

# Starling



TOM FOSTER '71



# STARLING

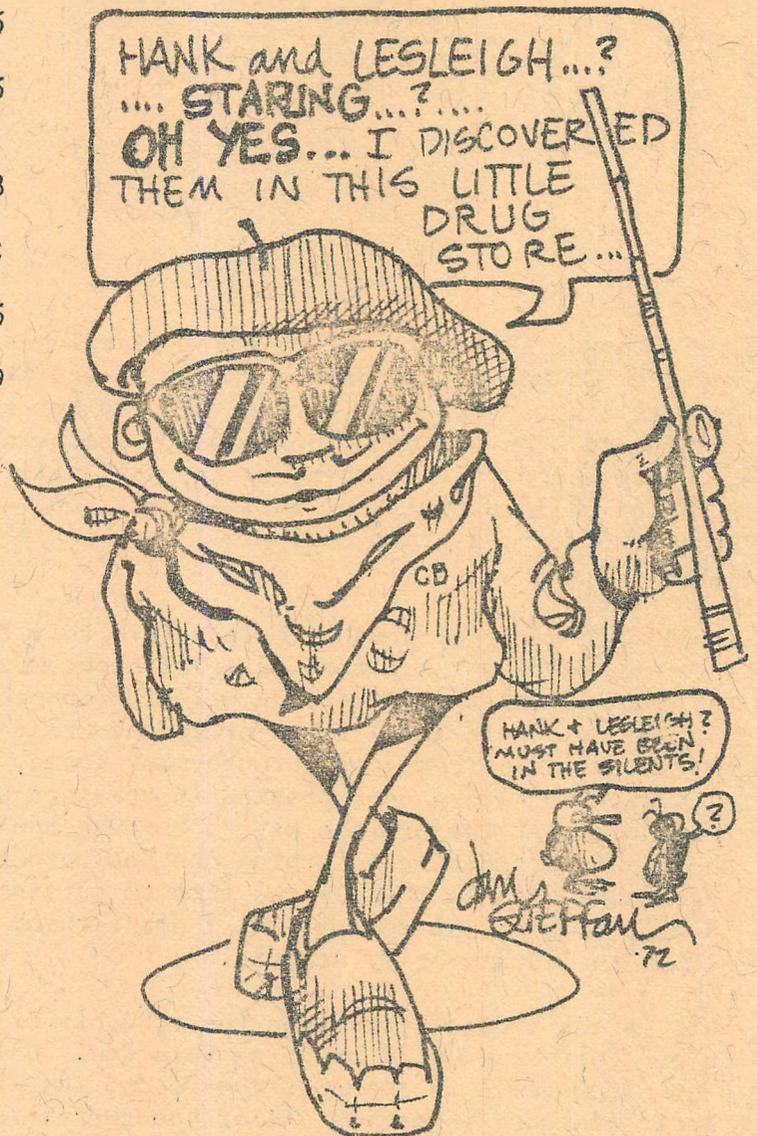
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cover -- Tom Foster

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+ Hank Luttrell +

Busy, Busy. This will be the first Starling since Lesleigh and I were married and moved to Columbia that came out late -- and it isn't too late. And that was a fairly long time ago. Lesleigh is finishing up her senior year of school, and we are beginning to plan our move to Madison, Wisconsin, where Lesleigh will be going to graduate school. That move, by the way, will take place in late summer. The next Starling will be published in late July, and shouldn't be affected by it. . .so keep those cards and letters coming. I hope to publish a change of address in the next issue.

You'll find a great deal of material in this issue about movies. For some time now I've wanted to publish some material about movies -- what could be a more logical topic for Starling, in keeping with the concentration on popular art themes which has been the rule lately. The article I wrote for this issue is the most recent form of pieces which have gone through many forms, some of them never published before, some of them having been printed in apazines and a local underground newspaper. I suspect that the article may go through some additional reworkings, yet. Lesleigh's article is something she has been talking about for some time -- this issue seemed to be the logical time to publish it. Jim Turner's column might also be said to be about movies, but I don't think you'll find it overly related to either Lesleigh's or my article.

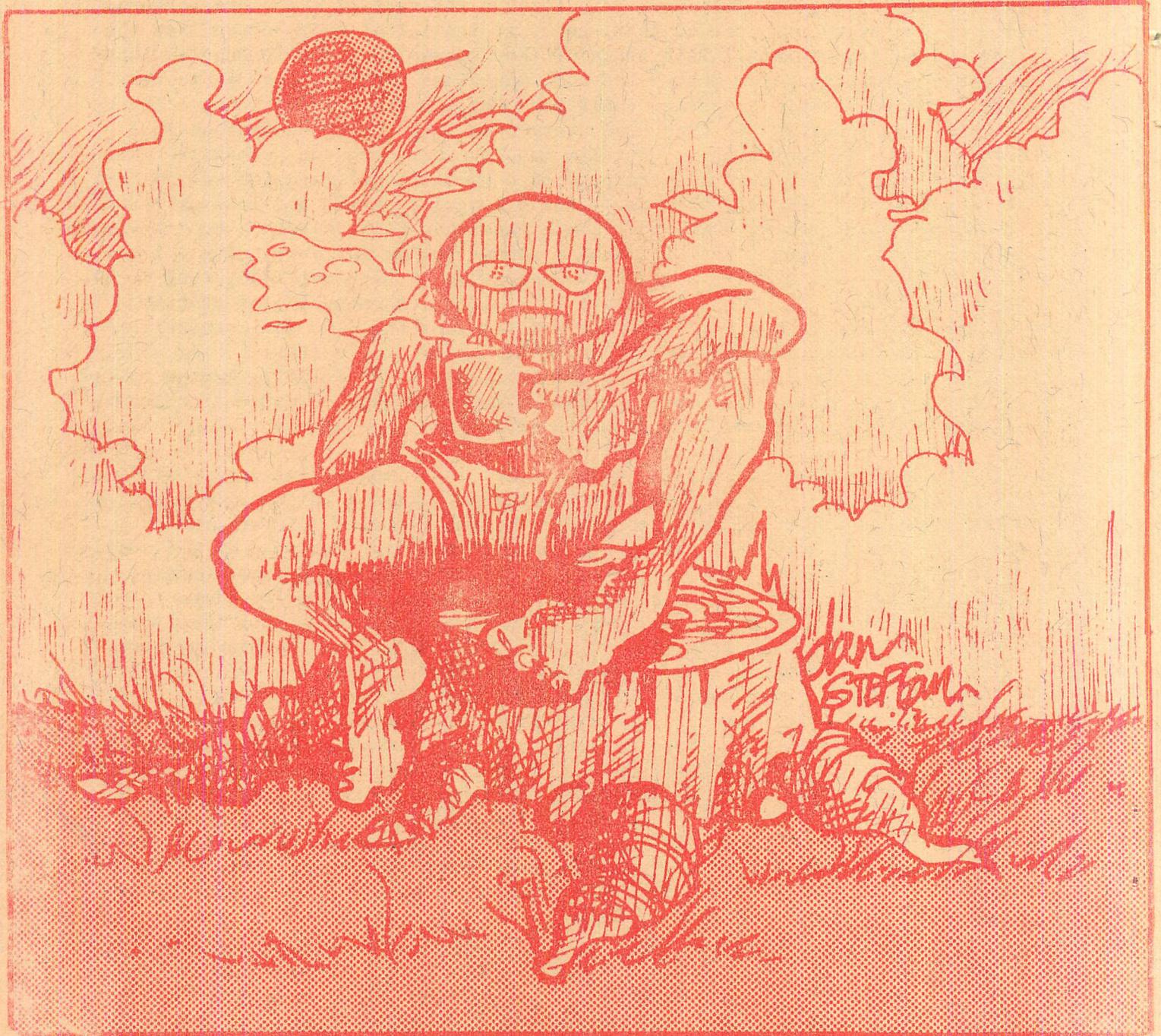
This is the time of year when the thoughts of all trufans turn to conventions. As is our custom, we will be going to a few. Unless currently unforeseen events prevent us, we will be going to the Pecon, the Midwestcon and the LAcon. We'll be looking forward to seeing all of you there. You know where to look for us -- one or the other of us, or both of us, will be in the huckster's room all day, and you can ask us where were we will be spending the evening. I'll be selling science fiction paperbacks, mostly, at Pecon and Midwestcon, but at LA I'll be selling mostly comics. I'm only in this for the money, you know. (Not true, I like comics.) There might be one other convention upcoming on one half of the family's schedule. As I hope

you already know, Lesleigh is standing for the Down Under Fan Fund, so she might be going to Australia this August to attend their national convention, the Syncon 2. I will be inclosing another DUFF ballot with this issue. Yes, I know you've already gotten a half dozen of them, but perhaps you lost the one you had put aside to vote on -- or perhaps you know someone who lost all half dozen that he received. No excuses, now. With enough support, DUFF could become a fine continuing tradition.

I wonder how many of you have been picking up some of the rock music magazines recently and noticing how the by line of our very own Greg Shaw is almost always present, attached to any number of interesting and amusing articles and reviews. Perhaps after noticing that you may have read through the rest of the magazine (Creem or Fusion or whatever) and decided that, heck, it isn't that much better than the stuff you write for fanzines. This train of thought would naturally suggest that you try writing something for one of the rock magazines. Well, allow me to tell you something. The rock music magazines don't pay much better than fanzines, either. They probably pay something to Greg Shaw every once in a while, because he is a particularly valuable contributor. But I'm no Greg Shaw, and you probably aren't either. The first piece I ever had accepted by a professional magazine was an article for Hit Parader. They finally paid me, after a long long time, and lots of letters. Since then, my experience with the rock music magazines has included a book review in CREAM for which I haven't been paid and a record review for Fusion for which I haven't been paid -- in all fairness, that Fusion hasn't been out long, they might yet get around to me. I was talking about this situation recently, as starving young writers are apt to do, to Jim Turner not too long ago. As the conversation developed, it was suggested that I write my Creem and Fusion editors a nice note, telling them that my Uncle, Vito "Big Shoes" Luttrelli of their city, wanted to talk to them about their debts. He wanted to make them an offer they couldn't refuse. So far I haven't gotten around to writing those letters.

PLUG: I have a magazine here which I thought you might find of interest. It is a regional magazine, published in the northwest, called Bullfrog Information Service. I think it might be described as a "counter-cultural" magazine. Issue number 3 features a section on science fiction, edited by Alpajpuri. Included in the section are the following: "Science Fiction: a View in the Speculum" by Charles Garvin, "Extrapolation Problematation" by Andy Offutt, "When You're Strange" by Diane Zaharakis, "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun" by Angus Taylor (featuring additional material from the interview Angus had with Sgt. Pepper, which you saw here in Starling), "Fanzine. Look that up in your Funk & Wagnall's and you won't find a damn thing." by Jerry Lapidus (fanzine reviews, featuring a number of small cover reproductions), "Science Fiction in Film" by an uncredited author (who turns out to be me, surprise -- my by line was left out by mistake), "Feedback Prime" by Grant Canfield (reprinted from Energumen 6), "Science Fiction Book Reviews" by Ted Pauls, and a little short story called "Only at Night" by Vonda N. McIntyre. There is also an introduction by Paj, and lots of excellently reproduced artwork by such as Grant Canfield, Steve Fabian, Vincent di Fate, Mike Gilbert, Jay Kinney and Jim McLeod. I thought the coverage given to fandom was pretty good. If you'd like to see a copy, the price is 50¢; the address is Bullfrog Information Service, Inc., P.O. Box 895, Eugene, Oregon 97401.

# WORDS FROM READERS



Don Blyly, 170 Hopkins, URH, Champaign, Ill 61820

I taught a SF course last semester, which is being repeated this semester, and I feel that Joe Sanders has a lot of misconceptions about teaching SF. There is a danger that a SF course could turn off people, but only if the wrong people teach it. If the teacher enjoys (or, preferably, loves) SF, and if he uses any judgement at all in selecting the reading list, I don't think the students could possibly have their enthusiasm for SF killed. The danger is that quite often the person who is literally forced to teach a SF course either knows nothing about the field and couldn't care less, or knows nothing about the field and is proud of that fact. The woman who taught a SF course here at the U of I a couple of years ago was fiercely proud of the fact that she had not read a single SF book by a living author. Her class had to listen to her compare Frankenstein to Beowulf for two weeks. I am sure that the people in her class who had never before read SF decided after the course that they would never read it again.

