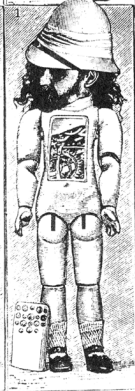
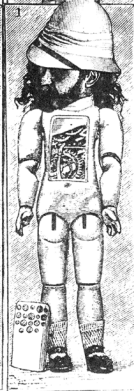
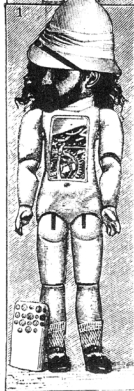


GENRE RAT



GENRE PLAT

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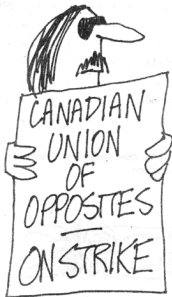
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*We hope that none of our mail has gone astray in the meantime,
and apologize for any problems the recent address hiatus may
have caused. Genre Plat's next number will be issued from
That City By the Bay under slightly different management.*

--Bill Gibson

October 20, 1977--

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EDITORIAL



This summer I met someone who made a tremendous impression on me and my first/immediate inclination was to write an article about our meeting. I must have started the article a dozen times before realizing it couldn't be written, at least not by me. I discovered there was no way to do the article without getting extremely personal, and that I wasn't willing to do. For a while I thought I could get around the problem by writing about myself and my reactions to this person, but that didn't work either for the simple reason that my reactions were to what I perceived to be their character make-up, to the things we said and did, to how they reacted to me. (Sorry people, but I really do hate 'per' and I am trying to avoid gender identification in the pronouns.) No matter how I wrote it, it all seemed to me like an invasion of my friend's privacy.

Since Westercon in July I've received an incredible number of personalzines in the mail, and I've been quite interested to see how others treat the questions of "how personal is personal?" and "exactly what constitutes an invasion of privacy?" Many people seem to feel it is perfectly all right to make value judgements in print about someone they have met ("X is something of a snob). Others discuss intimate details of their friendships, sometimes naming names and sometimes not. I'm truly surprised at the lack of lawsuits in fandom, considering the damaging things that are so frequently printed. The defense here is usually that 1) personalzines and apas have a limited circulation and the statements are therefore not made "publicly," or 2) this is "personal journalism" and people realize that what is printed is one person's opinion only and doesn't necessarily apply in all cases.

Well, I dunno: 1) An item Susan Wood printed in her limited circulation personalzine AMOR was recently excerpted and run with comments in a large circulation *bona fide* fanzine (Carl Bennett's SCINTILLATION), and things became very public; 2) People *don't* realize, or else they forget, that personal opinions are not necessarily valid in all cases.

And another interesting thing about fandom: It seems that once something does get into print, especially if it's a negative comment on someone, whether it's true or not, it stays in fandom's mind forever.

The topic of personal journalism came up at the non-con I attended in Seattle over the Labour Day weekend. Participating in the discussion were: Jeff Frane, Susan Wood, Denys Howard, Eli Cohen, Sharon and Doug Barbour, John Berry, Jane Hawkins and myself. (In keeping with the spirit of the non-con, it was an extremely informal, though we felt important, discussion.) Except for Sharon and maybe Jane, we have all either published personalzines or written many personal journalism articles. The problem is real for us, not just an intellectual hashing over of ideals.

Despite the fact that we all had fairly definite feelings on what constitutes an invasion of privacy (and leaving aside for the moment the strictly legal definitions of libel and defamation of character; this is after all fandom), we never did reach any totally satisfactory conclusions. I think we all agreed that what we choose to print about ourselves is our own business; it was when we tried to decide what we have a right to say about ourselves in relation to someone else, or about someone else all by her/himself that we bogged down.

The discussion began with objections to and comments on a statement that was made in one particular perzine most of us had received. While we all agreed that the editor had a right to make his opinions public, we disagreed about whether the editor had the right to say what he said in the particular way he said it, and we tried to figure out how to voice opinions about a second party without hurting that second party.

