

**Stans**

September: Vol. 2., No. 3.

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JANUS  
VOL. 2, NO. 3

EDITORS  
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PRINTER: HANK LUTTRELL  
PROOFREADERS: JANICE BOGSTAD  
LESLIEGH LUTTRELL  
TOM MURN  
MARY LOUTHER  
LAYOUT: JEANNE GOMOLL  
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or 5/\$3.50. JANUS offices:

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143 W. Gilman #303  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

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Greetings people! Welcome back to the magazine of Madtown, home of the Moon Man who sells the moon on street corners at a dollar an acre (cautioning his buyers that they will have to provide their own transportation). He sports a spiffy saran wrap skirt, silver sandals, chrome hair and lives with a lady named Honey Moon. Of course. Well that's Madtown.

We (the majority of still-in-town MADSTFIans that is) have just recently returned from the Midwest-con/Relaxacon in Cincinnati where we relaxed and reveled and had a good time. Especially momentous for one anonymous member of our group was a poolside tete-a-tete with the famous Mike Glicksahn, when he mistook her for a lifeguard. Luckily for him, he didn't send her inside for a drink or I would have spilled liquor all over his looks.

Another member of MADSTF, especially conscious of the developing pick-up scene at the con and of the

practice of some famous (sic) men to travel with an entourage of groping groupies, is sneaking over the beginning of an insidious counter lampoon plan for the Eademericon.

Other than this salubrious space into the heartland of America's Bible Belt and an informal gathering on the 8th of July, the MADSTF group has involved itself primarily with non-programed, relaxed weekly meetings. Author nights and radio play work will hopefully return to our schedule at the end of the summer, when all of our members have returned from their exotic summer retreats. In the mean time, MADSTF slouches to cooler places for its meetings (we're going continental and meeting at a local bar), and replaces one of JANUS's regular writers (Rick White, away playing with the telescope at Arecibo, Puerto Rico) with Perri Corrick in the fanzine review column. John Barleit, being not so far removed (in Milwaukee), continues to contribute we gratefully report. Plans for a membership drive for this fall are under way.

Having reached its first birthday this summer, MADSTF is planning a wild, dissipated saturnalia (at least I am—everyone else thinks it's going to be just a picnic). The event, whatever, is scheduled for July 25th (and will take place while this issue is being typed/printed—so control that adrenalin, you've already missed it). Also, in honor of this momentous occasion, the MADSTF group now has its very own T-Shirt! (See page 49)(I wouldn't advise trying to iron it on anywhere.) Resemblance of any of the individuals portrayed in this sketch to any real person, living or dead, is probably not merely coincidental, though I think I will be claiming so until the lawsuit proceedings instigated by certain disgruntled MADSTF members have been concluded.

As to this month's JANUS, the advertised Blood-For-Einlein cover has been relegated to a cover-in-spirit-only, a compromise due to Jan's not sharing my taste for vulgarity... However, if you will read the issue carefully, it contains several contributions to this month's "tasteful" blood motif, um, smack, drool..., among them, a good practical article by Perri Corrick on a tasty by-product of hemoglobin.

The article I had planned to do for this issue still interests me, but now seems

impossible. I wanted to use library records in order to ascertain (with a list of sf holdings) if more male readers than female read sf. I predicted that, using this test, the results might be significantly different than the results that rely on the older readers tabulated in the usual book club and magazine subscription lists. But... Due to commendable right-of-privacy rules in all the local libraries, this research has been forestalled. If anyone knows of a way to get around this problem, I'd appreciate knowing about it.

Also this issue we have a multitude of non-scuttled projects. Among them are Jan's editorial on Future Histories, our regular columns (JBvsJB, reviews, etc...), and a couple of surprising regular columns (two reviews by Tom Murn which actually praise their objects). Our review column, this time and in the future will be divided into "new" reviews of books just out, and "old" books (NOSTALGIA REVIEWS). Also, this issue, there is an excellent article by Tom Murn on the New Wave in sf. Experimentation goes on in all literature whether classified as mainstream or as sf. Tom Murn's article describes some of the exciting breakthroughs by some of sf's most dynamic authors. They, like avant-garde mainstream authors find themselves in the precarious and exciting position of not being too sure--yet--whether their paint brushes are creating life-giving visions for the future, or whether, (like the confused fellow described in Thomas Pynchon's V), they are only frantically and uselessly repainting the hull of an abandoned and sinking ship... Whatever the outcome, the very recent art that dares to make itself vulnerable to such judgement is exciting. And so is Tom's article.

For those people who have mentioned that they will miss Jan's and my "friendly rivalry," let me assure them that our opinions continue to clash on occasion, and will no doubt return every so often as a JANUS feature (...it is NOT a genre!) For those still hungry for conflict, see JBvsJB...

Speaking of recurrent features, we come to Jan's often-planned Marion Zimmer Bradley article... Or maybe I should say, we won't (this time...).

One word about the two fictions included in this issue of JANUS: Credit must be given to John Bartelt, since it was during a conversation with him on the nature of time, while he was in the process of writing "Paradox Lost," that my own story was born. My loose interpretation of the principles John so much more carefully elucidates in his story can unfortunately be blamed entirely on myself. However, it might be interesting to read the two stories knowing that they started at close points of origin.

That's all.

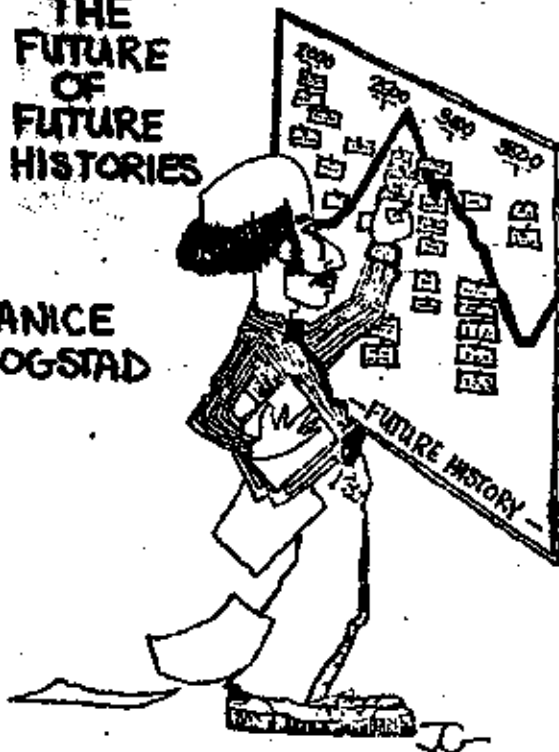
SEE YOU IN KANSAS CITY!





## THE FUTURE OF FUTURE HISTORIES

JANICE  
BOGSTAD



The proliferation of Future Histories has become a noticeable phenomenon in the recent history of Science Fiction Literature. This is an interesting and, in many ways, logical step in the development of the SF genre. To understand why it is so one must look at some aspects of SF of the past and present.

An operational definition of Future History would be helpful at this point. A Future History is a fictional scheme, encompassing a broad time-span, set in a future time. It never appears as a totality within a single work by the author who creates it, but references to this discernible scheme found in one novel are, to a great extent, consistent with references found in others by the same author. The scheme which lies behind a Future History is usually not written out until after an author has begun to use it in his/her fiction as with Larry Niven's "Known Space" time-scheme or Heinlein's now famous fictional plan for the future. The scheme may never be written out at all but consistencies will appear within the works of an author which make his/her readers suspect the existence of a Future His-

tory. With Ursula LeGuinn's works, one can pick up references to a culture or a planet explored within one novel, as passing references in another. Marion Zimmer Bradley's "Darkover" series, although sometimes inconsistent from novel to novel with regard to minor points, is slowly becoming the Future History of another planet. This is pointed out in The Gemini Problem by Walter Breon. Katherine Kurtz's "Deryni" series is a similar case. A Future History is not simply a series of books about one subject but rather a system for the future which operates as if it were a known past. It is a history of the future.

A bifurcated argument for the logical development of Future Histories can be made. One can consider both the nature of SF literature as it has developed and the advantages which Future Histories as a subset of SF literature, have to offer the writer and reader.

The first writers of modern Science Fiction, in the late nineteenth century, had a formidable task before them. They had to fulfill the demands made of any creator of prose fiction: to write solid, convincing, fictional works. They had their own peculiar challenge to overcome also. People had to be introduced to the idea that technological developments could be a plot source for a work of fiction. The possible effects that changing technology could have on the people who live with and in it was then and still is an elemental part of much SF.

Writers of the last three decades have profited from the freedom earlier writers won for them. It was a freedom of acceptance. As readers got used to the idea of technology as an element for story plots, writers could become less and less bound by the necessity of justifying their subject with elaborate explanations of details of the technology which appeared in their stories. This hard-won acceptance of the realm of SF also marked out its bounds. Science Fiction came to be seen as the portraying of a possible future rather than just a piece of fanciful thinking recorded in story form. As authors devoted less and less narrative space to convincing their readers

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of the validity of their subject matter, technology and its effects on humanity, they could devote more and more attention to experimenting with possible future technological change. This was their first step towards freedom in narrative speculation.

As more writers became interested in the potentialities of SF, and more SF was consequently written, another freedom was bequeathed the contemporary writer. Not only did readers come to accept technology as part of the plot structure, but they also began to accept certain recurrent aspects of that technology. This acceptance came about through the sheer proliferation of Science Fiction Literature itself. One read again and again about travel to the moon and other planets, one read of different possibilities through which technology would allow inter-stellar travel. The ideas of rocket-propelled and faster-than-light travel, teleportation and time-travel, were explored within what Ursula LeGuinn has called 'the experimental laboratory' of SF. ( This is stated in an essay called : "Is Gender Necessary" in the anthology: AURORA: BEYOND EQUALITY ). The more individual writers explored each of these subjects and their implications, the more freedom each writer had to concentrate on details of his/her particular interest. Say a writer wished to explore the implications of time travel. By the sixties, through the efforts of such writers as Robert Silverburg, he had several well defined areas from which to choose. HE/She needed only to choose a theory or conception of time travel without having to stop and explain all aspects of this theory in order that his/her readers might accept the field of interest. With the freedom given the writer by the appearance of certain aspects of his/her interest in other SF, he/she could go on to look at a particular aspect or consequence of a theory of time travel in more detail. He/she need not explain the very concept of alternate universes, for example, in order for this concept to take a major part in the creation of his/her plot. No longer need an author exhaust the greater part of his/her story on technology itself. He/she could turn to developing effective plot and characterizations perhaps. In the last decade, with the "new wave", we have seen the re-introduction of the exploration of writing as a technique into the field of Science Fiction. This can only increase the possibilities for SF as an expressive medium. But it can only come about because the other steps have been taken by earlier SF writers.

The proliferation of SF novels discussing the trappings of a technological future have another dividend for the contemporary writer. When an author can borrow freely from the ideas of other authors, when he/she can depend on a certain foreknowledge of the genre, he has more narrative space available to his to explore another subject. HE/She can perhaps concentrate on the interrelationships between people and changing technology. Such an exploration occurs in the works of writers like Larry Niven and Ursula LeGuinn. They work with the technological givens of the genre in order to explore their own particular interests but they also skillfully introduce the human element into their fiction.

With the previously mentioned authors, and many others such as Robert Heinlein, Gordon Dickson( In the Dorsai novels) Harry Harrison( In the Deathworld novels), Marion Zimmer Bradley( with Darkover), Isaac Asimov( Foundation Trilogy) and perhaps Frank Herbert ( the Dune books), the perceptive reader can discern the development of the next step in a progression towards more definition predating the creation of an individual novel. The specified works of these authors include more givens than exist generally in the field. Each of them has created their own set of parameters, broad outlines within which their novels operate. One could see this progressive increase in the number of givens operative in a particular SF novel as being progressively more restrictive on the freedom of the author. More rules must be complied with as the field develops until finally authors are creating sets of rules for themselves within the rules to limit their freedom. Actually however, with these Future Histories, they are creating a certain kind of freedom for themselves. For example, LeGuinn can invoke the paradoxes of faster-than-light travel as it relates to the nature of time, subjects which have been explored much in SF as well as in contemporary physics, without having to describe the whole controversy in detail in The Disposed. Speculation in the field of technology is acceptable to modern readers and that particular technological problem is acceptable. She can also invoke the universe she has



From:

Mark Sharpe  
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Indianapolis, Indiana  
46236

Also at this address is the fanzine of dubious distinction, ECLIPSE, the Indianapolis SF & F Ass'n President (me) and one or two demented orcs.

Dear Editor's,

Thanks again for JANUS, it brightened what had been a dull day. I was in conference for 2 1/2 hours with Peg Rogers and Mary Alice Simpson (editor and publisher of Child Life magazine, respectively). CL IS GOING TO a SF format/content starting with the January ish this coming year.

Editorial was nice but I miss the ~~cutting at throats~~ friendly rivalry between two editors. I refuse to join in on the controversy, if that is what you wish to call it, about SF and its literary aspirations. I don't give a damn whether or not SF is ever "accepting" in the outside world; it will remain close to my heart and screw those who wish to drag SF out of the gutter. You can't drag us out kicking and screaming, you have to have a willing entity and as long as we have Elwood and his equals we will stay where I'm comfortable -- lonely and abused. Nice letters and Buck is right, the magazines I mentioned will never see the light of day -- which isn't too terribly upsetting. After all I managed to get payed, which is all I cared about (I've already had the article published elsewhere and the Rollarball review is WAY out-of-date.

Vonda McIntyre is a nice lady. I wrote Ursula LeGuinn to get her address, but LeGuinn was in London and someone sorted her mail and sent my letter to Ms. McIntyre. Her response was nice. Ecile Waiting was the topic and praise just flowed. I have

read three books that I feel/felt were good enough for the Hugos: The Forever War by Balaban, Inferno by Pournelle and Niven and The Exile Waiting by McIntyre. I thought Inferno was nice but had damn little plot. You can only do so much rehashing of Dante's classic. The Forever War lacked characterization, but the idea was good and well carried out. The Exile Waiting, however, had excellent characterizations, plot and story and deserved both the Hugo and Nebula but missed the Nebula and didn't get on the ballot for the final Hugo voting. Shit! I guess having a well-known name meant the difference, he said pontificating.

I like Simak. Nice man.

I'm not much of a feminist but I agree with some of the principals, at least the ones expressed by Farenthold and Steinheim when I attended their talks at IU. I was so impressed I joined the local NOW chapter but have yet to go to any of the meetings. I'm not that much of a joiner but they need the money. They probably need volunteer workers more but I don't have the time. Anywho, this is supposed to be leading up to a comment of the Gomoll article, but I'm sure going around it in a round about manner. But first off, characterizations of women are worse than Jeanne made out in her article -- gosh I had better learn to type -- Take Asimov and Norman and Burroughs. The first has written storable, cold women, but then all his characters are like that. Norman is just one sick cookie -- or is it KOOKy/ -- and should be cast out. The last turd wrote ridiculous characterization all the way around but had these pure and chaste women that have never existed outside of fiction. But, like all things women in literature are evolving. Slowly, mind you, but there is change. The nuclear family will dissolve one day soon, say within a century. It will never disappear altogether, but we can see the beginnings of the change today. At least two of my friends have decided not to have children, one going so far as to have her fallopian tubes "tied". If I was married I think the nuclear family would be the way I lived for awhile, but the traditional roles would play little part in the home. Besides, I love to cook and I like babies -- can't stand 'em when they get to be seven or so; they get down right cruel to each other and animals if any are present. Steinheim said in her lecture, and anthropologists are in agreement of the most part, that prehistoric societies were matriarchal until it was discovered that the man played a role in the bearing of children, or rather, the conception of the child. Somehow, we just took over over the centuries and women have not had the chance to re-emerge until recently. I sound like a preacher, don't I? Anyway, it was an excellent article.

I won't even read the article about Ellison. That short little creep (the later adjective was used by him to describe Juanita Coulson when she declined to buy his zine O so many moons ago) irks me to no end. I made the mistake of seeing a Boy and His Dog. Suzanne was wrong, once IS enough.

MARK

#### TALES

Barry Glassner  
Box 24226, St. Louis, Mo.  
63130

Thank you for the June issue with your review of a story from our summer issue.

We are pleased to see that you have taken sufficient interest in TALES to review us in your magazine. Also enjoyed reading much of the rest of the issue.

I must correct your information about TALES. We are America's most widely read fiction magazine, but we are nonprofit. In fact, the editors regularly bail the magazine out. We pay writers \$25 when we can, which includes the present months because we received a grant for that purpose.

Yours is the only negative reaction we have received to "Perchance to Dream." The reason I do not find your review convincing is that it largely rests on the assumption that SF stories must be conclusive by one means or another. The strength I and many of our readers found in "Perchance" -- the drama of it -- was its inconclusiveness.



You make assumptions about the narrator's assumptions which the story does not specify.

BARRY

Peter Werner  
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Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Perhaps I was a bit too harsh in my review of Jack Stuart's story "Perchance to Dream," and I hope I did not cause hurt feelings. However, neither that very remote possibility, nor the fact that Mr. Glassner did not find my review convincing, nor the lack of other negative opinions of Stuart's tale, implies in any way whatsoever that the logic of my argument was unsound. ---if TALES wishes to win a popularity contest, without proper regard for the quality of its material, that is none of my business, except that I doubt it makes for good fiction.

My commentary is too complex to repeat in detail here, and certainly much more complex than to suggest merely (as Glassner interprets my views) that all SF stories should have unambiguous endings that prove a point---to summarize, I suggested (i) that the scientific basis of Stuart's story was nonsense, and (ii) that the story as a whole was flawed conceptually, whether scientific or un.

Mr. Glassner comments that I was wrong about Stuart's intentions---I reply that if it was Stuart's intention that the experiment prove nothing (which I doubt), then I have no objection to that, but I object in that event to the apparent lack of disbelief on the part of the witness at the story's end, even though he had initially had rather severe doubts that the experimenter could ever prove anything---whereas if it was Stuart's intention (as I believe) that the experiment does prove the inventor's integrity, then I object because an unsound experiment (without substantiation from independent sources of evidence about the real world) proves not a damn thing.

As for my information about TALES, I apologize for not checking more carefully; I must have recollected incorrectly from the WRITER'S MARKET---surely TALES did not misinform them in the first place.

PETER

DAW Books, Inc.  
1301 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear JANUS:

When I first read the manuscript of Tanith Lee's DON'T BITE THE SUN I realized that it was a novel that people would either like intensely or dislike intensely. It would seem that your reviewer, Thomas Murn, unfortunately for me, fell into the latter group---there seems to be no middle grouping.

