wonder, is Heinlein so popular if he's so bad? I'd have thought the answer was obvious--the lowest common denominator principle which governs popular taste ensures that the worst will always outsell the best, that mediocrity and crowd-pleasing will remain forever triumphant. (How else to explain the success of Barry B. Bongyear?)

I snort in your general direction. First, it ought to be manifest that popular taste is not governed by lowest-common-denominator considerations. That's a popular myth--oh, so flattering to us intellectuals who can be so righteously aggrieved that our pets don't achieve notoriety--long overdue for explosion. For as far back as anyone can tell, the "popular taste" has not uniformly been for the worst (Shakespeare's and Moliere's plays, remember, made it first because they were big box office); the most that can be said is that public taste is rather indiscriminating, picking out trash as well as the sublime. I could spend a few pages documenting this, but I will simply refer you to the cinema: a very large number of those "classic" films are of genuine, lasting quality. The only way such a phenomenon can be accounted for, according to your notion is, random chance. And that explanation is completely unsatisfactory.

Given your admiration for Heinlein, this is (I daresay) an answer you're not prepared to contemplate for more than a second or two, but even so you do seem aware that he's not as good a writer as he could be. You, and possibly the majority of his readers, obviously compensate for this by concentrating on his ideas--as the body of your letter attests--but in so doing you're ceasing to regard his novels as works of fiction and instead treating them as manifestos for political and social change. This strikes me as very odd--admittedly, some novels are or have been written with the specific purpose of awakening their readers to certain alternative possibilities, or highlighting a particular social malaise, or whatever (such as, to name examples at random, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Black Beauty, and Great Expectations), but a novel is nevertheless first and foremost a novel, and in the first instance must be approached as such, with all other considerations stemming from and subsidiary to that. This latter includes examination of the ideas the novel contains: before we can ask how worthwhile they are, we have to ask how well they have been dramatised. Heinlein, to judge by those of his novels that I've read, fails utterly on this score; his characters simply sit around and discuss his ideas at tedious length, which does not remotely fit the bill. (Well, it clearly fits one bill...Bill, geddit? Oh, never mind...) as didactic art, his is so prolixly didactic it's appalling.

I think Heinlein's technical skills are somewhat unevenly developed. That is the most I would say about that point. I don't believe that anyone seriously approaches Heinlein's work as "manifestos for political and social change," and I don't see how you came to that conclusion. Rather, what I think happens is that Heinlein experiments a great deal. Some of his experiments work; others do not. The conceptual contents of a work of fiction are an integral part of the work; the reader makes an overall judgment balancing his reactions to each aspect against reactions to other aspects. On the whole, historically, those reactions have been favorable.

And, as a parenthetical aside before I push on to the next point, I have to disagree with your contention that the rape scene in Friday is "trivial." You may suspect, as a goodly number of other people have, that he put it in just to be controversial, but have you stopped to consider its effect on those readers who don't know any better, adolescents or the sexually incompetent who may believe what he says, take it as literal truth? If you're going to look at Heinlein's work from the viewpoint of his ideas, then I think you

have to take all his ideas into consideration, including those you'd like to dismiss as "trivial" because you think they are irrelevant to the main thrust of the book--would you, for example, dismiss the business of "discorporation" in Stranger in a Strange Land as "trivial" because it has nothing to do with the alleged satire (satire) of messiah-figures? You can only do so if you're prepared to dismiss the Manson killings as "trivial" as well...

What a confused load of nonsense. First, I did not say that the rape scene was "trivial." Go back and read what I said. Second, it is very, very difficult to place blame on a writer for what a warped mind does to his work. Manson did incorporate convenient bits of Stranger into his philosophy, but that does not thereby make Heinlein responsible for the murder of Sharon Tate, et al. That is simply wildly irresponsible on your part.

The next point, as you may have suspected, stems from the opening paragraph of your letter. I'm afraid that I don't find the idea that "fiction is fiction is fiction" remotely nonsensical (or else I wouldn't have said it in the first place); instead, I find your idea--not overtly stated, but nevertheless implicit in what you say--that "fiction" can be divided into a variety of different "types" that have little or no connection with each other daft in the extreme. Sure, certain novels will differ from certain other novels by virtue of their style, subject-matter, and auctorial approach, but this is merely a difference in emphasis, not in kind. Your apparent contention that one "type" of novel cannot usefully be compared with another "type" of novel would mean, pushed to its ultimate conclusion, that comparisons between any and all novels would be impossible, and criticism hence become meaningless. This, I think, is where you seem to misinterpret my remark about "standards": I am not for one moment arguing that there is, or should be, a particular prototype, or model, from which all fiction is derived and against which it must be compared (and I don't think anyone in their right mind would argue as much, either), but I am arguing that there is a measure of achievement, of general excellence, against which they can be held up--i.e., I'm proposing that all fiction can be judged on the basis of its quality, as opposed to the quantitative values that you're pushing. How else, after all, are you going to decide what is good or bad, and why? (And, despite everything you say, you do actually make a judgment in accordance with "my criteria" when you state that Barth is a better writer than Heinlein--for it you're not comparing one with

the other, then what are you doing?)

Utter gibberish. No one has contended that one "type of novel" is formally distinct from another "type of novel." Really, Joseph, if you're going to pretend to make pronouncements as to technical and literary merit, you should take the trouble to learn something about technical and literary analysis. At this point, you are simply wasting my time. My comment about Barth being a "better writer" than Heinlein referred to the fact that there is, in the purely formal sense, more attempted and more achieved in Giles, Goat Boy than in Stranger: Barth is a more accomplished technician of the satire than is Heinlein.

On the matter of criticism, I have to reject your defence of Robert Prokop's review of Resnick's The Soul Eater on the grounds that, because he was writing a review rather than a work of criticism, there was no call for him to indulge in any analysis of the kind for which I called. (A line of argument, incidentally, that I have not run across since Spider Robinson gave up reviewing a few years ago). This, as far as I'm concerned, is nonsense, mainly because there's a bugger-all distinctions between the two--criticism may be defined as a statement of principles about literature in general, yet what else is a review but the application of those principles to a particular book? Such differences as there may be between the two are (slightly familiar phrase coming up) ones of emphasis, not of kind. To defend Prokop's review as it stands is to condone his use of his subjective prejudices rather than any impartial or objective principle to evaluate the worth of a work, which (as I said) tells us nothing about the book at all. How am I, and how is anyone else, supposed to judge whether or not a book is worth reading with nothing more to go on than someone's unquantifiable statement to the effect that they liked it? (And please don't give me that old line about prolonged exposure to someone's subjective prejudices eventually providing some sort of guide to what is worthwhile--as before, such remarks will tell us everything about the reviewer and next to nothing about the books. Never mind the fact that any individual's subjective prejudices are likely to vary so widely from book to book as to provide us with no consistent or usable baseline from which to derive our judgements.) No way will statements like that persuade me to read a book. (And certainly not when made by someone who thinks James P. Hogan is a really terrific writer. James P. Hogan, for the love of God) As far as Resnick's plagiarism goes: yes, I concede your point that, provided the theme has been given a

fresh treatment from a fresh viewpoint, the charge does not really count--but then, considering how obvious it was, why didn't Prokop mention the similarity and explicitly discuss the freshness or otherwise that Resnick had or had not brought to it, even if only from a subjective viewpoint? I'm afraid that this is yet another criticism that one can level against the review; and I stand by my earlier statement that it was a bad one.

Well, if Prokop ever wants to tailor a discussion of a book specifically to Joseph Nicholas, he now knows how.

While I will credit that you have exactly expressed how you approach reading, I think that you fairly seriously misunderstand why most other people read. My impression is that, generally, most people are interested in how a book makes them feel--how it engaged their value-system, if you wish to be technical about it. The technical considerations an analyst looks at either aid or hinder the main chance, and so are secondary considerations--to most people. There is, of course, a thriving analytic-criticism fandom to be satisfied, but I can't see any particular reason that one should always address his comments only to that crowd.

I note that you have used Prokop's review in precisely this way above: you concluded that anyone who's value-system included James Hogan could not conceivably fit into yours...or have you perhaps broken down and actually read the book?

Well, enough of this; as usual, I've gone on much longer than I thought I would, and you'll have not room to print any of it if I say any more. I'll add, however, that I boggle slightly at Quodlibet's earnest discussion of television programmes, and am even more boggled by the fact that it arrived here the day after an article by Milton Shulman in The Observer for Sunday 7 August 1983 pointing out how much of our everyday conversation is now taken up with discussion of the previous night's TV shows, and in consequence how debased our conversational vision and vocabulary have become. Some coincidence, eh? But I shall not join the discussion, despite the fact that certain of the programmes you mention are screened in the UK (or so I believe), for we neither own nor rent a television set, and how immeasurably enhanced are our lives in the absence of the wretched thing! Do yourself a favour, and kick your screen in!

I've lived with and without a television--just as I've lived with and without a stereo. On the whole, I prefer the options for being aware of one's cultural medium a television provides me.

I have a friend who replaced his television with a 40-gallon freshwater aquarium. Very soothing.

But, once again, the criticisms of someone who does not follow the medium are virtually worthless.

Being inclined, myself, to the sin of the Pharisees, I am quite conscious of this point, at least.

This follow-up letter arrived in late January.

Interesting to note that you only print the first of my replies to your letters in Quodlibet 21, thus making it seem as though I have no reply to the points you raise; unless, of course, you're planning to print them in Quodlibet 22. Even if you don't, though, I'm not going to reply to them again here: I've said it once, so why should I say it again? Although I have, I know, yet to reply to your letter of 26 August 1983; but that was one of fifty-odd pieces of mail awaiting us on our return from holidaying in the Netherlands in mid-September 1983, and like many of those letters had to remain unanswered due to the pressure of time and other work. (Besides, you did say in it that you felt I was wasting your time--in which case, I thought, why did you bother writing it in the first place?)

I could respond to that, but I won't. I won't. The hell I won't.