Feelings varied here. Denys wants to see us becoming more open and honest with each other and therefore feels it is all right to print intimate things about friends and acquaintances (I apologize for paraphrasing him incompletely here). Jeff feels it's okay to make personal comments about people he's reasonably certain no one in his readership will know, or about people he hasn't been in communication with for some time. Susan feels that we should talk about people only in the most ambiguous of terms when saying something negative, but it's fine to name names when praising. None of us was able to define constructive criticism to everyone's satisfaction, and everyone admitted that our personal rules are not hard and fast, and don't even always work.

My own personal dilemma is still not resolved. I still haven't written my article for publication; in fact, if it ever does get done, it will probably be given to my friend as a gift, intended for no one else's eyes.

This is the strange thing: The article would be positive in nature, saying complimentary things about my friend. The crux of this particular problem is this: My friend is at least somewhat a public figure. Before meeting this person, I "knew" them by reputation, having read things by and about them in fanzines and having been told things about them by friends who had either known them personally for some time, or had met them once. The stories were all very interesting and entertaining, but had absolutely nothing to do with the person I actually got to know this summer.

And therein lies the temptation to do the article: Compare and Contrast the Reputation with the Reality. Or at least with my reality. See, the article would have been, as I said before, about only my own interaction with this person, and the more I thought about it, the more I felt that, however interesting you all might have found my reactions and evaluations, I couldn't invade my friend's privacy at this time in this way.

But, damn, I'd still love to write the piece!

* * *

This issue is late and though we apologize for keeping you waiting, we have Good Excuses. Susan went to San Francisco for six weeks; Bill went to Toronto for two weeks; Westercon 30 happened (especially to Allyn); Allyn got a job; Susan went to San Francisco for two weeks; Allyn went to San Francisco for ten days; Susan went to Portland for a week; Bill and Deb had a baby; Allyn got another job; Susan, Allyn and Eli went to Seattle for a non-con; Bill had to paint his apartment; Bill and Allyn couldn't get it together to do one of their cute little editorial duets; Allyn decided to move to San Francisco and has spent a lot of time packing and putting her affairs in order; classes started at UBC. Oh, and Eli got a job.

It's been quite a summer.

As of this writing we are all in Vancouver but if all goes well I will be leaving for the States in four days (and Eli will be leaving for New York for two weeks), leaving the mimeography and the mailing of this issue to Susan and Eli. We are calling it the Summer/Fall issue but it's not a double issue. No. 3 will come from San Francisco and will appear in three months, ghu willing. ((Boy, are you tempting Fate! -love, Susan)) In the meantime, our address remains the same. We will maintain the editorial co-operative, making *Genre Plat* a truly international fanzine; however, next issue we will introduce a new co-editor. Some of you will be surprised.

-Allyn Cadogan

MICHAEL BISHOP'S TWO NEW NOVELS:

THE PROMISE FULFILLED

reviewed by doug barbour

Michael Bishop, one of the best new authors of the '70's, has been writing fine short fiction for some time now (and that statement forces us to face how far into the '70's we are, doesn't it?), but his first two novels were no more than "promising." In his two latest novels, *Stolen Faces* and *A Little Knowledge*, the promise is brilliantly fulfilled. The two books are not at all alike, except for the wit and intelligence with which they are crafted.

Stolen Faces is set in a far future where Glactik Komm controls, through its Martial Arm - the interstellar branch - and its Civil one - planet-based bureaucracies - the inhabited galaxy. Because he acted insubordinately in the eyes of his captain, Julian Yeardance is demoted from his position as a starship astrogator/engineer and sent to the colony planet Tezcatl to serve as kommissar of a quarantined compound of people suffering the incurable leprosy-like disease, muphormosy. The novel details his increasingly despairing discoveries there: that the disease no longer afflicts the muphormers, or "lepers" as they're called by the planet's healthy population; that the planet's governing bureaucracy knows this, does not care and will not try to help the "lepers" back into society because the population's fear and loathing of them is too strong; that the muphormers - victims of neglect, prejudice and the deforming ravages of the disease in past generations - truly believe they are "dung;" and eventually that they have invented a horrific religious rite of mutilation (which demonically parodies the originally violent rituals of the Aztec mythology that so fascinated the starship captain who discovered and named the planet - and left his knowledge of Aztec mythology there to become entertainment in the capital city, and something far worse among those descendants of the colonists who originally fell victim to muphormosy).