To offset your review, I offer a quote from a letter (unsolicited) from Marion Zimmer Bradley, March 21: "I have just sent a recommendation for a Nebula---my first ever---for Tanith Lee's DON'T BITE THE SUN. I think it is probably the finest book you have ever published and I also feel it is a HELL of a lot better than most of the books that have won these awards."

Your readers may have by now seen Tanith Lee's THE STORM LORD which is more in THE BIRTHGRAVE's style. And there is to be a sequel to DON'T BITE THE SUN which will clarify much that apparently went over your reviewer's head. This is entitled DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE and will be published in January 1977.

DON WOLLHEIM

Harlan Ellison  
3484 Coy Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California 91403

As previously, JANUS received and read with pleasure. You continue to publish a journal of considerable intelligence and worth.

Doug Barbour's comment (in his letter) that "when women are few, they will be well-treated" is THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS, is correct, of course, given an intelligent, ordered society. It is wrong, it seems to me, given the wild, semi-barbaric society of "A Boy and His Dog." In Heinlein's novel, we are dealing with intelligent, cultured people, whatever their other flaws. In "Boy/Dog" we have very young, very chaotic, very anarchic kids who have feelings and needs, and very few rational, ordered, long-view impulses. I patterned the society, such as it was, on the historical model of all cultures after a decimating war; rape, looting, self-serving are the forms. It isn't even a sexist society, it's a pure survival one, with hardly any room for the niceties. Perhaps the sequel I'm writing—"Blood's a Rover"—will explicate that world better. But Mr. Barbour's view, however correct for another fictional society, simply ain't right for the world of Vic and Blood.

Cliff Simak's gentle and solid comments about "new wave" were a joy to read. In fact, the entire interview was a joy to read. Cliff continues to be one of the exemplary figures in the genre because, like Jack Williamson, he has forced his talent to expand, to operate at the outer edge of his craft at all times. And not coincidentally, both Cliff and Jack have brilliant stories in THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS that are as an ou rant and experimentally sound as those by any of the "young turks."

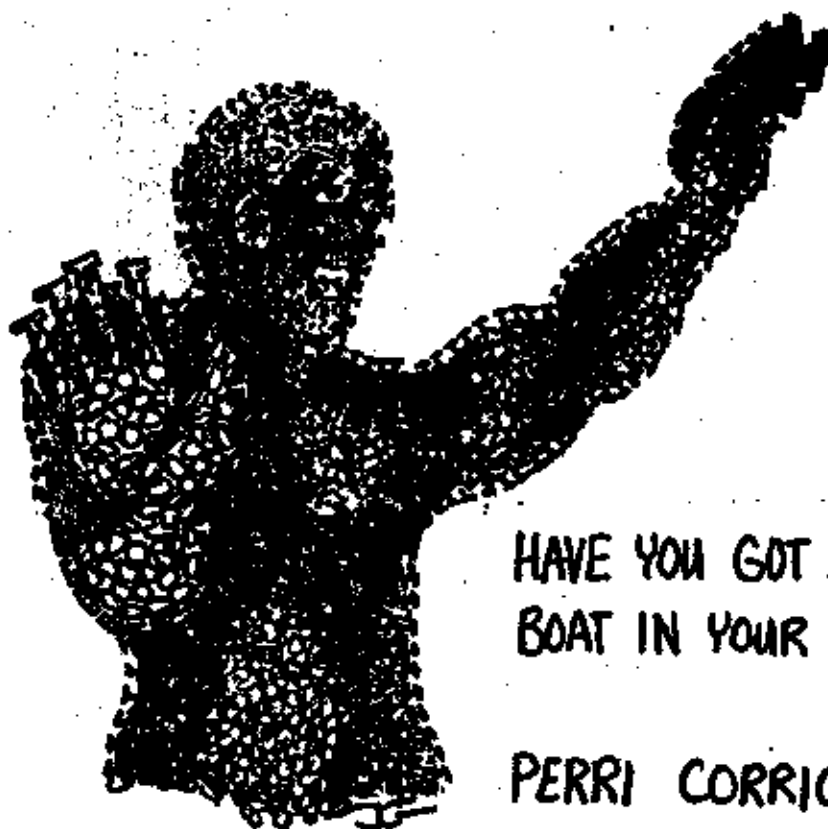
I have read Ms. Peterson's article evaluating and attempting to analyze my work. In some respects I think she is quite right; but overall I find the piece light-years away from what I am doing, what the stories were intended to say, how my head works and what their "meaning" might be. For the most part, it confused and saddened me. I have the feeling that trying to effect this kind of academic criticism is a thankless and ultimately pointless chore. It is like Monday morning quarterbacking, to employ a time-honored macho phrase. No one but the writer can ever really know what the writer meant. And tossing in "Try a Dull Knife," which isn't even remotely concerned with love or male/female relationships struck me as specious.

The long essay on love that I wrote to introduce the new Pyramid edition of LOVE AIN'T NOTHING BUT SEX MISPELLED, plus the stories therein, speak for my position as eloquently as I care to be spoken for. I refer Ms. Peterson and your readers to that material. It's rather exhaustive and may well serve to invalidate much of what she set down as proven fact. With all due courtesy to Ms. Peterson, I have the gut-feeling that she brought more of her own world-view to her interpretations than my own.

At least, I hope to God she's wrong. I would hate like hell to think I'm that depressive and unpleasant a person. It is clear that there is no rancor in her article, and so none is engendered here, but I cannot help wondering how her conclusions parse with the phone call I received yesterday from a nameless reader out in the wilds somewhere, who called to thank me (it was a woman) for my presentation of (what she called) "rational neo-feminist viewpoints." I don't know that she was any closer to it than Ms. Peterson, but frankly, folks, it's truly difficult for a man to write about women these days, without being conscious of the alert audience out there waiting to pounce on the wrong words.

I'll go this far, however: Ms. Peterson's thesis was that in my fiction—and by extension I myself—love is equated with "pain, destruction, even death, on many levels." She is one-third correct. In my view, and in my experience, love is equatable with pain. I think anyone being honest with him or herself, anyone who has ever tasted love, will agree. It is painful. Pain and pleasure being inextricably linked, of course. Without the pain, there would be no comprehension of the pleasure. To deny that is to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45.



HAVE YOU GOT A  
BOAT IN YOUR BODY?

PERRI CORRICK

How does the old  
saying go?

"What are little  
boys made of?  
They are made of  
frogs and snails  
and little iron  
nails."

Of what...? Well,  
a slight editorial  
license seems to  
have crept in  
there at the end  
so that the rhyme  
will illustrate an  
idea that came up  
at a UW Tolkien  
Society meeting  
this past winter.  
The topic of the  
meeting was the  
Philip José Farmer  
RIVERWORLD series  
—composed so far  
of the books, TO  
YOUR SCATTERED

BODIES GO and THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT. (The affinity between Middle-Earth and Riverworld being so self-evident, I need not elaborate further on the suitability of this as a Tolkien Society meeting topic.) Presumably many readers of this magazine are familiar with the Riverworld series in which Farmer postulates an extremely long river, on the banks of which live all of humanity (but no other animal life), resurrected youthful and apparently immortal. That is, people can be killed repeatedly in Riverworld, but each time they will be resurrected somewhere else along the River. As Farmer tells us in THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT, "There should have been no cowards in the Riverworld; courage should have become universal. Death was not permanent; a man was killed only to rise again." It isn't quite that simple, of course, but, for example, along the River, kidnapping is considered a worse crime than murder.

In THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT, Sam Clemens (alias Mark Twain) constructs an iron paddlewheeler with the aid of iron secured from a giant meteorite that falls in the Rivervalley. At the end of this second book of the series, we see the riverboat being stolen from Clemens after its painful construction. Sam ends the book by vowing to build another boat and go seeking revenge on the thief.

When the group at the meeting reached this point in the discussion, several people toyed with various ideas of what means Farmer may have in mind to use in his next book in order to introduce more iron into the Riverworld to enable Clemens to achieve his ends (another meteorite being unlikely). Somewhere along the line, Phil Kaveny, future chess champion and group bodyguard, remarked that he had heard it said that there is as much iron in the human body as there is in a small iron nail. This started off a whole series of speculations (limited only by an almost complete lack of facts) on ways and means of transforming people into riverboats.

Several days later at a party, the participants in the above discussion were recounting the proceeding to me, "Ah ha, Perri," they said, "you should be able to

figure all this out with your chemistry background." I started to explain that this was probably beyond the usual expertise of your typical chemist (even of one as necessarily versatile as I) but stopped myself. How much iron is there in the human body, anyhow? How many people would you need, say for a ton? How would you extract the iron? Lovely food for thought!

Iron in the body is mainly found in the blood--as most people know from watching Geritol commercials. Blood, however, is composed of plasma and erythrocytes or red blood cells. The red blood cells are composed of 60% water and 40% solids--the latter being almost entirely the red pigment and major oxygen carrier, hemoglobin. Now hemoglobin is a large, complex organic molecule whose molecular weight is about 65,000 (the molecular weight of water, for comparison, is 18). There are four iron atoms in each hemoglobin molecule, so hemoglobin is 0.344% iron by weight. Medical tables tell us that the average adult has about 160 grams of hemoglobin per liter of whole blood. Since the typical healthy adult has in the neighborhood of 5 liters of blood circulating, 5x160 or 800 grams of hemoglobin are available per person. Ah, nearly there... if each person has 800 grams of hemoglobin and hemoglobin is 0.344% iron, then 800x 0.00344 or 2.75 grams is the amount of iron per person. Therefore, each person represents about a tenth of an ounce of iron. With 16 ozs. to the lb., 160 people would be needed for a pound of iron and 320,000 people for a ton!

This almost begins to look feasible. Riverworld is estimated to contain 35-37 billion recyclable people--an almost unlimited source of iron--even considering inefficiency of extraction and conversion and the probable disinclination of the source material to cooperate wholeheartedly. Perhaps the most persuasive of Mankind's advertising executives could get together and come up with a campaign emphasizing self-sacrifice for the greater good--à la U.S. Army recruitment. Or perhaps they could produce one appealing to peoples' wanderlust and search for adventure--"In one stroke, see new lands, make new friends.. ." etc. It would not appear to be beyond the ability of part of the human race to convince the rest that to stand up and be slaughtered is a wonderful thing--especially since the slaughtered are guaranteed resurrection. Organizers and instigators of the various medieval Crusades should be naturals for this--they did it once before, after all.

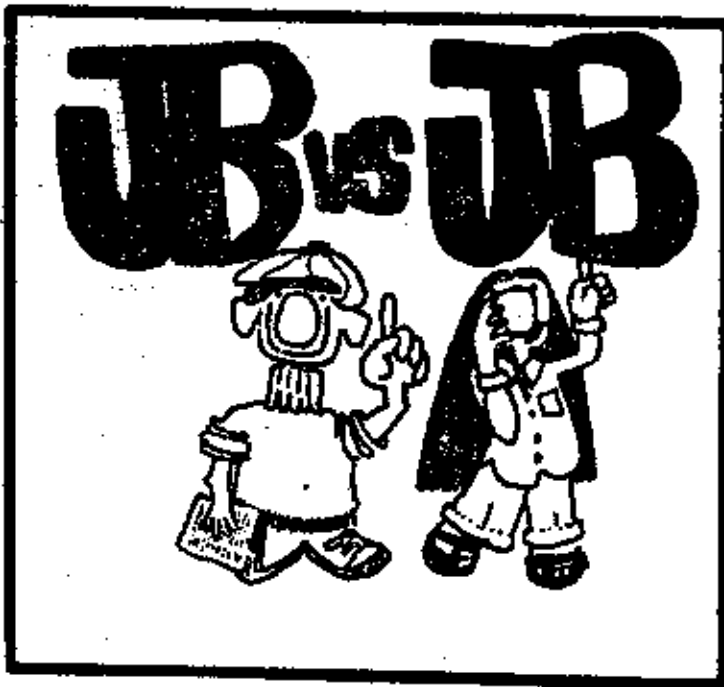
Very well, we have our hoards of people lining up, each clamoring to be first. How to get from the body to the boat? The collection of the blood could be left to trained butchers and animal slaughterers. We have no doubt that they slaughter animals humanely, right?--we need not scruple then to put them to work on humans. Once the blood is collected, it needs to be ashed. The grailstones (which supply Riverworlders with food and other paraphernalia) have the ability to incinerate the flesh of the unwary, so they could be used to convert the organic blood to inorganic ash. Assuming one got the blood completely ashed, one would have essentially a mixture of iron oxides. Now we're getting somewhere--iron oxides are what iron ores are all about. If Clemens was able to take an iron-containing meteorite and smelt the free metal from it, then our iron oxide ash should be a cinch for him.

So the problem resolves itself--the hundreds of thousands who contributed their lives'--blood to the undertaking should be rewarded in some suitable fashion--a free ride in the riverboat perhaps, with possibly a pull on the whistle for those who contributed more than once. Even the name of such a riverboat suggests itself--what other than DRACULA?

If Mr. Farmer should find himself in dire straits, he is welcome to use any or all of the ideas presented here. Remember, the next time that you see a bum in the gutter--don't look on him as a useless piece of humanity; don't look on him as a bit of human flotsam--instead, look on him as a two-penny nail!

HOT FLASH!!!

No, not that kind of flash--a news flash. John Bartelt (who, any regular reader of JANUS knows, is a regular contributor to JANUS) is proud to announce the publication of the first (and possibly last) issue of his own zine: DIGRESSIONS. On sale anywhere fine fanzines are sold, or write to John Bartelt, 442 W. Gorham, Apt. 2, Madison Wisconsin 53703



an exchange:  
John Bartelt  
Janice Bogstad

I recently reread Ursula K. LeGuin's magnificent **THE DISPOSSESSED**. I had read it when it first came out (1974?), cover to cover, and was profoundly affected by it. It changed my socio-political-economic philosophy radically.

[I CAN'T TELL IF YOU'RE TRYING TO BE IRONIC OR NOT SO I'LL INTERPRET. LEQUIN MANAGES TO DRAMATICALLY PORTRAY, THROUGH ITS REPRESENTATION IN THE GRADUALLY TRANSFORMED CONSCIOUSNESS OF HER PROTAGONIST, SHEVEK, THE DIFFERENT EFFECTS WHICH DIFFERENT ECONOMIC-POLITICAL CONSTRUCTS HAVE ON THE INDIVIDUAL. HER CHARACTER MOVES FROM PRACTICE TO THEORY TO PRACTICE. HIS FINAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE USEFULNESS OF HIS DISCOVERY IS DEMONSTRABLY CREATED NOT BY EITHER THE CAPITALISTIC OR THE ANARCHISTIC SOCIETY EXCLUSIVELY BUT BY THE CONFLICTS EACH OF THEM CREATE IN CONTRAST TO HIS NATURAL FEELINGS. THIS CHARACTER PORTRAYAL IMPRESSED ME PERSONALLY MORE THAN THE

**SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF THE NOVEL. --Jan]**

I hadn't really read the whole book again (only going back now and then to read certain passages) since; when I did decide to reread it, I decided to do it differently: I started with Chapter 2, read all the even numbered chapters, then went back to Chapter 1 and read the odd-numbered chapters. For you few benighted souls who haven't taken the time yet to read this book, I should point out that the book starts somewhere in the middle of the story, then Chapter 2 begins when Shevek, the protagonist, is a child.

[I WAS JUST REMINDED BY OTHER READING I'M DOING THAT THIS 'BEGINNING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STORY' IS A CLASSICAL TECHNIQUE FOR STORYTELLING WHICH ORIGINATED WITH THE EPIC. THERE IS EVEN A LATIN TERM FOR IT: IN MEDIAS RES. AH, THE MERITS OF A HUMANISTIC EDUCATION ARE NEVER-ENDING. --Jan]

Chapter 3 starts where I left off, and they continue alternating, until Chapter 13 finishes it. This time, while the social implications were again interesting, I was also struck by the perceptive analysis of the physical quantity, time (Shevek is a physicist specializing in "chronosophy," the study of time). Ms. LeGuin's ideas and conceptions of time, as brought out in Shevek's theories and in the structure of the book, are both clever and subtle. In contemporary Physics, especially in the last century, it has come to the attention of theorists that our present understanding of Physics is not adequate to explain some of the observable qualities of time. Shevek's theories began to deal with these problems. Shevek first promotes the theory of Simultaneity over Sequency, the latter being the accepted theory, and then, in the end, combines the two. It is with this synthesis that the theoretical groundwork is laid for the ansible, the device that allows instantaneous communication and that appears in other of her stories. (Synthesis of opposites seems to be a recurrent theme in Ms. LeGuin's stories: the inhabitants of Gethen/Winter in **THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS**, who can be



either male or female, is the first example that comes to mind; perhaps someday I can take a more in-depth look at that (or someone else can)).

[I WOULD HARDLY CALL THE INHABITANTS OF GETHEN PRODUCTS OF SYNTHESIS. TO ME THEY SEEM MORE AN EXPRESSION OF WHAT PEOPLE ARE LIKE WITHOUT THE, OFTEN NEGATIVE, EFFECTS OF CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH A PARTICULAR SEX. MS. LEGUIN DOES DESCRIBE HER CHARACTERS IN 'MALE' OR 'FEMALE' POSTURES BUT I THINK SHE DOES SO FOR LACK OF A BETTER WAY TO DESCRIBE THEIR ACTIONS. AT CERTAIN TIMES IN THEIR LIVES, WHEN THEY TAKE ON PHYSIOLOGICALLY MALE AND FEMALE FUNCTIONS, THEY BECOME "MALE" OR "FEMALE" --THE REST OF THE TIME THEY ARE PEOPLE. --Jan]

Also, in reading the chapters out of order, I began noticing more of the symbolism (though this may have been just an effect of rereading). There are a great many subtleties in this novel; I may go back and read it again.

One more observation, for what it's worth: the story of THE DISPOSSESSED takes place on two planets (which orbit each other, and orbit the star Tau Ceti, just as the Earth and Moon orbit each other, and together orbit the Sun); there are a few references to Earth, and there is a Terran embassy on the one planet. OK, the observation is this: in the few Terran words used, the long i sound is spelled "ai." There is reference to an old Terran physicist, Ainsetain (Einstein); later, one of the Terrans in the embassy exclaims "Mai-god!" presumably, "My-god!" I don't know what this means, I just thought I'd point it out (of course, there are the Hainish, that ancient race from which we are supposedly all descendant).

[POSSIBLY A VALUABLE OBSERVATION FOR READING MS. LEGUIN'S OTHER WORKS... --Jan]

There is a new prozine out, ODYSSEY, edited by Roger Elwood (who else?). Since it includes reviews of fanzines, it's only fair that it get reviewed itself. I have only the first issue, for Spring 1976; it's supposed to be a quarterly, so I imagine the second issue is out, but I haven't seen it (but then, I haven't been able to find much of any science fiction magazines on the stands lately). (I got my first copy from a huckster at Minicon II.) It has a cover by Kelly Freas, which sort of legitimizes it.