First, I print all letters which can reasonably be construed as comment. I have too much inherent respect--and gratitude--for the basic courtesy people give Quodlibet by commenting to fail to print. I try to print them exactly as written, including idiosyncracies of punctuation. The exceptions have been the few occasions I have "tightened" up excessive rambling or coalesced several letters into one, or in the few instances where I have lost letters. I had misplaced my correspondence file containing your August letter when I finally produced Quodlibet 21, but have since re-found it.

As to why I wrote telling you that you were wasting my time--that is simply because I hoped that by "calling" you on the slapdash way you were writing, I could provoke a (admittedly subjective) "better" quality of comment.

It's interesting to note, too, that while you produce approximately half a page of counter-argument in response to my observations on Robert Heinlein, you fight shy of Judith's points, citing as your reason for doing so the fewness of areas of agreement between you and her. Yet the obvious fewness of the areas of agreement between you and me didn't stop you from taking issue with what I said, so why this inconsistency? Let's pare away the rationale leading up to

Judith's question and ask it again: "If you want to read (Heinlein) as Menippean satire, shouldn't you at least demand some fidelity to the real life and attitudes being satirised?" What's stopping you from responding to that? Or, when you talk of a putative "blind spot," do you really mean to imply--as you do, whether you intend to or not--that you regard the inflatable plastic dolls who masquerade as women in the pages of Heinlein's work as genuine representations of the real thing?

I felt, reading Judith's response, a point of view so alien that it was not possible fruitfully to discuss the material without going clear back to first principles and building up common agreement from that point, if such could be found. As I do not regard Quodlibet as the proper vehicle for that sort of thing, I proposed that we simply "agree to disagree" in these pages, leaving it ambiguous as to where any "blind spot" might lie, so that both of us could take pride away unwounded, and let it go at that.

As to the question you pose, I answer, first, "no." A character in a satire need not have any particular fidelity to real-life and attitudes being satirized. Basic principle of the satire: journalistic fidelity is not a virtue; it is a hindrance to be avoided. Second, I reject the formulation of the question re "inflatable plastic dolls."

Anyway, if you're going to lift a good part of your critical methodology from Northop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism I think you should at least acknowledge as much. I certainly take slight umbrage at the censorious, finger-wagging, wise-old-uncle tone of a sentence like "You are led into nonsensical statements...from time to time because you persist in the silly notion that fiction is fiction is fiction", which makes you sound as though you think you're sitting in judgement on my entire career to date. Damned if I'm going to sit still for that.

I don't sit in judgment on your entire career to date, because I know nothing about your entire career to date. But I recognize GIGO when I see it. And Anatomy of Criticism is only one of about 600 references and sources I consulted while preparing to write a doctoral dissertation on Menippean satire.

Still there's always Prokop's response to my comments on his review of The Soul Eater to wonder at--except that it now turns out he didn't write a review at all, merely recorded his reactions to the novel in a letter he happened to be writing. Well, I think you could at least have indicated as much when you printed it, and saved me all that trouble... Seriously, though, his reply strikes me as possessing a rather hurt, and in

some senses slightly petulant, tone: how dare anyone dare question his liking for that sensawunder stuff, how dare anyone say that sensawunder isn't important to SF--from where he obtains the idea that if I don't like E.E. Smith then I must be fond of Russ, Malzberg and Ellison completely mystifies me. This is his polarization, not mine--although his claim that Smith will still be read and enjoyed long after they're forgotten is simply silly. The best fiction survives, and enters the pantheons of the world's literary classics, because it has something of lasting value to say to its readers: a message which transcends the period in which it was written and remains valid for all succeeding generations. This is why such as Steinbeck, Conrad, Hardy, Austen (to name but a few favourites of mine), and Melville (to name one of Prokop's favourites) have remained in print to this day, and continue to be read and re-read; and E.E. Smith can hardly be said to satisfy the same criteria for "lasting value" as they. Great literature his work is most definitely not; merely a childish saga of galactic cops and robbers, as trivial as it is simple-minded. So I verily believe, and so I will not be convinced otherwise, no matter how often his stuff is 'reprinted--reprinted, presumably, by publishers well acquainted with the third of Damon Knight's three maxims for successful SF ("Only kids and idiots read this stuff anyway, so what the hell") and equally well aware of the essentially juvenile appeal of most genre SF. Sensawunder? What's that but a crutch for those frightened of the real world.

The recognition that reality is an infinitely exciting place in which to live.

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Dave Locke just showed me a copy of Quodlibet 20, which I found quite absorbing--especially the letter from Joseph Nicholas, a name with which I am unfamiliar.

I make it a policy never to reply to critics. However, since Mr. Nicholas seems not to have read The Soul Eater before commenting upon it, he hardly qualifies as one, and hence I think a line or two of explanation is due.

The Soul Eater (which, I am pleased to report, has been sold to Germany and Japan this summer) uses the framework of the Moby Dick story/legend/theme simply as a means of exploring the nature of Love and Obsession. I am about as guilty of "theft" and "plagiarization" as James Joyce was when he used Homer's

Odyssey as a starting point for Ulysses--or, to take a more modest example, as Alfred Bester was when he used Crime and Punishment and The Count of Monte Cristo as the frameworks for The Demolished Man and The Stars My Destination--and I deeply resent Mr. Nicholas' slanderous implications.

Okay, I've had my say. I won't address the subject again.

Perhaps others, though...?

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Thanks for Quodlibet 20. After the pleasant experience of reading 18, with its talk of cheese and shopping malls, I'm afraid I have to admit to being disappointed with 20. There's too much in it of the scarcely interesting subject of Heinlein's writing, and your tone throughout can only be described as querulous. Not to mention your arch reference to Avicenna, which (though relevant) deserved expansion.

However, three cheers for the words of Ted White which you quote. He's absolutely right. Fandom is a continuously evolving social structure--it has its ups and downs, but to divide it into arbitrary "eras" is pointless. Fan history isn't the fascinating thing some people find it, either. So far as I'm concerned, fan history before my own time (i.e., the 50's or earlier) is so long ago now that it has little or no relevance to my life and experience of fandom. From 1960 onwards I can work up an interest to reminisce about old times now and then, when something I was actively a part of is under discussion, but what interests me is participating in fandom here and now. History is only relevant as a force shaping the present and the future.

Which probably accounts for my unfashionable attitude toward fanzines. I don't "collect" fanzines. After I've read them I dispose of them (perhaps clipping or xeroxing anything I find worth hanging on to), and I have no desire at all to acquire old fanzines from the past. It amazes most fans when I tell them I don't keep fanzines: the collecting instinct must be very strong in fandom. But fanzines are largely creatures of their time, part of a two-way process between their publisher and their readers. Having served their purpose what further use do they have (Except as I said, individual items which are worth preserving as amusing entities in their own right).

Shrug. Different strokes and all that. Aside from the esthetic arguments for collecting old fanzines, all of which are perfectly self-sufficient, I suppose it should be noted that old fanzines are virtually the only window we have into the long-term "process" of our subculture(s). There are a few secondary sources which help fill the void--Warner's history volumes, for instance--but old fanzines are still far and away the best way we have of sensing the continuity and discontinuities in fandom.

Ideally, I suppose, one should get his fannish indoctrination by word of mouth: there should be a scattering of Old Fen and Tired in every community passing along the tradition. It doesn't happen that way, though. Even when the older fans are around, they frequently (and completley understandably) are not involved with the younger circles.

From a follow-up letter in January.

The perfectly formed and regular crystal glassware about is fake stuff, made by machine and probably moulded instead of cut. Hand cutting of real glassware means that it's bound to come out not perfectly symmetrical, although of course the best is a lot better looking than the lower quality items (which in fact constitutes the bulk of what you can buy in shops. High quality glassware is in short supply and expensive.

True. When I was living in Phoenix, I chanced to meet a distinguished glass-cutter practicing there. His work was beautiful, precision-struck, and naturally priced sky-high. The art is endlessly fascinating and requires a sure hand and eye. However, I wasn't talking about that so much, because I'm not fond of incised crystal. The machine-turned crystal is ok by me, so long as the piece has beautiful lines and proportions. What I was indirectly objecting to (in issue 21) was the parvenu stuff deliberately made sloppily so that it is obviously hand-made to the crudest eye. I find no particular virtue in that.

I've never been able to understand the attraction of collecting first editions, or even collecting books come to that. Books are meant to be read, and the only reason for me to keep a book around is if I think I'm likely to re-read it or consult it in the future. I could understand people who collect ornate bindings, or even particular editions which are good to look at, but why hold on to a book just because it represents the first time that particular work saw print?

This is going to be tough. People who don't have that/those particular urge(s) are never going to understand the ineffable mystery, the

process by which one's thoughts are drawn to speculation about who first held this book, the thoughts of those who have read it in the interim. Books have a longer life than we do, and--for me, at least--there is something of the same feeling of complexity, for want of a better word, that I got talking with my 80-year-old grandmother, eyewitness to events long past. I can't explain it. It has to be experienced.

And then there are the "practical" considerations. When I was growing up in Phoenix, I lived about 7 miles from the nearest library, and there was no decent public transportation. That certainly encouraged the keeping of a personal library. And, too, I'm inclined to re-read books, favorite or otherwise. And I am also a compulsive reference-user. I can't stand to have people arguing about a question of fact which can be affirmatively answered. Who can tell what obscure text will be needed next? I finally solved part of my chronic shelving problem by taking all the fiction and the secondary source books off the shelf and packing them in a closet, with a list of what book is in what box so that I can find it quickly if I need it again. Only the more frequently-used reference works are kept on my bedroom shelf.

One of the things I find most upsetting about word-processors is exactly the drawback you mention in the first paragraph of Q21. One mistake and you can lose the product of hours of work, just like that. The WP I use at work has the irritating habit that if you accidentally press two keys at once (it's easy to brush against one key while touching another, and the depression required to operate the keys is really very small) and one of them carries a control function then the machine will delete the whole page in progress. Annoying if I'm near the need of said page. I'm sure it must be an accident of the programming (surely nobody would have deliberately designed so silly a feature of the machine) but it does get me narked.

There's an awful lot of simply bad design in wordprocessing equipment. Xerox seems to have the worst I've run across--stuff just badly planned and executed, with no regard to the functions the machine is actually called upon to do.