Most people would be shocked at the thought of somebody teaching a college course in Dickens if the only experience they had with Dickens was watching the TV version of A Christmas Carol. Unfortunately, many colleges think that somebody who once saw part of one episode of Star Trek is magnificently qualified to teach a SF course. This kind of teacher can not do much damage to an entrenched SF fan (except alternately boring and infuriating him), but will almost invariably turn off the people who enrolled just to see what SF is all about. The SF fan gets his revenge by giving the know-nothing teacher endless headaches, but the non-reader gets a warped view of SF, perhaps for life.

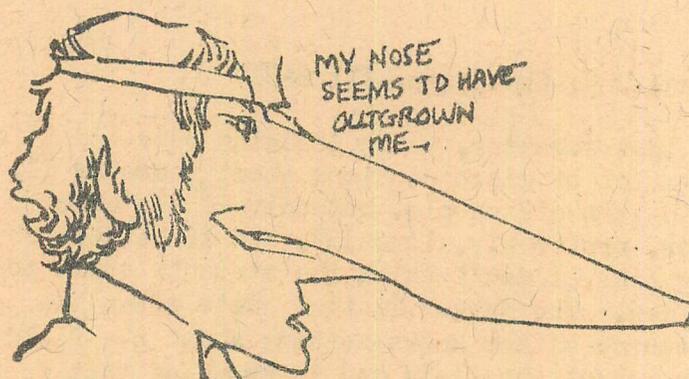
Joe's idea that students would get nothing from a SF course taught by a person who loves SF except a notebook full of predigested ideas is mind-groggling, to say the least. If I caught anybody taking notes in my class after the first week, I would have a talk with him to see what was wrong with him. I conduct my class as a discussion course, not as a lecture course. This forces the students to think for themselves, rather than simply writing down and blindly accepting everything I say.

Even more grogging -- in fact, downright shocking -- are his comments that a major problem with teaching is that "you must always maintain authority" and that "a teacher must always be superior to students in actual knowledge and implied ability." Bullshit! You'd have to screen your class very carefully to make sure that everybody in the class knew less than you about SF -- you would have to exclude all the best students.

\*You missed the point of Joe's concluding remarks, which suggested that SF  
 \*courses often break down traditional teacher-student relationships -- the type  
 \*of relationship where the teacher is always superior. ~~##~~ I had a very pleasant  
 \*experience in a course where the teacher knew little about SF -- he was in-  
 \*terested and open minded, and willing to learn along with the rest of the  
 \*class. --HL

Mark Mumper, 1227 Laurel Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

From the odd bits of information that trickles in to me, it seems that most college SF courses are being drowned under a sea of triteness. I mean I don't think anything is being done in these courses, no great insight is available; everybody reads Asimov and Heinlein, maybe some Sturgeon, and it's a great trip, but they don't do anything with it. I don't know if I can express



clearly what I mean, but I got the feeling that there is no nontext in which these things are read, that SF's true value is being ignored somehow, and that what's being done is a mere cataloguing of themes and ideas with no reflection to today or the human condition. If anyone out there knows more about college SF and can disprove this depressing theory, I'd appreciate it. It seems like a wasteland from here.

Whenever writers outline or expound their system of writing, it seems they inevitably get to the point of dictating how to write successfully or professionally, as if their way is the only way. Of course it's fascinating to read those expositions, and Of Worlds Beyond is a handy reference, if only to provide insight into those particular writers' working minds. Van Vogt is probably the most dogmatic of all those in the book, and I think his ideas just serve to show that writing is an individual thing, that one must learn on one's own, taking other writer's hints with a grain of salt. His technique of using 800 word scenes certainly worked for him, but I think it also degraded his writing, transforming the creative process into an assembly line, simplifying his stories overmuch and eliminating any chance for unusual breakthroughs and unforeseen influences. It may be an interesting technique, but scenes or vignettes just don't fall nicely into 800 word patterns all the time. Writing is learned by doing, independent of others' rules and techniques. They can be helpful, but they can also be limiting.

Jim Turner's column was weird. The first time I read it I thought he was for real; I suppose this shows up the unnerving influence hard "decadent rock" (or "black arts rock" or "paranoid rock" or whatever) has on me. I'm so used to seeing this kind of stuff that I don't even stop to think whether it's a put-on anymore. That's kind of a creepy feeling.

\*A lot of people thought Jim was for real -- I suppose his satire was  
\*too good. -LML

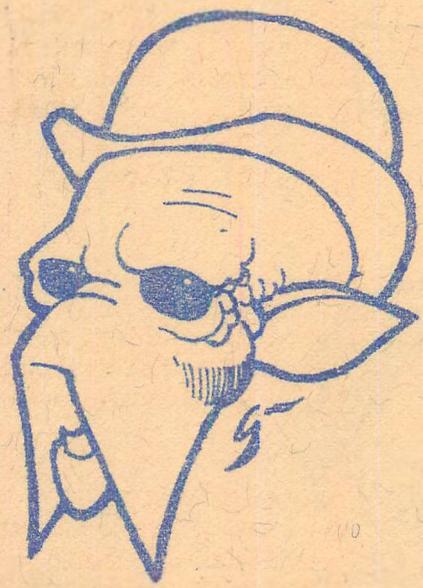
rich brown, 410 -61st St., Apt. D4, Brooklyn, NY 11220

It's been far, far too long since an article in a fanzine has had me rolling on the floor in helpless laughter, but Jim Turner's "Kick In The Jams" is far fucking out funny. I read it half an hour ago as I write this, and I still have to stop every few minutes to giggle or wipe away the tears.

Jim's satire and Alice Sanvito's letter are actually about the same things, in a way, and the two together prompt me to write this LoC. Like Alice, I also wonder about the whole nostalgia over the 50s bit -- and unlike her, I Vas Dere, Sharley. I'm 29. Next year I'll be 30. My six years of Junior High and High School spanned 1953-59, which means if anyone should be nostalgic about those years, it should be me. And I'm not. I may not have been a typical teenager, but I wasn't all that atypical.

either; I didn't have a "short" (car) of my own, but I could sometimes borrow my parents' and my best friend had his own; I wore my hair in a greasy ducks' ass flat top, was a member of a teenage gang ("Los Lobos," -- "The Wolves" -- of which I was one of the few non-Mexican American members; I guess you could say I learned about Racial Unity there . . . we stuck together so we could beat up on the niggers and pollocks); I drove drag races, went to and danced at the High School "hops" (attendance at our school was mandatory, Alice), hung out at the local candy store/malt shop where all the latest Rock blared forth from the jukebox; lost my virginity at a drive-in movie, and so on, etc., &c. In atypical fashion, while I liked a lot of Rock -- I'd say an average of seven out of any particular moment's "Top 10" -- it was essentially because it was new and alive, not because I thought it had any real artistic merit. In fact, those other three songs out of any particular moment's "Top Ten" -- even then, when the only music I had heard to compare it to was Country & Western -- were down on the bottom because they impressed me as so much icky glop.

You see, after Elvis and Ricky Nelson started making it big and "Blackboard Jungle" had made Bill Haley & The Comets an overnight sensation, this "new and alive" kind of music became very formula-ized. One group sounded very much like the next, with minor variation for soft-pop-rock and heavy-beat rock; a "new sound" meant that the background group, instead of going "Doodley-Wop-Doo-Wah", over and over again, went "Re-Dooby-Dooby-Wah-Wah" over and over, or, if they were really bitchen group, "Wop-Shop-Sha-Na-Re-Bing-Bang-Bang." The lyrics to most of the Rock & Roll in the 50s were really inane -- and even the most avid R&R lovers of the time could defend this only by saying, "But the lyrics aren't important anyway!" By the time I was 16 or 17, I had stopped trying to keep track of what was on the Top 10 List, and I was beginning to get interested in classical music. I remember seeing an R&R flick -- one of several churned out at the time, a loose story around which was woven numerous opportunities for the various popular groups to make a cameo appearance to do their "latest" pop hit -- in which the main character makes a remark very similar to the one Hank makes here in the letter column to Jacob Bloom; "What the older people don't realize," the character said (It was always the Older People who didn't like, i.e., Understand R&R), "is that the rock and roll composers of our time are writing for the people of our time, much as Bach and Mozart did in theirs."



And while I find myself, now, just a hair short of total agreement with what Hank says, I laughed at the time. Because, at that time anyway, even I could see that rock wasn't rolling toward any new horizons -- it had already hardened and was gathering moss.

Oh sure, there are a few songs from the time I don't mind hearing because they do bring back some pleasant memories. But by and large I'm reminded of how empty, comparatively, those days were; R&R was something we listened to because it bugged our parents, and because we like to dance to it, is all. It was a Big Deal because, with the possible exception of James Dean, there didn't seem to be much else to make a Big Deal about; and it was all so empty and mindless.

It wasn't until the Beatles became popular that I found anything at all in Rock that really interested me. R&R had reached the heights by then, and The Beatles gave the music some width -- and I was drawn from my musical ivory towers by the observation that they used some very Bachian counterpoint. And the thing that really impressed me about The Beatles, you know, is that even though they were the New Fad, they refused to remain the same; they sought change and they grew musically. And then, when Dylan emerged from the folk-wings, with folk-rock, he gave the field depth -- real poetry, meaning, thought, lyrics that Had Something to Say and said it better than I had ever heard it said before. And the kids who listened to this music, and the music that grew up all around it, impressed me as being so much greater than I, and the kids of my time, had been -- instead of getting together at the local parking lot to beat each other's brains out with chains and baseball bats, they went on Freedom Marches and Peace Marches, trying to get this country into doing good things for its citizens and out of doing bad things to a poor country half way around the globe.

What rock has become makes me nod in agreement with what Hank said to Jacob Bloom, instead of laughing as I did at a similar remark made 15 years earlier.

So this yearning for and harkening back to the meaningless and empty noise of the 1950s startles and non-plusses me. Nostalgia? For what -- indifference? Apathy?

Greg Shaw, 64 Taylor Dr., Fairfax, CA 94930

I wanta tell you that Jim Turner's column is his best yet -- some real fine writing and no one can say the parodies weren't earned. I dig all those Black Sabbath type groups, but not as the savior of rock & roll that Dave Marsh of CREEM seems to feel them to be. Lester Bangs, of the same magazine, appreciates these groups for their staggering inanity, and I have to go along with him there. There's something about their baldfaced crassness that's essential to all that rock & roll has been, but the only way to appreciate that is with a drunken grin, or you spoil the whole thing. That's how I feel about it, anyway. If Jim Turner's the boozier he claims to be, I imagine he was into Grand Funk before all of us!



Kent Fletcher '71

Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 74, Balacalva, Victoria 3183, AUSTRALIA

Poor old Jacob Bloom, you really put him down. We all know that somebody who listens to the Goldberg Variations is a better person than the slob who listens to mediocre rock and roll but what we know even more is that somebody who claims to be one of the higher order of people deserves a quick bash in the ego!

I would rather listen to Bach than rock but I still have a great respect for rock so I'm not particularly biased either way. All the same a good many rock fans I know keep saying that they wish they knew as much as I did about classical music (if only they knew how little I know) and they seem to consider it a higher form of music which is beyond them. So it goes. I don't particularly condone Bloom's attitude of looking down his nose at rock because, after all, it's all music and various forms of it attract different people.

However, Hank, I would like to make you see Bach in a correct historical perspective; I can't say too much about Shakespeare -- even though I am inclined to agree with you -- because I don't know much and I don't feel like taking the time to read up on it.

Bach was not a popular composer of his time. He wrote works which he performed in his job as Kapellmeister or Cantor but in his time he was regarded as a great organist. As soon as he died somebody else took his job and he was forgotten and it was not until at least fifty years later that an interest in his music occurred and people began to listen to his compositions as music, not as pieces he played.

Even taking into account any popularity he might have had during his lifetime you have to realize that Bach was not popular, not in the sense of rock and roll, because he was separated from the masses by the class structure. He was born into a family of professional musicians (one of the oldest in Europe) and everything he did was financed and encouraged by and for the upper class. The Goldberg Variations would not have been known to the person in the street, if they had lived in Leipzig they may have heard him play on Sunday's, but they couldn't have cared less. They had their own popular entertainment, their own songs and their own musicians.

Trying to say that Bach was part of the popular culture of the 1740's is like saying that Stockhausen, Penderecki and Berio are part of today's pop culture. You may be able to find some pop culture musicians taking ideas from Stockhausen (Pink Floyd) or Penderecki (David Crosby) but the interchange is only one way and serious (well, you couldn't call it classical could you?) music these days just isn't popular with pop culture freaks, or just about anybody really; which is a pity really because a lot of contemporary serious music would be just right for tripping with.