[PERHAPS YOU CAN ELABORATE IN YOUR NEXT COLUMN WHY A COVER BY KELLY FREAS LEGITIMIZES A MAGAZINE. DOES ONE WITHOUT A COVER BY THIS ARTIST NECESSARILY LACK LEGITIMACY? OR IS IT THAT ASSOCIATION WITH THE PROLIFIC "LASER" SERIES? DIDN'T I HEAR YOU SAY YOU HAD A NOVEL YOU WANTED PUBLISHED?... --Jan]

It contains three novellas, one by Fred Pohl, one by Jerry Pournelle (which was OK, but the ending seemed to have been a little chopped (by the editor?))

[--NOW, DON'T GO BLAMING THE EDITOR WITHOUT PROPER VERIFICATION--YOU KNOW WE ARE ALL AFTER YOUR BEST INTERESTS... --Jan]

and the third by Robert Bloch (billed as his first SF work in years), called, "ETFF" (if you can figure out what those initials mean, you should be able to get all the jokes; otherwise, some of the jokes may go right past those totally unassociated with Fandom (breaking into "ET" and "FF" may give you a hint (I must admit, this reporter didn't bother racking his brains, but just plunged in, and found out very quickly))). There are also five short stories: "Jeremiah, Born Dying," by Joseph Green, which struck me as just very fourth class (something good for a fanzine).

[I RESENT THAT!!! AS A FANZINE EDITOR, I MUST REMIND YOU--OUR STANDARDS ARE VERY HIGH. --Jan]

Also, there is Thomas Scottia's "Someday I'll Find You." About the only thing suspenseful about this one was wondering if I really had guessed the "surprise" ending half way through (I had). From the beginning, it struck me that the story seemed like something from the 1930's; very trite in some sense; very clichetic (that's a word I just made up; it means to be riddled with cliches, or taken as a whole, having the nature of a cliché). And, I might as well get picky: his understanding of radiation and radioactive waste seems fuzzy (there aren't quite enough details to really pin him down and say he's wrong, but he doesn't sound quite right either). And, as long as I'm getting fussy, Scottia is billed as the "Author of the smash bestseller, 'The Towering Inferno';" now the movie, "The Towering Inferno," was based on two books (neither of that

same title), one of which was co-authored by Scottia. Oh well, back to the magazine.

There are also features: a column by Theodore Sturgeon, in which he talks about books and various other things; Robert Silverberg is the regular book reviewer, and Charlie Brown's column, "Fan Scene," is primarily concerned with reviewing the top fanzines. And there's an interesting interview with Zenna Henderson.

A few words about the magazine's format: it's 8x11 1/2, and 80 pages long. It's obviously for mass distribution (it even has those funny little stripes for price encoding). There are an awful lot of ads in it, the kind you'd expect to see in a comic book, sort of (like "Be a Locksmith" or "How I made a Fortune at the Track"); in some places, every other page is an ad. They've also apparently tried to save money on artwork by using pieces twice (like once in red and once in blue, and maybe trimmed a little differently). Good grief, I just looked at the ad for the magazine itself; let me quote: "For those tens of millions of people who thrill to the adventures seen on SPACE: 1999, and are still gripped by the exploits of STAR TREK, here is a new science-fiction magazine... ODYSSEY." They may be in worse trouble than I thought. I also note from the ads that this same publisher puts out UFO REPORT, which looks like the kind of thing that gives UFO investigators a bad name. In all, it's not a terrible magazine, but there's plenty of room for improvement (I don't think Ben Bova is sweating too hard). I probably should have said something nice about ODYSSEY; I'm trying to sell them some stories...

Speaking of prozines and Ben Bova, the only thing I've had time to read out of the August ANALOG

[SUCH DILIGENCE, I'M STILL ON JUNE. --Jan]

is Joseph Goodavage's interview with Carl Sagan. It stunk. The first half consisted of a lot of almost hostile questions putting Sagan on the defensive for discrediting Immanuel Velikovsky's crack-pot theories; then Sagan had to defend Einstein's Theory of Relativity to Goodavage, who acted like he had never heard of it before. They only occasionally touched on anything interesting. Why didn't they talk about the Viking mission to Mars, or some other subject Sagan could wax eloquent on?

[BUT WE MUST MAKE EXCEPTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS WITH EARTHBOUND IMAGINATIONS. GOOD GRIEF. I SAW A TELEVISION PROGRAM WHERE A SCIENTIST WITH THE SPACE PROGRAM SAID THAT PEOPLE, SINCE 1965, HAVE GRADUALLY COME TO ACCEPT THE NOTION OF LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT PEOPLE HE'S SPEAKING ABOUT BUT MOST OF US ACCEPTED IT LONG BEFORE THAT!! --Jan]

As this is being written, the 34th Worldcon is not far away, and that means another set of Hugos will be given away soon (since this zine is scheduled for distribution a said con, perhaps by the time you get around to reading this, they will have already been awarded; so then you can check my predictions.

[WHO WOULD PRESUME TO DOUBT YOU? --Jan]

My favorite among the novels is THE FOREVER WAR, by Joe Haldeman; and I think it will win. THE COMPUTER CONNECTION by Alfred Bester (which, unfortunately, I haven't read) also has a chance.

[I LIKE IT BETTER. IT'S DECIDEDLY THE MOST HUMANISTIC OF THE GROUP. --Jan]

The other nominees: INFERNO, by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle (whose NOTE IN GOD'S EYE lost out last year to THE DISPOSSESSED; I think enough fans were upset by INFERNO's ending to just about put it out of the running); THE STOCHASTIC MAN, by Robert Silverberg (good, but...); and DOORWAYS IN THE SAND, by Roger Zelazny (which I haven't gotten around to yet).

Among the Novellas, the only one I've read is Larry Niven's "ARM:" it could win, but of course, I'm on rather shakey ground here.

[I'D BE ON PRETTY SHAKY GROUND TOO IF I SAW SOMEONE WALKING AROUND USING AN ARM I COULDN'T SEE. I MUST ADMIT, HOWEVER, THAT NIVEN DEMONSTRATES THE USEFULNESS OF SUCH AN APPENDAGE QUITE EFFECTIVELY IN HIS STORIES ABOUT GIL HAMLIN. --Jan]

I've read three of the nominated novelettes: "...and Seven Times Never Kill a Man," by George R. R. Martin (I remember reading this one; when I had finished it, I looked around on the floor for the pages I thought I must have dropped (I didn't find any); I don't think I'm a terribly imperceptive reader, but something must have gotten past me; I sure didn't get it); "Tinker," by Jerry Pournelle, and "Borderland of Sol,"

by Larry Niven: if it's a fight between these two, it'll be close, but I give Niven the edge; however, it's quite possible that Ursula K. LeGuin will grab this one for her "New Atlantis," which unfortunately, I haven't read.

"Creston," by Harlan Ellison is the only nominee for short story I've read; I wouldn't want to bet against Harlan, but again, I can't make any firm predictions.

For dramatic presentations, I think A BOY AND HIS DOG has just about got it sewn up; I'd give DARK STAR an outside chance, and even MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL is possible (considering that last year, YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN won (and the year before, SLEEPER)). ROLLERBALL can be written off, and I've never heard of THE CAPTURE (a slide show); so my money is on AHEAD.

[I DON'T AGREE WITH YOU ON THE STATUS OF ROLLERBALL. I THOUGHT IT WAS A PRETTY GOOD FILM. NOT ONLY DID IT PORTRAY A FUTURE WORLD WHICH WAS A POSSIBLE OUTGROWTH OF CERTAIN FEATURES OF OUR OWN CULTURE, BUT IT ALSO OFFERED A POSITIVE INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN CAPABILITIES. HERE, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT IT AS I SEE IT.

ROLLERBALL USED THE THEME OF SPORTS AS A RELEASE FOR MASS FRUSTRATIONS. IT WAS MADE TO SEEM A POPULAR RELEASE FOR DISSATISFACTION IN MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT THE ROMAN GAMES WERE DURING THE LATER, DECADENT PERIOD OF ROME. THE CAMERA FLASHED INTO THE AUDIENCE AT ROLLERBALL GAMES IN ORDER TO SHOW THE GAME FOR WHAT IT REALLY WAS: A PLACE WHERE OTHERWISE REVOLUTIONARY EMOTIONS COULD BE CHANNELLED AWAY FROM THE ELITE CLASS WHO CAUSED THEM. WHEN A FEW LARGE CORPORATIONS CONTROL THE ENTIRE WORLD, ANOTHER LOGICAL EXTENSION OF THE CONDITIONS IN PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY, THE GREATER MASSES FOR WHICH THE SYSTEM OFFERS NO OTHER FORM OF SATISFACTION COULD FIND EMOTIONAL RELEASE IN A SPORT LIKE ROLLERBALL. THE SPECTATOR SPORT ALLOWS ONE TO FEEL AN ARTIFICIAL SENSE OF VICTORY AND DEFEAT. FOOTBALL IS POPULAR IN OUR OWN CULTURE FOR THIS REASON.

FREDERICK POHL FIRST WROTE ABOUT THE POSSIBLE SPREAD OF CORPORATE CONTROL BUT ROLLERBALL DIFFERS FROM HIS WORK IN ITS CONCENTRATION ON THE GAME OF ROLLERBALL AS IT FUNCTIONS IN THE SOCIETY AND ITS ALMOST EXCLUSIVE CONCENTRATION ON THE LIFE OF THE PROTAGONIST. THE PROTAGONIST'S TRANSFORMATION IS THE MOST DYNAMIC FEATURE OF ROLLERBALL.

A PERCEPTIVE VIEWER WATCHES THIS ROLLERBALL HERO CAST ASIDE HIS MANY INCORRECT PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRECISE REASON FOR HIS UNHAPPINESS UNTIL HE GETS TO THE HEART OF THE POWER STRUCTURE IN HIS SOCIETY. HIS FIRST STEP IN THIS PROCESS IS THE REALIZATION THAT HE WAS NEVER SUPPOSED TO GET AS GOOD AT WINNING AS HE IS. HE CASTS ASIDE ANOTHER FALSE PERCEPTION WHEN HE SEES HIS FORMER WIFE AS SHE REALLY IS: THE CREATURE THOSE IN POWER HAVE MADE OF HER. SHE APPEARS LATE IN THE MOVIE AS THE BRIBE OFFERED BY THOSE IN POWER WHO WISH TO ENTICE HIM OUT OF CONTINUING HIS TOO SUCCESSFUL ROLLERBALL CAREER. THIS IS HOW HE DISCOVERS THAT SHE IS HAPPY WITH HER POSITION AS THE WIFE OF SOMEONE MORE IMPORTANT AND PRESTIGIOUS THAN HIMSELF. HE WIPES THE TAPES AND FILMS HE HAD KEPT OF THEIR PAST TOGETHER AND WITH THAT ACT WIPES HER FROM HIS MEMORY. IT IS NOT HER LOSS BUT HIS ENFORCED SUBSERVIENCE TO A CORRUPTING POWER STRUCTURE WHICH HE NOW SEES AS THE SOURCE OF HIS UNHAPPINESS.

THE THIRD AND FINAL STEP TOWARDS REALIZATION IS MADE ON THE GAME FLOOR AS HE REALIZES WHY ROLLERBALL IS A RIGGED GAME. IT IS MEANT TO DECEIVE THE MASSES INTO BELIEVING IN THEIR OWN IMPOTENCE. THE PROTAGONIST AND HIS AUDIENCE SEEM TO MAKE THIS REALIZATION AT THE SAME INSTANT AS ON THE GAME FLOOR HE REFUSES TO KILL THE LAST MEMBER OF THE OPPOSING TEAM. HE NOW KNOWS THAT HIS ENEMY IS NOT THE OTHER TEAM BUT THE ELITE CLASS LEAD BY HIS BOSS. THEY HAVE CREATED AND MAINTAIN ROLLERBALL BECAUSE THEY CAN INTERPOSE IT BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE ANGER AND FRUSTRATION OF THE PEOPLE THEY MANIPULATE. THE PROTAGONIST SCORES A POINT WITH HIS STEEL GAME-BALL INSTEAD OF KILLING THE MEMBER OF THE OTHER TEAM. THEN THE CAMERA SHIFTS TO THE BOSS'S BOX AS HE RUSHES OUT OF IT AND TO THE NOW SEETHING AUDIENCE AS THEY BURST OUT AFTER HIM IN WHAT COULD EASILY BE SEEN AS REVOLUTIONARY ZEAL.

ROLLERBALL IS EASILY SEEN AS A PORTRAYAL OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS WHICH BECOMES THE NEXUS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF MASS CONSCIOUSNESS. ROLLERBALL WAS HUMANISTICALLY AND IDEOLOGICALLY EDIFYING BECAUSE OF THIS ACHIEVEMENT. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE LATTER WILL BE REMEMBERED FAR LONGER. --Jan]

Ahem, as I was saying about the Hugo nominations...

The same nominees as usual for best professional editor (Baen, Bova, Fernan, Silverberg, White), and I reckon Ben will grab this one again.

The nominees for best professional artist are: George Barr, Vincent Di Fate, Steve Fabian, Frank Kelly Freas, and Rick Sternbach. Personally, I like Sternbach, but Freas has won so many, I'd guess he'll get it again.

The nominees for fan artist are: Grant Canfield, Phil Foglio, Tim Kirk, Bill Rotsler and Jim Shall (where's Jeanne?); I'm very unsure here, but I think Kirk might win this one again, too.

Charlie Brown, Don D'Amassa, Dick Geis, Don Thompson and Susan Wood are nominated for best fan writer; I seem to be very conservative in my betting, because I'm picking last year's winner here, too: Dick Geis.

For best fanzine, ALGOL, DON-O-SAUR, LOCUS, OUTWORLDS, and SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW are nominated; it has to be between SFR and ALGOL, and I'll pick the former.

The John W. Campbell Award is presented by Conde Nast to best new writer; this year's nominees are Arsen Darnay, M. A. Foster, Tom Reamy, John Varley and Joan Vinge. I can't say that I've read something by each of them, or would remember if I had; but I'll play a hunch and say Arsen Darnay (with Varley as the second choice).

The other award voted on at the same time as the Hugos is the Gandalf Award (presented by Lin Carter and SAGA) for life's work in fantasy. Poul Anderson, L. Sprague de Camp, Ursula K. LeGuin, C. S. Lewis and Andre Norton are nominated. This is a toughy; one has to consider not only who deserves it the most, but who will the fans more readily vote for (part of science-fictiondom or C. S. Lewis); cringingly, I'll say Lewis, with the thought that the other four will be on next year's ballot.

And one final thought: the Viking lander was originally scheduled to land July 4th, to help mark the 200th anniversary of Declaration of Independence; the first choice for the landing site had to be dropped, and the landing postponed. As of writing, it is scheduled to land on July 20th, which is perhaps just as appropriate, being the seventh anniversary of the first footsteps on the moon. A thousand years from now, which will be more important date, July 4th or July 20th?

[I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE LATTER WILL BE REMEMBERED FAR LONGER. I'D HATE TO SPECULATE ABOUT THE OTHER CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD EXIST IN A SOCIETY OF THE DISTANT FUTURE WHERE JULY FOURTH WAS A MAJOR EVENT. WORLD CULTURE MUST BECOME LESS, NOT MORE, NATIONALISTIC. —Jan]

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

created for some of her other SF novels and, though the reader need not have read the others to understand this novel, nevertheless, he/she can experience the added excitement of recognizing references to the same future universe or Future History in all her novels. The Future History is the next step in the development of SF literature. It is a step towards more freedom of expression for the author who can thus present a more complete picture of a future world with a few phrases than earlier writers could hope to do with several paragraphs. The modern writer has all of SF to call upon for his/her future setting. The creator of a Future History has this and his/her own future construct to invoke as well. And, something which is also very important to SF authors may prompt them to create a Future History. Future Histories are very popular with SF fans.

The Future History as a phenomenon, a subset of SF literature, is here to stay. Larry Niven pointed out its popularity in the introduction to his anthology: TALES OF KNOWN SPACE. All of us as readers of SF have experienced the thrill of recognition in seeing the recurrence of an idea or theory, but this becomes even more intense when we recognize and piece together whole systems for a possible future across several novels. Neither the pleasure of Future Histories nor that of SF could exist without the support of the long history of Science Fiction Literature.



# The Search for a Humane Heterotopia: Visionary Experiences in Contemporary Science Fiction

Thomas J. Murn

The ability to interpret different realities in variform and discriminative ways has long been a primary and identifying characteristic of speculative literature. From Aristophanes to Thomas More, men sought out the alternatives which their imaginations could offer them, and set down their visions in fictional form.

Speculative literature, before the time when arbitrary literary boundaries had been established, was considered to be a perfectly worthwhile literary endeavor; and many authors who explored the boundaries of human experience were read and criticized side by side with the most time- and attitude-bound period pieces. Jonathan Swift, for example, was a relatively well-known member of the literary community in the British Isles, and "Gulliver's travels" and "A Modest Proposal" were read and accepted as the trenchant commentaries that they were.

The mania for classification seemed to come with the second wave of the industrial revolution, around the turn of the century. Not only were elements classified in a periodic Table, and species placed in Families and Genera at about this time, but literature began to fracture into Serious Novels, Romances, Mysteries... James Gunn has attributed a large part of the rapid change in printed fiction around this time to the extension of mandatory education to the children of all citizens in the United States, and parts of Europe. A reading public was created in the illiterate masses, but it would not be a market for the works of Dickens or Dante. More accessible printed matter was required; and thus popular fiction (and popular music) were born!

Around 1900-1910, numerous 'specialized' magazines began to appear, primarily in the United States. Printed on cheap paper, they came to be known as "pulp" magazines. They were initially centered around the detective story and the romance; though Wells



and Verne had been writing 'science fiction' for decades, the first sf magazine did not appear until 1926.

The pulp magazine medium was an excellent, if segregated, culture for the founding of the field; and the separation of sf from the 'mainstream' of literature has continued, largely unbroken, until the 1970's. The pulp, pop appearance that was given to the field by Gernsback's AMAZING STORIES and its imitators kept away many serious writers, and those who did choose to publish sf (appropriately labeled as such on the cover) were often forced to compromise aesthetic standards to satisfy an editor who was more interested in mass appeal than symbolic or stylistic imperatives.

But sf, from its infancy, has carried on a tradition of literature which has its roots in a particularly human and humane aspect of the human experience. From classical times, people have been searching for a 'perfect' society--one in which there was no misery or hardship, where equality and justice were honored by all and implemented with similar values and similar effects.