Best wishes for 1984. Looks like it won't be quite as bad as Orwell thought, after all.

George Flynn
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I must admit I'm hesitant to respond (belatedly) to Quodlibet 20. After all, you express alarm at one point about "the locs overrunning the format," and in the case of my own loc your comments are about 50% longer than the loc itself...That's your problem, though.

Pay no attention. I go off on those self-pitying fugues every so often. Means nothing.

I must admit the interchange between rich brown and you on fanzine packaging is fascinating, even though the whole issue seems pretty trivial to me. I'm on your side, I guess.

Gee. I thought rich brown and I were on the same side...

Alexis Gilliland remarks that "1950 was very tight-assed about a lot of things which loosened up by the end of the decade." Let's see, I think it was about 1954 that a poll of the students at my college showed a majority in favor of Sen. McCarthy (I found this appalling at the time). Of course, it was a Catholic college....

Harry Warner is right about fannish repro standards often being higher than those of professional publications. It seems like every few days I'm reading a newspaper article and find that the bottom line of the page didn't print.

I thought V deserved the bad reviews: "hokey conventions" as you say, hardly any good lines, and of course the totally unresolved ending. I was particularly annoyed by the blatantness of the aliens' demi-swastika symbol.

Interesting point about the correlation between age and when people think Heinlein "went into a permanent decline." Well, I'm 47, and I guess I started having reservations about his early-'60's novels--maybe Starship Troopers, certainly Stranger, and Farnham's Freehold was awful--but I also thought The Moon is a Harsh Mistress was about his best, so I didn't perceive it as an irreversible process. The ones after that were pretty bad (though none were without good bits), but I was mostly impressed with Friday.

That seems to be pretty typical. I think Starship Troopers must have been a big shock to the sf community, following on the heel of his relatively felicitous juveniles and demi-juveniles of the 1950's. Coming along a more than decade later, I got the whole corpus all at once, and I didn't have that strong sense of discontinuity about the book--or Stranger--which I suppose might affect people's reactions.

Nope, no "Martial Arts" in the Boston Yellow Pages.

Your response to my remark on anarchy vs.

population pressure was interesting enough, but I didn't think it had much to do with the point I was making. Oh well.

Let's see...digging out the dusty copy... perhaps I was just too prolix: my response to your point was that a "frontier" is as much in the mind as it is in the lebensraum.

Now St. Elsewhere is moving to Wednesday evenings, when I'm almost never home. *Sigh* Maybe I should expand on the matter of the "Boston accent." R-dropping (and -adding) is pretty general Eastern New England--roughly everywhere east of the Connecticut River, I think. Most non-upper-class Boston natives add to that the fairly standard urban intonation: some nasalization, slurred consonants, etc. The Rhode Island accent is about the same. The Harvard accent, in contrast (i.e., the way the Kennedys talk) has r-dropping with lengthened vowels, anda general mid-Atlantic flavor. Then there's Down East, which is higher-pitched and drawled. To get back to St. Elsewhere, the most blatant accent problem was in the show about the two fishermen brothers: one spoke pretty much General American, the other a weird variant of Down East. Rather disconcerting.

Enough of this, I think.

Rich McAllister
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Palo Alto CA 94303

Thanks for sending the last couple Quodlibets. No. 19 helped motivate me to go up for a Lounge Lizards, which was fun.

I suspect that "graffiti is the 4th dimension" will confound a lot of people. I haven't seen the "gravity is the 4th dimension" stencils on any walls outside of San Francisco. Do you have any idea what it is supposed to mean?

Not really. I was told that it was a tag-line from the text of a crank lecturer in 1976 or 1977. Before my time. No telling how it got to be a graffito. This City gets peculiar fads--like the Hastings ad series a couple of years back...or the "where's the beef?" nonsense on everyone's lips now.

Maybe California Yellow Pages are different. A couple summers ago we had a student working with us, out from the East--MIT I think. We were talking and he mentioned that he would like to try biofeedback, but didn't know where to go. I naturally suggested looking in the Yellow Pages--he didn't believe that we would find anything. Even in the San Jose book there were four pages of listings.

Yeah. I don't think Eastern cities are made for the benefit of their inhabitants.

Frank Denton
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Seattle WA 98166

I've received three issues of Quodlibet and I'd better write you a note of thanks before I'm consigned to the minors again. I have enjoyed it immensely, but just haven't gotten around to responding. (Do I have Allyn to thank? Were you using her hit list?)

No. You should have been on the mailing list from the first. Remember Black on White and Ash-Wing? I do.

By the by, were you not at Westercon? I don't recall seeing you there, but I'd find that hard to believe. Unless you have given up con-going.

Actually, I was at Westercon for all of forty-five minutes on Sunday. I've...uh...been rather busy, otherwise, and my interest in conventions has flagged somewhat in the last few years. When I heard about the mishegoss among the Phoenix bid people, quotha "not again" the little man inside, and I hie myself off to consort with a passable Mexican meal and the comforting company of fakefen.

I enjoyed the convention as much as ever, but after all these years, found myself going to a great number of panels and readings (11 panels and 6 readings). I attribute that to a greater interest in writing since I've retired. Sort of wanting to see what the competition has to say. My god, they are young and bright. Raymond E. Feist, Janet Gluckman, Lisa Goldstein, Barbara Hambly, Clare Bell, Greg Bear. Does this old beginner have a prayer? Well, Thomas Costain started at age 52. Hi ho. But I think sf and fantasy are in good hands.

I've never agreed with Joseph Nicholas yet, and I was even once on the receiving end of his barbs (though Ghu only knows why he thought me important enough to care), but I chuckled at his Heinlein remarks. When I first entered fandom people told me I had to read Heinlein. And I tried. Really I did. Six different novels at six different times, all on other people's recommendations. And was never able to finish a single one. The closest I came was Podkayne of Mars.

That's cheating. You only almost finished that because it's so short!

Quod[libet] has lots more meaty letters, but I haven't the time to write at length. I did want to say hi and sort of plead to be allowed to stick around Quod[libet] for a while longer.

Such pleas do not move the fierce editorial and circulation eye. Respond by every third issue or out you go, sirrah! Of course, at Quodlibet's current frequency, that could be

years down the line...

Lee Pelton
P.O. Box 3145 Traffic Station
Minneapolis MN 44503

It behooves me to respond to Quodlibet in some way, lest you find cause to remove me from your mailing list prior to your receiving your first copy of Private Heat...

I like the writing styles you and your letterhacks have. I am, though, a bit removed from the goings-on and expect it will take a little time to really grasp what's going on.

When you figure it out, let me know.

I will say that all this Ted White said this, and Ted White did that, both in your fanzines and others, is getting really, really boring. Oh, it's nice to have a rabble-rouser around to cause others to wave banners so violently that a form of polarization occurs, but, by golly, I just don't give a damn about it. My fandom is, by nature, a more human one, full of people, not subject matter, form, and content, although all of it is part of my fandom. So the pointing of fingers and straw man arguments just make me yawn. Can we get on with it, please?

On with what? That was on with it, as far as I'm concerned. Interaction requires responding to ideas. That two issues in the course of twenty-two concerned reactions to a formulation of Ted White's is not all that much overdoing it, is it? Gimme a break, mon.

I really love your comments to the letters in this ish [20]. The general tone reminds me of nothing so much as the response the New Yorker has to the little clippings occasionally found at the bottom of columns throughout the magazine. Pithy, to the point, and sharp due in great part to the brevity of the response. Are you, perhaps, a fan of George Bernard Shaw?

Yes, but I don't see how you infer it. Pith is a consummation devoutly to be wished...but I run off at the keyboard more than I like to think.

Really, I'll do better in future locs, but for now I have pressing things going (like working for my salary, instead of typing locs on the company computer) and should try and get my article for PH written before too long. So, please keep them Quodlibets coming. I do like it, particularly the highly personal editorial presence. That's my kind of fanzine.

Aw, shucks.

PS. What the hell kind of place is a building with an apartment number 9943?

Well, it could be a very big apartment complex, I suppose, but as it happens, 537 Jones St. is an accommodation address, a mailing

service. That is my customer reference number, the number they keep on the manila folder for my mail.

Don d'Amassa
323 Dodge Street
East Providence RI 02914

I see by my notes here that I had a lot of little comments to make about Quodlibet.

First, let me recommend Woody Allen's Zelig. A very odd little funny in a low key way, the kind of film that won't be very popular but will be talked about a lot. I enjoyed it more than anything except Sleeper.

I saw Zelig in November. Nice little film. About three-quarters of the way through, I leaned over and commented to Gail that Zelig was simply a new recension of Stardust Memories--exactly the same protests about his own career, but realized in a much more palatable form. Zelig is not merely played by Allen--he is Allen.

As to its popularity: it's been playing at the Vogue here for more than five months, and there were still long lines to get in, even in the middle of the Christmas theatre season.

I disagree with Tim Kyger about Heinlein. I do not believe that Heinlein really tried to show women as the equal of men. Even in Friday, the protagonist is shown to be much tougher than one would normally expect a Heinlein woman to be, but she was still essentially acted upon rather than acting.

Friday is not the best of Heinlein's women to test this thesis against. She is, after all, a crippled personality. Second, all of Heinlein's bildungsroman characters start off as passive. If you take those elements out of Friday's character, you are left with a demonstratedly tough and resourceful person, somewhat similar in character to a number of Dominicans I have known. Hmmm. It's not a bad analogy to think of Baldwin's organization as a kind of religious order.

Much better test cases would be the female characters in "We Also Walk Dogs..." or Belle of Door Into Summer, "Girdie FitzSnuggly" and Mrs. Grew in Podkayne of Mars, Alluquere of Puppet Masters, and so on. Sometimes they do, and sometimes they do not, support your thesis. I think it's simply that Heinlein has a theory of women which cannot be reconciled with the currently-popular theory of women. Both his and the currently-popular theories cover the same ground in different terms, and they are simply matters of intellectual fashion. Women will

continue to be, individually, what they are, irrespective of the systems theorists use to think about them.

An American Werewolf in London was indeed a weird mix of humor and horror. It was extremely unsettling because I never was quite certain what my reaction should be. I also thought the ending was a cop-out, a necessary inevitable cop-out, but still unsatisfying.