\*Without today's mass media and without recorded music, Bach couldn't have  
\*been as popular in his own time as any composer or musician may be today.  
\*In so far as he was popular as a musician with the upper class, he was  
\*still within limited bounds a part of a popular culture. ## In my reaction  
\*to Bloom's letter last time, I was first of all amazed that he would think  
\*his liking of two such universally respected artists marked him as superior.  
\*I also wanted to point out that some art which is considered "popular" in  
\*its own time eventually earns a "serious" label -- Shakespeare is a good  
\*example, Bach isn't too good an example. --HL

Jerry Kaufman, 417 W. 118th St., Apt 63, NYC 10027

I can think of tons of things I'd like to say to Jacob Bloom, but I'll boil them down

to one worthwhile question: what got you involved in a fandom devoted to a pulp, popular literature? Why have you been wasting your time on this crap when you could be reading something "esoteric" like Dickens? (I'm not putting down Dickens, I love him, but he seemed the novelist most equivalent to Bach and Shakespeare in the minds of the public, still widely read and generally beyond question a great writer. . . and not in the least "esoteric".)

Lots of artwork to toss bouquets to, like both the front and back covers, the cartoons by Doug Lovenstein (man from the heart of the sun) and the Canfield for the letter-col. It does seem, though, that you are doing handstenciling in a few places that call for electrostencilling. Last issue Chris pointed out several to me that really didn't bother me, but this issue I pointed them out to him. The Canfield on page two looks it to me, but you can correct me if I'm wrong.

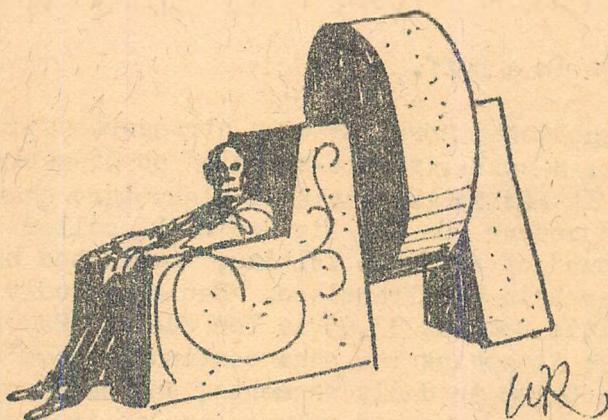
\*In case some of you haven't noticed it yet, Starling is produced on as small  
 \*a budget as I can possibly manage -- cheap paper, re-cycled envelopes as much  
 \*as possible -- and, of course, I hand-stencil artwork when ever possible. I  
 \*don't hand stencil anything that might be ruined, however, and as a result I  
 \*electrostencil most of the artwork I publish. That Canfield was electro-  
 \*stenciled -- it looked hand stencilled to you because of the style in which  
 \*Grant drew it. Frankly, unless you are very familiar with hand stencilling,  
 \*I don't think you'll notice too much of my hand stencilled artwork. --HL

I have seen one of the Graphic Story Magazines with the Basil Wolverton material. Mighty peculiar. Had a strip about a little runt with huge strength, along the lines of Popeye, but less belligerent. It was in the great American tradition of the easy going countryboy or greenhorn who still comes out over the city slickers or the roughneck cowboys because of native intelligence or skill. Recent example might be that TV show "McCloud" about the Arizona sheriff who confounds the New York police with a combination of modern techniques, Indian methods, brilliance and guts. An easygoing charming cool.

\*You should become familiar with the real Popeye, E.C. Segar's Popeye -- he was  
 \*a true gentleman, if perhaps somewhat un-schooled, and in no way belligerent  
 \*unless forced to violence by one of his enemies. --HL

The passage from Ada that Angus Taylor quotes is one that confirms not only that it is a sort of sf (science or speculative fiction) but also that it is excellent sf. Here is an alternate earth in which electricity and other technological devices have been discovered far earlier because the Russians have settled America and because (I think this was the hero's theory) every alternate world is on a different time-schedule. And this passage exemplifys the technique of sf (developed by Heinlein, Panshin says in Heinlein in Dimension.) of introducing details of a totally new environment by inserting them naturally in the narrative just as they would arise, using no more explanation or exposition than the characters would normally need. The fantastical should arise from the expected. . .to a native of another environment, the everyday is not fantastical. If you were rummaging about in a trunk, just how fantastic would you find a pair of roller skates? As for the eroticism, that doesn't deny Ada the classification of sf. It makes Ada a welcome addition to the field, even if no one but Nabokov can do it. I don't think that the sf elements in Ada are exterior to the theme or the substance of Ada; they are casual only in the way such things are casual to the people in any culture are. To people outside the culture (us) they are of much greater importance.

I have seen two issues of Air Pirates, and I've read Dirty Duck over and over. I really like the use of Herriman's style and the character Annie Rat. The one thing that jars is the black flea(?) servant, because he doesn't seem to fit the drawing style (just a black blob rather than a line drawing) or the main character (with his



nasty masochism). But then I find myself a lot less willing to accept violence and perversion in underground comics simply because they can be done. S. Clay Wilson is about the only artist I read precisely for violence and perversion, and in his case the wierd sense of humor and the consistent, stylized drawing leaven the ugliness. . .and he seems to have a great ear for dialog. (He keeps it in a jar on his desk.)

Jay Kinney, 420 Clinton Ave., Apt 1-B, Brooklyn, New York 11238

I share your enthusiasm for Dirty Duck and Merton of the Movement. London has an uncanny sense of humor and his Herriman/Segar riffs are truly amazing. Hallgren and Richards and the rest of the Air Pirates are usually pretty entertaining, too. Somehow though, I can't get worked up over Dan O'Neill's stuff. I guess its a matter of taste, but I always start in on O'Neill stories and then start skipping ahead and rarely stick with them. He doesn't hold my attention, his art seems rushed to my eyes and he wastes space. I did like Air Pirates #1. . .but #2 seemed a letdown. For the most part I find "to be continued" stories to be cop-outs. . .and it was that run-on tendency at Marvel that soured me on them years ago.

Perhaps all this centers around the fact you noted in your Notebooklings: "This group, more than most other underground comic book artists, are into the history and fine traditions of the comic strip." I guess this is true if you are talking about the "comic strip" as opposed to "comic book." Brand, Osborne, Deitch, Lynch, etc., etc., are heavy into comic books, particularly EC. . .but comic books are a lot different from strips. . .Like the difference between a soap opera and a TV movie?

\*Which one do you think of as being a soap opera, and which the TV movie? I'd  
 \*say that in general the comic strip has a more distinguished history than the  
 \*books -- because there has always been more money in the strips, and the art-  
 \*ists have usually been able to spend more time on their strip work. Their has  
 \*been brilliant work in both fields. . .--HL

My influences and preferences run to comic books rather than strips for the most part (Pogo, Barnaby and a few others excepted) and the things that make up a good strip are not necessarily the things that make a great comic book story. . .for me, at least.

Tom Whitmore, 14120 Miranda, Los Altos, Calif. 94022

I have a few notes on the underground comics mentioned by Hank in his editorial. Dan O'Neill was temporarily forced to leave the Chronicle, it is true, and the Chron. regretted that particular decision, and were called, telegraphed and picketed by irate lovers of the strip. It was finally reinstated, with a full page of the paper devoted to the strips that were missed. Eventually, O'Neill got fed up with doing the strip and meeting deadlines and decided to kill it. They refused to print his

13  
last few strips, so he left in a huff.

Dan O'Neill's history of published works is even stranger, as is the development of his style. His first book, a small, saddle-stapled pb of early Odd Bodkins strips was called Buy This Book. It is in the style of elementary characters and no background. The next volume to appear was the Big Red Book, called "Hear the Sound of My Feet Walking, Drown the Sound of My Voice Talking," published by Glide, which is an off shoot of a liberal church in San Francisco. Dan supposedly gave it the unofficial title of "Steal This Book as \$3.95 is Too Much to Pay for That!" It has several really fun aspects; it begins the saga continued in DO'N C&S, which almost all ran through the Chron in daily segments, and parts of it are printed in full color. It is a large pb red covered volume, and an incredible exhibition of Dan's style. It appeared in December 1971 (70?)

Other interesting and little-known facts about O'Neill and the Air Pirates: The publisher of the Chron never censored "Odd Bodkins" when it was running there. In fact, when it was suspended and then reinstated, he admitted he didn't understand it -- which apparently said to Dan, do what you want, but keep it obscure! And it is a fact that his stuff really went wild after that. Tortoise and the Hare Comics is really Air Pirates #3 with the directly Disney-like material removed and a new cover and name to get around the injunction Disney Productions has out against them. A sidelight I picked up in Berkeley on the suit -- suing Hell Comics, the Air Pirate's corporation, will do them little if any good. The only things they can get are 20,000 copies of Air Pirate Funnies and the sole tangible assets Hell was incorporated around: Dan O'Neill's pocket knife.

Tom Collins, Artic Village, Alaska, 99722

Hank's editorial was interesting, especially since I have been out of touch with comic artists for some time now. The last time I talked to Danny O'Neill was in mid-summer, when he had left his house in the country and was living in SF proper with a bunch of people known as the Air Pirates and putting out comic books hand over fist.

O'Neill was dropped by the SF Chronicle three times, and twice restored by popular demand. I know the second time at least there was much agitation among the staff. The official reason was to make room for "Miss Peach" which was transparently unnecessary. The copy boys took a bunch of wire copy off one of the teletype machines and wrote a message on the back of it, stringing it across the city room like a banner: FUCK MISS PEACH. I suspect the third time O'Neill's heart wasn't really in the fight, though, and by then he had gotten pretty weirded out.

You say his strip was published "for awhile." Actually, about six years, beginning when he was a mere kid of 18 or so fresh from Grass Valley, Calif. He pooped along for years getting little attention until suddenly -- dope and revolution took over. He lost interest in politics pretty much when the pigs murdered James Rector, an innocent bystander during People's Park at Berkeley in 1969. . . In the list of leading characters you forgot to mention Norton, the motorcycle, who really does exist. The policeman who is sometimes encountered also really exists, but I have forgotten his name.

Dave Hulvey, Rt. 1, Box 198, Harrisonburg, Va. 22801

I'm really disappointed that you didn't say anything important concerning the new American cultural tradition, the underground comic. I thought third-rate book reviewers claimed that as their forte. Obviously you've perfected the form beyond

their crudest attempt. I wish you'd take a break from the collating, stencil cutting and sundry labors you do and actually rap in your "Notebooklings" sometime. The fingernail synopses might turn on Jerry Kaufman(ho hum) but they are a poor imitation of a real comment.

Andrew Porter, PO Box 4175, New York, NY  
10017

Mark Geston's two books have consistently struck me as classics of their kind, though until now I've found few who agree with me. I think the books are summed up by the particularly strong vision on pages 127 and 128 of Out of the Mouth of the Dragon, of fighter airplanes resting in formation on the floor of an immense, deserted cathedral. The flowing language of the books and the nearly perfect evocations of reality that Geston is able to convey are some of the finest sense-of-wonder writing I've ever read.

Creath Thorne's review of Of Worlds Beyond was cogent, very well written, and only another example of why Creath is the Unsung Writer (well, almost unsung: periodically people like Terry Carr and Ted White sing his praises) of fandom.

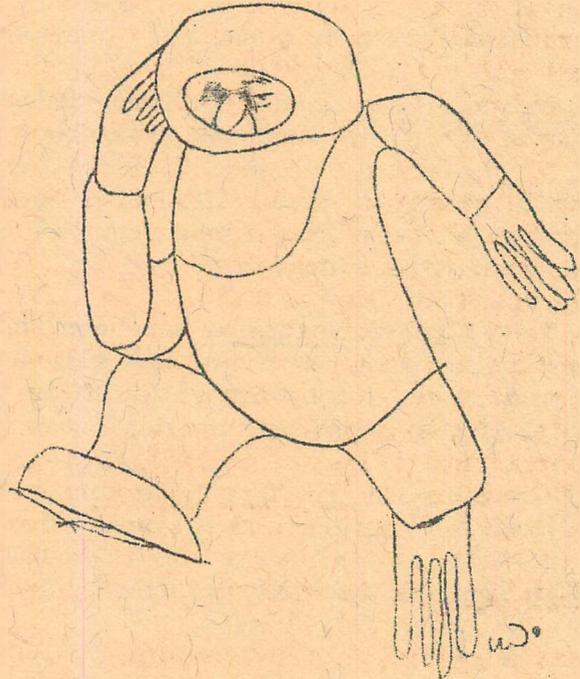
Darrell Schweitzer, 113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, Pa. 19087

I might suggest to Creath Thorne that the reason Heinlein isn't living up to his own standards any more is that he doesn't have to. He is sufficiently famous that any editor will fall over backwards to get something of his. (It is said that GALAXY bought I Will Fear No Evil on sight -- before even reading it) Few editors would dare tell Heinlein what to do. If one did turn him down (Fred Pohl did reject Glory Road) there are half a dozen others waiting.