But there was always a catch to the classical utopia. Some authors had misbehaviors shown to the border, or worse yet, put to death. This intolerance of variation was in essence a negation of the term 'utopia.'

Most serious sf has always, if not depicted, then at least aspired to, a condition of the human species which was benign, tolerant, and understanding. Asimov's FOUNDATION trilogy depicted the human race as being saved from 30,000 years of barbarism by the visionary insight ('the science of psycho-history') of one man, who valued a utopia-like state of civilization above all else. But sf, for all its scope, often fell short of a practical utopian-society construct. Often, human nature was used as an excuse for a society which held the promise of attaining a utopia-like state; assuming that, like the poor, the maladjusted would always be with us. Other authors simply left loose ends lying, or for the sake of an imperative of plot, left a 'fatal flaw' in the society's conception.

But sf has grown and matured over the years; and Samuel R. Delany has introduced a new term in his most recent novel which may signify a 'new wave' washing over sf: heterotopia.

Delany apparently saw the possibilities of a 'heterotopia' long ago. He wrote in a 1968 essay: "Academic sf criticism, fixed in the historical approach, wastes a great deal of time trying to approach modern sf works in Utopian/Dystopian terms--works whose value is precisely in that they are a reaction to such one-sided thinking."<sup>2</sup> Delany goes on to make a statement which is only today becoming a reality: "Modern sf has...gone beyond this irreconcilable Utopian/Dystopian conflict to produce a more fruitful model against which to compare human development."<sup>3</sup> But the best 'models' had not been conceived of when Delany wrote his article.

Sf in the forties and fifties was a more isolated field of literature than it is today. There was almost no formal criticism, in or outside of the field; the "pulp" had persevered, and remained a major source of income for sf writers, despite the magazines' consciously lurid appearance and consistently low editorial and managerial quality. Nonetheless, some major writers, possibly realizing the potential of the genre, devoted a large part of their output to sf during this time. Writers like Theodore Sturgeon produced consistently good, if not remarkable, sf. Several authors became widely known outside of the field--Issac Asimov, mainly for his nonfictional scientific books; Arthur C. Clarke and Alfred Bester, who in a less repressive and more experimental time might have been powerful (and famous); and Robert Heinlein, who was for years to sf what the Beatles were for pop music.

Heinlein bears closer scrutiny, not only because his books became widely known, but because he is a prime example of the moral and philosophical constraints which stopped sf from becoming any more than, as Austrian critic Hans Rottensteiner wrote of Heinlein, "chewing gum for the vulgar."<sup>4</sup>

Rottensteiner goes on to describe Heinlein as naive, a fascist, a narcissist, a suppressed homosexual, and an authoritarian. While Heinlein did indeed populate his created universes with simplistic and prejudiced characters, much of his work was a basis for the vision which sf has come to encompass. Alexei Panshin, perhaps the best critical authority on Heinlein, sees the breadth of Heinlein's imagination as

providing an expanded concept of the universe and humanity's position in it. Heinlein and his contemporaries postulated an ever-growing variety of universe shapes and sizes, with Humankind as a species fitting in at most places on a scale of quality and quantity. Fanshin calls this a period of "symbol invention, the defining and testing of a symbolic vocabulary."<sup>5</sup> Particularly because of the in-group nature of sf, Heinlein and his treatments of future worlds were read not only by most sf fans, but by sf writers who were able to draw upon an ever larger pool of possibilities, which most sf readers would also be familiar with.

This pool of possibilities continued growing, rather placidly, until the mid-1960's. The "real" changes that sf reflected through this period were more often changes in the "hard" sciences than literary or philosophical developments. But changes were to become pervasive in each of these fields by the mid-1960's; and sf, which could at any rate be labeled a form of popular culture, would have to begin to reflect the changes to avoid economic extinction.

But more than mere adjustment to scientific developments began to take place in sf. The changes in sf began to show in new stylistic forms, new perspectives on morality. Some sf authors began to write stories reflecting a disenchantment, and even a distrust, of contemporary science. Sf's Old Guard was quick to notice the qualitative changes; the terms "new wave" and "old wave" were born sometime during the mid-1960's.

Sf had long been known for its rather exclusively young, white, male audience; so it was not surprising that when sf's readership began to grow up and go to college in the Sixties, the radicalism which they found and extended to all parts of their lives they would search for in sf. Heinlein's STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND gained a certain reputation as an 'underground' classic, but its fame was due more to an empathy with the quasi-religious free-love and-money communes envisioned by Heinlein than any massive symbolic statement. In 1965 and for years following, there just was not any clearly identifiable "new wave" sf. There were authors who greatly improved upon traditional sf themes; I will mention several of the authors and their works, which, at one time or another, were claimed to be "new wave." But beginning around 1969, a minority of writers began to produce science fiction which could definitively be called a "new wave," if not the "new wave" of legend.

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John Brunner is an English science fiction writer, but he has attached himself to America by topic and symbol in his work, and also by his participation in American fandom (which does not seem to migrate overseas with the same ease as, for example, chess interests). Brunner, like many a struggling sf writer, wrote some dreadful space-opera early in his career. But by 1965, he had produced SQUARES OF THE CITY, a perceptive account of the game of politics as played in a South American country in the not so distant future—written from the viewpoint of an American technical consultant who inexorably becomes involved in the power struggles.

Brunner's most well-known and critically accepted novel, STAND ON ZANZIBAR, was published in 1969. Brunner uses four general subsections to make up the novel, and the sections vary in subject matter, tone and general relevance, but as a whole present a varied and encompassing picture of the Earth of the 1990's. Norman Spinrad has written a critical essay comparing the techniques which Brunner uses in STAND ON ZANZIBAR to cinematic methods of film editing, closeups and quick pans (one of the book's sections is titled "Tracking with Closeups").<sup>6</sup>

Brunner's followup to STAND ON ZANZIBAR, THE SHEEP LOOK UP (1972), did not employ the same methods, and suffered as a result. The latter book is a vision of a late Twentieth century America with everything gone haywire that possibly could—plagues, martial law, black marketing, sputtering electrical power, water shortages, civilization in general buckling under.

But most of the disasters contained in THE SHEEP LOOK UP had been, if not delineated, at least suggested by earlier sf. Though Brunner was claimed by "new wave" advocates, his popularity might be attributed to that part of modern culture which likes to brood on the hints of disastrous occurrences. Rumors of toilet paper shortages have made good copy in newspapers; and, unfortunately, Brunner's disaster novel bears a slight relation to such reportage.

Roger Zelazny is another sf writer who rose to prominence (in sf) during the mid- and later 1950's. Zelazny won a Hugo in 1966 for his short novel "...AND CALL ME CONRAD," but his best novel and biggest success to date remains LORD OF LIGHT (which also won a Hugo, in 1969). LORD OF LIGHT details the adventures of a group of Gods as they attempt to economically control an alien planet, and fight with Demons, and among themselves. Zelazny gradually lets slip that the 'Gods' are merely quasi-gods, made immortal by an advanced technology, though the demons that they fight are 'real' spirits, endemic to the planet.

Zelazny's characters are always clever, and usually exceptionally confident in themselves. The confidence would seem to rule out any vision of a multiplex consciousness; but I believe the confidence comes only from a slightly better informed viewpoint of the characters vs. humanity in general. A Twentieth-century person would be more confident of his real position in the universe, because of the enhancement of the reservoir of scientific knowledge, than a First-century Roman, who considered anything beyond Punt on the African coast Terra Incognita. But the Twentieth-century person, in his supposed state of sophistication, should also be more humble, knowing the boundaries of his knowledge; and so Zelazny's characters act with a sometimes overlarge quantity of compassion and sympathy for those less informed or less well off than they. But when they run into their own metaphysical Terra Incognita, they react with an insatiable desire to know, to find out, to understand--and they attempt to push their way through the chaos which is the unknown--though with the feeling that they'd rather be somewhere else, like drinking wine and chatting with friends, or practicing their fencing. It is the acute humanity of Zelazny's characters, in all their arrogance and power, which makes his novels successful.

Zelazny is noted for using mythological structures of classical descent, particularly in his earlier novels. His most experimental novel, CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS, used Egyptian mythological figures, and some symbolic paraphernalia. But Zelazny has been criticized by several critics for using the mythologies (Hindu in LORD OF LIGHT, Greek in THIS IMMORTAL) without incorporating most philosophical overtones of the mythologies. It could be said that Zelazny used the form, without the substance, of the myths; and it could also be said that most of the symbolism behind such types of classical mythology would be grossly irrelevant to a reader of the 1970's. At any rate, Zelazny must feel unconcerned over such arguments; he is a "teller of tales," and retains his own, unique way of envisioning universes. Zelazny stated in an interview that "it would be easy to write a very good book by consciously avoiding [experimentation], by writing around and slicking over my deficiencies...but then someone would notice that [my books] were sounding more and more alike..."<sup>7</sup> Zelazny, like his characters, is willing to challenge the unknown. A writer with such integrity is rare in the sf field, as well as in contemporary fiction in general. Zelazny continues to publish novels and short stories; and the final verdict on his singular portrayals of people and worlds will not be returned for, hopefully, some time.

I feel compelled to mention Ron Goulart at this time. Although he is not widely known, especially outside of sf circles, Goulart's wit and perception set him above most modern sf writers. Goulart writes short, satirical novels, usually about some sort of space-detective running down a case for some kind of partially-benevolent Galactic police group. Goulart manages to parody almost everything, especially manifestations of the pop culture; ridiculous stereotypes, space-opera with too-clever and too-brawny heroes and bubble-brained women, rock music (such as the "Monterey Mechanical Jazz Festival"), bureaucracies, red tape, spies, too-fantastic techno-inventions resembling Flash Gordon gimmickry... Goulart's wit sometimes waxes acid, but his dogged persuaance of a particularly campy joke or pun is reminiscent of Thomas Pynchon in his sillier moods.

But Goulart, probably intentionally, limits the scope of his novels. If Reality is a big joke, then Goulart may be considered prophetic. Until then, he remains a science-fictional gadfly, a fictional critic and commentator on the more ludicrous inventions contained in the science-fictional symbolic vocabulary, which Heinlein and his contemporaries contributed to so voluminously.

There are several other authors who took the first wavering steps in the late 1960's towards a reconstruction of sf--J. G. Ballard, Brian Aldiss, even Harlan Ellison and his DANGEROUS VISIONS anthologies. But I would now like to consider two authors and three books which I feel may represent the possibilities inherent in modern speculative fiction which other authors have only hinted at. There are very few flaws to be found in the subjective or objective realms of these books--CAMP CONCENTRATION, DHALGREN, TRITON; and their authors--Thomas M. Disch and Samuel R. Delany--have created true visionary experiences, and in the context of science fiction as well.

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Thomas Disch began writing sf in the 1960's. His most well-known work to date has been CAMP CONCENTRATION, but he has also written two novels (BLACK ALICE and 334), as well as numerous short stories. CAMP CONCENTRATION sold few copies on its initial press run; to date it has sold fewer than 75,000 copies. Yet it is a powerful work, definitely sf in its has-not-happened-yet tense, tightly constructed yet accessible. The novel is one of the best examples of a true "new wave" in sf: it employs "various bits of technological discourse, (real, pseudo, or speculative) to redeem other sentences from the merely metaphorical, or even the meaningless, for purposes of denotative description/presentation of incident."<sup>8</sup> CAMP CONCENTRATION may also be considered somewhat of a precedent setter in sf in the casual relevance of a myriad of literary sources to the thematic construction of the novel. Disch himself lists some of his sources in an introduction to the second part of the book: "the Bible, Aquinas, the Kabbalah, various alchemic texts, including the second part of THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE, Richard (and George) Wagner, Bunyan, Milton, de Lautreamont, Rilke, Rimbaud, and any number of modern English poets."<sup>9</sup> Disch curiously omits one of his major influences, Thomas Mann.

Louis Sacchetti is the protagonist of CAMP CONCENTRATION, who is thrown in jail sometime in the near American future for being a 'concie' (conscientious objector) to some unspecified cold war inexorably becoming hot. The story begins as Sacchetti's diary of prison life; he is a poet in the midst of gaining repute in his field, and the prison is a drastic unsettling of his life and the rising order in it. But Sacchetti (perhaps an amalgam of 'Sacco and Vanzetti') is moved to a 'special' underground prison, a kind of research facility jointly run by the military and unspecified large private corporations. His first reason for joining the group of human guinea pigs, he was informed, was to report in writing on the activities, the hobbies and distractions which the subjects of the experimentation were occupying themselves with. Camp Archimedes, Sacchetti found, was thoroughly stocked with articles for any kind of activity--a stage and costumes for plays, a complete library; and the subjects of the experimentation, though not allowed aboveground, were allowed a complete access to the facilities.

Sacchetti was not told much more about the nature of the experimentation; a doctor tells him the Camp is for "an investigation of learning processes." But when he begins to speak with the 'inmates,' he discovers that they are simple-looking men who turn out to be geniuses, and also to be very sick.

Sacchetti soon discovers the truth: the enhanced-learning program is based on a virus--a mutant of *Spirochaeta pallida*, the initiator of syphilis. The germ accelerates learning to an astonishing degree--but it also kills the infected subject in a short period of time.

Finally, Sacchetti himself is infected with the germ; his subjective record-keeping (which is the text of the book) turns into a morasse of fantastic speculations, brooding, quotes from suddenly-interesting obscure novels which were read in minutes. One of the inmates tells Sacchetti that "genius is an infinite capacity for pain,"<sup>10</sup> and another says "my mind is flying off on tangents, into vortices, trying to tie all the loose ends of the universe into a single knot of consciousness. It doesn't fucking stop..."<sup>11</sup>

The book ends with appropriate duality; some of the experiments' subjects, using their accelerated learning abilities, constructed a "mind reciprocator" to remove their consciousnesses from their dying bodies, and occupy healthy ones. The inmates slowly occupy the bodies of Camp personnel, and take over the operation. Several in-

mates find moral objections to taking over another person's body; these die as the germ takes over their bodies. But one of the resurrected subjects hides the 'reciprocator' from Sacchetti until the last possible moment, so that he is spared the agonizing ethical decision.

Sacchetti says at the end of the novel, after his transferal to the body of a guard, "the poison has had not two effects—genius and death—but one. Call it by what name you will."<sup>12</sup> The thematic power of the ending, and the questions that it represents, are obvious. But the remarkable fact about the novel is its excellence and depth of information in the context of an sf novel. Disch's hero is on a search, and he happens to find himself in a position to examine more possibilities, good and bad and in between, than most less knowledgeable people. On the basis of this novel alone, Thomas Disch should have established himself as a primary force in the field of contemporary speculative literature.

Samuel R. Delany published his first novel at the age of 18, a trilogy for Ace called THE FALL OF THE TOWERS. By 1966, he had won a Nebula award for his novel BABEL-17. In 1968 he founded and edited a speculative fiction (and art) quarterly paperback magazine called QUARK, which was considerably more avant-garde in format and material than most magazines and anthologies of those years which dealt in sf. There was also some serious criticism in the QUARK series (four issues were published), the best article being one written by Delany himself called "Critical Methods: Speculative Fiction." He also wrote a critical article for SF REVIEW in 1969 called "About Five Thousand, One Hundred and Seventy-five Words" which is attaining classical status in the field of modern sf criticism. In the essay Delany starts with a temporal distinction between speculative literature and other forms of writing—things that happened, which Delany calls the "level of subjunctivity at which journalism takes place." For naturalistic fiction, "a blanket indicative tension" indicates a definition: things that could have happened. Fantasy would be things that could not happen; and sf operates in the realm of things that have not happened. "Events that have not happened, yet which still must be interpreted in terms of the physically explainable..."<sup>13</sup> "[The sf writer must] maneuver the existing tensions between words and objects."<sup>14</sup> Delany has proven that he knows the inner workings of his chosen field. What remained for him to do, in the 1970's, was to give sf a fictional example of the kind which would reflect and support his critical perspective.

NEXT TIME: A CONTINUATION, WITH SPECIFICS  
ON DEALGREN AND TRITON

footnotes ---

- <sup>1</sup> James Gunn, "Science Fiction and the Mainstream" in SF: TODAY AND TOMORROW (NY: Penguin, 1975), p. 184.
- <sup>2</sup> Samuel R. Delany in "Critical Methods: Speculative Fiction" in QUARK #1 (NY: Paperback Library, 1968), p. 189.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- <sup>4</sup> Quote cited by Alexei and Cory Fopshin in "Reading Heinlein Subjectively," in THE ALIEN CRISIS #216 (1973).
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- <sup>6</sup> Norman Spinrad, "STAND ON ZAREBAR: The Novel as Film," from SF: THE OTHER SIDE OF REALISM (Bowling Green University Press, 1971).
- <sup>7</sup> Delany interviewed in THE ALIEN CRISIS #216.
- <sup>8</sup> Delany, "About Five Thousand, One Hundred and Seventy-five Words," in SF: THE OTHER SIDE OF REALISM (Bowling Green University Press, 1971).
- <sup>9</sup> Thomas Disch, CAMP CONCENTRATION (Arv., NY, 1971) p. 111.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.
- <sup>13</sup> Delany, *op. cit.*, "About 9475 words."
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*





# Paradox Lost

John Bartelt

If someone with a strange accent should come up to you and start asking you questions about history, answer him; he probably isn't a nut. Your replies don't have to be extensive, just tell him who won the Civil War, or who was president during World War II, or whether or not Kennedy was assassinated. But he probably won't be popping up around here again for several more years—not until after the turn of the century, at least.

I met him one evening not long ago.

I was sitting near the lake, over in the park, just watching the ducks, when he came over, sat down next to me and said hello. I returned some noncommittal greeting, and after a bit of hesitation, he began, "You know, I was just thinking about something, and I can't seem to get it out of my head. The battle of Gettysburg, that was a decisive battle; what do you think went wrong there?"

You mean for the Confederates?"

"Ah, yeah, yeah."

Well, I've never studied history much, but I seem to remember somebody, one of the generals, delayed his charge, and that was one of the main reasons the Confederates lost."

"Yeah. The Confederates lost." He mull'd this over for a minute before asking something about World War I. Then he had a couple more questions, always about some minor point, but like he was just interested in a more general question. Finally I pointed out to him that there was a library a couple blocks away, and he could find out everything he wanted to know over there. He said, "Yes, I know, but I find it's faster to do it this way at first." There was another pause while he scrutinized my face, and then said, "You're Christopher Donaldson, aren't you?" I replied in the affirmative, while trying to figure out where he knew me from. "And you read science fiction, right?" I gave him another yes, still trying to place him. "OK, you're Christopher E. Donaldson, you were born December 13, 1960, you have one sister; you married Carol Styznik, and you have two sons, named William and Robert." He was correct on every point.

"Where have we met?" I asked.