You and Robert Prokop list the writers you feel are "paragons" among the new crop, and neither of you mention the ones I find most impressive, like Michael Bishop, Paul Williams, Stephen King, Gardner Dozois, George R.R. Martin, Tanith Lee, Richard Cowper, Joan Vinge, Michael Swanwick, and Brian Stableford, among others. Shows you how different tastes can be.

I wouldn't call many of the people on your list "new crop." Cowper and Stableford have been publishing since the mid-'60's, and Martin, Dozois, King, and Bishop are near their decade. I haven't read Lee, Swanwick, or Williams yet. Joan Vinge hasn't particularly impressed me--good, journeyman work--although Tim Kyger likes her writing a lot. Similarly, some of Stableford's ideas have been tantalizing, but I react to him much as I react to Vance--i.e., without much enthusiasm.

Joseph Nicholas is one of the few people in the world who can make me sympathetic to Robert Heinlein. There is no such thing as a really original plot, and it is meaningless to fault Heinlein for doing what every other author has to do, steal, imitate, and run. With regard to the theory that the age of the reader indicates which novel of Heinlein's was the last good one, I'll offer that I'm 37, and I thought the last good novel was The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

I enjoyed the film Bladerunner immensely, with only a few minor quibbles. I understand that Phil Dick saw the rough cut of the movie before his death and felt that it had nearly perfectly captured what he had been trying to do.

Back on the subject of The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, I have to reject your contention that the main characters are concerned with the common good. They may pay lip service to it, but altruism is not their motivating factor, and I doubt very much that Heinlein would disagree with me. His stress is on independence and self-reliance. The protagonists don't want to live in a non-free colony, so they do what is necessary to change their environment. I'm not being critical of this position. Enlightened self interest is fine. But the assertion that they were giving selflessly of themselves for the future of their culture strikes me as bullshit.

I don't think you can maintain that thesis, for several reasons. First, I made no such statement. Second, "altruism" is not a proper antonym for "self-interest," and one can obviously do things which contribute to the common good, if you think that important, without intending not to profit thereby. For example, whenever an entrepreneur recognizes a market, he identifies a "common good." A genuine market is an element of "common good," by definition (i.e., if there were no public demand for the product, there could be no market, and a demand is prima facie evidence of a common economic good). And workers for organized charities generally do expect to be paid. Work for the "common good" does not denote or imply "altruism."

Moreover, your thesis is contradicted directly in the text of the book: it is the projection of cannibalism and food riots which prompts the apolitical Manny to join the conspiracy. I don't know how much more "common good" a consideration has to get to please you. Personally, I don't think the common good, insofar as it can be distinguished from the interests of individuals, is all that important a consideration.

Similarly, it would not be hard to make a case for the American Revolution being conservative rather than liberal in nature. There have been a number of books written on this very subject. I believe the most prominent historian of that school is Charles Beard. His contention is that it was the upper middle class and upper classes in the colonies who revolted, partly because they wanted more freedom to amass personal wealth, partly because they felt the time was politically ripe, and partly to abrogate their own debts to

British merchants. Remember that the revolutionary governments suppressed the freedoms of Tories every bit as ruthlessly (in fact, more ruthlessly) than had the British government suppressed their own freedoms. The American Revolution is taken as a model for many liberal revolutions because it was in fact a successful casting off of colonial authority, partly I suspect as well because the Declaration was so full of high-minded statements.

Well...you can make an argument for that position, by strip-quoting and careful organization of your data, but the facts don't fit very well in that Procrustean bed. For example, who are the liberals in our society? Not, in the main, the impoverished, but the upper and middle economic classes. Those high-minded sentiments you mention were the most liberal, generally accessible, political thought of the day. The economic factors you have pointed to are sufficient to describe motivation and timing, true, but that's hardly the whole of the story.

I think probably that trying to describe the American Revolution as either fundamentally "liberal" or fundamentally "conservative" straightjackets the complexity of the situation --radical liberals infighting with moderate liberals, all opposed by conservatives of every political stripe. It's indicative that Thomas Jefferson was regarded as the intellectual mentor of the new country, the "Great Democrat," well into the 19th century. And he was one of the most radical-liberal theorists around. Qualifications, qualifications every where, and no room to put them down...

Enough. I'm no historian, and I imagine someone among your readers can provide much more accurate information if you want it.

So much for issue 22 (The First). With any luck at all, I'll be able to get out 22 (The Second) before leaving these hollowed holls. A little of this, a little of that. More locs, a long article. Bits of this and that. April 17, 1984. 537 Jones Street, No. 9943, San Francisco CA 94102.

WILLIAM H. PATTERSON, JR.
637 JONES ST., NO 9943
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

dump the



San Francisco must have a Jewish soul. It's April 18 again, and the City pauses--or pretends to pause--thoughtfully, reflecting on the events of April 18, 1906, our very own secular seder. That's a date that shook the consciousness of rawboned SF, like a DT drunk tossing away his bottle, like a whore-with-a-heart-of-gold reforming in a revivalist's meeting-tent. That's The Great Fire, for those not in the know. Oh, yeah. There was a big earthquake, too. But it's the disastrous fire following the quake, when the gas mains burst and the Fire Department dynamited firebreaks, that the City Remembers. The Fire Plug That Saved The Mission District gets a new coat of gold paint, usw. Some historians of the City think that the Earthquake and Fire was the watershed of SF's history, the moment that SF decided to Settle Down and Try to Forget its eyepopping, rambunctious past. Mollie Brown, move over.

This year, the solemn ceremonials are even more pointed: we're staring down the throat of the Beast--the Democratic National Fistfight in July--and Warren Hinckle, columnist for the Chronic-icle, has a total of three quarters of a page reviving the fifteen-year old, perennial issue: Dump the City's Official Song (*blush*), "I Left My Heart In San Francisco."

"I left my heart in San Francisco
"High on a hill, it calls to me
"Where those little cable cars
"Climb up halfway to the stars..."

One does not willingly hear that song in SF; the City's residents will cross the street (and have even cut through the lobby of pariah-Nieman-Marcus) to avoid it. The sound of Tony Bennett's voice has been known to make strong men quail and women and small children faint. Dogs, too conscious of their special, Bummer-and-Lazarus dignity, howl. Not even the City's darling Pavarotti could rescue that nauseating clump of musical velveeta: in his cinematic cowflop of last year, Yes, Giorgio, Pavarotti sang it not once, but twice. The audience of media critics in the Wodell Screening Room winced and squirmed through the first rendition, and many got up to leave when the second started. Fortunately, Pavarotti "clenches" halfway through the song, and the audience cheered mightily.

Herb Caen, back in his crisper salad days, said of it: "It is not a song; it is a travel poster."

"Tourists are the only people who ever request [it]." said pianist Peter Mintun. "If it's

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sung, it should be away from San Francisco so we don't have to hear it."

That bit of "infantile drool" became the City's Official Song on October 6, 1969, a day that will live in infamy, due to the ill-advised lobbying of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau cabbage-heads, presumably on the theory that it would be inoffensive and lure the mindless tourists here. And (big plus), the head of the Bureau is reported to have noted that it had been "adopted by American forces in Vietnam as their own war anthem." Which only goes to prove what every one had been saying about Vietnam all along, and is a better argument against drug [ab] use in the military than anything the Pentagon has otherwise considered. Take away the "Ride of the Valkyries" from Apocalypse Now and substitute that unpalatable piece of musical macaroni. See what I mean?

There are plenty of other candidates. More than any other city, SF has inspired poets and songsters. I don't recall whether anyone has made a song of George Stirling's "Cool Grey City of Love" poem, but the 1936 Clark Gable--Jeanette McDonald film San Francisco has far and away the most rousing of the lot. "San Francisco, open your golden gate--" you know the rest.

I can't get too terribly excited about the City's having an official song, but at least I could hear that one, jingoistic as it is, without wincing. The Boston Pops did a brass choir arrangement a couple of years ago, and it was passable. By all means, let's clean up the City's image before the Beast makes the City unliveable in July.

Last issue was forceably abbreviated to 12 pages so I could get it out before leaving Alioto & Alioto and my wordprocessor. It consisted solely of locs. This issue will contain the articles I had reserved for 22 when it was still thought of as a single issue--plus a few remaining locs. First things first:

Ben Indick
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Quodlibet 20 is a neat, provocative, good-natured, locfulzine. I noted with agreement that the spread of apa's has probably affected genzine production adversely, although I've never done aught but apazines. One could as well say that a number of fans might have done no zines at all except for apa's. Of course another culprit is the desire to be professional or even semipro, resulting in superzine production whose cost necessitated, perhaps encouraged, rather steep

issue changes. Some of us have been loathe to pay for zines, not only for the dubious returns but because something of the nature of fanediting and its joy for its own sake was lost.

One could also, however, blame shifts of interest--to videotapes, video games, etc., removing some fans from the field entirely! Finally, the sheer cost of even amateur fanzines--for paper, repro, and, most heinous villain, postage!

Well, I don't know. It seems to me that fanzining must be in the blood. Those johnny-come-lately entertainments usually come as additions to print fanac, rather than replacements. I mean, it's true that Gary Farber, for instance, is a pinball addict...but it would be difficult to make a case that he doesn't do zines much anymore because he's spending all his fanac time at pinball parlors...I think innate sloth has a lot more to do with it. Hear me, Farber?

Don D'Amassa
323 Dodge Street
Providence RI 02914

I'm not about to spend time re-reading Heinlein to respond to every point. Certainly Friday is a crippled personality; I tend to think most of Heinlein's characters are, certainly the female characters. All of his characters are essentially flat, male and female, but I happen to think the female are worse than the male. The only Heinlein characters I ever really cared about were in the juveniles, and Mike in The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Our definitions of new crop may have something to do with the length of time we've been reading SF. For me, Bishop, Martin, and the like are the newer writers to have any body of work by which to judge them. Certainly there are promising writers who are even newer--Michael Swanwick, Kim Stanley Robinson, Timothy Zahn, etc., but there isn't enough yet by them to judge them as writers.