Yeardance is the figure of the good weak man in a position of insufficient power to do the good he sees needs to be done; who tries anyway and pays for his attempts with his life, a failure though a noble one in his way. He does succeed in partially changing the prejudices of the few colony young people under his command at the compound, partly because he doesn't simply give in and up as the previous kommissar did. Yeardance, by trying to act as a real kommissar, becomes a sympathetic figure, but it is precisely because Bishop refuses to make him the usual "competent" sf hero that he finally becomes such a movingly engaging figure of loss.

Bishop is especially good at detailing the political relationships of people and the occasional upsetting shifts of balance within these relationships: Yeardance and the governor; Yeardance and his staff; Yeardance and the muphormers, especially their leader, the "non/ent." But though Yeardance wins the respect of his staff, he cannot win freedom for his charges from their unnecessary and psychologically demeaning Long Quarantine. Instead, in a truly terrifying scene of demonic possession, he finds himself helplessly joining the muphormers in their "rite of spring," the ritual changing of the god and group mutilations of Burgeontide, and eventually he is killed by one of their murderous bands of children. An Afterward, coolly precise and therefore horrifyingly distant and analytical - a marvelous piece of bureaucratic blame-shedding, in fact - informs us that as a result of his death an investigation was ordered by Glactik Komm. The results? The compound was closed and an attempt made to bring the muphormers back into the planet's society. An attempt which failed because the older folk could not adjust at all and though some of the younger ones did, they agreed to be sterilized so that within a generation or two all trace of them disappears. *Stolen Faces* is a bitter, biting novel of social maleficence and it gets to you.

As, in a very different manner, does *A Little Knowledge*. Where *Stolen Faces* is a tightly confined story concentrating on one person and his psychological discoveries, *A Little Knowledge* is an expansive social fable, a large novel teeming with characters and bursting with life. The story takes place only a century from now, in the Atlanta Nucleus, one of the huge Dome City-states which have replaced the U.S. and Canada as the political units of North America. It is implied that these Domes are not only self-sufficient but, like the U.S. of the late '30's, self-absorbed and isolationist; certainly Atlanta, ruled by a Christian-revivalist theocracy, the Ortho-Urbanist Church, is. The Ortho-Urbanist Church has wiped out all other religious sects, except for two small groups allowed in sufferance, the Muslim New Islamites and the Krishnaworshipping FUSCONites and in this sense it is a typical of theological dictatorship, of which there have been many. There haven't been any like Michael Bishop's before, I believe, for all the ones I know have been presented in black-and-white terms as dangerously evil in their denial of free thought (and usually the hero of the story, after beginning his life as an acolyte, becomes a member of a revolutionary fifth-column - cf Heinlein's *If This Goes On...*, Leiber's *Gather Darkness!*). Bishop, who is only too aware of the complexity of any human-made social organism (and I suspect of the breadth of thought possible in the late medieval Church), revels in the human variety achievable in his invented city and its theocratic bureaucracy, and shows us the range of human possibilities even within the governing church.

The actual story is extremely complicated. Emory Nettlinger, whose real father assassinated the young evangelist-reformer Carlo Bitler years before, and who was brought up by Fiona Bitler and eventually married her, has developed FTL starship-probes in Scandinavia. One of these has discovered intelligent life on a planet of the 61 Cygni system. But although European humanity welcomes all this, the isolationist Atlanta Nucleus wants nothing to do with the extraterrestrials. Nevertheless, Nettlinger and Fiona Bitler return to Atlanta and eventually introduce seven Cygnostikoi into the city. Early in the novel, the extraterrestrials are permitted, finally, to attend a religious service and they all declare for Christ and ask to be made ministers of the faith. The novel is about the effect these events have on the people of Atlanta, most of whom are believers in Ortho-Urbanism on some level of faith or another.