I suspect the Heinlein story which was bounced thirteen times was "My Object All Sublime". For one thing, this story has never been reprinted, despite the tremendous reputation of Heinlein. Even a story RAH did for a fanzine got reprinted. It is by far Heinlein's worst story, sort of an inept attempt at humor, imitating the imitations Henry Kuttner was doing of Damon Runyon in those days. It appeared in FUTURE SF in 1942 under the name Lyle Monroe.

\* \* \* \* \*

I would have printed more from Aljo Svoboda's letter had I more room, as it is I wanted to mention that he and several other readers mentioned that, "The cover made me wonder what you really look like." Tom Foster: Juanita Coulson mentioned Betty Boop. Those were some of the best cartoons ever made. More than slapstick. Cab ("funny reefer man") Calloway did music for some. Fairly flagrant on sex." WAHF: Dan Steffan, Sheryl Birkhead, Poindexter, Sam J. Lundwall, Richard Gordon, Dick Lupoff, Grant Canfield, George Proctor, Nick Shears, Roger Waddington, Jeffrey May, Richard Labonte, Michael Carlson, Gene Wolfe, Eric Lindsay.



# SGT PEPPER'S STARSHIP

+ Angus Taylor +

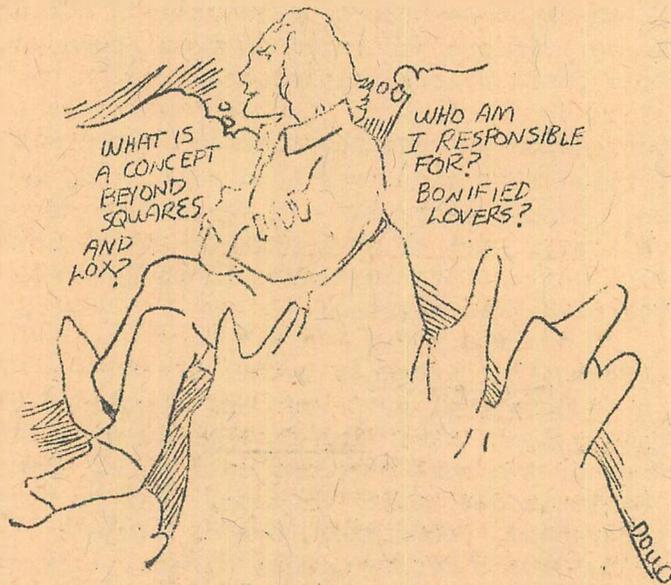
What's it going to be then, eh? Another Hugo for Stanley Kubrick?

A Clockwork Orange opened in Toronto last December to a chorus of reviews from the critics calling it everything from "best movie of the year" to "worst movie of the year." The Ontario Science Fiction Club went along en masse on opening day to see this "follow-up" to 2001. 2001 had a phenomenal run in this city, playing without break for more than three years at one theatre, and reappearing several times at various theatres since.

Thus far A Clockwork Orange has been showing to packed houses, and looks to be headed for a long run. However, not all who see it come away ecstatic, sf fans included. Many are upset by the violence in the movie, some even walking out in mid-showing. Many people claim they don't see what the theme or message of the movie is.

A discussion among sf fans here centered on these two issues of violence and theme. Questions: Is Kubrick's "stylization" of violence (including his use of music) meant to make it seem less real? Is the audience expected to laugh or feel sick? Is Kubrick crudely manipulating his audience? Are we supposed to admire Alex? Feel sorry for him? What does it all mean?

Kubrick has been remarkably faithful to Anthony Burgess' novel, and to anyone who has read the novel previously, the movie probably seems fairly intelligible -- although it probably also loses some of its impact. For my own part, I see the key to understanding the story lying in the ending, where Alex, "cured," is giving the thumbs up sign with the Minister, and having all sorts of horrorshow fantasies about the old ultraviolence. It would have been too easy, too cliched, too trivial to end it all with Alex, a poor pawn of forces beyond his control, manipulated by politicians, beaten by the police, scorned by his parents, stumbling away into a bleak



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sunset. We could all leave tut-tutting, mumbling about poor Alex, and wasn't it terrible, and yes, it certainly shows you how cruel the world can be. The point the story makes is quite different: Alex (and you and I and John Doe) is right in there in cahoots with all the other manipulators -- the politicians, the scientists, his parole officer, his parents, the police, his droogs -- getting in his two punches worth, doing unto others as they do unto him. You scratch my back or I'll stab yours. The point is: everyone's guilty, everyone's exploiting everyone else. There's no altruism in Alex's world. Even the victims are guilty.

A Clockwork Orange will probably be a shoo-in for this year's Hugo in the Dramatic, Presentation category. I won't regret the decision, really, although my own choice would be I Think We're All Bozos On This Bus, by the Firesign Theatre. This album picks up again on the alienation theme of Don't Crush That Dwarf, Hand Me The Pliers. But the fact that Don't Crush That Dwarf didn't win a Hugo last year means that Bozos won't this year. SF fans in general either can't grasp the Firesign Theatre's weird brand of humor, or aren't getting to hear their records in the first place.

\* \* \* \* \*

At last year's Secondary Universe conference, Joanna Russ gave a talk on "The Genderless Myths of SF." She said that one of the main reasons she had been attracted to sf as a writer lay in the fact that the themes required of a science fiction writer were not of a sexist, male-oriented nature. Mainstream fiction, she maintained, stresses themes such as "Boy proves manhood by shooting bear in Minnesota," which comes out sounding sort of ridiculous if a woman tries writing about "Girl proves womanhood by shooting bear in Minnesota."

Alright. Let's concede Russ' argument as far as it goes. But her thesis gives science fiction far too much credit. There is no reason why a writer of mainstream fiction must persist in obnoxious themes -- though of course public and editorial reaction may militate against unconventional ideas. But what of science fiction? As Sam J. Lundwall points out in a chapter titled "Women, Robots and Other Peculiarities" (in his book, Science Fiction: What it's All About, Ace), "In a world where women at last are beginning to be recognized as human beings, science fiction still clings to the views of last century. If a daring member of one of the current women's liberation movements stepped out into the men's world of the future, she'd probably be shot on sight."

It is true that proving one's manhood by shooting bears in Minnesota is not an sf theme, but then that's because science fiction is more oriented to societal themes than to the individual as such. The record of science fiction on the subject of women is not very good -- and indeed the whole John Campbell/Consciousness II school has propagated a science fiction analog of bear shooting. All of which puts a rather big dent in the Russ thesis.

The back cover of John Boyd's Sex and the High Command blares: "WOMEN'S LIB GONE WILD. Dr. Henrietta Carey, leader of the Fems, was the first woman candidate for president, and the perfecter of VITA-LERP, a biological skin cream designed to do away with superfluous men. It spelled WAR BETWEEN THE SEXES." Unfortunately, however, the promise of this provocative blurb is never realized. Boyd displays all the faults of The Last Starship from Earth (the other novel of his I have read) and few of the merits. (At least Starship has one of the funniest last lines in science fiction.) Boyd writes in an annoying, frothy manner, more concerned with displaying his wit than with developing the plot, and apparently unable to decide how "seriously" his story is to be taken. He skips about various "levels of seriousness," with the result that the reader is constantly being jarred out of the story's context. (It's rather like viewing a single canvas on which objects have been painted in

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clashing styles, appearing in varying degrees of realism and abstraction.) The main point here, though, is that Boyd's novel is not about women's liberation or human sexuality -- it's a hack adventure story about nothing in particular. I mention it only as an example of how science fiction today is not examining these questions.

Another failure along this line is Five to Twelve by Edmond Cooper. Cooper imagines a female-dominated society of the future in which women are bigger and stronger than men, and in which the usual social roles of the sexes are reversed. This should provide a great chance to say to male readers, "See what it would be like if the shoe were on the other foot! How would you like it then, and what do you think that says about present conditions?" But Cooper blows his chance, and turns out a reactionary piece which ends with the hero glorying in his mutant ability to produce super-male offspring that will eventually restore the old sexual "balance" (read: imbalance).

Other than something like Sonya Dorman's "Bitching It" (Quark/2), it seems we have to go back some years to find anything significant on the subject of woman's role in society. "The Masculinist Revolt" by William Tenn (1965) is very funny -- the sort of thing Boyd's novels should have been but isn't. (I'm still expecting the reintroduction of the codpiece -- whoever picks up the idea will become famous and rich, wait and see.) And in "Consider Her Ways" (1956) John Wyndham makes some perceptive comments on the subjugation of women and the co-optation of women's rights movements as justified by the "needs" of the economic system.

But to find the sf story on relations between the sexes, we must go all the way back to 1951, to The Disappearance by Philip Wylie (recently reissued in paperback). After more than twenty years, this novel still stands up extremely well (except for some oddities in regard to "colored folks" and to the cold war)! Wylie splits the world into two continua, so that all women vanish from the men's world, and all men vanish from the women's world. (Wyndham simply does away with all the men.) Wylie's observations on sex roles are right on, the story is exciting, and the ending is rather a nice little mind boggle.

But why is it that we have to go back so far to find a good science fiction work on this subject? And where are the sf novels of today that may as accurately anticipate the issues of the 1990's? Writing in New Worlds Quarterly 1, M. John Harrison describes most of today's sf as "a literature of comfort", characterized by "the repetition of form and content; careful rationalizations of any change in the status quo; a body of warm, familiar assumptions, reiterated from book to book and serving precisely the same purpose as 'once upon a time'"

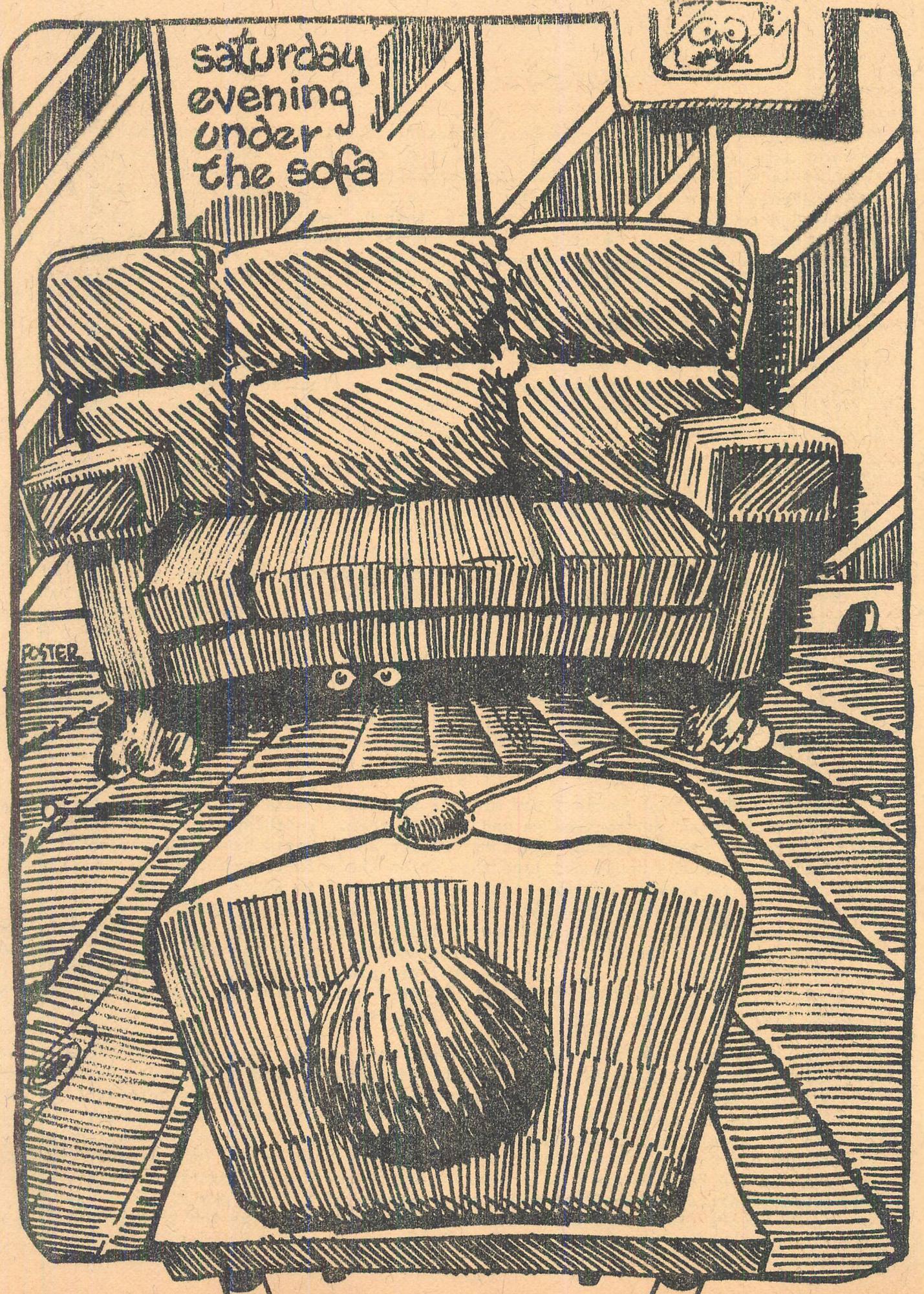
When we look at the outstanding works of sf, we must note what a large proportion have been produced by authors outside the world of fanzines, prozines, conventions -- the whole comfortable little world of the science fiction fan. Wells, Stapledon, Orwell, Huxley blazed the trails for a host of imitators. When we add the names of George R. Stewart, Philip Wylie, and a few others, we must ask ourselves this question: Can it be that the comfortable, incestuous sf ghetto is a huge breeding ground for literary mediocrity? That with its myriad conventions, standards, and understandings it simultaneously provides a rudimentary training for the talentless and stifles the talented? That a writer within the ghetto will prove either (1) fair, or (2) adequate, while one who scorns the ghetto will produce drivel, but just may produce a masterpiece?