Hmmm. I've been reading sf since 1957 when I started to read every book in my elementary school library from Z to A, chanced across S. Fowler Wright's Throne of Saturn, and turned to more specialized reading. It still seems to me that a writer whose first works appeared in the mid-sixties does not belong in the same clump with post-Star Wars writers.

Your definitions of altruism and common good and so forth are so at variance from mine, I doubt we can communicate well on the subject. If you stretch your definition to say that a salesman looking for new markets is acting for the common good, the term effectively loses its

meaning.

Not at all. You haven't been listening to what I said, is all. I made a distinction between "common good" and "altruism," saying that one does not imply the other. You have used the terms interchangeably. Or, more precisely, I started talking about "common good," and you responded in terms of "altruism." I agree with you that the characters in TMAH are not acting from altruism, but I also hold that there is a strong element of work for the common good in the book.

Yes, I can make an argument for the American Revolution being a conservative one. So can (and do) an awful lot of historians. The meanings of liberal and conservative have changed over the years. It might have been "liberal" then, but it is "conservative" by modern terms, that is, property rights were the basis of complaint, not "human" rights. The high sounding rhetoric is all well and good but the revolution was primarily because the guiding lights of the revolution thought it would be to their personal financial benefit to do so. There are, of course, exceptions, but Patrick Henry was probably certifiably insane by some reports, and I think you'd find it much more difficult to make a case that the colonists were being oppressed by the mother country. In fact, the average colonist probably had a higher standard of living than the average British citizen, and certainly had more of what we would now call civil liberties.

Not being a historian or even particularly well read on the subject, I would hesitate to say that the American Revolution was "primarily" because of anything. But one thing I know, from the most elementary acquaintance with historiographic theory, is that superimposing contemporary moral and political values on a historical scenario is an A Number One Crime. As to the other issues...hell, the French and Russian revolutions were "conservative" by those standards.

I haven't read The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress for a long time, so I'll pass on the protagonist's motivation, but I sure don't recall him doing it for the reasons you mention (above).

I don't have a copy handy, but there is a scene near the beginning of the book when Manny, Prof, and Wyoh are gathered in a hotel room. Wyoh and Prof give their life stories and talk about the economics of the earth-moon relationship as a preliminary to forming their own revolutionary group. Manny says "I'm not sure I want to be included in this. You'll have to convince me." Mike then gives a short-term prediction of food riots and cannibalism within

something like seven years. Manny is shaken and says "Count me in." Manny's motivation for joining the revolution is quite well documented.

I'm rather fond of Sinclair Lewis myself. You should read Elmer Gantry by all means. It's his best novel.

Since writing Quodlibet 20, more than a year has passed, and some local fans took pity upon me. Early editions of Elmer Gantry and Mantrap now rest soundly (and read) in my collection.

I don't think Elmer Gantry was Lewis' best book. I'm still more impressed with Babbitt.

Voyage Into Yesteryear isn't Hogan's 11th or 12th book, it's his seventh. I wish I thought Prokop was kidding, but I don't. Edward E. Smith may well outlive (literarily) Barry Malzberg, but I doubt very much that he will last as long as Ellison and Russ. If he does, that says something rather sad about literary tastes.

I have to agree with you about Connery vs. Moore as Bond. I see the latter because they're fun if there's nothing else to do. I used to actively look forward to the Connery ones, and still think From Russia With Love was the best Bond film ever.

I sympathize with Marty Cantor's dislike of using a lot of illos. He gave in because it seemed to fit more with the kind of fanzine he is trying to produce. When Mythologies was appearing, it had very very few interior illustrations, because (1) I didn't want to spend the time on them and (2) I begrudged the space not being used for more text.

Terry Carr's remarks about the lack of historical perspective in fandom struck a chord. I occasionally see references to early issues of Mythologies by people who were never on the mailing list and sometimes the misunderstandings (particularly if they have heard of it but never seen one) are often amusing. And Mythologies isn't even that far in the past.

Well, there's no way to acquire historical perspective except by sensitively reading old fanzines. That's become a popular pursuit recently. That may or may not be a good thing in general, but I find the fad for selling fanzines, old and new, at astonishingly inflated prices in convention huxter and fan rooms somewhat obscene.

In regard to your argument with Judith Hanna about Heinlein: I'm one of those people who enjoyed many of Heinlein's works, despite the poor female characterization and rather, shall we say, unprogressive views. I don't have to agree politically with a writer to enjoy his work. But that doesn't mean I don't recognize his shortcomings/differences from my worldview. I find Michael Coney's worldview almost totally

alien from my own, but I still enjoy almost everything he writes. I disagree with a lot of Joanna Russ, but I still consider her one of the most skillful writers in the genre, and I enjoy most of her stuff. I think both you and Judith are overstating your cases.

Possibly, but (a) I wasn't aware that we were having an argument. I tried real hard not to; and (b) I haven't stated a case at all. As to Heinlein's female characters, they derive from such a "different" vision that I don't feel competent to say that the writing is therefor poor. I do find them, at the very least, historically interesting.

Judith is also overdoing her criticism of Marty Cantor. I don't think he would say, and I'm fairly sure he never did say, that the US is completely without blame in its foreign policy. No country is. What he seemed to me to be saying is that the US is blamed disproportionately because we are more open (read clumsy) about what we do, and because people around the world know that by criticizing us, there'll be a reaction, but that there is no point in even attempting to stir the conscience of the Soviet people, for example, because even if the message gets by the censors, there is no way for them to express non-support.

Mr. Shcharansky might disagree.

Dan Wynne
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Well, I guess it's about time I got off my duff and loosed the last couple of zines. I think I'll just comment on issues 20 and 21. As you know, I'm one of the original gafiates of Phoenix fandom (and boasted of my "illiteracy") so fanatic or worse yet fanfeuds don't particularly thrill me. Who cares about sixth fandom or any other? One thing is true: fans tend to think they are the only ones swaying the marketplace. I've seen too many "readers" who didn't know anything about fandom and yet had voracious appetites for sf or fantasy and probably constitute by far the largest share of the books bought. (Which to the publishers or the authors is the only criteria of success).

Since I've been lying around due to my little accident which seems to be reoccurring, I have been reading and seeing films and thinking and even, ghu help me, writing.

I like the basic premise and promise of Quodlibet to be an outlet of intellect and comment. I'm a bit disappointed in some of the contributions to be little more than personal attacks which have little bearing on any great intellect. It is one thing to disagree with someone's opinion, but quite another to attach

one's character in print. Particularly if the charges are based on being uninformed or leaping to conclusions not supported by facts or situational background. This only leads to, as we said in the old days, twitdom.

It was particularly refreshing to read Judith Hanna's locs as being both thoughtful and very readable. Bill, you now have a truly international fanzine (not to defer our Canadian friends). I can only see better things come of it.

Now on to some impressions of some films seen. My wife and I went to see Terms of Endearment and I felt that it was a bit contrived and the scene changes came very awkwardly, like the director just took a passage from the book and tried to squeeze it into film format. I think the best scene was the first with the title credits. The script tried to be so middle American with the, God forbid, three-child family and the partners jumping into other people's beds. Jack Nicholson plays a very strange part as an astronaut lech who drives a fast car. The character is very two-dimensional until somewhere towards the end when he turns into a halfway recognizable person. It is as if the writer (or studio) just read The Right Stuff and crammed a character into the story. Very strange. Shirley MacLaine plays a bitchy mother and mother-in-law who throws retorts to everybody around her. And Debra Winger is not any better. It is almost what a New Yorker thinks how Texans can be.

I was extremely disappointed with the film. Couldn't sympathize with any of those characters. They were all the most boring twits--except, maybe, John Lithgow. Nor did I think anything well of the acting. MacLaine had some good lines, but her repertoire of expression was extremely limited and overused. She has one good scene, with Nicholson, at the airport. That was effective. Nicholson was particularly nauseating. Winger very flat. Lithgow played his very minor and yickily sappy role with commendable intensity. On the whole, there wasn't a decent job anywhere in the film. And yet it seems as if everybody in the country went weepy for that overturned meller. Turned me right off the Academy Awards this year.

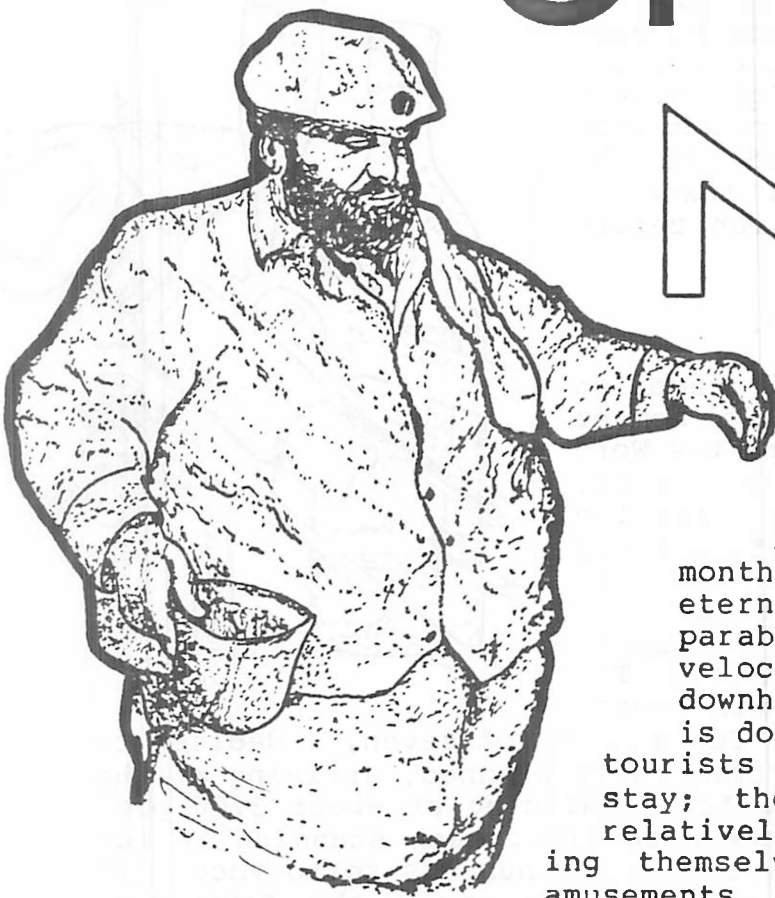
On the other hand, Linda Hunt did get her Oscar for Year of Living Dangerously, so not everybody's head was completely filled with custard. The Best Supporting Actress spot was a real competition this year, with both Cher (Silkwood) and Linda Hunt giving spectacularly outstanding performances.