A large group of widely divergent and equally interesting people parade through the pages of this witty and energetic book. All contribute something to our understanding, and to our entertainment, but the two central ones are Julian Cawthon, an

agnostic would-be writer who ends up working as a gopher for the aliens, after their previous gopher, a Muslim, is brutally murdered by some of those who take the aliens' declaration of faith as an excuse to get rid of all other faiths, and Margot Eastwin, an intelligent and lively young deacon-in-training, who, among other things, allows us to see that some of the seminarians in this theocracy have very free-thinking minds indeed. They meet, and with the sympathetic aid of a Cygnostikoi, discover their mutual love far sooner than would ordinarily be the case. After which they are granted the shocking theological revelation which is the novel's climax. Bishop is at his best in the presentation of the revelation and its aftermath.

Although this novel is essentially comic in contrast to the essential tone of bitter loss in *Stolen Faces*, it is not a light comedy, as the scenes of murder and carnal urban violence and their effect upon the lives of ordinary citizens show. Nevertheless, there are many scenes of brilliant light humour and the scene of the revelation is most effectively one of these. Even better, Bishop doesn't stop the world, nor the novel, there but shows us how, for ordinary people like Margot and Julian, even a revelation which utterly destroys all human notions of what "God's" plan for humanity and the cosmos might be can only be assimilated in small doses and as part of the unassuming continuation of their normal lives. This makes for an ending which is humanely inclusive in its sense of a human place in the universe, and I think that is a truly fine ending, indeed.

Bishop not only writes with wit and occasionally marvelous comic timing, he handles a wide range of emotions and some complex intellectualizations with great finesse. His control of his various themes - including the awful but always tempting aggrandizement of religion by politics or vice-versa, the theological speculations the fact of the aliens presupposes, the complexity of life for ordinary people in huge enclosed urban spaces like the Atlanta Nucleus and the kinds of violence such restricted living areas encourage, the ever-present intellectual/emotional choices of individual lives - is sure. His style is allusive, witty, intelligent and powerfully evocative by turns; his insights and occasional epigrams well turned. The novel is vital and full of energy because its characters are vividly alive in his telling: we believe in their emotions, thoughts and actions.

One other aspect of these novels deserves some comment: that is the neat way both books fit into large (and I think separate) future histories which Bishop has been constructing in other stories as well. Certainly *A Little Knowledge* is set in the same Atlanta (and therefore on the same future Earth) as that of the beginning of *A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire* and the powerful novella "The Samurai and the Willows" and, in fact, Julian is the son of the lady Queequeg of that story. I find this a good sign in Bishop's work, for some of the best sf writers (Ursula K. Le Guin is the shining example) have created consistent futures to fill in with story after story and I know I want to learn more about both sub-creations Bishop has begun to explore in these novels.

Meanwhile we have the novels, not masterpieces, no, but both fine pieces of writing. If I had to choose between them, however, the expansive, social and essentially comic vision of *A Little Knowledge* provides me with the finer entertainment of the two.

Michael Bishop. *Stolen Faces*. New York: Harper & Row; Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1977. 176 pp. \$9.60 in Canada.

Michael Bishop. *A Little Knowledge*. New York: Berkley/Putnam; Toronto: Longman Canada Ltd, 1977. 293 pp. \$10.50 in Canada.

Bill Beard reviews

STAR WARS



RABID

"...I didn't want to make a 2001, I wanted to make a space fantasy that was more in the genre of Edgar Rice Burroughs; that whole other end of space fantasy that was there before science took it over in the Fifties. ...I think speculative fiction is very valid but they forgot the fairy tales and the dragons and Tolkien and all the real heroes....Nobody is going to colonize Mars because of the technology, they are going to go because they think...it is romantic...."