"Tomorrow."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I met you on a different timeline just before I jumped to



...and one day it may happen to YOU!

this one; I also jumped backwards a day; so I met you tomorrow." I gave him the blank look he deserved, and which he was expecting. "I don't usually sit down and explain this, but you've helped me in a number of timelines, so I will; also, you've read science fiction, and that'll make it easier. You've read Niven, if I'm not mistaken."

"Larry Niven—yes." He was a science fiction writer back in the 60's, 70's and 80's.

"Then you're familiar with the theory of branching timelines; he used it in a number of stories."

"Well he wasn't the first--"

"No, nor the last; but you do understand the concept?"

"Yeah. It goes something like, every time one makes a decision, there's an alternate universe where it's made the other way."

"Right. In effect, every time you make a decision, the universe you're in splits, so that the decision is made both ways—or all possible ways."

"OK. And you're trying to tell me you're from an alternate universe, right?"

"Right!"

"Sure. So what're you doing here?"

"I'm trying to find my way home."

"You mean you can't find your timeline?" I was acting like I believed this!

"That's part of it. See, not only do I go sidewise in time, but also forward and back."

"Uh huh"

"I'm originally from the year 2056. I was working on a top secret government project—a time machine. At that time, I had never read any science fiction, but I thought up myself what's usually called the 'Grandfather Paradox.' You probably know what I mean. Suppose I can travel in time. Suppose I go back in time, to when my grandfather is a little boy; suppose I kill him. Then my father is never born, and I'm never born. But if I wasn't born, then I couldn't have gone back in time. If I didn't go back in time, my grandfather would've lived, my father would've been born, I would've been born, I would've killed my grandfather, and so on.

"I don't like paradoxes," he continued. "I had to find out what happened. So I stole a time machine."

"Just stole a time machine, eh. I'd love to see it," I said, regaining my skepticism

"Yeah, sure, here." He pulled up his shirt and exposed a metallic network crisscrossing his chest. He also pointed out a peculiar belt buckle, which contained the controls. Very impressive. "I figured I could return to a moment just a second after I had left, so that it would never be missed."

"A time belt. I've read a story--"

"I know; you told me tomorrow. But it's logical for a compact, one-man time machine?"

"So what did you do, go back and kill your grandfather?"

"No, I had too many fond memories of both of them. But there was this great-grandmother..."

"Ah ha. Why didn't you go way back, and hit a great-great-great-great-grandparent?"

"I was worried about time inertia, or the hysteresis of time, as they call it sometimes. If I went too far back, the guy I hit could be replaced by almost anyone, and they'd have a child who'd marry the right person, and so on, so that things would become more normal as time went on. Then someone almost exactly like me would be born anyway. I wanted to keep the probability of that low."

"So what happened?"

"I went back and killed her. The universe didn't come to an end, and I wasn't dead, so I jumped back to 2056. Everyone was speaking Spanish."

"Huh?"

"That's what I said. I couldn't see how knocking off one ancestor did that, so I went back in time again. I found a different past, too. For some reason, the Spaniards had retained control of large portions of North America; I think it stemmed from the British winning the Revolutionary War, or something like that. Well, I jumped around some more. I finally found a past that was pretty similar to my own—which is pretty similar to yours, too. That's when I ran across the Niven book. I finally figured out what had happened. You see, the universe really does branch every time you make a

decision. When I went back in time, I just followed my own branch down—so I got into my own past. But when I tried to get back up, I just got thrown into any random future—it didn't even have to be a branch of the universe I was in. Well, anyway, that's when I solved the Grandfather Paradox. When I killed her, my great-grandmother, I had to decide to do it; so I also decided not to, on some other timeline. And on that timeline, or at least on some of its branches, I'll be born, and I'll go back in time. You can't change the past when you go back in time, you can only make new futures."

"So now you're trying to find you way back home."

"Yeah. I found that by making short jumps, I could usually stay near the timeline I wanted; and I learned to jump sideways. Every now and then, though, I'll hit a strange line, and I'll have to make my way back. That's why I prefer to talk to people—it's faster than checking libraries. But that's what I'll eventually have to do, to narrow it down."

We both stood up, and I was about to bid him good evening; he had told a good story, and it was something to think about. He said, however, "Well, I've decided what my next jump will be, so good-bye. Perhaps I'll run into you or one of your analogues in the future." And with that, he touched his belt buckle and disappeared with a little pop.

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*A Room Alone*

Jeanne Gomoll

[THE FOLLOWING TALE IS EXCERPTED FROM AN ANTHOLOGY COLLECTED BY ELINNA TERWIR AS PART OF HER MASTER'S THESIS FOR THE UNIVERSITY ON PLANET BIBLIOS. WHILE DOING THE RESEARCH ON THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE TENTH CONCEPT\* TO MEMBERS OF TYPE 9 CULTURE GROUPS, SHE HAS FOUND AN INTERESTING AND VARIED DEPENDANCY OF MANY INDIVIDUALS IN SEVERAL CULTURES, (INCLUDING, AND ESPECIALLY, RESETTLED TERRAN GROUPS) UPON THE CULTS AND RITUAL QUESTS SURROUNDING REVELATIONS OF THE NATURE OF THE TENTH CONCEPT.]

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Floating within the inky liquid inside the globe, the numbers blink on and off with unconscious precision, never faltering, never slowing. Not really expecting to be able to break the thing, I nevertheless grasp my writing stylus with both hands and

\*The last of a series of basic language-genesis concepts, discovered to underlie, in some proportion, every human culture. The extent to which each culture is able to interact with another is rooted in the number of basic concepts they share and that thus can be translated and communicated. The ten concepts form the basis of the government of the Galactic Contract, administered by the Greton race, a Type 10 culture that rates new (or shifting) civilizations, and sets up intermediary communications between cultures of different concept accumulation.

plunge it downward onto the glassy surface of the Mortality Meter. The stylus splinters and dribbles red ink onto the unscathed globe, obscuring the reading for a moment and I panic, ripping at my shift to wipe the surface clean again.

1.22.7.19. clicks the Mortality Meter, unaware. One day, twenty-two hours, seven minutes, nineteen seconds (no, now fourteen seconds) are left to me.

There is no other way—I must leave the cubicle soon. And once I've gone, the room will murder me should I attempt to return, as the signals of my brain will no longer match the computer's record of the legal occupant. I try to think but can only hear the steady click, click, (crash, crash) of the Meter. Usually I'm not even conscious of the sound, but today...

Steady, steady...

A sheaf of papers lies upon the floating work table in front of me, and the pen that covered their pages with frantic scrawls lies broken in a pool of ink upon the floor. To calm myself, I begin to read over what I've written.

Is it self-protection and delusion [I wrote] that we all secretly harbor the illusion that effect follows cause, that we propel ourselves through the mainstream of life, that decisions and actions must change our worlds? How can I escape such a conclusion and still accept the knowledge that the obstacles in my life, the limitations, even my immanent death are but products of my own devices and desires?

But to begin at the beginning. There must be pattern.

How to begin?

To Erin, my daughter: the experiment was to be discontinued. My work would have ended but I could not leave the apparatus alone and did not have the time for you and your silent questions concerning the morality of the work. I never had enough time for you, and now it is too late. Perhaps I should be expressing thoughts of despair or motherly loquacity at the thought that I will never know you. But I regret only that you were born. You were only a name given to something that was once a part of me, now a useful point of view with which to organize a beginning. Things would be different now, but it's too late.

Work on the time machine went smoothly and with almost dreamlike swiftness: the difficulties were few, and those our teams overcame with casual clarity of vision. Doctor Vonne, who discovered the basic principle of transchronodimensional warps, was working with us, and in those early days we rushed towards the final stages with childlike impatience. There were no bungles, for the equipment was incredibly simple in design, the method straightforward. --At least it seemed so to me. Not being one of the scientists I was nevertheless totally convinced by Dr. Vonne. She would talk for hours, drawing upon reams of paper while she sketched out the utter simplicity of the model, the elegant balance of her formulas. I would wait outside the ring of technicians and scientists always swarming about her as she talked to them, her eyes sparkling and her hands animated as if each finger were pointing out a potentially exciting direction for study. She would nervously pull her short tangled red hair behind her head and then release it as her fingers became involved in the task of air-sketching her dreams.

And then she would turn to me and smile, pushing everyone out of the room so that we could talk. I would grin behind a solemn mask of professionalism, thinking how they must envy my private talks with Vonne. My role was basically one of a double agent. I reported to the congressional investigators and the mysterious "supervisor" whom we supposed represented the CIA, made out the routine reports and fended off the newspaper reporters. Officially, my job was to protect the project's "Top Secret" classification and keep news of our activities out of the media. My reports to congress were larded with technical doubletalk in order to discourage curiosity from that quarter. But primarily, and unofficially, my job entailed preventing anyone, including (and especially) that mysterious little supervisor from realizing the actual significance of our project. This last assignment I took on at the request of Dr. Vonne. It would be best, she said, that no government control this discovery. When it was ready, the whole world would know. At least weekly, sometimes daily, Dr. Vonne and I would have a conference, she helping me with the technical doubletalk I needed for my reports, though I got rather good at it towards the end, and I would sit enthralled as she eloquently condemned the

pomposity of those who make secrets necessary. I would return to my office with new energy and a self-righteous, crusading self-image. As always, I would carefully lock the door before I unlocked the files and slid out a page to begin work on.

Despite having worked with Vonne's team for over a year, I was scarcely on a first-name basis with half of the small staff of scientists and technicians. There was Donald of course. I remember coming home once, arguing fiercely with him. Donald, your father, was one of the scientists who early on had begun to express doubts about the project and even then would meet me after a day's work and argue that we were becoming dangerously obsessed, worrying so much about secrecy in order to prevent the paranoid image of bureaucracy and the CIA from clamping down on us and restricting our work, that we ourselves were becoming blind to the implications of the project. Donald and several others had found themselves in disagreement with Vonne on certain points. But I was perhaps the most obsessed of any of the teams; I accepted her judgements absolutely and I could not really listen to Donald's objections. As the work progressed, I learned to avoid certain topics of conversation with him, and at last to avoid first his glances, his eyes, and then him, and the project took more and more of my time. I came home less often, using the cot in my office, and finally requisitioned an adjoining office and moved in entirely. Nothing was more important than the project and my work, hiding the erupting, quaking events in the time machine lab under bland reports of barely evident progress and shadowy application assessments. It was necessary to keep two sets of equally detailed records, one true, one fictitious, and as Vonne and her scientists neared completion of their experiments and increased their requisitions for materials, the "official" records had to show a more discouraged, yet diversifying effort. At times, I found myself involved with the description of this fictitious picture of the project to the extent that I became depressed about its progress. This inevitably gave itself to confused misunderstandings in my interactions with the people around me.

"Any progress yet?" I would politely and sympathetically ask, and stutter out a confused explanation upon seeing the blank stare of the technician who was not aware of the year-long block he was supposedly engaged (expensively) in untangling.

It was so invigorating though--nothing went wrong. Perhaps it was the naive sense of trust in the seeming obviousness of Vonne's calculations that was shared by most of the project workers, or in the lack of complexity of the time machine itself that led us to so unwittingly dispense with normal precautions. It was foolish and was as much my fault as anyone else's.

I was oblivious to everything not directly connected with the time machine. I was seldom outside the laboratory grounds and lost all track of personal obligations. Your birth, Erin, was an early result of my absorption. There was no time to be aware of anything but the painstaking construction of the "official reality," statistic agreeing with time chart and progress reports, all hiding the secret "reality." --"What time did I have for personal "reality?" How long had it been since I'd stopped seeing Donald? How many periods had I missed? It was impossible to calculate. Donald lost an angry debate with Vonne. So, the project would continue to be classified Top Secret, and Donald left the project. I, outraged at his defection, accused him of wanting to sabotage our efforts, of having sabotaged me, and hysterically blamed your imminent birth on his maliciousness. I told him that I never wanted to see him again and after a conference with Vonne, listed him as a security risk.

After that, the work began to go a little slower, but by that point, it was only a matter of methodically working through the process, constructing and testing the time machine. Subterfuge became simpler, but I felt more at ease in the complex of buildings surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards. After Donald left I allowed myself even less interaction with those who worked in the building. With the exception of Dr. Vonne, they all began to look at me with suspicion and vague dislike, and I stayed in my offices most of the time. Terry and Sandy Vanderhelm left during that period, following Donald and his objections, and they too were listed as security risks. I carefully made no requests for information concerning their whereabouts.

Terry and Sandy had asked pointed questions, and sometimes during the year that followed, I imagined that you accused me (though you were hardly able to master a few words

yet), demanding to know what would happen when we sent something back in time... But it all seemed irrelevant next to the excitement that the machine would work. And, as I had avoided Donald when he attempted to delve beneath the surface of things, I began to avoid you and your gleaming eyes. I engaged a nurse in a near-by town and it was unusual if I visited more than once a week and endured your squeals and hugs. I could excuse the situation and promise myself there would be more time later, but of course there wasn't.

The experiments began. Two teams worked; one kept records on objects found in the closely guarded time machine lab and compared notes later with the team that was engaged in sending things back (a day, two days). Both teams were carefully sequestered one from the other, with definite non-overlapping periods of the week they were allowed to work in the main lab. They communicated by memos read by an intervening third team of which I was a part. We wanted to be sure that, later, there would be no accusations of a swindle. The first team, working Sunday through Tuesday in the lab would find a brick or a tube or a slip of paper as they materialized on the platform, and then leave the premises to the next door building for the remainder of the week, leaving their records for my team. The second team would inhabit the main lab for the remainder of the week and send back various objects--the brick, the tube, the slip of paper--on the time machine. Saturday, all the teams would conference and confirm the agreement of both teams' records.

Delirious, we pressed on. And then finally, there was the week in which the first team reported no "found" objects. I waited eagerly for Saturday's conference, certain that Vonne would announce the next, the important step, and new procedures. Instead, the second group met us in stunned silence. There had been a transmission, but no pick-up... Cathy Grayson had won the lottery to be first time traveler, but she had not appeared in the laboratory.

We were numb, the eleven of us that were left. You gulp from a glass you think contains water and cough down gin. You step across a walkway and jolt down the unexpected step. You leap out of a window you believe to be on the first story, and the vista of a busy intersection, 25 stories down rushes up at you.

Noone could immediately offer any explanation and I could not maintain the fiction of a smoothly (though slowly) moving investigation in my statistics and reports. There was a shift in power and certain names disappeared from the letterheads and memos I received; others appeared, and we were officially forbidden to continue the experiment. All funds stopped, and an investigation of the project would soon be instigated.

My world was collapsing. Donald's warnings recurred to me, visions of my disgrace colored my dreams, but most of all I felt the despair of knowing that I would never understand why it had all ended, what went wrong. Vonne was already gone. I couldn't sleep: I spent hours prowling the hallways listening to whispered conversations among the people still around, trying to find a clue. It was possible, went one theory, that Cathy had changed the world into which she had emerged in some way (a way not noticeable enough to be detected when only a brick or slip of paper was sent back) and now existed on another time branch. As Donald and the others had warned, she had thus created another world in which those changes could be accommodated... I gathered that our machine may have turned out not to be a time machine at all...

Perhaps it was the three days of no sleep, who knows, but then began my fascination with the machine. I couldn't sleep and I couldn't remain in my office knowing that there was a possible way to escape the whole mess. If Cathy Grayson could create her own world, why couldn't I? I'd been living in a fictional world for over two years after all, perhaps a new one would last a bit longer. Once I decided to risk the machine trip, I knew that I had no time to spare.

The controls were simply operated and I preset them. I stepped upon the glowing platform, closed the mirroring pannels in upon me, my reflection repeated infinitely in series, and even before I heard the sound of the apparatus' operation, I felt as if I were falling. My knees grew wobbly, but then a faint hum growing to a piercing buzz sounded through the booth and the sense of imbalance turned into one of nausea as my reflections bloated and shrunk, stretched and wavered like a carnival mirror image.



I lost control. And I mean this not in a physical sort of way; rather, it was a mental sensation in which everything was very clear: What I had ever known, what I had ever done, exactly how I fit into and perceived the world. But the "blanks" (the "reality connections" I had unconsciously relied upon but never actually conceptualized) were just as obvious as the memories that were strong and clear. But I was falling, and only the things that I knew could slow my downward tumble. I had to hold on to these rungs which were mainly convictions concerning the security of my isolation from others, the safety behind walls. The fragile spiderweb of my conception of the "real" world around me tore and disintegrated within my grasp. The fantastic snarl of offices, conspiracy, politicians and fairy-tale shadows of CIA, fell into chaotic dust as I tried to recognize their borders and solidify their mechanisms. Then I found the blurred faces of people I had known, your's, Donald's, Vonne's, shimmering, almost solid,—I threw my arms around Donald's shoulders but his strength collapsed. I lost control. It was as if I had been suddenly handed the responsibility for the operation of my own body... as if I had to consciously operate my own heart beat, the transfer of oxygen from lung membrane to capillary, and I was not even aware of most of the operations of my body, much less their correct functioning. I knew that in order to return to my world I would have to reconstruct it as I knew it. Those parts I never understood or was not able to articulate would not reform themselves in the familiar ways, but would follow the necessities of my expectations and memories.

In that instant of freedom, that instant when my being was bound neither by past premise or future necessities, in that one instant and by thought, I acted. And a universe was created.

It seemed a small universe, a universe of one, a room of dials and screens and marvelous toys. There was a chairlike thing on which I woke that took up two-thirds of the space. It converted itself (actually shrinking or growing) through a mechanism I have yet to comprehend, from bed to lounge to chair at my whim. The orange ceiling above me curved closely but comfortably into the soft-colored walls which were full of niches and platforms, displaying silent life support systems, writing supplies, work bench and exercise area.

I had always lived here—and for a moment I was confused. I knew that this world was honeycombed with millions of similar cubicals, each a habitation for another individual, each cubical powered by the central energy source and monitored by the computer, impregnable against the intrusion of any other individual. (The room would destroy anyone not identified by computer records as the rightful inhabitant of the room. Life support is carefully rationed on an equal basis to every cubical inhabitant. An individual retains user rights to a cubical for a definite, finite "lease" period, and can not extend a life support term by sharing with another.) I had many working acquaintances nevertheless, who I could contact on the visitor screen, and could leave the cubical at any time and meet in the common rooms with others, but I had never chosen to extend relationships beyond the view screen. Privacy is infinitely respected and valued in this world—there would be no untimely interruptions here, until my "lease" on my cubical ran out and the Mortality Meter registered "0."

I seemed to hold two life-memories in my mind, that of the cubical and that of a chaotic world of the time machine and Donald. Vague memories of past events in each intertwined whenever I attempted to identify them. But there were no childhood memories connected to the cubical as there were to the other (running in the sunlight, checking out the maximum allowed number of science fiction books from the local library and puffing home with them...). I sighed relieved that I had been able to put things together, to understand that this was the world I had created.