Aside from that, though, I was disappointed

Continued on p. 13

courtesy of

NOLA



August is often a gemütliche dull month in San Francisco. Time Out: an eternal moment poised on the crux, the parabolic, thirty-one day instant when velocity is zero, the uphill trip is downhill, and the downhill trip ahead is downhill, too. For some reason, the tourists stay wherever it is that tourists stay; the hotels become, for a moment, relatively quiet; and the natives, depriving themselves of the sophisticated street amusements provided by polyester leisure suits and notions of historicity best termed "quaint," threaten--momentarily--to forget that they are Modern and Cosmopolitan: they indulge themselves with Sunday picnics in Stern Grove, Gilbert & Sullivan or cool jazz spiced by imported cheeses, domestic wines, and an assortment of gay blankets and tablecloths. Crops of sunglasses, reaped overnoon, appear and disappear. Ocean beach--momentarily a beach again--is scattered with joggers and stone-skipppers, sand-dollar hunters and timid waders warning each other nervously about the dread riptide and looking longingly up The Hill to Cliff House. The sun sets, grayly or goldly, and small fires kindle in sandpits every fifty or sixty yards--some driftwood and some Safeway sawdust logs. Random walkers stop in to share the fire and the chardonnay. The tide comes in; one finds a still-glowing stick long enough for ritual purposes (like as not put by especially for the purpose), whirls it over his head until it

bursts into flame, and throws it, glowing end-over-end, trailing an arc of red, better-than-fireworks sparks, into the Big (Dark) Wet. San Francisco August.

Into this suddenly almost-homey August dropped an ongoing Event: K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen.

Now, restaurant openings are not *News* in San Francisco. Even the most hoity-toity Polk or Union Street wine-and-dinery rates, at most, a politely stifled "Oh, really?" yawn. What, after all, is one more Hecuba among five or six thousand? But K-Paul's rates as something special, even to the jaded appetites of San Franciscans.

Paul Prudhomme, the owner and head chef of New Orleans' famed Louisiana Kitchen, fled NOLA's August humidity and took up residence, lock, stock, staff of twenty-two, and barrel of crayfish, in the Old Waldorf at Battery and Clay Streets for one month, ending August 20. The restaurant is a converted nightclub, seating only seventy-eight diners at a time; the menu is Cajun--perhaps even "excessively" Cajun--and reputed to be astonishingly good; and K-Paul's takes no reservations. "We will serve no man before he's done time."

This is a recipe for chaos.

If anybody's paying attention.

Somebody was paying attention.

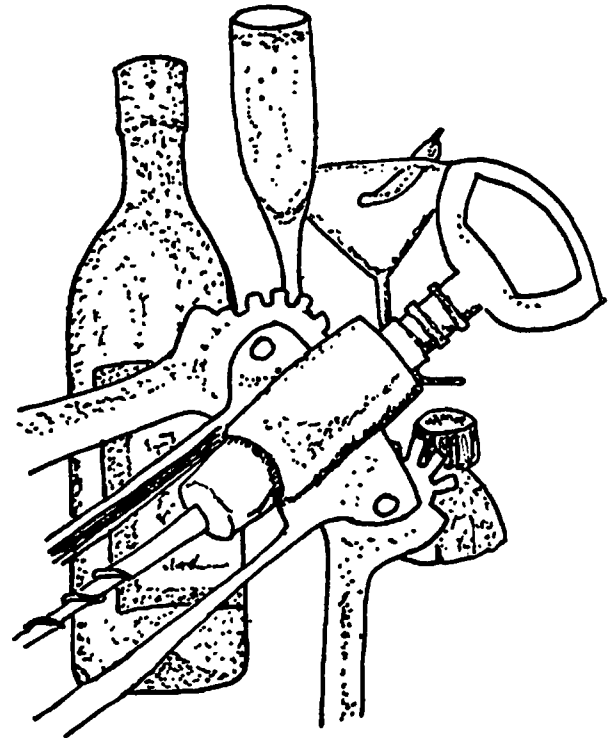
The newspapers had begun their campaign of routinely false enthusiasm the moment Prudhomme stepped into the City, and the Word had gotten out: during the first week, people were lining up at 3:00 p.m. for the 6:00 p.m. opening. And on August 5, the day that a group of us from work had arranged to brave the gauntlet, The Chronicle ran (another) half-page article on K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen. Lines of 600+ people. Oy. The wait had increased from three to six hours.

Oy, oy. As I was to stand in line for a party of seven, I decided to leave a little earlier than I had originally planned, arriving at the third-story, open-air plaza of the Alcoa Building at about 3:00 p.m. There were already thirty-three people in line, each standing in for three to ten others. I started muttering the numbers sotto voce: it was evident that our party was not going to make the 6:00 p.m. seating--the math was a little vague as to whether we would even make the 8:00 p.m. seating.

But the day was pleasantly clear and warm, and a light breeze (any more would have been inconvenient) was stirring the air. I took off my jacket and settled in the shade of the building with Busman's Honeymoon.

The line was a lot like those Stern Grove picnics, and it got more so as the afternoon wore on. About half the people had brought something to read--the man behind me in line had Dick Francis' Twice Shy, so we had a brief session of mystery-bonding. Ahead, the group had apparently visited City Lights recently: William Burroughs' The Ticket That Exploded and Jim Carroll's Basketball Diaries.

About four o'clock, the wines began to come out--bottles of local chardonnays mostly (1983 is the Year of the Chardonnay), with a



sprinkling of chenin blancs--and a few indefatigable champagnists began popping corks. But it was early yet for me. Patricia Sturdevant had taken on the Care and Feeding of Linestander for our party, and she dropped by in enharmonically vibrating fuchsia costume (prepared for the occasion) to make the Question of the Hour ("When?") confirm that the Party would assemble here at 6:00, and leave me with lemonade and a double cappucino. Much better suited to the hour and the occasion, I thought.

The aroma of the chardonnays hung around the lee of the plaza, though, and that was very pleasant. This has been an especially good --or, at least, well publicized--year for Northern California chardonnays. I haven't been paying attention. I understand that the 1983 grape harvest has been astonishingly bounteous: the major wineries are holding 800,000 barrels this year, compared to last year's bumper harvest of 500,000 barrels, and the local newspapers are filled with ditherings and viewings-with-alarm. If they release it all, it will depress a market price they consider already too low. Not here. In the heart of wine country, in a city that consumes more wine per capita (I understand) than any other in the U.S., San Franciscans pay premium prices for the most ordinaire of vins. Identical bottles retail in Los Angeles for \$1.50 to \$2.00 less than in markets here. I suppose it's our faddish but somehow enduring wine-consciousness itself that supports these outrageous prices. A very snobbish wine shop (John Walker) has opened in the Crocker Galleria, and wines retailing for \$9.00 to \$12.00 everywhere else in the city are priced there at \$18.00 to \$24.00. The markup surcharge seems consistent, although it's difficult to put an "average retail price" on gold-inlaid silver taste-vins and decanting funnels...I think I may have met two other people who have tasted vintage ports. The highly aged wines seem to have gone somewhat out of fashion.

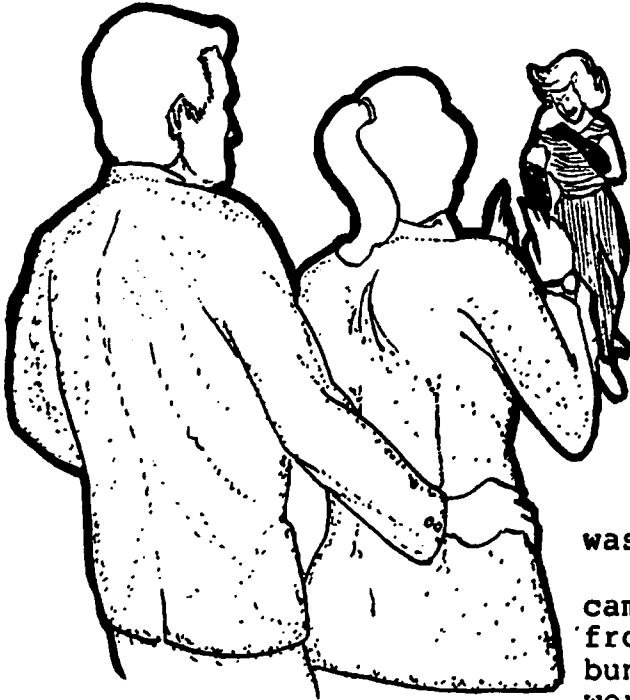
Toward the 5 p.m. mark, the line began to swell like a frying sausage--outward, not in length--as officeworkers joined their line-standing compatriots. Somewhere toward the front of the line, a big, blue balloon appeared bobbing over a knot of arrivistes, and twenty minutes into the hour, a couple costumed in pseudo maid/butler getup, gravely walked to the knot at the base of the stairs, each carrying a silver tray, one bearing party-picked canapes, the other bearing champagne flutes (none of those distressing, wide-mouthed cocktail glasses, I'm happy to report) and ice bucket. The balloon bobbed my way and twisted for a moment, enough to catch the lettering on the "front": "Hap.../Birt.." Well, that's cute. Doing it up in style. I asked the Dick Francis reader to hold my place in line and got the caterers' card: Almost Anything of San Francisco.

I went back to my place. Peter and Harriet married and went off to Talboys. Bunter set to chasing blackbeetles out of the copper. A noise like...like music and applause caused me to look up again.