-George Lucas
Rolling Stone
August 25, 1977

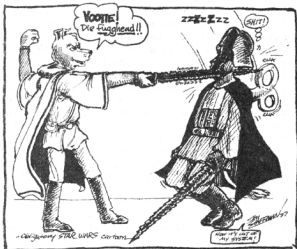
Star Wars is a very hard movie not to like, and despite the fact that there wasn't a snowstorm publicity campaign for it ((in Canada)), it's an enormous hit at the box-office. The reasons for its success aren't far to seek. Ever since Stanley Kubrick's *2001* it's been plain that one of the things the public will really part with money to see is science fiction movies with reasonably intelligent scripts and, above all, lots of very smooth and expensive technical hardware and special effects. The medium-to-big budget sf movies since *2001* have generally been gimmicky projects like *Westworld*, *Soylent Green* and *Logan's Run*, where the selling point has been the idea rather than the hardware: a robot-manned super-Disneyland, a polluted future where people have to eat dog biscuits that turn out to be made of human flesh, or a utopian society where nobody is allowed to live past thirty. These movies are very similar in conception and appeal to a lot of science fiction literature. But now that we've watched ourselves landing on the moon on television, science fiction is to some extent a reality; and what most fascinates the majority of people about it is the 3-D reality of the miracle.

This is where *Star Wars* cashes in. It certainly has the best hardware and special effects seen anywhere since *2001*, and is a worthy successor to it in that area. Many people are quite happy to pay admission just to watch the beautiful

realizations of spaceships, monster satellites, interstellar drive, aerial combat, robots, futuristic uniforms and hand weapons, and the nice selection of creatures. But there's more to the movie than these things. It's written and directed by George Lucas, whose first feature was a reasonably good "idea" science fiction movie called *THX-1138* in which a bald Robert Duvall tries to find happiness with his equally bald girlfriend in a society where sex and love are forbidden.

Then of course Lucas did *American Graffiti*, in its own way a science fiction movie, about a past that never existed rather than about the future. Thinking about it, *Star Wars* has a lot in common with *American Graffiti* - the same glossily beautiful physical surface, the same loveably nostalgic oversimplifications of character and emotion. *Star Wars* is "space opera" - entertainment directed unswervingly towards the 12-year-old in all of us. As one young person seriously and accurately remarked to another coming out of the theatre, "Basically it's Good against Evil, and Good wins." The goodies, marshalled by a gently patriarchal Alec Guinness, include an innocent idealistic youth in search of adventure, a beautiful princess trying to deliver vital information to a distant planet, a smart-talking spaceship captain and his hairy alien co-pilot who are helping them out, and two amiable robots bringing up the rear. The baddies are minions of the evilly oppressive Galactic Empire, from a cadaverous Peter Cushing and the black-visored goodie-turned-baddie Lord Vader at the top, to the thousands of raygun-carrying Imperial troops, clad from head to foot in white fibreglass armour, at the bottom.

Apart from his superb handling of the technical aspects of the movie, Lucas' virtues are most evident in his loving, straight-faced use of the conventions of the genre. We're plunged into the intricacies of the plot as though this were episode 12 of a Saturday-matinée serial, a parallel that's deliberately evoked by the explanatory titles at the beginning, rolling away from us into the distance for all the world like a Flash Gordon serial of the late '30's. No apology whatever is made for the two-dimensional characterization, or for the black-and-white moral simplicities of the story; just the reverse in fact. There's a lot of humour in the film, much of it centred on the lovely variety of non-human creatures. The two principal robots are both comic characters: one looks like a heavy-duty vacuum cleaner, emits nicely timed gurgles, squeaks and whoops, and has the personality of a faithful cocker-spaniel; the other is a graceful, gold-plated android with exquisite manners ("I'm programmed for etiquette," he says), who's continually reacting with gentle alarm to all the scrapes he gets dragged into. Other creatures include a race of dwarfish, hooded, squeaking beings that scurry around in packs like miniature monks; a green lizard-like bounty hunter who speaks in what sounds like speeded-up Japanese (it's subtitled); and a collection of garish monsters who sit around in a seedy bar acting like waterfront toughs. Lucas swipes conventions from all over the place: the bar scene just mentioned is scripted like something from a gangster movie or maybe a Western, with appalling-