I wondered aloud how long I had occupied the cubical: The computer replied with a clipped voice. "Twenty-nine years, eleven months, two days, fourteen hours, ten minutes." There were thirty Plus years remaining on my Meter.

For a time, the cubical was a perfect environment. I had access to a limitless library of tapes and I read about the history of my world for days, stopping only briefly for rest or food. I tried to write for a while, setting down my memories of Vonne's laboratory and the experiment, but it soon became evident to me that there was something wrong, something missing: an urgent feeling that I had forgotten something.

the conviction that I had left something unfinished clawed within me. No matter what I tried to read or what I attempted to set down on paper, there was always the notion in the back of my head that if I could recall this one important fact, I would realize that everything else was a waste of time, that my writing lacked a fundamental depth of perception, that I was trapping myself in a dead end. I daydreamed constantly, and usually my thoughts would settle on Donald and the days before he had left, while he still worked enthusiastically with the others on the project. The memories of working with the others through him was most pleasant then and the recollection of the feeling of the touch of his hand against my back so clear, I would awake startled that he was not beside me. I began to realize what the problem was. I was lonely. I had created this "perfect" environment of isolation, and now could not bear it. My old belief that I was better off alone was based more upon the suspicion that if I admitted a need of others, they would not be there. Better to make walls and turn them away than be turned away myself. So now the walls were real, and I was shocked at my trembling, at my hypocrisy.

Finally, I could not write or read at all, and I tuned in the visiting screen at random.

The face that appeared on the screen was Donald's. I turned the viewer off immediately, my back was covered with sweat and my hands shook. Then, again tuning the screen at random, I flipped the switch to "on." Again it was Donald who appeared. Again and again his face filled the screen, his eyes questioning. He never spoke but simply waited as I stared.

Whether we were the only two people in the world, or whether everyone else in the world was Donald, or whether my visitor screen was connected only to his cubical, I suppose now I will never know. There is no time.

For soon afterwards, I did begin to talk to him. At first he only looked on--seeming to wait for something from me. I told him about what had happened with the time machine and as I explained, he still only stared at me, saying "yes" occasionally, acknowledging that he had heard me or asking me for more details. And then we argued, the light growing brighter in his eyes, and I didn't--or couldn't--prevent myself from going back again and again to the visitor screen and calling him. Soon afterwards, I left the cubical for the first time to meet him outside.

Thus the nightmare began (or ended).

We met at the end of a long corridor of cubical doorways, all shut tight, at the opening to a long doorless tunnel that led with a steep ramp, upward. Above the entrance to this dark hole, was an ancient clock that had lost one of its supports and was scewed over to one side, rusted and bent, no longer operating. Sitting there against the wall, our arms touching, or later, in a common room, we would talk for hours. I discovered that I could feel comfortable again in the circle of our arms if I didn't worry about who was in control of the situation. Together we imagined and fantasized, constructing imaginary adventures and romances and experiences all totally impossible in this limited world, and I knew that my cubical would seem less fulfilling and comfortable when I returned.

Walking back, the halls seemed to have become dingy and when I entered the cubical that first time, I thought I heard the sound of a tortured gear squeaking somewhere far away. But before I could investigate the sound, I found the important thing: the reading on my Mortality Meter had registered a five year interval loss while I had been gone. There were mechanical difficulties apparently. A second meeting outside the room subtracted another two years from my reading, as well as from Donald's, and the hallway had disintegrated visably this time. Time was recorded normally as long as I remained in my cubical. For a while we continued to have contact only through the view screen, but then I couldn't bear that and I tried to rebuild the walls inside myself again and I refused to answer his calls, I tried to bury myself in reading, but it was impossible. Once having opened myself to contact with another, it was impossible to go back.

And so again we left our cubicles, staying together for as long as possible, dreaming dreams of better worlds as this one seemed to crumble before our eyes. The corridors became strewn with rubble as the ceiling crumbled, the lights dimmed periodically

and threatened to go out entirely, the air seemed stale and our Mortality Meters dropped years as if the insides of their mechanisms were stuck together with glue. Six years one time, six months another, two years the next time...but never reflecting the mere hours we'd actually been absent from our cubicals. During our last rendezvous, we noticed the old tunnel, now actually better lit and less littered than the corridors. The clock was upright and clean and operating above its entrance.

The tunnel is our only chance now. With only a little more than a day left on the Meter (the last interval loss stunning us with its size; ten years), there will be no more returns to the cubicals. But if we are right, the tunnel will take us out of this walled world, to what--we don't know--but certainly a new world, not just another warped reflection of the old, a real escape.

--Or perhaps just the opposite...

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## THE BOOK OF JOHN BRUNNER

DAW #177

Reviewed by Thomas J. Murn

BOOK is a collection of Brunner writings, standing well apart from 'normal' one-writer anthologies. In between the short stories are nonfiction articles on sf, poems, limericks, even a crossword puzzle. It is an attractive diversity, and the product of an obviously talented writer.

Among the five short stories is an outstanding tale called "Bloodstream," originally from a Vertex

published in 1974. It's about city as organism, and it's a clever classic. The other stories are reasonable, one or two might fall a bit short but you'll hardly notice it in such surroundings. The poems, apart from any novelty value, are good on their own. There are a few paragraph-type puns which are amusing, though not on the order of Arthur C. Clarke's "star-mangled spanner," maxi-ha-ha. There are several limericks which I thought were inspired, though it depends on your sense of humor, I'm sure. (Fans take note--this stuff will make great chit chat material at the next con.) And there are some nonfictional-type articles about sf which make for good reading. There's even an article on getting your sf story together for Publication (Brunner must not be worried about the competition).

About the only things in BOOK which I must mention in a deprecatory tone are the SONGS. The titles include "The Spacew<sup>o</sup>ck of the Old 97," apparently sung to the music of an old Kingston Trio tune. There's also "The H-Bomb's Thunder" which in the birthing days of the Nuclear Disarmament Campaign, the demos of '57 and '58 in England (where the peace sign came from, you know) must have been a rousing anthem--but these days merits only a snicker or a sigh, depending on how fatalistic you are. And I must mention "Lullaby for the Mad Scientist's Daughter" which uses the tune of "hush little

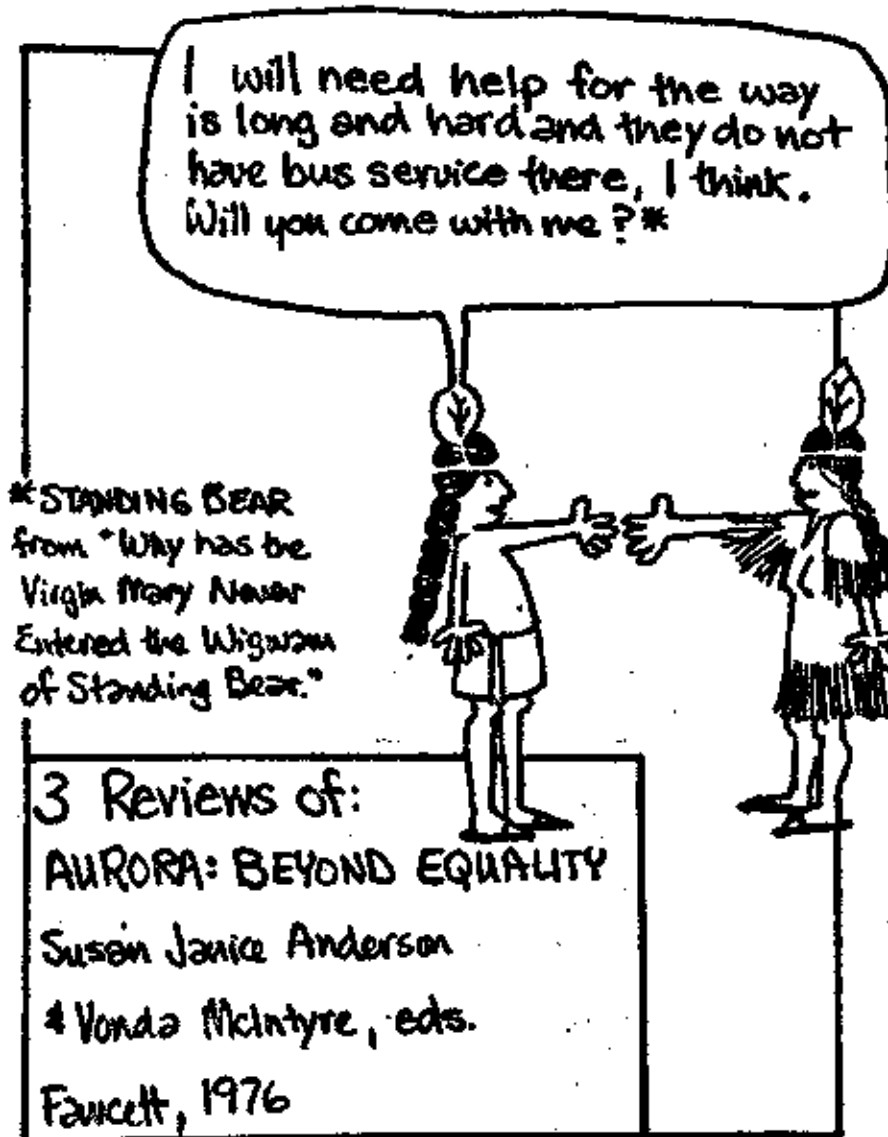
baby don't you cry" and starts with the lines

Hush little baby button your lip!  
Papa gonna build you a rocket ship.  
If that rocket ship abort  
Papa gonna build you an aquanaut.

Oh it gets better from there. Great fare for a camp-fireside singalong, but in my opinion manifestations of the sf subculture such as this lilting ditty should best be hidden under big rocks.

Barring these few signs of oncoming Geritol syndrome, Brunner's BOOK may be heartily recommended to the sf initiate or the experienced spacer. Bravo John Brunner.

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There's a lot to say about an anthology of femsf that proclaims "Amazing tales of the ultimate sexual revolution" on the outside cover and "nonsexist sf" in the innertroduction. A:BEq is a bit closer to the latter estimate than the former. Editor Susan Anderson says in the introduction "all our stories stimulate questions and indicate directions for further explorations." In general, the stories do accomplish these functions--but it is unfortunate that few of the stories do more than this.

The lineup of authors in A:BEq includes a few prominent names--James Piptree, Joanna Russ, Ursula LeGuin--indicating that a solid center of material might be found in the anthology. And, indeed, Piptree turns in a competent space-effort, Russ contributes a foggy piece of intrigue, and LeGuin adds an article with some LEOB after-thoughts.

Some of the contributions by newer faces

#1... by Thomas J. Murn

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bear mention too. Raccoona (sheesh) Sheldon portrays a housewife-type gone wacko in a late-model Chicago, phantasizing a future world where all sisters are, well, sisters... Unfortunately for the reader, Sheldon's heroperson, in a final blanket of otherworldly visions, is set upon by real-life nasties wandering around the Dan Ryan Expressway (real real-life, eh?) and OD's in a final gurgle of blood.

After Sheldon's leadoff story comes Tiptree's "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?"—a fairly clever rerun of the ol' space-ship-through-time-warp-to-brave-new-world trip—rather too fraught with nasty tensions as NASA astronauts of the repressed-psychotic variety encounter an Earth of the future which is 100% female—and 100% closed. Even the storyteller (the ol' space doc) recoils in horror after he learns the Real Truth about the beauties in the spaceship of the future. A'course, the real horror is the reaction of the NASA types, boorish barbarians that they are; but I'm sure that a real-life Neil Armstrong sort would have greeted such a revelation with a blush and a "gee-whiz" or two, after which he would recite the US constitution, hand out a few plastic rosaries, and retire to his assigned room to have funny wet dreams.

Immediately after Tiptree's story comes Dave Skal's "The Mothers, the Mothers, How Eerily it Sounds"—again a competent effort, but A containing too much violence, as the preceding two stories do, and B not really a definitive new contribution to the boundary-breaking wavecrest of fensf.

The two best stories in the anthology turned out to be an excerpt from a forthcoming novel by Marge Piercy, and P. J. Plauger's "Here Be Dragons." Piercy's story has an older woman confined in a mental institution find the ability to transport her spiritual essence, or whatever, to some future time on Earth, where everyone comes from a test-tube incubator, where everyone has three mothers (male or female), and everyone seems to get along just fine. Ms. Piercy has an attractive style and an evident sense of imagination (although I hardly think that a society of the future would substitute the words "handfriend" and "pillowfriend" for "girlfriend" and "boyfriend"). Piercy acknowledges the yin/yang dissonance in our society, and envisions a place where the best of the male/female variance can be taken advantage of.

Plauger's story initially scared me off. The title reminded me of books that I'd rather not have read, and the first paragraph mentions the characters "Karl Dedalus" and "Boatmaster Grimes" about to enjoy "two mugs of javva." I was not ready for the symbolic structure that these items might be referring to, so I passed it up. On a second and more thorough examination, I can report that the story may well rate as the best in the book. It is subtle but suggestive, with a good mix of sharp wit. (Though I'm still wondering if the "Grimes" reference is intentional. If it is, it's a classy touch—since "Boatmaster Grimes" turns out to be Officer Susan Grimes.) I won't divulge the details of Plauger's story—primarily because there's so much to discuss. But I can recommend the anthology on the basis of these two stories alone. Though the other authors make creditable contributions, Piercy and Plauger provide solid illustrations of the ways that speculative fiction can react to the changes that are occurring—and must occur—in modern society.

## #2... by Jeanne Gomoll

Indeed, Marge Piercy's story, "Woman on the Edge of Time" is a lovely story. (It is an excerpt from a novel, now in-progress, but stands up well on its own.) It takes place in a future, (almost) androgynous society and as Tom suggests in his review (above), is decorated with a "futuristic" shorthand language in wh'ch "per," short for person, replaces singular gender pronouns and where one says "Fasure," a general affirm-

ative idiom (for sure), and mostly leaves out a lot of useless prepositions, "grasp?" [By way of digression, and with regard to non-sexist pronouns, I personally would rather not hassle with trying to make new words--(as in this story or a novel by the name of THE COOK AND THE CARPENTER)--instead, I'd like to bend a grammatical rule, much easier than inventing and passing on new words, and use the plural, neuter pronoun we already have in all general cases. Thus, instead of "If someone wants to go to the spaceport, he usually travels by shuttle craft," one would say, "...they usually travel by shuttle craft." Such general cases are almost entirely implicitly plural anyhow, why else the rhetorical "he?"] But anyhow, "Woman" is a nice re-do of Bellamy's LOOKING BACKWARD, (there's the observer from the past being given the grand tour of how they do things in the Future), only with a plot and a change of emphasis on what things need to be changed in our future in order to solve present problems. As Joanna Russ has noted, the revolution will have to come, and be portrayed in our art, in the arena of family and emotional interaction between the sexes. Bellamy set his travelogue mainly in the factories and department stores and economic milieu of the future. Piercy sets her's in the baby embryo breeders (to demonstrate that only through the giving up of the physical experience of giving birth and through the sharing of the duties and joys of motherhood with men, will women attain freedom, or people achieve androgynous roles). She sets other parts of her story at the scene of a child leaving on her (per) rite of passage, ("to break the dependencies"), as well as in scenes developed to spotlight relationships between people coping together without power games. There is even a woman, honored and respected, not treated as a "sickie," whose avocation it is to care for children, although she would rather not have anything to do with adults/sexual relationships. But best of all, as I noted before, there's a plot to go with the travelogue which is woven from the reaction of the observer from the past (now), a woman whose "visions" or actual mental wanderings into the future help her at last to deal with the anguish she has suffered because she is a woman and because she is a Chicano. (All of which makes a good case for the therapeutic value of reading and/or writing sf...)

A lovely story.

Other than Marge Piercy's "Woman on the Edge of Time," I was also much taken with Wisconsin writer, Racoon Sheldon's "Your Faces, O My Sisters! Your Faces Filled of Light!" It confronts us feminists with questions about the source of our dreams for a true sisterhood. Does our anger and frustration lead us to unreal idealism, impossible expectations? Craig Strete's hilarious "Why Has the Virgin Mary Never Entered the Wigwam of Standing Bear," (celebrated in the illustration for this series of reviews), was my favorite though. My first thought was that Richard Brautigan had begun surreptitiously doing sf, so deftly does it create and sneer at the plastic images of our time. Strete's story is an exhilarating one: It celebrates the strength of a proud, rebellious, and victorious woman.

The use of prototype North American Indian societies to model ideal non-sexist societies upon (in 3 of the 9 stories) is an interesting coincidence, of more significance than simply the editors' preferences I think, and the suggestion of several of the authors that biological tinkering will be necessary to effect a truly egalitarian society, struck me as a rather disturbing sort of implicit surrender to things-as-they-are-now. Tiptree's "final solution" seemed to project an especially malevolent point of view.

In spite of, but in most cases, because of these diverse points of view, I consider AURORA: BEYOND EQUALITY to be by far the best of recent feminist sf anthologies and recommend it highly. It is a joy to read.



# #3... by Janice Bogstad

"Here be Dragons" by P. J. Plauger (in AURORA: BEYOND EQUALITY), can be evaluated with two distinct standards in mind. It is part of an anthology and was supposedly included therein because it fulfilled the standards set for the anthology. These were clearly delineated for AURORA: BEYOND EQUALITY, in the Introduction by Janice Anderson. How well the story conforms to Ms. Anderson's stated standards is one criterion for evaluation. This short story also has strong points consistent with its total presentation and effect. How well the story does what it sets out to do, is another criterion for evaluation.

Plauger's story begins dynamically enough from the standpoint of Ms. Anderson's criterion. The author is careful to include indications that women as well as men have positions of responsibility and power. This is done through the character Grimes, who only becomes obviously female by the middle of the second page. As one examines her characterization along with the rest of the story, the superficiality of Plauger's foray into non-sexist fiction becomes obvious. The first thing one notices is that the story falls into the second fallacy Anderson proscribes in her essay. In describing Grimes, the author does not create a new interpretation of sexuality. Rather, the traditional characterization associated with a male sailor is placed upon a female figure. In the Farmer culture of "Here Be Dragons," everyone must do a certain amount of governmental service; How then, since Grimes' position is probably short-term, would she have come to have "left more than one saddened when they sailed." Especially since she is also described in her relationships with members of the crew? The myth of Superstud rides again.