Let me predict right now that the next great writer of science fiction (if such appears) will not win a Hugo until after he is safely buried (because sf fans won't understand his work). As a matter of fact, because the English-speaking world is so polluted with fandom, et cetera, he will almost surely not be English-speaking. And by "he," of course, I mean "he or she" -- or "she or he." Et cetera.

saturday  
evening  
under  
the sofa



FOSTER



+ Lesleigh Luttrell +

It seems to be a perennial argument, at least according to Forry Ackerman, whether or not watching monster movies is bad for young children. Forry, of course, thinks it isn't -- and he has a lot of arguments that readers of his magazine can use on their parents who won't let them stay up to watch the Saturday night horror movie. I never had to use any of those arguments, though, because my parents always let my brother and I stay up on Saturday night. I don't think it was because they ever read Famous Monsters of Filmland. Perhaps it was because my mother remembered watching Dracula and Frankenstein at the theater when she was very young and being scared to take her usual way home through an alley. I guess she figured watching those movies on television couldn't possibly be that scary.

I don't know if it was as scary, but it was scary enough for me. I remember watching something called "Spook Spectacular" every Saturday night for several years when I was pretty young, and I was almost always scared. But it was my favorite show, and I still remember it with a great deal of fondness.

Many television stations have or have had locally originated Saturday night monster movies -- I suppose because they always get a pretty good viewing audience. Some of these shows are like regular movie series, in that their announcer is merely a faceless voice telling you the name of the movie and its stars immediately after every commercial interruption. Some attempt to be a little more imaginative and have a visible announcer in some sort of monster makeup introducing the audience to his 'friends' in the movies. Spook Spectacular was sort of a hybrid. The announcer was certainly not visible, but that was because he was a ghost. He seemed to be watching the movies and enjoying his role as announcer. He also liked to trade witticisms with the show that came on after his. This was another locally originated show called "Hiram and Sneed". Hiram and Sneed were two local actors who dressed up sort of like country bumpkins and did about 15 minutes of comedy ala Bob and Ray. (I remember one bit where one interviewed the other about his hobby of reading jars). They liked to say something about the "spook" at the beginning of each of their shows, and he even visited them once. I've never seen another show like it.

"Spook Spectacular" was where I saw many of the famous (and not so famous) horror movies of the thirties and forties -- and I loved them. Watching the movies became almost a ritual. Every Saturday night my brother and I would haul out every doll and stuffed animal in the house and line them up on the sofa to watch the movie with us. We'd turn the television on, the lights off and crawl in among the dolls to watch, perhaps on the theory that monsters would have some difficulty getting us because it would be hard for them to tell the people from the dolls in the clump. (If the movie that night was particularly scary, we might decide to take all the dolls and animals to bed with us too. It worked just as well as lying as still as you could with your eyes closed tight on the theory that the monster would think you were asleep, because nothing ever did get us -- not even in a nightmare).

And then we would watch the movies. And what good movies they were! Of course there was Frankenstein and Dracula; they were very impressive, and scary, but not my favorite movies. No, I liked Bride of Frankenstein much better than the original. You see, I always liked the monster a lot more than the 'normal' people in the movie, and Bride treated the monster pretty well. It was pretty obvious to me that the only reasons Frankenstein's monster (poor thing never did have a name of his own) drowned the little girl in the first movie was because he thought she would float like the flowers -- certainly not something that made him deserving of a fiery grave. So I was glad to see he hadn't died after all. Instead he managed to escape the townspeople (who

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must have been crazy, since they carried torches around even in the daylight), and makes friends with a blind man who lived in the woods. This friend even taught the monster to talk -- his vocabulary may have been limited, but he got his meaning across. Certainly Bride proved the monster wasn't innately evil (despite his 'criminal brain'), but only badly misunderstood. And of course, Bride included Dr. Pretorious and his little people. I still don't know how they did that scene but I really liked it -- I couldn't understand why anyone who could create something as perfect as the little king and queen could think much of Henry Frankenstein's crude accomplishments.

There were a lot of other good movies, too. I think they must have shown just about every movie Universal made on "Spook Spectacular", and watching them I came to appreciate the talents of people like Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney, Jr., Peter Lorre and others. Lon Chaney was one of my special favorites probably because he always played a monster it was easy to sympathize with. As The Wolf Man, he was really a victim (something like those of Dracula's victims who became vampires, except that lycanthropes were still normal, living people most of the time and vampires were already dead). Larry Talbot was really a tortured soul, and he certainly proved to me that monsters weren't necessarily monstrous.

People were the real monsters. It was they, as personified by the mad scientist, who created the monsters, who tried to use the monsters for their own evil purposes. Dracula was the only consciously evil one of the lot, and one had to admire him for his ability to be his own master and in fact to cause humans to do his bidding, instead of visa versa. About the only other monster who was really his own master was the mummy (in the movie of the same name, not in the sequels). He accomplished this by the very round-about method of having his reincarnation, Ahmed Bey, return his spirit to the mummy in an attempt to regain his princess (who had, of course, also been reincarnated). The sequels forgot about this little detail and introduced tana leaves which could be used by evil high priests to revive and control Kharis. But I could forgive the poor mummy almost anything considering he was suffering from having been buried alive in his youth.

There were some 'monsters' who were just people; murderers and the like. Igor was one of these, but he was pretty atypical because he teamed up with a real monster (Frankenstein's) and became his friend. (He liked Frank so well that in Son he had his own brain transplanted into the monster's body so that they would always be together). But there were people who were murderers plain and simple, like in Old Dark House and I just couldn't feel very sorry for them when they got what was coming to them at the end of the movie.

Old Dark House featured what I thought (and still think) is one of the scariest situations imaginable -- to be locked or trapped in someplace where you know there is a monster of some sort, even if you don't know who or what it is. In a way, it was scariest when the 'monster' was just a person whose identity remained secret until the very end of the movie (like in Ten Little Indians), but sometimes it was done with 'real' monsters. One movie like this was It, the Terror from Beyond Outer Space, where a group of people were trapped in a spaceship with a monster (actually just a wandering Martian), who is killing them off one by one. They manage to do him in before he gets the hero and heroine, though.

Another variant on this theme is The Thing which scared me more than any other movie I ever saw, in all my Saturday nights of viewing. In this one, the people are 'trapped' at an arctic base, with no one able to get to them and no way they can get out because of a storm. The monster is an alien who is discovered in his spaceship which is buried in the arctic ice. The scene where the people from the base come out to see

what's in the ice and decide to make a human chain around its outline only to find they've made a circle is one of the scariest I can ever remember seeing. I don't know why it should have scared me that much, but it did, and I watched the rest of the movie from underneath my mother's desk. There are a lot of other scary scenes in that movie, too, like the one where the thing's severed hand begins crawling across the table, or when the people find the torn up body of one of their companions hidden in the green house. And of course there is the scene where the guard throws an electric blanket over the block of ice that contains the monster. It's one of those scenes (which are found overly often in horror movies) where you find yourself screaming, "No, don't do that!" to the television (or movie) screen.

People in monster movies are often pretty stupid in their actions. Sometimes I think they deserve whatever happens to them in the movie just because they act so stupid. One of the stupidest actions, I think, is when in a haunted house type movie, the characters all go off to their own separate bedrooms alone. They must all be crazy; they ought to know that the best thing to do in a situation like that is to stick together -- especially if the destructive agency is human rather than ghostly. Not that I didn't like haunted house movies -- one of my favorite movies is The Uninvited, a sort of Gothic with Ray Milland. In this one, one of the ghosts turns out to be pretty nice and is persuaded to stop her disturbing apparitions by Milland and the heroine (one case where someone tried to understand the 'monster' and succeeded).

Then there are the movies where the monster is just a misplaced animal. There are a lot of these about mutated giant bees and grasshoppers and ants, or about prehistoric beasts who somehow manage to survive into the twentieth century (but not beyond). I always liked movies from the latter category better. Rodan is a good example from the Japanese group. I liked it a lot because it was the first monster movie I saw in a movie theater (the scene where Rodan hatches in the cave is fantastic in color). There was Beast from 20,000 Fathoms where New York gets destroyed in some pretty scary scenes. But the grand-daddy of all these movies and one of the most impressive movies ever made is King Kong. That is a movie that can never bore you, no matter how many times you have seen it. Even if you know all about how the special effects are done, you must be amazed everytime you see them. The fight between Kong and the dinosaur, the giant spider in the gorge, Kong running wild through the streets of New York -- these are all fantastic scenes, unmatched by anything made since.

King Kong isn't really a scary movie, though, not the kind to make you want to scream, and to peek through your fingers at the screen because you just 'can't look'. It had more action and adventure than suspense, and suspense is what makes movies really scary. What scared me the most (back when I called all monster pictures 'scary movies') was knowing something scary was going to happen, but not knowing what it would be or when it would happen. I suppose that's why I used to get a lot more scared when I watched the horror movies then, than I do now. When I watched "Spook Spectacular" not only were all the movies new to me, but also all the plots used in those movies -- I used to get infuriated when my mother knew what was going to happen in a movie even if she'd never seen it before. I just couldn't understand how she did it, because I never knew what to expect. And when I began to learn, I often picked up on the wrong clues. For instance, I saw a few movies where something startling happened during a kissing scene, and for years afterwards, I found myself tensing up whenever anybody kissed in any kind of movie, because I thought something would happen -- it never did though. Finally, I caught on to the right clues and now I imagine I can be just as infuriating in guessing the ends of movies. Ok, I still get scared once in a while, but not very often and never while watching movies on television. And I kind of miss it.

OPUS

TO

WATERLOO

+Jim Turner+

You remember Beethoven, don't you? The old Ludwig van?

He had a dynamite single a couple of years ago ("A Song of Joy"), composed the theme music for the NBC Nightly News, and contributed sound tracks to a couple of sleazy westerns. During World War II (the Big One, you know) he got a lot of acclaim for his orchestration of the letter "V". Recently he reached the highwater mark of his career by writing most of the music for Stanley Kubrick's newest movie A CLOCK-WORK ORANGE.

There are a lot of things about this heavy old fart you may not know. According to the 1791 ROLLING STONE, his funky piano riffs had all Europe boogie-ing and, by the time that everybody noticed that he didn't comb his hair or change his clothes very often and had B.O. like other people have Nixon, he had become BEETHOVEN and there wasn't anything anybody could do about it but wait for the Time-Life Records Complete Works of.

I bet you didn't know that Beethoven won the battle of Waterloo?

Did you?

Well, it's all coming out in a brand new movie called LAST OPUS TO WATERLOO directed by Joshua Logan, who gave us CAMELOT.

This movie was inevitable, of course. There have been two recent movies about Tchaikowsky. We know that movies breed like Catholics so we shouldn't be too surprised. Old Ludwig van has, after all, done well in a couple of flicks (YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN and something really trippy in FANTASIA) and the project went right along.

LAST OPUS TO WATERLOO begins in Paris where the young Ludwig van (Ryan O'Neal) is studying composition at the Conservatory under the bluff but kindly old Handel (William Holden). We first see Ludwig pounding away at the piano (by the way, the music on the soundtrack was assembled and arranged by Maurice Jarre who gave us the soundtracks to DR. ZHIVAGO and GRAND PRIX so I know you'll want to reserve your copy at Korvette's right away).