It was almost 6:00, and the news cameras had arrived in force. But there was more of a crowd to the front than could be accounted for by late arrivals or



simple curiosity seekers. The applause burst out again, and portions of the crowd laughed. Curious, I walked around the crowd and saw that the party with a touch of eclat had imported a stripper (female variety) for the Birthday Boy's delectation and that of the crowd (and news media). Not bad, either. The light in the open plaza was a little harsh, but she was pretty and "stacked" ("too fat," some of the



women commented. Nudniks. If one is interested in boys, there are plenty of accommodating ones around...). She skinned down to bikini (this may be San Francisco, but public newdity is yet frowned upon), gathered up her clothes, and tripped giggling into the Alcoa Building. In the meantime, my Party had begun to arrive, and, moments later, the line surged ahead as the first seating



was admitted to The Presence.

Grumblings and rumblings as the news cameras hithered and thithered through the front doors. When the surging ahead, bunching up, and thinning out stopped, we were camped a scant eight feet from the front door--not as encouraging as it might be: from the front door to the maitre-d's desk was an additional forty-five minute wait in itself. Jim Sturdevant went down to a wine store three floors below and came back with a bottle of Domain Chandon, a good brut, and a handful of plastic cups, one for each of us. The party ahead of us had come prepared, though: for the six of them, one was carrying a box of crystal flutes. But what, I ask, is champagne in these circumstances without the paper cup? Don't screw around with the rituals, I say.

At any rate, the posted menu was clearly visible-- including that elusive delicacy we had been speculating about for three weeks: the Cajun martini, served up in pint and quart mason jars only (perhaps carrying authenticity a bit too far). And at the bottom, the legend: "Only parties of six or less will be seated." We were in trouble: our party had seven.

Topic A was chewed to death; the wine was loosening tongues all around, and the more solitary pursuits gave way to chit-chat and exogamic socializing. My battery ran out (my circadian rhythm has a whim of iron), and I sat out the next forty-five minutes or so on a convenient ledge while shop and various other matters buzzed about.

Eventually I rose from my state of semi-somnolence. The line appeared to have stalled at the outside entrance, but newspeople kept hustling in and out, big grins on their faces. The first dissenters appeared about this time, complaining about apparently preferential treatment, and two incredibly sleazy-looking assistants--bouncers, really--rushed out to handle complaints. One of the bouncers was a tall, lean individual wearing an ice-cream suit and silver lame necktie-I-kid-you-not. Silver lame. Shaking of head.

Low blood sugar was beginning to take its toll. Some of the mem-



bers of our party began complaining and making moves as if to leave, but Patricia and Jim set their jaws and got stubborn: they had too much time of their own invested (to say nothing of mine) to back out now.

In another half hour or so the first satisfied customers of the day left, threading their way backwards along the entrance line. Peculiar thing is, they had red, blue, or gold paper stars on their cheeks, most of them. More shakings of head and general wonderment. A few stern resolutions made, and so forth. The line began moving again. We were actually inside the door.

The next half-hour or so wasn't too bad. The line did move visibly, and we were within smelling distance now--a wonderful, heady combination of file and garlic and seafood odors hung around the narrow hall, and the satisfied grins on departing customers' faces were particularly welcomed, as it meant we were that much closer to the end of the line and the beginning of The Experience.

It was 8:30 p.m. before we got to the head of the line and could look into the dining room. It was a very unprepossessing sight--a narrow, dimly-lit floor, scattered with plastic-wood grain tables (no tablecloths), and diners taking their goddamned time and enjoying themselves hugely.

Our party had solved its size problem by splitting into two groups, three and four. Jim and Pat Sturdevant and I were in the first group. At 8:30 a table opened up right in front of the line, and we sat down, leaving our compatriots standing at the head of the line. Mistake.

We were handed hand-written menus:

APPETIZERS

Dirty Rice with Ginger Snap Gravy
Cajun Curry
Duck Gumbo
Creole Seafood Gumbo
Cajun Jambalaya
Eggplant Ring with Rabbit Roll
Cajun Popcorn

ENTREES

Swordfish Meuniere or with Pecan Butter
Oysters Tassoon Pasta
Blackened Redfish
Paneeed Rabbit
Baked Halibut with Crabmeat Buttercream
Stuffed Crayfish
Barbeque Shrimp
Shrimp Creole
Blackened Lambchops
Softshelled Crab

Jim insisted that we should redeem the long wait (5-1/2 hours for me, 2-1/2 for everyone else) by feasting hugely--a good idea if one's stomach can accommodate huge quantities. We compromised by ordering an appetizer apiece and a fourth "for the table," as well as entrees. We feasted on Duck Gumbo, Jambalaya, Eggplant Ring with Rabbit, Cajun Popcorn, and then Blackened Redfish, Oysters Tassoon, and Softshelled Crab. The appetizers came with a tray of muffins and rolls of

various kinds--the best being the cornmeal muffins--which was refreshed periodically throughout the meal.

The Cajun Popcorn turned out to be the meat from more than two dozen crayfish tails lightly dusted with flour, deep fried, and served with a sweetly-bland sauce touched with cayenne.

We also had two pints of the Cajun Martinis, which turned out to be gin or vodka in which jalapeno peppers had been macerated overnight. This was decocted and chilled in the freezer. The mason jars were appropriately colorful, but the restaurant had the triangular cocktail glasses for drinking them--just as well--and pickled okra for garnish. I blushed and tried not to watch Jim as he crunched his okra and made noises of delight. Shudder. The gin went down very smooth, and then the burning started--the infamous jalapeno "kicker" that makes them primo for guacamole (the real thing, not the tomato-and-sour-cream gunk Californians make). Gasping time. Put that in Tucker's pipe and let him smoke for a while...

The restaurant was even less impressive from the inside than it had appeared from the vantage of the line; the nightclub had been partitioned up with what looked like sheets hung on frames, leaving a small dining room and huge areas not in use. A corridor between the rows of sheets led to the men's room. We were later informed by a clever associate at the office that K-Paul's shares kitchen space as well as bathrooms with the Punch Line comedy nightclub, and it is possible to order appetizers and one entree through the Punch Line. As there is no waiting to get into the Punch Line, this could have given us a shortcut, had we but known.

It was galling to know that there was all that unused space in there when people were waiting more than five hours to get in, but I understand Prudhomme's reasoning: seventy-eight people was as much as he could serve at one time, given his kitchen facilities and staff. He couldn't import more trained staff, and he didn't have time to train

locals. Catch 22. His philosophy became more attractive when the food began to arrive, as we were well taken care of--indeed, the waitresses (they did not have assigned stations: each waitress took care of whatever was ready at any given moment, so we had five waitresses during the three hours we were there) were, if anything, a bit too solicitous. They did play to their accents, but I felt them more "quaint" than "charming." And, ensuring the perfection of everything, Paul Prudhomme sat holding court (his back to us) at an enormous table in the middle of the restaurant.

Prudhomme is short, bearded, and enormously heavy--he looks as if he ought to be a cook. Pat Sturdevant went all tremulous and stage-frighty, so Jim and I spent part of the evening encouraging her to go over and talk to him, as his Court appeared to be open to the public.

The appetizers began to arrive. Meanwhile, our compatriots were still standing in line, looking wistfully at our cluttered table. We began passing breads and martinis and picks of Cajun Popcorn over to them. The waitress came over and asked us to stop, as we were setting a bad example for the rest of the crowd. Reluctantly we cut down on passing samples, and eventually they were seated, as well, two tables over from us.

As we ate our way through the evening, we shared, discussed, and graded each dish, comparing each to the others. Of the appetizers, Jim's Duck Gumbo was far and away the star attraction, its stock unbelievably "deep," and the flavors blended with precision and delicacy. The Eggplant Ring with Rabbit was a smooth and elegant, almost continental, confection, not at all spicy. It would have been at home with any French country-style dinner. I had been looking forward to the Jambalaya, but it was a disappointment--watery, overcooked, overspiced, and containing no shrimp that I could discern. Feh upon it.

The consensus at this point was that K-Paul's was good, if not spectacular. But the test of the evening--was it worth the wait?--would come with the entrees.

First came the Oysters Tassoon, then Jim's Blackened Redfish, a specialty developed by Prudhomme, and, finally, my Softshell Crabs--and there were two of the beggars, breaded with cornmeal and deep-fried, resting in a pool of lightly sweetened hollandaise with chopped, fresh tomato. When the waitress explained the combination, it didn't sound appetizing, but it turned out to be a perfect complement for the crab.

I'm used to the New England style of softshelled crab--dredged in flour and pan fried in butter. This was a "first-cousin" method of preparation, quite good in a very different way. But it was the combination with the sauce that made it special.

In the meantime, we all had samples of each others' dinner. The Oysters Tassoon was basically fettucini with oysters in a modified bechamel sauce--creamy, smooth, and quite delicious (this is the testament of one who



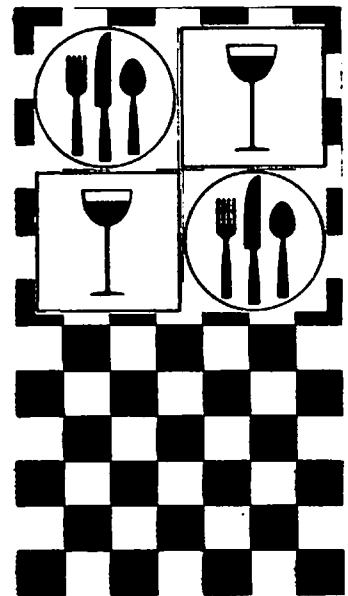
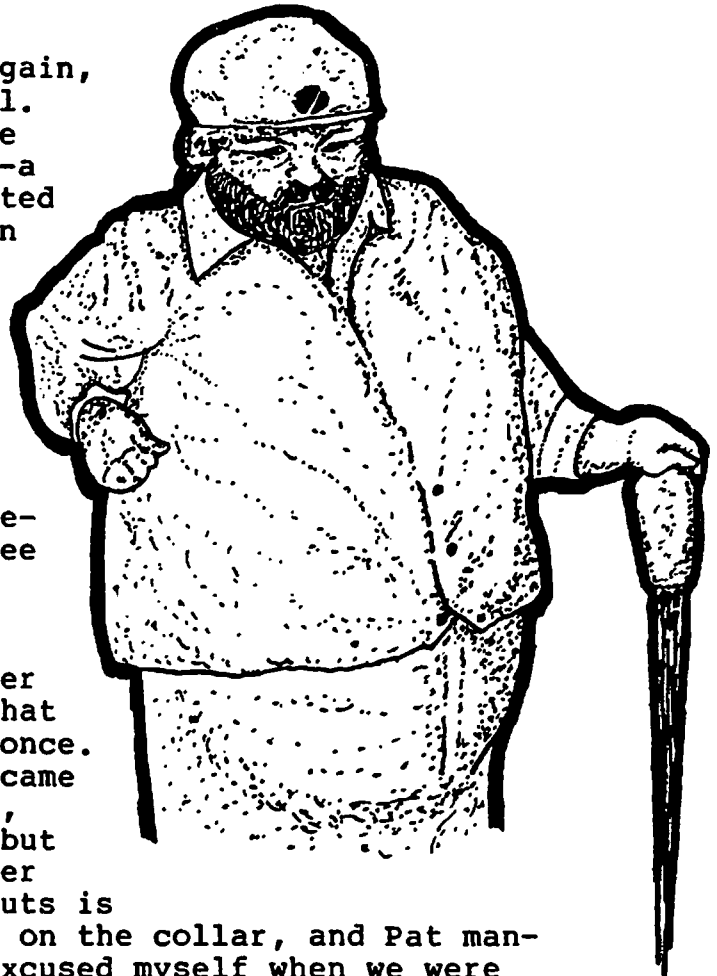
dislikes oysters intensely) but, again, less Cajun than oddball-Continental.