With musings on the characterization of Grimes arises another, more basic question. I will never understand why people in this culture (20th century Western), are so compelled to define a person's character by their sexual practices. Are most of you still fixed at that adolescent point of development when nothing is important but your success on the mattress? Not only is Grimes defined in these terms, but the protagonist, Karl Dedalus, is largely defined through his response to the sight of Susan Grimes, Boatmaster. The thoughts about "off duty watches with Susan," and her "Freudian slip" again betray a preoccupation with sex which is all too common in the Science Fiction Anderson and McIntyre purport to disagree with.

Plauger fails in another important facet, with the characters of Dedalus and Arnold Gottfried, his opposing captain. The Chief protagonists in "Here Be Dragons" are both male. The innovative, active head of the Farmer expedition and the calculating Lieutenant on the Wizard's Fireboat are men. This is understandable in the latter case since the Wizard culture is male-dominated, yet I could see the story becoming much more effective if the Farmer protagonist were female. Indeed, if Grime's sexual practices must be described to develop some theme of male-female equality, her characteristics as seen through the eyes of a female captain could have been carried off without the definite tinge of lascivious delight which mars the captain's characterization in the story as it stands.

To reiterate the distinction I made at the beginning of this essay, I must now turn to the positive qualities of "Here Be Dragons." On its own ground, Plauger's story comes off very well. The plot is interesting and provocative and the characters which are focused upon are quite well developed.

Three male figures come to the foreground in "Here Be Dragons" These are, of course, Dedalus, Lieutenant Gottfried, and Gottfried's Crewmember, Chen. By the end of the story, one has a good idea of not only these men's characters but also the character of the societies from which they come. The contrast between the progressive Farmer

culture and the stagnant Wizard culture is skillfully developed through musings of the opposing protagonists, Dedalus and Gottfried. Plot, character and setting are well wedded into a single expression, the sure sign of a well-written short story. "Here Be Dragons" is well written. It is not revolutionary.

## LET FIRE FALL

BY KATE WILHELM  
(PANTHER PRESS, '72)

Reviewed by  
Jeanne Gomoll

nostalgia reviews



It's been a long time since I've read anything by Kate Wilhelm, and I picked up LET THE FIRE FALL hoping to add another woman of author to my

list I keep for purposes of recommending to my non-sf feminist reading group and other sceptical folk who don't understand the peculiar obsession. But I was grievously disappointed... I hope the things I found were unusual for Wilhelm.

Like the description of a minor "badie," Colonel Wakeman... ("He was a pansy, she thought in disgust...Wakeman was forty-two, athletic, sunburned, virile looking and a pansy—who knew that she knew, and hated her for knowing.") Colonel Wakeman and this characterization have no importance in the novel, the description serves merely as a facile, cheap and rather disgusting denigration of a character Wilhelm wishes us to dislike. Several chapters later (and with a similar display of prudery in relation to language), the tough street youths speak "in asterisks," as Wilhelm terms the dialect. (He'll cut off your \*\*\*\* and stuff it up your \*\*\*." says one hoodlum.) In the tradition of naturalistic linguistic realism, they also refer to the police as "creepies," a cute street futurism if ever there was one. Dee Dee, the mistress of one of the main characters, emerges from his bed and a brutal session with the man, "aching, bruised, and happy..." "'Boy that sure must have been a ball!'" quips Merton (another of Dee Dee's lovers) when he sees her battered body. "There were red marks from pinches and bites, and a bruise on her thigh, and another on her shoulder. When her gaze reached her face, she was startled: she had never looked prettier." At this point I paged back to check the copyright date, but no, it wasn't a '50's reprint; Kate Wilhelm had written LET THE FIRE FALL in 1969... And there was more to come: heavy ladling of Freud, as well as references to oral sex (\*\*\*\* \*\*\*, I mean) to suggest the most loathsome of human depravity (or "ab aberrations," as Wilhelm liked to refer to it).

Admittedly, such were minor infestations. There was no one prejudice that intruded itself in full force into the story line (which, lest I forget, is a fast-moving, but less believable version of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND and IF THIS GOES ON--is that possible?--with an alien, and a rising, world-storming revivalist church), unless one considers that the family setup and intersexual relationships portrayed reflect 1950's morality and not any sort of extrapolated 1980's world as it pretends to portray.

All in all, I wasn't too \*\*\*\*\* impressed. That LET THE FIRE FALL is offered by a woman, depresses me even more.

# Philosophy, Physics, Soap Bubbles & Space Opera...

8 review of OCCAM'S RAZOR (David Duncan)  
reviewed by Janice Bogstad

The July, 1976 issue of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN has a flashy cover depicting a soap bubble within the confines of a wire frame which outlines a cube. This picture draws attention to an article discussing

the use of soap bubbles in the study of minimal surface physics.

William of Occam was an early fourteenth century philosopher. He mainly concerned himself with the relative reality of names as compared to the groups, classes or individual objects which they named. Occam is remembered, however for his logical approach to phenomenon. As his famous Razor records, Occam observed that the simplest explanation for a phenomenon which likewise adequately accounts for all of its aspects, should be the correct one.

Somewhere between these two broad areas of thought, but nevertheless including both in its conceptual framework, is David Duncan's novel OCCAM'S RAZOR.

I consider myself fortunate to have discovered this book. It has been out of print for a long time. I secured a copy, circa 1957, from the Huckster's Room at Relaxacon in Cincinnati, circa June, 1976 (From the very hands of Buck Coulson I bought it).

OCCAM'S RAZOR is not particularly well written. Its major flaw as a work of literature are its lack of effective plot and character development. Speaking strictly from a feminist standpoint, for example, one can criticize the fact that female characters are portrayed as ingenues or mixed up bitches. A simplistic characterization also mars the plot structure; it seems as if the author divided his affections between the protagonist who falls in love with a young woman from another time-pulsation, the space opera plot, and the scientist concerned with minimal surface physics, Staghorn, who figures out how she and her brother got there. I consider Staghorn to be the real hero of OCCAM'S RAZOR. The other character seems like useless window dressing.

Staghorn, as a character, is depicted in the anti-social scientist stereotype. His most dynamic function is as the medium through which Duncan's ideas on the structure of time are depicted. The conceptual scope of OCCAM'S RAZOR is its most striking feature. Duncan combines time-theory and soap bubbles through the use of Occam's Razor. To explain this process I must refer to the July, 1976 SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN article. Here it is explained that soap bubbles only form in certain ways, depending upon how many surfaces are in contact with them. The shapes these bubbles assume are defined by those positions which, given the shape of soap molecules, will require the least amount of energy to assume. These are then called minimal surfaces. When one dips differently figured wire frames into a soap bubble solution, the surfaces which result are defined both by this principle and the configuration of the wire frame. A square frame does not give you a four edged surface, a cube shaped bubble. A wire frame outlining a pyramid gives rise to a "bubble" which has no inside. It is merely joined to itself along four lines in the center of the frame.

In OCCAM'S RAZOR, a certain wire frame, because it behaves otherwise than it should, becomes the basis for a theory of time. While giving a demonstration to prospective physicists, Staghorn encounters a bubble within his many surfaced frame. The bubble should have only two surfaces, two pin-pricks should suffice to destroy. During this demonstration, but only once during many attempts at the same procedure, the bubble takes three pin-pricks to destroy. Before it is completely destroyed, the scientist is able to glimpse something in the third, and unexplainable surface. Although it is not described in the text, one surmises from ensuing events, that the scientist tries this again, with a larger wire frame. From his results and the application of Occam's Razor, he is able to deduce his theory of time and of alternate universes. The simplest explanation for the appearance of an extra surface in his soap bubble is that it has

another point of attachment in addition to those of his wire frame. The simplest explanation from this deduction, and other phenomenon which he observes, is that the bubble is in contact with another time surface. When the bubble is strengthened (a little glycerin does the trick), Staghorn is able to hold onto this extra contact point. Hence the plot of OCCAM'S RAZOR.

There is something greatly satisfying in thinking through the logic of a piece of Science Fiction like OCCAM'S RAZOR. Duncan's work demands of the reader a certain amount of work and sophistication on the scientific plane. The scope of the thought involved is what makes his work eminently worth reading. As a science- surrogate, it is excellent. Unfortunately, as with much Science Fiction of the time, OCCAM'S RAZOR does not show much evidence of thought lavished on the plot and characterization. I could have done without the soap-opera of Boy meets strange girl, girl cannot help but fall in love with boy, they go off together, though I must admit the book has a surprise ending.

So you see how Philosophy, Physics, Soap bubbles and Space Opera are all a part of OCCAM'S RAZOR.

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# ALIKS

LOGAN'S RUN  
DARK STAR

ROSEMARY'S  
GRANDCHILDREN

## Logan's Run reviewed by Philip Kaveny

It is my intention to offer one possible interpretation of the film, LOGAN'S RUN. The preview for LOGAN'S RUN stated: "Life is beautiful in 2374. You can do whatever you want, but life ends at thirty." The film is set in a

domed city of the future which totally protects its inhabitants from the outside world. The city tolerates no pollution, no dust, no garbage, nothing which would offend anyone's sensibilities. At birth which takes place inside of a mother-surrogate machine, each infant has a pure crystal set in his left palm. This crystal changes in color throughout his life until it finally changes color and starts blinking at age thirty. The portrayal of this process is an essential element of the plot for at thirty each person must present himself for the ritualistic death rite known as carousel. The only hope the rite offers him is that of renewal, a vague promise of continued life achieved in fact by none.

Logan is a Sandman whose job it is to make certain that everyone presents themselves for destruction at age thirty. A few individuals do not, thus becoming runners. Sandmen hunt these runners down putting them to sleep with fiery laser blasts. Still, one got the impression that few tried to run, most simply accepted their fate.

Logan is twenty-six with almost four years of his life left. Life for him is a hedonistic paradise until one day he is forced by the city's central governing computer to seek out and verify or refute the possibility of a sanctuary, that is, an alternative to life under the city's dome. He is given more impetus to become a runner seeking out sanctuary, when the crystal in his palm starts to blink. With this change, he is fair game for the other sandmen. He must either run or die. To survive this

situation, he must be accepted by a group of runners, primarily represented by Jessica VI, a young girl whom he has bumped into by chance on a matter transportation channel. I might add the transportation channels seemed much like the transportation booths found in Larry Niven's work.

Logan and Jessica break out of the city, only to find a seemingly dead world, overgrown with vegetation. After a long journey they stumble upon the ruins of Washington D.C. At this point the film takes on a new dimension; the two find something they have never seen inside of their beautiful hygenic city. They find an old man living in the ruins of the Senate. The old man, played by Peter Ustinov, lives with hundreds of cats all of whom he knows and loves. He explains to Logan and Jessica that each cat has three names. A first and last name that he has given them, and a secret name known only to and answered to by the cats.

The old man reminds us vaguely of a time when each human had a first and last name and a secret name known only to himself. Logan and Jessica have so many questions for him, What is a mother? What is a father? Why did you bury your dead? Who are these old men whose pictures are on the Senate wall? What is a memory? In short, each one of these statements represents an aspect of the value of human uniqueness. This argument must always circle around itself if we do not accept that women and men and cats have two names and a secret name known only to themselves. To return to the plot, Logan has been pursued the whole time by one of his old friends and he finally catches up to Logan in the Senate. A struggle takes place and this comrade is killed by Logan. He is buried, but not forgotten.

Logan and Jessica promise to bury the old man when his time comes but Logan must go back to the city. Why we ask ourselves must he return from the ethical light of the outside to the moral darkness of the city? The answer is that Logan cannot hide outside of his now recognized humanity. He must go back and tell and save the others. But what of the old man? They have promised to bury him. They decide to take him along. There will be so much strange and new for him to see and so much for him to tell everyone.

As all three return towards the dream-become-nightmare city the pace of the film moves very fast. They approach the waters outside the city which the old man cannot cross. He must wait outside for them to return. Logan and Jessica break back into the city in an attempt to rescue the latest group of thirty year olds from the death rite. Noone listens to what they have to say. Logan is captured and taken to the computer for questioning. He is asked if there is a sanctuary; this is a question which must be answered both yes and no. There is no sanctuary in the sense of a place which has a location in space and time, and yet there is the idea of sanctuary in Logan's acceptance of the value of human uniqueness. This contradiction in Logan's mind is too much for the computer to handle. In the chaos which issues the city's dome is destroyed and its inhabitants are forced to flee.

The physical destruction of the city is not the ultimate message of the film. The city and Sanctuary represents two frames of mind which not only exist in the future world presented in the film but preoccupy our minds today. We live in a world that seeks to hide and perhaps denies all that does not conform to the ideals as presented in so much of our media of youth and beauty. That which is unique and does not conform is hidden or perhaps institutionally murdered. Why is age thirty picked in the film as the cut-off point for life and value? I sense that it is because at age thirty, diversity becomes ever more and more apparent. It does not matter whether the people are thrown on a fiery wheel or not once they have accepted themselves as being without value.

Sanctuary represents a concept of the world where old men can have memories and cats and men can have secret names. The victory in LOGAN'S RUN comes not in the rubble of the city; it comes when the old man and the young woman touch each others' faces and are pleased with the differences they see and feel. This film had a very satisfactory ending for me and any stray cats that might have been in the audience.

# The Emperor Needs a New Body

## LOGAN'S RUN \* DARK STAR

### a criticism by Jeanne Gomoll

It is rumored that a certain TV-series next fall, George Lucas' STAR WARS, is planning to use sets that look as if they had been inhabited for longer than two days by a small delegation of the Keep America Clean Lobby. They're

going to have a rusty hull and all sorts of dingy, unorthodox, unfuturistic sounding props.

Not projecting any such non-glossy image in the new film, LOGAN'S RUN, the embodiment of future technology in that film is portrayed as a shiny, seamless, plastic city--all perfectly capped up with a series of impressive, mammoth bubbles and a system of seals--containing grandiose monorail ramps and endless corridors and cathedral roofed rooms that create a sense of nostalgia for Hyatt-Regency Hotel lobbies. Built long ago in order to protect its population from an environmentally ravaged outside world, the city is carefully and completely regulated by the central computer which keeps things under control with a cadre system of human lieutenants (known as "Sandmen") and the enforcement of the basic law of the bubble which imposes the death penalty upon all individuals once they reach the age of 30. The efficacy of such a law is questionable judging from what we are shown in the film. Does the law purport to control population? There are better ways than restricting the population to prime birth-giving years--and, besides, the film offers no suggestion that the city could conceivably have even a potential problem of overcrowding since all children are born in easily monitored and regulated test-tubes. Perhaps the law was instituted in order to limit the life-styles and expectations of the population so as to be more easily managed by the central computer? This is an interesting idea (that, just as agri-business 'benefits in the short run by the homogenization of local land use, so too might urban machinery run smoother with a homogeneous population), but it is an idea unsupported by the film's meager exploration of social motive. If a teenage & twenties revolution is responsible for the social set-up presented in the film, that too is unsupported by any clues. It is my cynical theory that the reason has more to do with how older people would clash with the pretty decor, thus poetically balancing the film by making plot too, a logical outgrowth of the special effects budget... Indeed, the reasoning behind the emergence of the "solution," if it is that at all, e.g., to restrict population to those under the age of 30, as well as personal motivation attributed to individual characters, are never explained at all to my satisfaction. The primary motive "idea" of the film is shunted aside and instead, the time is spent flashing futuristic scenery and hardware (and the pretty face of Michael York) in front of our eyes.

The major criticism I've encountered with respect to LOGAN'S RUN, has been that concerned with the lavish waste of money on a story with too little plot or idea. It's a case of the Emperor and His New Clothes in reverse: a lovely wardrobe, but nothing substantial on which to drape it. And this flaw, evident in too many recent Hollywood made films (as well as the stomach-turning TV drak, SPACE:1999) is made quite evident when LOGAN'S RUN is compared to a really fine, worthwhile film such as DARK STAR, which was made by the film department of UCLA and is up for a Hugo this year.

Both films, LOGAN'S RUN and DARK STAR, start with the assumption that people have essentially become victims of their own technology. In philosophy, each film diverges significantly from the other in terms of how this situation is resolved, but the most obvious difference between the films has to do with the way in which sf form is used (or not used) to project idea.

Where the city in LOGAN'S RUN is used to embody future technological achievement, (and must be destroyed in order for people to escape enslavement to that technology),



the working symbol in DARK STAR is the ship (the Dark Star) and its cargo of bombs. These combine to destroy the crew who, at last, find themselves incapable of controlling their environment. The opposition of philosophic stances, however, is not what makes comparison of the two films most interesting.

Visually, DARK STAR impressed me more than LOGAN'S RUN though it was produced with a far smaller budget than the latter. My preference stemmed primarily from DARK STAR's apparent consciousness of the history of its medium (written and cinematic traditions). One of the opening shots, satirizing such films as LOGAN'S RUN and their emphasis on producing visually stunning (and improbable/meaningless) images, is marvelous. In this scene, the Dark Star glides in front of a montage of spectacular galactic "scenery" (in impossible sequence), and nearing its destination--an unstable planet--it glides across the screen partially eclipsing the planet's face and stops (with an audible "clunk") in precise aesthetic position. The creators of DARK STAR displayed with their effective foolishness a sharp awareness of the contribution special effects is (and has been) capable of in producing an sf film. (Lampoons directed at 2001 and STAR TREK abound.) They recognize special effects to be an element (to be satirized itself at times) and not the all-important raison d'être of an sf film (or any other work of art). They were able therefore, I think, to produce a top-notch film on more levels than (but not excluding) the creation of an exciting visual background.

The "alien," for instance, a prop that can be a major expense in any film, in DARK STAR becomes a painted beach ball with claws. It appears to breathe and clicks its claws meditatively when making a decision about a potential meal. Originally, one of the ship's crew members, Pinback, adopted it as the ship's mascot on a past planetfall, but now has to be nagged periodically like a reluctant child by the ship's computer to clean up after it (with broom and dust pan), and to feed it. The "alien" in LOGAN'S RUN is a robot gone berserk, trapped in a section of the city unable to do its programmed work (freezing food stuffs for storage). In compensation, it freezes unlucky sanctuary-searching humans who wander into its prison. In both

films, the humans destroy the alien because it threatens their lives. In LOGAN'S RUN, the robot dies in spectacular and predictable fashion, shot down by the valiant hero's laser gun; in DARK STAR, the alien is punctured by the shot of a sedative gun, and beach ball that it is sputters around the room as the gas escapes it. The alien in LOGAN'S RUN is simply a stock obstacle meaningful only as an extension of the city grown dangerously blind to human needs. The alien in DARK STAR, though consistent with the film's cynical view of the world as an essentially absurd place, is primarily a humorous parody of the idea of BEM's common in pulp sf and B films. Taken on that level, it is fresh and delightful, whereas the LOGAN'S RUN prop only bores. The latter film relies in this instance, as well as most others, upon predictable cliché of traditions (the basic plot line for instance: a one-man victory against an inhuman society) and presents each alone, or connected in only the loosest fashion to the next.