The camera pans the room, pausing briefly over the opulent portraits of Mozart,

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Vivaldi, Scarlatti, Haydn, Schubert, Schickele, ending on his enraptured face. We watch him for a few moments. His music is cut short by Handel's heavy hand slapping the top of the piano.

Handel informs Ludwig that he's working too hard, that his playing and his composing are suffering as a result, and that he should get some rest. For, the old rogue explains with a wink, it is spring and the time for love.

Ludwig goes out for a walk in the spring weather and suddenly, to tumultuous hallelu-  
luas on the soundtrack sees a lovely young girl dancing along in the park in slow motion. Wondering vaguely how she makes her body do that, he strikes up a conversation with the girl whose name turns out to be Josephine but whom we immediately recognize as Barbara Streisand.

It seems that she is waiting for her lover. Ludwig looks deep into her eyes. "What is his name?" Ludwig asks.

Josephine gazes in amazement at this blond young beast and walks slowly toward him. "A Song of Joy" begins in the background as she stares back and whispers "I don't remember."

Now we have the lyrical cinematic fake fuck that you have to have in every movie these days ending with the seriously depleted lovers sprawled in disarray across the floor of his bare student garret. Fade to a montage of the lovers walking by the Seine, dancing in the streets with a blind organ grinder and his red-coated monkey, running through the snow and rolling in the high deep drifts, drinking from the same wine bottle to the strains of the "Appassionata" piano sonata, ending abruptly, harshly, as Josephine tearfully wails, "Ludwig, I must marry him. He needs me!"

Josephine admits she has been seeing her old lover on the sly because she felt so sorry for him. He is a young officer in the artillery and she means everything to him. "Meet him just once, Ludwig, and you'll understand. . .and forgive."

Ludwig agrees to meet him. . .without Josephine. She arranges for them to meet in the gardens of her father's estates. Ludwig is surprised to find that the pit-  
tous young officer is, in fact, an obvious opportunist, a snob and a braggart who loves Josephine for her father's money. Shocked but wishing to make the best of it, he extends his hand.

"Hi. Bonaparte?" he enquires politely.

Napolean (Kirk Douglas) Bonaparte smiles sardonically. "You are the fiddler?"

"I am a composer," (His hand is still extended.)

"Fiddler." Very deliberately, Bonaparte spits into his palm.

Without thinking, Ludwig slaps the insolent officer. At once three other officers rush out of hiding with drawn swords. Bonaparte explains that these gentlemen have witnessed Ludwig's challenge. Before he realizes it, one of the officers thrusts the hilt of a sword into his hand and Ludwig finds himself facing a duel to the death.

Without going into the duel or how many times Bonaparte makes Ludwig pick his sword

up, suffice it to say that Ludwig is slashed across the head. Dimly, he hears Josephine crying, sees her leave with Napoleon as blood fills his eyes. The world fades as he lapses into fever. He enters into a haze in which faces appear at random: Handel, Mozart, and Marie Antionette (Dick and Liz to you), & others. When he emerges from the fever and the delirium, he goes to the piano and begins working. The "Moonlight" Sonata emerges from his pen. We see the score packaged and addressed -- to Josephine Bonaparte. Cut to the doctor's pity-filled face, "It was the fever from the head wound, boy. I'm afraid that. . . science can do nothing."

Ludwig, stricken, "Nothing. . ."

"That's right, you're going deaf."

The years pass to excerpts from his music. Pages turn on the screen. Ludwig loses his bitterness in his music. We see a newspaper heading that says Napoleon is now Emperor. Ludwig smiles. His Josephine is an Empress. Whatever Napoleon did to him, he made Ludwig's great love an Empress. Ludwig sends Napoleon the "Emperor" Concerto and the "Eroica" Symphony. Ludwig's hair grows longer and thinner and grey. We see him playing his "Pathetique" and weeping as he stares at the headlines proclaiming Napoleon's betrayal of Josephine. The news comes that Napoleon is beaten in Russia and Ludwig issues the "1812 Overature" in triumph. He curses and weeps when Napoleon escapes from Elba.

He hurries to Belgium where the confrontation between Napoleon and Wellington is shaping up. He has confided to the dying Handel that he plans to enlist in the British Army. Handel begs him to stay, that he has too much to give the world, that he has no right to risk his life. Handel begs him with his last breath. Ludwig gently closes the old man's eyes, whispering, "No, old friend, a man must go as his honor calls -- I have heeded my Genius too long."

Ludwig has read that Wellington is a frustrated concert violinist forced into the army by his domineering mother. He knows that Wellington will understand and grant him a commission.

When he finds the Iron Duke (Richard Harris), he almost drops his listening trumpet. The British are hopelessly outnumbered in men and artillery. No one knows if the Prussians will come up in time. It is obvious that everyone will die in the morning and that Bony will carry the day. The Duke sits despondently in a camp chair, a dead cigar trailing hopelessly from his mouth and a half-empty bottle in his hand.

Slowly Ludwig takes out his violin and begins to play the Violin Concerto, softly at first, then louder and louder and louder and the Duke looks up. The General tosses his cigar into the fire and starts to smile. He goes to a battered trunk and removes his own violin he played as a boy. Blowing the dust off it he sits beside Beethoven and plays along, awkwardly at first, then with greater and greater skill as his boyhood love of music returns.

The music ends and the Duke slowly puts down the instrument. He turns to his aide. "Call in my staff," he tells him. "We attack tomorrow morning."

The day dawns to the "1812 Overature" with cannons going off in all the right places and the battle starts. The Highlanders march into battle, their pipers blowing away on a transcription of the overature that Ludwig has thoughtfully provided them with. Ludwig sits under a tree, scribbling frantically on a pile of music paper in his lap.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28.

+Juanita Coulson's +



## DANCE TO THE MUSIC

A recent article on college life said the campus population is polarizing along racial lines ( a phenomenon the writer suggested extended into high schools around the country, too), with whites and blacks congregating in different parts of the student union and having their own slangs, clothing, social interests. . . and music. If true, it's sort of a sad turning back of the clock twenty years. And here we go again, back to the time before music meshed and became rather fused.

There was a period in the 50s when the dividing lines between different "classes" and/or "styles" of music were pretty blurred, at least as far as the young were concerned. There wasn't this strata-conscious belly button lint gathering research and cranny seeking as in today's rock magazine reviews or some of the columns in jazz journals. Little of the knowledgeable critic passing judgement on what was to be admitted to the hallowed circles of rockdom, or was to forever be cast out into the nether world of pop music. . .or whether it's soul, acid, hard, Latin, or whatever existed.

Before the 50s you had serious. . . i.e. "Classical". . .music and pop music, with jazz a barely separate branch of that last. Oh, there were critics defining which was which, but their audiences weren't nearly the size they are/were in this era. There was Pop, and then a blurry line fading into things like Dixieland and some of the newer Jazz forms like Stan Kenton's Progressive Jazz. But the break line wasn't sharp. Kenton or Eddie Condon might have something on the juke box, and might get just as much play as Kay Starr or Frankie Laine.

When rock and roll came along, it was. . .sometimes. . .a little easier to tell what was "young" music and what not. But if juke box statistics were to be believed, the fans of rock and roll had pretty catholic taste. Those who latched onto the new music weren't averse to playing a string that included Bill Haley, Chuck Berry, Duane Eddy, and then Pat Boone and Ralph Marterie and Nat King Cole in rapid succession. And unlike today, they didn't usually feel embarrassed about liking this moldy fig stuff along with the rock.

I think one of the things which tended to splinter music loving people into groups more and more was the continuing criticism from those older but not any wiser than those who were young. It finally got to the stage that if our elders insisted on knocking the rock with such fervency, we would reject everything outside of rock. . . even if deep down we had an urge to hum along or tap feet when some of that elderly music might please us. It was unfortunate that such a separation had to take place.

So now we've got categories. People debating with each other over whether something is country rock or just rock. . .whether it's hard or ordinary. . .whether it's any

good or beyond the pale. Since an awful lot of musical criticism is, to my ears, <sup>26</sup> extremely subjective, this is all a trifle amusing, when it isn't being irritating.

Take "Latin rock". No such term used to exist. . .and I'm not entirely sure it exists now. There were rock/pop things with Latin beats, and they invariably appealed, whatever their classifications, to someone who liked a Latin rhythm. Like me. Haley did a "Mambo Rock," Chuck Berry did "Havana Moon," the Champs did "Tequila" (and Boots Brown stuck tongue in cheek and did "Cerveza". . .and, just to run the point home, "Chili Beans"). . .and in the same era the Pop field and Jazz fields were also dipping into the bongos: Nat King Cole did "Calypso Blues," Roger King Mozian did "Midnight in Spanish Harlem" with Latin beat background to a jazzish theme, and Stan Kenton did "Malaguena" and "Baia" with five dozen banks of brass blaring their brains out.

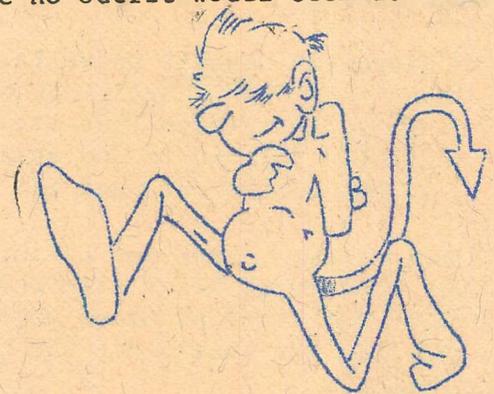
I think the character who digs a Latin beat will like it under almost any mask. I even possess an lp by Billy May and Yma Sumac called simply "Mambo." I would have bought it anyway because I'm a Sumac fan. . .both for her unbelievable voice and for the Latin/exotica quality of her material. . .but this particular combination is a ne plus ultra of two musical elements.

Latin was never divorced from rock, and even now there's a blending of it into pop and pop/rock and various other splinters. Things like "Suevecito" and the Dennis Coffey "Scorpio" which incorporate a lot of Latin style drumming. Some years back Mongo Santamaria hit the charts with "Watermelon Man" and proved Latin jazz could indeed capture part of the pop/rock market.

I know that "pop/rock" business smacks a little of Theo Bikel's German professor explaining to a lecture audience how "Ghost Riders in the Sky" can be converted into a "volk/pop" tune. . .but dammit it exists. For several years now the dividing line between what appeals to the solid rock fan and what appeals to that amorphous mass of faceless America. . .the pop music fan. . .has been tenuous. Some of the damnedest things get picked up by the damnedest people. . .who then occasionally pull mental contortions trying to defend their tastes. "Well, you see it isn't really rock -- it just has a rock beat." And, yes, it works the other way too. "I know the dumbass pop deejays have picked up on it, but man just listen and you'll see what it really is. . ." It's getting difficult to classify some stuff, even for the guys putting it out. You end up with Isaac Hayes trying to describe what he was doing in "Shaft" and waving his hands like a stereo-typed Jewish merchant and muttering it's a sort of country/latin/rock/pop New Wave sort of. . .you know?

Even Santana can't keep it straight. On the surface no outfit would seem as blatantly classifiable as Santana and their music to ball by. Latin rock. Chicano rock. Yes. Okay then what is "Incident at Neshabur"? Latin beats that break down into jazz wanderings? Is "Singing Winds, Crying Beasts" pure Latin rock, or is there some electronic meandering in there that sounds more like The Who playing around, despite the band-aided fingers on the skins?

Thing is, Latin. . .no matter what hat it's wearing. . .or how many hats. . .does one universal thing to the fan of that type of music. It makes for raunchies. Santana probably pricked the ears of staid critics when he described his music, but he wasn't far wrong. Even some old



fuddy duddy types of elderly folks who otherwise reject rock are trapped by Latin rock because anything with a Latin beat does exciting things to them. It is very movable music to the afficiando. How you choose to move to it is of course your own affair and we must do our own thing and so on. . .

But I'd think the least you'd want to do was dance.

Back in the 50s, even Kenton couldn't bend Latin rythms so much out of shape that you couldn't dance to them. Lord knows he trêed. Brubeck could probably get the job done, but he'd have to work at it awfully hard; Brubeck is one of those people who can make music almost undanceable and yet, for me, still very listenable. . .which ain't easy. (One of the funniest scenes ever on AMERICAN BANDSTAND was a bunch of these juvenile camera hogs sauntering around in front of the lens trying desperately to figure out what to do in response to a Brubeck record; you saw some confused Twisting, a bit of shuffle-footed Strolling, hand jiving attempts to look as though the wavees actually knew what they were doing and even a few dazed souls waltzing. . .none of them making any attempt to shift with Brubeck's dizzying skips from time to time.)