Unquestionably the star of the evening was the Blackened Redfish--a sizeable fish that has been marinated in a sweet and tangy sauce and then seared on a white-hot, cast-iron skillet. Again, it sounds like a disaster in the making, but it turned out to be spectacular--infinitely better than the Blackened Redfish we had enjoyed a few weeks earlier at a local Cajun restaurant, The Elite Cafe. So Jim lucked out with the top vote-getters of both Appetizer and Entree rounds of the meal.

We took the final vote during dessert--otherwise unspectacular chocolate cake and raspberry cobbler --and it was unanimously decided that K-Paul's had been worth the wait--once.

Toward the end, the waitress came over and made moves to put colored, foil stars on our various cheeks, but I dodged (successfully), putting her out (a fifty-year old woman who pouts is not a pretty sight). Jim took his on the collar, and Pat manfully bore the cheek(y)-star. I excused myself when we were reduced to dawdling over coffee (with a few hundred people yet to be admitted--but, darned if we weren't going to enjoy the table while we had it!) When I returned, Pat was staring at her hand and saying "I'll never wash it again." She had finally gotten up nerve to speak to Prudhomme, still holding court in the middle of the room. She had thanked him for bringing the Kitchen to San Francisco and told him he was a culture hero.

A few minutes later, Prudhomme stood up, a ball of wrinkled, white cotton, and took up a peculiar walking stick with a massy silver head. That was, I suppose, a proper ending to the evening. We broke up, then, and went our separate ways, into the gemütliche dull San Francisco August night.



that the best films of the year weren't even nominated: La Nuit de Varrennes; Local Hero; Experience Preferred But Not Essential; The Year of Living Dangerously; Zelig.

Another film I saw double-billed with Road Warrior is Never Say Never Again with Sean Connery as 007. Actually, I saw this one twice, once at a drive-in and once at a regular theatre. As you might know, this is sort of a remake of Thunderball. I didn't like it the first time I saw it but it really isn't bad the second time. Connery has slowed down a bit from some of his other 00's, and the special weapons and decoder rings are down to a minimum (pity) but the girls are still there, especially Fatima Blush. (With Sean getting older, they really are girls.)

I saw Road Warrior for the first time a couple of weeks ago. What a great film and how depressing! Technically and artistically it is one of the best films I've seen although it is subtle. Almost too much. And the violence is almost overwhelming and yet captivates you. You realize you are the animals, not too removed, in this film. It seems implausible that anyone would kill for a gallon of gas, and yet uneasily you realize there are some close by who could. I couldn't help reflecting upon his film as I walked to my big black four-wheel drive Dodge with its thirty-gallon tank.

I understand that Road Warrior is the film the director wanted to make, but his backers couldn't stomach the whole mechulla, so he wound up with Mad Max.

I loved your cover illo on issue 221. It reminds me of some suave literary meetings of the Thirties--the Algonquin Round Table or maybe the bar at the Clift.

It is hard to believe that three years have gone by for Quodlibet. I guess I have about half of the issues and I see a steady heightening of thought as each is published. A lot of magazines tend to languish on one theme and lose its interest. I find that I enjoy your articles on various subjects (better than a continuous round of locs)(With the possible exception of lurid wine comments, but I'm not a great imbibor).

I've got to go to Lounge Lizards (is that anything like a couch potatoe) someday but little kiddies and reclusive wives make foolishness inscrutable (if you catch my drift). There are certainly quite a few people I'd like to talk to again. Or meet. From what I've heard, it's no Little Men's.

To our British friends, nothing personal but the Brits were and are shits in world affairs. The US is only copying. I had the honor of living under the benevolent British colonial rule in Hong Kong. While I was there I saw how real

justice is meted out; with judges who don't understand or want to understand local languages, customs, or social conventions. There is also little or no recourse. In Hong Kong, there are basically two types of British. There are expatriates who generally run things and can't wait to get back to good ol' England, and the belongers, usually ex-POW's who decided to stay. Since they are ex-POW (the British higher-ups left them for the Japanese) they can get by with some special favors that the local Chinese populace can't have. These types of things are not unique: talk to any person from anywhere the British had dealings. The feelings are pretty universal. The underlying success of British colonialism was the use of enemies, be they Scott, Welsh, Irish, Punjabs, Sikhs, Kurds, or whatever, to rule over people they hate even more. In this sense, the US historically hasn't been as bad. But certain areas of the world such as Nicaragua, Cuba, the Philippines, and to some extent China, the US has been involved many times. In times past, the US has had to get involved because of another country's bungling or lack of action. The Barbary Pirates is a good example.

You're kidding, right?

Well, as I sit around recuperating, I am having flights of fancy, usually in two forms. Thinking about flying again and actually getting my license, and buying a sailboat. (A wordprocessor wouldn't be too bad either). One thing I found out recently, which may seem very prosaic, if you want to do something, make plans and do it. Nothing gets done if you keep putting it off for a better time.

As Quodlibet's appearances demonstrate.

That just about clears up the stuff that ought to get in 22b. The year-end review of films was originally scheduled for this issue, but I've published it first in Hors Commerce and will reprint it here in 23--which, presumably I will be doing manually at home during my month-long holiday in May. Haply I will have time to develop that issue a bit more carefully than I have either of these halves of no. 22.

Whiling away the time until the copy comes over to the appropriate side of page 14: Herb Caen carried an interesting item today. Well, kinda interesting: "ADDENDUM: One of the joys of attending the earthquake ceremonies at Lotta's Fountain ('Lottie's Pump') each April 18 at 5:13 a.m. is meeting colorful oil-timers, among them Dr. Lester Bulloch. Doc is the guy who, each April 18, sprays gold paint onto the fire hydrant that saved the Mission District in

ought-six.

"A retired chiropracter, Doc is a man with marvelous memories. 'Between 1938 and '41, we lived at Beaumont and Anza, next to the Odd Fellows Cemetery, which was being removed for a housing development. Late at night, I spent many an interesting hour watching the ghouls disinterring the remains. First order of business was to cut through and remove the sheet lead from around the rotted casket and stomp it into a lump of salvage. Second, check for any silver handles on the coffins. Third, pay over the remains with a stick, looking for goodies from Albert Samuels [jewelers], et al., and fourth, pick up the mandibles and maxillary bones inspecting the teeth for inlays and crowns.'

"The Doc stopped and shook his head. I shook mine. Ghouls in San Francisco only 40-odd years ago? He went on: 'You wrote recently about Eric Hoffer's missing tombstone. Well, a screwball living three houses down the West side of Beaumont had his entire backyard patio paved with "RIP's" and "In Memory Of's". It was a blast to tour that backyard and wonder how many hours the bereaved had spent picking out just the proper stone at Bocci and Company.

"Mr. MaCabre, cont'd. Last week, one Tim Gracyk wrote a letter to the editor complaining about the lack of quality people in our cemeteries. 'For instance,' he complained, 'Philadelphians can toss pennies onto Ben Franklin's grave as they walk to work. Why can't our city buy the remains of, say, Napoleon from the French? What about all those dead poets lying around crowded England? Asking for a Shakespeare is a bit much but might we not secure the rights to a Chaucer or even a

Swinburne?'

"Considering that we no longer have a working cemetery, except for the almost filled Presidio's, we don't have to be ashamed of our dead. Cora and Casey, hanged by the Vigilance Committee of 1856, are buried at Mission Dolores, as are a lot of people who became famous as street signs: members of the Noe and Leidesdorff families, Don Francisco de Haro (our first Mexican alcalde), Don Jose Joaquin Moraga, who led the first settlers to SF, and Don Luis Arguello, a native San Franciscan who became first Governor of California under Mexican rule."

Do you get the impression that mortality is weighing on ol' Herb's mind these days? Still, he has a point. In Boston, I used to walk to work along Tremont Street, between the Granary and the King's Chapel with its attendant burial ground. I didn't recognize a lot of the local names--no doubt many of them great names in Boston's history. But I did stop frequently to scatter breadcrumbs on Sam Adams' grave. And then I discovered that some anal-retentive Bostonian of the last century rearranged the headstones (but not the graves) into neat rows bearing no relationship to the situs. Frustrating.

I blush to admit that I have not visited a single cemetery in San Francisco--not even the site of Emperor Norton's second grave (he was originally planted at a cemetery near 7th and Market, but in the '30's the whole shebang was removed to the peninsula to accommodate a short-lived boom in office buildings. Now the U.N. Plaza is on that patch of land, and Emperor Norton rests where San Franciscans rarely go.

And I live only three blocks from Mission Dolores.

QUODLIBET 22 (the Second) is dated April 18, 1984. Bill Patterson, 537 Jones St., No. 9943, San Francisco CA 94102.



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