Bureaucracy (i.e., the process wherein humans structure their lives to accommodate machinery, rather than the reverse), is portrayed in each film as having grown beyond mere insensitivity to a dangerously anti-human level. The central computer assigns Logan, a Sandman, to discover and destroy "Sanctuary," the place to which it is rumored



that people are escaping the city and carousel, the death-at-30 mechanism/ceremony. The city's original purpose—to protect humans—has been radically perverted and the original danger—a hostile outside world—no longer exists. In DARK STAR, the instrument of bureaucracy is, at first, the visage of "mission control" who in Major Danby's voice (the character in the film version of CATCH-22 who, grinning, sends off bomber crews with blackly humorous messages), smilingly advises the crew of Dark Star that due to budget cut-backs, vital supplies cannot be afforded the mission. In another example of inefficiency, the same agency earlier mistakenly sent a mechanic along on the Dark Star Mission because he was wearing the star suit of the real crew member, Pinback, and does not know how to operate the helmet intercom. Later in the film, however, the agency of the Dr. Strangelove menace of human-made machinery moves in closer. Doolittle the captain, convinces one of the planet-destroying bombs (in a hilarious discussion on Phenomenology that Woody Allen would have been proud of), that its sensory input is untrustworthy, its connection with reality tenuous and that the only thing it can be sure of is its own existence. Although this discussion temporarily delays an untimely explosion, Doolittle/Humanity, infuses technological objects with humanity's sense of solipsism, and at that moment loses control and all is lost. The bomb explodes in its own time, announcing, "Let there be light," and destroys the ship and crew.

Logan too, must confront the central mechanism of the city. In the tradition of STAR TREK and Captain Kirk, both Logan and Doolittle point out an error in the computers' assumptions and thus avoid death as a result of the computers' inexorably logical actions, (in Doolittle's case, only temporarily). Logan's unconscious mind (in the much-advertised not-filmed holographic sequence) cannot answer where sanctuary is because he has discovered that sanctuary is a myth. The computer is unbelievable sensitive (as were all the STAR TREK computers); it blows up in frustration, the city bubbles burst and explode, and Everyone Is Free...

The difference between the two films lies between what is usually done and what can be done in an sf film. LOGAN'S RUN is limited because it is totally defined by the gimmicks and money that has been poured into it to finance them. Major questions are opened up (or avoided) by the over-emphasis on special effects, questions that are more interesting than ideas actually dealt with in the film. Why has the 30-year limit been imposed? Why should the computer care if people escape through the city seals? If people must die at age 30 and the computer thinks that the outside is inhabitable (which is a reasonable assumption based upon its programmed purpose), then it must also think that the refugees perish, as they are required to do at the age of 30, so what is the problem? Is the city intended more of a prison than a sanctuary, designed to protect the outside environment and not the people? Again, an interesting idea which is not supported in the least within the film. LOGAN'S RUN tries to say things about the "obvious" danger of abandoning the nuclear family (in favor of test tube births and the familiar semantic situation in which the concept of biological parentage has become obscene). But again, the film picks up the familiar concepts, drops them into the plot and makes no attempt to explain their genesis or develop them as a theme. LOGAN'S RUN is simply a hodge-podge of cliched sf elements, bouyed up with an enormous amount of expensive tinsel.

DARK STAR, although it starts out with a similar conflict to that which is used in LOGAN'S RUN (humanity vs machine), does not simply use its time to showcase dead-end cliches. The latter film concludes with a vision that sustained many a 30's and 40's sf story and borrows and (badly) pastes together supportive elements of the same period in the field. DARK STAR projects a vision of our time and lends new life to its supportive elements, because it shows awareness of their cumulative meaning. LOGAN'S RUN affirms the efficacy of human solipsism--the individual can always overcome obstacles posed by machine/bureaucracy--while DARK STAR denies that concept. The universe is absurd and humanity only increases the danger to themselves by adding leverage to their machines/bureaucracy through the infusion of their own sense of being. In Heller's CATCH-22, Yossarian learns to survive in the world only through a chameleon-like, adaptation of absurd patterns of behavior; however, in doing so, he adds to the general condition and the world becomes more dangerous with another loaded absurdity ricocheting (or, exploding, as in DARK STAR) through the cosmos.

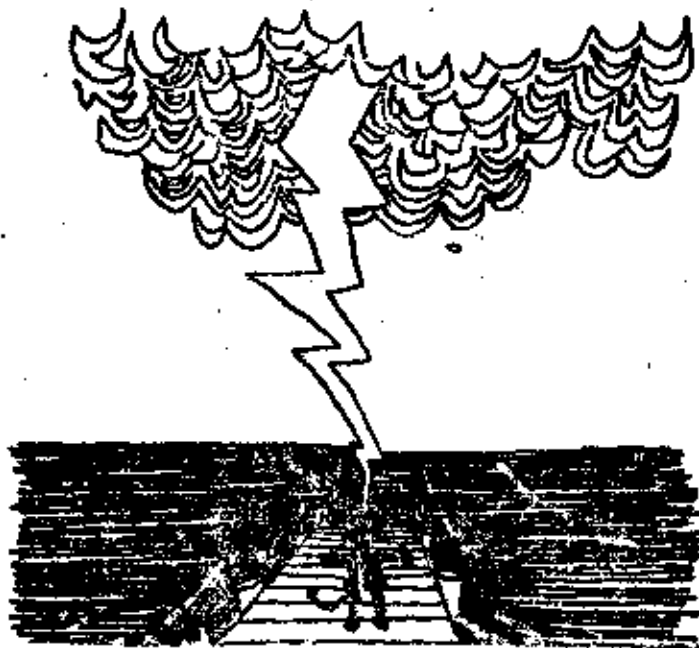
While LOGAN'S RUN raises questions it seems oblivious to, rather than simply incapable of answering, DARK STAR's purpose seems to be the lampooning of that very obliviousness. It creates characters of genuinely believable humanness and puts them in contact with the familiar sf props, resulting in fresh visions. Pinback--the rechristened mechanic and accidental crew member--finds his relationship to the alien to be a tedious, exploitive, sometimes nerve-wracking experience rather than the life-changing experience generally postulated. Powell, the dead captain, died not in an experience of apotheosis, but by electrocution from a short in his seat cushion. (Just imagine Kirk or any Heinlein character passing away in such an insignificant manner one day between adventures while lounging in his control chaise...) Doolittle, the succeeding captain, involves himself not in the visionary search for life in the universe but with a bored target practice of unstable planets between wistful daydreams of surfing at Malibu.

The awareness and respect for the sf tradition that the creators of DARK STAR show, as well as their extraordinary movie-making skills and sense of humanity, has resulted in a sophisticated, marvelously funny film. And surprise, surprise: an sf work of art that succeeds in creating believable and worthwhile characterizations too. DARK STAR is an example of what can and should be done in the area of sf motion pictures. LOGAN'S RUN is something that should have been wrapped long ago.

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## ROSEMARY'S GRANDCHILDREN

--Diane M. Martin & Richard S. Russell



The summer of 1976 has produced an unusually large number of science fiction/fantasy films, including THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH, VOYAGE TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, and LOGAN'S RUN, not to mention (and please let's not) THE GIANT SPIDER INVASION. This review will consider two other movies, both of which have drawn strongly on the book (by Ira Levin) and movie ROSEMARY'S BABY for plot and technique.

EMBRYO, based on the novel by Louis Charbonneau, opens in traditional, almost laughably trite, horror-movie fashion: It is a thunderstorm-swept night on a lonely road, as Rock Hudson drives through the blinding rain. Suddenly, a dog

runs out in front of his car; he swerves but hits it. As he bundles the dog in his coat and drives it home, we discover that he is a biochemist, evidently retired, with his own home laboratory. Although the dog, which is pregnant, dies despite his ministrations, he manages to save one of the unborn pups with an experimental hormone. The

pup subsequently displays phenomenal growth development, turning into a full-grown dog overnight. Hudson is then beset by the Frankenstein syndrome and seizes his first opportunity to try the same technique on a human embryo. The embryo is decanted from his vat at the stage of development appropriate to birth but continues to grow. She is about the equivalent of a 21-year-old woman (four days later) when he finally hits upon the correct counter-enzyme to normalize her metabolism. Upon gaining consciousness, Victoria (Barbara Carrera) displays an amazing mental (and, as is later revealed, physical) precociousness. The remainder of the film follows her experiences in dealing with a world completely fresh to her but in which everyone else expects her to be fully socialized. Finally, she comes to an untimely end, the seeds of her destruction having been planted earlier in the story.

**THE OMEN** is an original screenplay by David Saltzner, directed by Richard Donner. It opens in a hospital in Rome at (as the tagline on the screen tells you) 6:00 am on June 6. Lest you pass over that point unaware of its significance, note the comment of Revelation 13:18: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred three-score and six." (Like the date in the movie, 666 is the number of the Devil.) Affluent Gregory Peck has just learned that his child has (supposedly) died at birth. A Catholic priest persuades him to substitute a (supposed) foundling for his own child. Six years later, Peck, now Ambassador to Great Britain as a result of his close friendship with the President of the United States, stages a grand birthday party for his young son Damian (Harvey Stephens). At the party, the boy's nanny hangs herself in spectacular fashion. Further omens start to accumulate around the lad: a new nanny and a mysterious dog appear out of nowhere to guard him; a priest trying to warn Peck that all is not as it should be is struck down during a lightning storm on an otherwise calm day; a freelance photographer (David Warner) discovers his photographs reveal those marked for violent death. The ambassador and the photographer set out to track down the clues left by the dead priest. Peck shields his suspicions from his wife (Lee Remick) until he can be certain of them; by then it is too late for her. Grimly, he sets out to ritually murder "his" child and save the world from Satan.

The two films have many similarities besides their debt to **ROSEMARY'S BABY**. Both have contemporary settings; both deal with fairly well-to-do people caught up in events which begin to get away from them; both involve two pregnancies, the first evil, the second normal but unsuccessful; both employ dogs as portents; both are centered on engaging young people of dubious ancestry; and both attempt to build suspense through unspoken implications while superficially denying the presence of anything unnatural. In addition, both films are carried by the abilities of their respective leading actors, Hudson and Peck.

From this common beginning, the two films diverge. Brian Aldiss, in **BILLION YEAR SPREE** (subtitled "The True History of Science Fiction") provides a useful construct here. He places us on a spectrum between the "thinking pole" and the "dreaming pole." (p. 158 ff., Schocken edition) The thinking pole is scientific, technological, rational, Wellsian, and characteristic more of what we call science fiction. The dreaming pole is spiritual, natural, faith-oriented, Burroughsian, and characteristic more of what we term fantasy. **EMBRYO**, with its links to **FRANKENSTEIN** and **LOST HORIZON**, strives to put forth rational explanations for its happenings. **THE OMEN**, leaning toward **THE BIBLE** and **THE EXORCIST**, pays considerably less homage to rationality.\*

Curiously, given this dichotomy, it is **THE OMEN** which best succeeds in causing a willing suspension of disbelief. There are several reasons for this.

First, **THE OMEN** is obviously a film made on an adequate budget, whereas **EMBRYO** seems from the outset to have been directed at (or perhaps by) the drive-in movie trade. The budget advantage of **THE OMEN** is most apparent in its splendid photography. Shots of cathedrals, graveyards, monasteries, and catacombs contrast successfully with those

\* Those who are interested in pursuing the eschatology of the Book of Revelation will find an interesting exposition in **THE LAST DAYS OF THE LATE, GREAT PLANET EARTH**, at religious bookstores and grocery-store revolving racks.

of skyscrapers, mansions, and hospitals, adding significantly to the effect of the film. On the other hand, EMBRYO uses a limited number of sets in a very ordinary way. Little attempt is made to suggest visual metaphors. The scoring of THE OMEN is also better suited to the atmosphere it is trying to create than the singularly unmeasurable soundtrack of EMBRYO.

Also, THE OMEN is unidirectional. It starts with suspicious happenings and crescendos toward the final confrontation without much divergence from the main pathway. By contrast, the action in EMBRYO is fractured and choppy. Victoria springs into being as from the brow of Zeus and shortly thereafter plunges into a whirlwind of social activity. Suddenly, her metabolism starts to go wrong, precipitating additional crises. The pace escalates until a slam-bam ending that leaves the viewer incredulous.

In defense of EMBRYO, it has taken pains to achieve clinical realism, even in its bloodier scenes. THE OMEN, by contrast, serves up extremely unlikely (yet believable in context) and grisly death scenes.

Further contrasts can be made, mainly to the detriment of EMBRYO, including comparative weakness of subplots and supporting characters. However, this is not to say that EMBRYO is inadequate. It is intended as entertainment, and it serves fairly well in that role. It is natural that it should suffer by comparison with THE OMEN, because the latter is one of the best chillers ever produced. It has the added advantage, as one reviewer of JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR has noted, of giving the viewer something more significant to take away from the theatre than the taste of popcorn.

We can recommend either of these films, but if all you've got is \$3.00 and you're forced to choose between them, go see THE OMEN.

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LETTER FROM HARLAN ELLISON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9.

deny the reality of what passes for love in our world. But the death & destruction part...well, they are literary tools. And I consider them as valid for my use as for Conrad, Dostoevski, Fitzgerald or Joyce. Not to mention Oates, Woolf, Tillie Olson, Cynthia Ozick, Colette and Porter.

Harlan Ellison



# Fanzine Reviews



By  
Perri  
Corrick

**THE WITCH AND THE CHAMELEON 5 & 6: (1976)** Amanda Bankier, Apt 6, 2 Paisley Ave. S., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. \$1.50@, 3/\$4 or the usual. "A Feminist View of Science Fiction." Varied, well-written and well-presented material. Cover by Jeanne Gomoll.

**TESSERACTION 25 (1976)** Science Fiction Society, Rm 519, Chicago Circle Center, UICC, Chicago, Ill. One story and one loocong article on viable alternatives to nuclear armament. Zine needs more variety-- they're looking for contributors.

**STRANGE DYSTOPIAS 2: (June 1976)** Bill Brummer, 11 Strath Lumber Court, Islington, Ontario, Canada, M9A 4C7. Available for 75¢ @ 4/\$1 or the usual. Good repro and easy chatter by BILL who shows potential.

**SOUTH OF THE MOON 12: (Spring 1976)** Andrew Sigel, 424 Greenleaf St., Evanston, IL. 60202. Available for 25¢ @, 4/\$1 or the usual. Tim Marion edited this issue of SOTM which is an apa-index zine.

**SIMULACRUM 2A: (March 1976)** Victoria Wayne, PO Box 155, Stn D, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6P 3J8. Available for \$1.50 or the usual. Long (48pp) letterzine with LoC's on previous SIMULACRUMs and Victoria's replies.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 17: (May 1976)** Richard E. Geis, PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211. Available for \$1.25 @, 4/\$4 or 8/\$7. Hugo nominee containing reviews, interviews, letters, etc.

**REQUIEM 9: (March-April 1976)** 455 Saint-Jean Longueuil, Quebec, Canada J4H 2Z3. Available for \$1@, 6/\$5 or trade. Slick fanzine written in French. Articles on Silverberg, Perry Rhodan, 2001, SF in Quebec, etc. Letter from Harry Warner, Jr.

**REQUIEM 10: (May-June 1976)** See above. More articles, reviews, etc.-- all in French.

**PABLO LENNIS 2: John Thiel, 93 N. 19th St., Lafayette, IN 47904. Available for 25¢ or the usual. Pleasant zine trying to get started. John can probably go places if he gets more material.**

**MYTHOLOGIES 9: (June 1976)** Don D'Amassa, 19 Angell Dr., E. Providence, RI 02914. Available for \$1@ or the usual. Long lettercol, Bonnie Dalzell cover.

**LOCUS 190: (June 30, 1976)** Charles & Dena Brown, 34 Ridgewood Lane, Oakland, CA 94611. Available for 60¢ @ or 15/\$6. Hugo nominee and THE SF newszine. Reviews galore.



**IT COMES IN THE MAIL 22:** (May - July 1976) Ned Brooks, 713 Paul St., Newport News, VA 23605. Diary-type comments on mail and fanzines in the order in which Ned received them in the mail.

**GRANFALLOON 20:** (July 1976) Linda E. Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076. Available for \$1, trades, contributions. Solid material—articles, reviews, LoC's. Good art and repro. Evidently GF will come out in intervals of a year or more. Regular subscribers will get her newzine KARASS.

**GODLESS 13:** (June-July 1976) Bruce D. Arthurs, 920 N. 82nd St., H-201, Scottsdale, AZ 85257. Available for 50¢ (#13 is 75¢) or the usual. Articles, reviews, good lettercol, etc. Art portfolio by Glen Brock and good article on fanart by Eric Mayer. Interesting zine.

**ECLIPSE 9:** Mark R. Sharpe, 10262 John Jay, Apt D, Indianapolis, IN 46236. Available for 50¢ @ or the usual. Short (14pp) and Mark needs a good proofreader. Steve Bridge has a good newsy article and an article by Bruce Coulson contains humorous portions scattered among outbursts of incipient megalomania. All right but insubstantial.

**DON-O-SAUR 45** (April 1976) Don C. Thompson, 7498 Canosa Court, Westminster, CO 80030. Available for 35¢ @, 6/\$2, 12/\$3.50 or the usual. Substantial personalzine with good lettercol. Hugo Nominee.

**CYGNUS X-1 3:** Bob Ruben, 1351 Denniston Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15217. There's been a change in editor but Bob will forward material, letters, etc. to the new one. Articles and other miscellany--short.

**THE CHIMAEERAN REVIEW** Vol. 1, No. 2: (Spring 1976) Bill Roper, 217 Smith Hall, Thompson Point--Lentz Hall, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901. Available for 75¢ @ or the usual. Published irregularly by the SIU SF Society. 21 out of 28 pages LoC's and editorial comments--one article by Bill on the Dorsai series.

**BOOWATT** Vol. 2, No. 8: (May 1976) Boowatt Publications, 616-415 Edison, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2G 0M3. Available for 25¢ @ or 12/\$2. Short personalzine. Garth Danielson rambles for 8 pages.

**BLUE JAUNTE 1:** (July 1976) Tara Wayne MacDonall, 1284 York Mills Rd., Apt 410, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3A 1Z2. Available for \$1 or the usual. Oneshot personalzine. Printed in red ink on lime green paper. News about Toronto fans.

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#### MIND GEOMETRY

I don't understand  
I hope you know  
How long, Now far  
Does this circle go  
I thought it would end  
With a twist of my mind  
But I've turned  
And I've circled  
Confused  
I can't find  
The way off the spiral  
Out of the heart  
Oh where did it end  
Oh when will it start

BY JANICE BOGSTAD