The saying used to be that rock and roll had a beat you could walk on. Add soul and you had a beat you could walk on and simultaneously finger pop to. Add Latin and you were obligated to hip throw, if not surrender and enthusiastically begin bumping and grinding. It was -- is -- that kind of rock. Latin rock, far more than Elvis ever delivered under Cunnel Parker's direction, was pelvic rock. Oh, you could employ other parts of the anatomy, but it wasn't Latin rock if it didn't induce you to give it some. . .er. . .ass. However, you choose to interpret that.

Santana, to use the most recent example, just souped it up by using more drums and borrowing acoustic work from other branches of rock. Probably I don't need to say that I like the result tremendously. But I've met people who are indifferent. I'm not sure whether they're indifferent just to Santana, or to Latin rock. . .or Latin music. . .entirely. Takes all kindsa wavelengths, I guess.

Percussion is the soul of Latin rock, and non-Latin musicians can get away with quite a bit as long as they hold to that tenet. Dennis Coffey proved it recently and in the rock/pop field some years earlier Sandy Nelson confirmed it with a vengeance. His cheap reprint records are now flooding the supermarkets, much to my pleasure. Nelson was often shallow, but he was always danceable. . .and in case you haven't guessed by now, my reaction to music is solidly based on how much it stire me into getting up and moving.

"Suavecito" doesn't prove it. Frankly, I'd class that in the same pop bag with a some years back high chart rider called "Guantanamera". Latin pablum. The latter's only claim to Latin-ness was its Spanish lyrics. It may have been a lot closer to genuine Latin folk music and spirit than the frenetic drumming we associate with Latin rock. . .but that's not what I'm interested in.

Latin rock. . .and pop Latin music. . .is undeniably an artificial form, in the same way soul music bears slim resemblance to the slow moving "Take My M<sup>O</sup>ther Home" type black spiritual of slave days. It's as if in both cases modern music saw the pattern and said hey that's not bad now if we cut it a bit here and beef it up there and add a beat. . .

This is the future, after all, and the music should suit.

And how sad it is to speculate that after all this marvelous two decades of melding

and borrowing and combining of various branches of the art, music. . .from the <sup>28</sup>point of view of the listeners. . .should start splitting apart again. That in the places where it counts, where popular support for a musical form is born, among the young, those tastes and attitudes are onee more indulging in apartheid. I suspect it was inevitable from that time in the 60s when the young nation that was going to be Woodstock started deliberately trying to segregate itself. . .musically as well as in other things. . .from the rest of the populace. In a lot of cases they wouldn't even accept fellow traveler tickets from anyone over 30. From that point on it was a down=hill trip to splintering within their ranks and quibbles over who had the only true sound and what was in and what was dead dead dead and worthless. From there to blacks and whites parceling their routines. . .and their music?. . .into separate compartments on campus.

But if the past is any guide, I'm wondering if amid this new alieaation Latin Beats won't continue to keep a foot in both camps and tend to cancel out this difference and serve as a bridge between the two factions. Let's hear it for the universal American musical language of brotherhood and raunchiness. . .Latin rock.

\* \* \* \* \*

CPUS TO WATERLOO  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24:

The battle rages all day. Toward dark a shell lands nearby. Closeup of the fuse burning away, the shouts of the English officers in the background, warning Bee-thoven to take cover. But he can't hear them, of course, and is mortally wounded.

He orders them to prop him us as he adds the last notes to his MS. "How fares the battle?" he croaks.

An English officer bends over him, speaking loudly and distioctly. "The French are finished. We are triumphant."

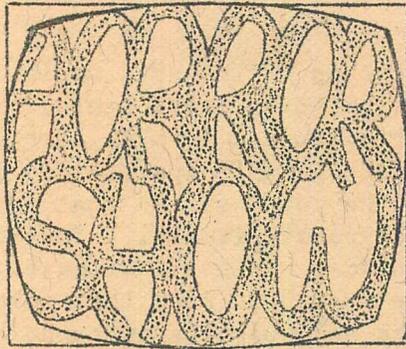
"Thank God," Ludwig says. He presses the MS. into the officer's hand. "Give this to the Duke," he commands. He stares into the sunset. Does he actually see it? Is it only a dying man's fantasy? Far in the distance, silhoutted against the sinking sun, Napoleon stands with bowed head in the midst of his ruined army.

"Ah Josephine. . ." he whispers. (Is that her against the sunset, risen from her suicide's grave, waiting for him?) He closes his eyes for the last time.

The English officer opens the MS. and reads the title: WELLINGTON'S VICTORY. Slowly the camera turns the pages, superimposed on the sunset and they dissolve as the rays of the sun project his face on the clouds.

THE END

\* \* \* \* \*



+ Hank Luttrell +

The original Dracula was released in 1930; Frankenstein in 1931; King Kong in 1933. They are probably the prototype horror films: they contain most of the elements of horror films made before the '30s, and foreshadow most of the development which was to take place thereafter.

Dracula starred Bela Lugosi, who had been playing the part of the vampire on the stage. To say that Lugosi gave a good performance is an understatement -- he became Dracula. Many other actors were to play Dracula in the years to come, some more often than Lugosi, but it would always be Lugosi's fluid movements and mannered gestures and unique way of speaking (more than just a Hungarian accent -- perhaps because he couldn't speak English well) that would be identified by fans with the part. The film could have been better, however. Early portions are fine, with a frighteningly gothic, crumbling and cobwebbed Castle Dracula, altogether a fitting place for Lugosi to float down the huge staircase and introduce himself to the audience, "I am . . . Dracula!" Later parts of the film unfortunately become stagey and static, with much of the action taking place off camera. The power the film retains today is largely due to Lugosi's complete commitment to his part, and also to the memorable roles of Everett Van Sloan as Van Helsing and Dwight Frye as Dracula's fly and spider eating slave.

Dracula had been produced by Universal Studios, who followed quickly with Frankenstein, directed by James Whale. Frankenstein is probably the most famous horror film ever, and justly so: it is something of a genuine cinematic masterpiece, distinguished by its fluid camera work and gothic sets. It begins on a grisly note, in a surreal graveyard scene. This set, and Frankenstein's laboratory, are outstanding. Later in the film there is a scene in the house of Frankenstein's father. From there the camera dollies through the village where a festival is taking place, then dissolves into another dolly across the country side where the monster meets a small girl who wants to play with him. Later, there is another dolly back through the happy village. But this time the dolly follows the father of the girl, now dead: killed by the monster. The festival melts into an angry mob which marches on the house of Frankenstein demanding justice. A fine piece of film structure. Actually, despite the clear superiority of the film making in Frankenstein, I still like Dracula better-- but that might just be because I enjoy doing imitations of Lugosi and Frye.

Frankenstein introduced to the movie audiences the considerable talents of Boris Karloff, a name which was eventually to be associated with screen horror like no other. Audiences can't help but feel a great deal of sympathy for the monster in Frankenstein; it is only because of the cruelty of an assistant (also played by Dwight Frye) that the monster escapes Frankenstein's laboratory; it is only because of a misdirected playfulness that he kills the girl. Karloff's mime communicates perfectly the confusion and torture of the doomed creature.

King Kong is a film of roaring, charging excitement which never fails to keep audiences glued to their seats, no matter how many times it is shown. One measure of its

appeal is the fact that Janus, the major distributor of "art" films, carries King Kong -- and, I'm sure, enjoys great success with it.

King Kong "starred" the special effects of Willis O'Brien, much more so than it starred any of its human actors, Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong and Bruce Cabot. The animation of the monster is amazingly detailed and smooth, and has never been excelled.

Universal Studio's Dracula and Frankenstein met with great success, and so spawned a whole cycle of Universal horror films, plus a host of imitators. King Kong had a couple of direct sequels, which didn't really measure up to the original (including Mighty Joe Young, which featured an actor named Ben Johnson, who you all recently saw in The Last Picture Show), but the Giant Monster films started coming out with amazing regularity in the 1950's.

Frankenstein, Dracula and King Kong must have seemed like very unique stuff to most of their audiences in the 1930's, but actually the films were not completely new for the film industry. The American horror film borrowed much from the fantastic silent films of Germany, with their Gothic settings and themes of mutilation and tyranny. Frankenstein was greatly influenced by the German film called The Golem (1920), about an animated clay man who rebels against his master. The sets, plot and the lumbering gate of the monster in The Golem are echoed in Frankenstein. Nosferatu (1922), directed by the well-remembered German film pioneer F. W. Murnau, predates Dracula as a film treatment of the vampire theme. Tod Browning directed Dracula; he had made a number of weird films in the 20's, including a number with the great Lon Chaney, who specialized in roles requiring monstrous-looking makeup. Willis O'Brien had been experimenting with the stop-motion animation of model dinosaurs for some time before King Kong, to eventually make The Lost World (1925) which had a plot remarkably similar to King Kong.

About the rest of that Universal horror film cycle. . . Bride of Frankenstein (1935), also directed by James Whale, was a fine film, with many weird, imaginative aspects, and large amounts of bizarre humor. In this film, the monster learns to talk, and becomes more human. Elsa Lanchester makes a startling appearance as the bride, and also as Mary Shelly. Son of Frankenstein was next, followed by Ghost of. . . (1942). The monster wasn't dead yet, but by this time he and his movies were very tired.

Dracula's first sequel was in 1936, Dracula's Daughter; then another in 1943, Son of Dracula. There were a few effective moments -- I liked the way music was used in Daughter to show the evil nature of the female vampire -- but mostly they were pretty dull. By this time, though, Universal had developed a new trick. If one of their monsters in a movie was popular and made money, two or more of their monsters in a movie should be more popular and make more money -- so their reasoning must have gone. They began to package several of their creatures in one film: Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman (1943), House of Frankenstein (1945), and House of Dracula (1945). The two House films were monster rallies featuring most of the Universal crew. These later Universal features started looking more and more like the hack westerns that were the studio's other main product -- even to the obligatory stagecoach chase at the end of the film through Universal's back lot. These scenes, of course, were the films' only exterior scenes.

And what of the rest of the Universal crew? There was The Mummy (1932). In this movie Boris Karloff plays a two-part characterization; Imhotep, the Egyptian priest condemned to living death, and the sinister Ardath Bey, the identity Imhotep assumes after his revival. The Mummy is prime early Universal; gothic, sinister, atmospheric. The superstitions dealt with in the film were real and fairly current to movie audiences in the early 30's -- the archaeological find in Egypt had been



big news in the 20's. The film was directed by one of Hollywood's best photographers, Karl Freund, and is visually very impressive. The revival of the Mummy is a horror classic. The Mummy returned in four more Universal films, with the last in 1944. In later films, the Mummy was played by Lon Chaney, Jr. Typically, Chaney tended to take roles that Karloff and Lugosi had left -- in that sense he was Universal's second string star horror actor, although he is still well remembered for his roles as a werewolf -- tragic, defeated. There had been an earlier Universal film about a lycanthrope, Werewolf of London (1935), but Chaney Jr.'s 1941 The Wolf Man is generally better thought of. Chaney's part is played with restraint and sincerity, and his make up is excellent, if more ape-like than wolf-like. Chaney would repeat the werewolf role in the later Universal monster rallies. When Chaney Jr., was given a good script and satisfactory direction he turned in remarkably good work. He prove this not

only in The Wolf Man and a few other horror films, but in some westerns and straight drama films. For the most part, though, Chaney was given work in poor movies; for the most part he was a wasted actor.

The Invisible Man (1933) is another fine film directed by James Whale. Claude Rains debuts in this film, and rants and raves from a literate (and sometimes funny) script. The Invisible Man was brought back in two later minor films.

There were a number of Universal horror movies which didn't feature any of their standard creatures. The Old Dark House (1932) was James Whale's next thriller after Frankenstein, and dealt with the now-familiar plot involving a group of travelers forced to seek shelter from a storm in an isolated mansion. Boris Karloff plays the weird old butler. The Murders in the Rue Morgue (1932) starred Bela Lugosi. The title of the movie comes from a story by Edgar Allen Poe, but the nature of the film seems to owe more to a surreal German silent film, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1919), because of its weird Expressionistic sets. This movie featured a gorilla -- and I wonder if the fascination that many horror film makers apparently felt for apes and gorillas might have originated with this film. The Island of Lost Souls (1932), adapted from H. G. Wells' story Island of Dr. Moreau, was concerned with a mad scientist experimenting with animals, attempting to make them into man-like creatures. The Invisible Ray (1936) was very interesting, combining as it did elements of science fiction and the gothic atmosphere of the standard Universal film. Boris Karloff -- without heavy makeup for a change -- and Bela Lugosi star, with Karloff finding a rare element called Radium X. He is infected by it, and finds that he can kill or destroy with a glance. Eventually, however, his power becomes his weakness and it destroys him.

Most of the Universal horror film imitators were very poor. Some are noteworthy, however. Mad Love (1935) was Peter Lorre's American debut. Lorre's physical appearance was remarkable -- shaved head, round, puffy features, bulging eyes. His Hungarian accent was almost as strange as Lugosi's. And he was an excellent actor, with an acute perception of insanity. In Mad Love Lorre oozes vicious sadism. In The Beast with Five Fingers (1946) Lorre turns in a fine performance. In one scene,

a hand severed from an artist -- the Beast of the title -- refuses to stay dead.<sup>32</sup> Lorre chases it around the library in an insane frenzy. No one could work up an insane frenzy like Peter Lorre. Finally, he nails it to a desk. The Cat and the Canary was first made in 1927, but the 1939 version with Bob Hope and Paulette Goddard is probably seen more often these days. This is much the same sort of movie as The Old Dark House. Many of the eerie effects in House were borrowed from the silent Cat and Canary, such as a long corridor lined with billowing curtains. The Hope/Goddard version is probably less eerie than the silent 1927 version because of the obligatory Hope comedy bits, but still it preserves some of the original atmosphere. One of the most often filmed stories of all time is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The version that is usually considered best was made in 1932 with Fredric March. The great John Barrymore had played this role in a silent movie, and March did well enough with the part that people for a while thought of him as the master's heir apparent. Dr. Cyclops (1940) is of special interest because it is such a good example of the "mad scientist" movie. Doc Cyclops reduces a group of people to six inch minatures. The efforts of the little people in attempting to aim a huge rifle at Cyclops are most interesting.

When writing about early horror movies, the work of one man becomes especially important; that man being Val Lewton. Lewton was a creative producer. That is, he worked closely with his directors, leaving his individual approach stamped on the films he made. His horror films are marked by a style almost completely unique to the field. Characters and events were believable. Horrors were suggested rather than revealed. The results were intelligent and dignified, and at the same time very frightening. In Lewton films, characters were pursued by unclear shadows, indistinct, horrible sounds and nameless, unseen terrors. The more fantastic Lewton films include The Cat People (1942), I Walked with a Zombie (1943), The Leopard Man (1943), and The Body Snatcher (1945).

By the late 1940's, the gothic horror fantasy had lost most of its popularity. The films, most of them, were falling victims to lower production values, trite plots, repetition, cliched characterizations. Universal nailed the lid of the coffin down when it released the very funny spoof, Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein (1948), a film much like Universal's monster rally films in that it featured Frankenstein, Dracula, the Wolfman, even the Invisible Man -- except this time the movie was supposed to be funny.

After the Universal horror cycle ended in the late 1940's, it was obvious that the movie audiences were no longer interested in gothic fantasies, and that some other areas would have to be found. The public was becoming interested in the approaching space age; suddenly science fiction was in the vogue. There had been examples of science fiction in the movies of the 30's and 40's; for instance Frankenstein and the rest of the mad scientists used some of the trappings of science fiction. But now cobwebbed castles and dungeons were old hat, and the science of the space age seemed more important.

Along with the rocketship operas of the fifties, it was now that the spawn of King Kong came into their own. Soon, there was a Beast from 20,000 Fathoms (1953), and Them (1954, giant ants) and a Tarantula (1955) and every other sort of giant this and that romping all over the landscape. In 1956, Japan got into the act with Godzilla, followed by Rodan (1957) and many others, including some monster rallies. It might be interesting to study how traditional Japanese myths have been used in their odd movies of giant monsters and dragons, but generally the Japanese films have been long on amusing but clumsy special effects, and short on everything else. Them was a good film, with some real suspense as the ants were hunted in their nests. Most of the others weren't nearly as good, and as time went on they deteriorated.

"Science Horror" was a logical type of film in the 50's. The Thing (1951) was officially directed by Christian Nyby, but in every real way it is a Howard Hawks movie -- the great director of Rio Bravo, Scarface, The Big Sleep and others. The Thing comes to earth on a flying saucer. On the surface, the film is about the conflict between the Thing and the people who discover him, but more importantly it is a typical Hawks' film -- the conflict is between men of ideas and men of action. The Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) is a frightening film directed by Don Seigel (who most recently did Dirty Harry) concerned with an invasion of "pods" which can become doubles of real people, and thus replace them. It Came From Outer Space (1953) introduced to the field one of the masters of "science horror;" director Jack Arnold. In 1954, Arnold made Creature from the Black Lagoon -- the Black Lagoon and the other exterior sets are suitably mysterious looking, and at one time the underwater photography must have looked very eerie, but anyone who sat through several "Sea Hunt" episodes won't see anything too new. In typical Universal fashion, after the success of Creature, Arnold was pressed to do a sequel, Revenge of the Creature (1955). In this film the Gill Man is taken from his Lagoon and is pitted against concrete, tile and glass. I don't recall much about the film, but it is supposed to be as good or better than the original. I think I'd rather see a parody Roger Corman did, called Creature from the Haunted Sea (1961). The Incredible Shrinking Man (1957) is Arnold's masterpiece. A very simple idea, it concerns a man who slowly shrinks in size -- after he becomes small enough, his cat and a spider which lives in his basement become horrible monsters.

House of Wax (1953) starred Vincent Price, a name that was soon to help replace those of Karloff, Lugosi and Chaney, Jr. as mainstays of movie horror. The film was a re-make of a 30's horror film, which in turn borrowed from a German silent film, and as such was something of a throwback. Released at first in 3-D, it was the biggest grossing horror film of all time until Rosemary's Baby (1968) came along and made horror modern and respectable. Price was later seen in The Fly (1959), which concerned an unfortunate man and an equally unfortunate fly who traded heads. Despite the unlikely nature of the plot, the movie comes close to working rather well. Price isn't nearly as weird as the older horror actors, but he'll do. He has an odd way of speaking, very precise. He isn't handsome, but rather distinguished. He can throw an acceptable fit when called upon to do so.

During the 50's, Roger Corman was known by the trade as the King of the B's, and became well known and respected by the industry for his ability to turn in cheap, commercially acceptable movies. His films spanned just about every possible type of subject matter -- westerns, war teenage films, and of course, science fiction and horror. These films vary a great deal, from wretched to pretty good; some were intentional spoofs, and rather funny. One can't help but stand in awe of the amount of work that Corman did during this period. Estimates vary, but it seems clear that Corman must have directed and/or produced well over 70 features.

In the early 60's, Roger Corman started directing Edgar Allen Poe films for American International -- these films, more than any of his others, made Vincent Price a star, and also featured an occasional Peter Lorre or Boris Karloff or Lon Chaney, Jr. While the sets and sometimes the stories and characters seem almost interchangeable from movie to movie, they illustrate well Corman's fine understanding of movie story telling, with fluid, well-placed camera work and tight editing. The best of these Poe films is probably Masque of the Red Death (1964). It is, of course, a "B" film, a "commercial" film. It is also a surrealmasterpiece, with only an occasional touch of sensationalism. The film deals with a "religious" theme, the final statement being that every man will have to find his own heaven and hell, and his own god. The climax of the film departs completely from realism, and deals totally in symbolism, quite a daring thing for a "B" film to do. The film ends with The Red Death talking shop with a number of other colors of demise.

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Not too long ago in New York a Roger Corman Film Festival took place. The people presenting the festival called Corman "One of film's youngest avant-garde pioneers." That is hardly correct -- it ignores Corman's commercial background, and for that matter ignores the fact that Corman is now about 46. But he is one of America's most interesting film makers. It is interesting to note that Corman's semi-autobiographical movie about acid, The Trip, while not as good as it could have been, was much better than you would expect a "B" movie about acid to be. It starred Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson, and was written by Nicholson. And yes, that is the very same bunch who made Easy Rider. If you ever wondered where Fonda and Hopper learned to make films, well, they learned from Roger Corman.

Corman's Poe films proved there was an audience for slick color horror epics, and a continuing stream of them have been appearing from other directors -- including Dan Heller, Corman's art director for some of the Poe films -- The Oblong Box and The Dunwich Horror, for example. Most of them haven't been near Corman's standards. Spirits of the Dead was very interesting, however, as it included an excellent segment directed by Federico Fellini.

In 1957, Hammer Films of Britain released their first remake of an old Universal movie: Curse of Frankenstein. Later, they were to rework most of the Universal themes: Horror of Dracula (1958), The Mummy (1959), Curse of the Werewolf (1961). In typical Universal fashion, the Frankenstein and Dracula films have been followed by a score of sequels. Most horror movie fans tend to consider them rather inferior to the originals, but still, they aren't too bad. They have some good actors, such as Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. The films have been colorful (in contrast to the somber black and white of the originals), competent and gory, but have failed to invoke the dark atmosphere of the older films.

One of the better Hammer films is Dracula, Prince of Darkness. In this film, Chris Lee's vampire is violent and powerful, tall and gaunt, wild-eyed, always moving quickly past the camera. Some of the most interesting parts of the Hammer vampire movies are the ways the monster is reanimated at the start of the film, and then destroyed at the end. In Prince of Darkness the dust of the dead vampire is mixed with the blood of a murdered man in a particularly gory scene -- Instant Vampire, just add blood!

A recent Hammer Frankenstein film, Horror of Frankenstein, is a remake of a remake. With this film, Hammer seems to be starting its Frankenstein series over again, this time with more sex and a tendency toward grisly humor.

One recent Dracula flick was Scars of Dracula, and it wasn't too good. Lee has more of a speaking role in this movie, as did Lugosi in the old films, but it isn't convincing -- merely more static. And this silly fake bat keeps fluttering all around. In this film, as in the Frankenstein reels, there is much more sex than in the past films. The Vampire Lovers is another recent Hammer release. It is even more sex-ploitation-oriented than the others. Hammer-brand sex runs mostly to low cut or somewhat transparent dresses, decadent noblemen and their mistresses or whores -- or, and here it becomes somewhat kinky, a love-sex relationship between the vampires and their mostly female victims. The Vampire Lovers was a non-Dracula movie, had a good script, but suffered a little from clumsy direction.

What happens next for the horror film? Hammer films and pale Roger Corman imitations seem to dominate the field with formula productions. Most film horror is a pretty incestuous business. Instead of picking some potentially frightening situation from the "real" world from which to make a movie, film makers usually take some myth already established and developed by past movies to run before the lenses yet one

more time. That is -- vampires, werewolves, mummies, old dark houses, Giant Artichokes, etc. With this in mind one of the most interesting films to come along in ages was Vincent Price's 100th film, Dr. Phibes. Gruesome comedy is a theme fairly common in horror films, starting with James Whale and continuing in Roger Corman and Hammer Studios. Dr. Phibes, however, carries this theme to an extreme which is almost shocking. Price stars as a madman who launches a vendetta to kill seven people he blames for the death of his wife -- the methods he devises are altogether horrible and yet ridiculous and funny. Dr. Phibes along the way manages to parody half of the old horror and mystery films you can think of. The handling of the Scotland Yard investigation is not only a fine parody, it is staged with such verisimilitude that it is actually better than most movie treatments of this sort of thing. A remarkable visual reference to one of Price's first important movies, House of Wax, serves as the climax of the film. Sequels are promised, though it is hard to believe that there is much more to be said on this strange theme.

Another interesting area recently for the horror film is the independent productions; cheapies made without the backing of studios by amateurs or almost-professionals. Most of these are awful, a few are outstanding. There are lots of them around, because there is always a good market for a competent horror programmer -- many newcomers to the film industry start either with horror films or pornography -- another film for which there is a dependable market. The recent Equinox is a good example. Actually, this was made a long time ago, but was only recently released. It stars our own Fritz Leiber in a small but significant role. The story is a fascinating mixture of occult mystery (with a forbidden, Lovecraftian book) and a good old fashion monster movie, with excellent animations of monster models, and some good optical special effects.

The champion independent production is a movie made for pennies (black and white, even) called Night of the Living Dead. A small group of people find themselves trapped in a little country house surrounded by flesh eating zombies, dozens of them. The radio and television tell them that the situation is wide spread; they will have to hold out until help comes. You probably won't see it on TV -- the film features a funny parody of TV newscasting, and some people would probably panic if it was shown without this section trimmed out -- like the radio "War of the Worlds." This situation is milked for every ounce of suspense and tension.

I suspect that no matter what shape film horror takes in the future, fans will continue to buy their tickets and popcorn, and wait eagerly for what tomorrow's double bill will reveal -- not to mention late night television.