looking things walking up to our hero and saying stuff like "I'm wanted for murder in ten galaxies." On board ship the android and the hairy co-pilot play a futuristic version of checkers, with pieces consisting of miniature monsters who growl and swipe at each other like tiny escapees from the original *King Kong*. And the final attack by the good guys on the gigantic military satellite owes everything to World War II fighter-plane movies, complete to dialogue like "Red Leader to Red 5 - you've got an enemy on your tail!"

Lucas brings so much whimsical humour, and so much tender loving care, to his enterprise that *Star Wars* is pretty well irresistible. It's certainly minor art - it wouldn't touch reality with a ten-foot pole - but it has an unerring sense of its own aims and its own limitations. It may be every bit as self-indulgent and ultimately sentimental as, say, *Rocky*, but then *Rocky* is a daydream that tries to persuade us that it just might come true, whereas *Star Wars* stays safely, and satisfyingly, in the realm of pre-adolescent fantasy, and has no further designs on us. It may be sugar-and-starch rather than protein, but it is a treat.

* * *

I'm sure nobody's going to believe me when I say that *Rabid* is one of the best horror movies of the year so far. *Rabid* is an horror movie written and directed by Shivers, managed to cause quite a from coast to coast, even in lets, crying aloud in anger and be allowed to pollute the larly when it was made by ment money. Everybody sions that hardly anyone beautifully poised, ginal little film, English-Canadian

Now Cronenberg originality and well. *Rabid* is a which features Marilyn American hard-core porn cycle crash victim who's tion in a nearby private plastic surgery.

The operation utilizes mental technique which restores has by some mysterious process of vampire, who's driven to suck a newly-grown subcutaneous needle-emerges from an opening in her arm the bite by embracing her victims, sieze on the ambiguity involved in an and predatory. Rose's victims are at first numbed and oblivious, but shortly develop into slaving violent monsters driven by the desire to bite others and thus transmit their disease - they become, in a word, rabid. Rose's first few bloodsuckings quickly mushroom exponentially into an epidemic - victims biting new victims biting yet newer



shows that he not only has talent, but consistency as fairly low budget film Chambers (superstar of films) as Rose, a motor-given an emergency operaclic clinic specializing in

a hitherto purely experi-Rose to outward health but made her into a bizarre sort other people's blood through sharp tube. Shice this tube pit, she can only administer and Cronenberg is quick to embrace which can be both loving

victims - and within days Montreal is reduced to a state of nightmarish chaos presided over by machine-gun-carrying soldiers shooting down rabidees and white-suited, gas-masked exterminators spraying everything with disinfectant and removing the corpses in garbage trucks. Meanwhile Rose is struggling not to recognize that she's the cause of it all, ultimately facing the truth and at last deliberately falling a victim to one of the people she has herself infected.

Under its sensationalistic surface *Rabid* is a highly accomplished, ambitiously complex and finally moving film. It isn't full of gory squishy creatures like *Shivers* (though there are horrendous moments); nor does it have *Shivers'* abundance of sly self-satirizing humour (though here again it does have several beautifully deadpan jokes). But it does share many of its predecessor's qualities.

First of all there is its splendidly cool, clean and restrained atmosphere. Cronenberg starts with an incisive perception of the bright, antiseptic, orderly, glass-and-plastic surface of present-day life. Quiet hospital corridors, cool and attractive apartments, machines humming with comforting self-confidence, clean lines everywhere - everything the camera looks at conspires to create a feeling that everything's in its place and under control. Nothing can go wrong. Then, from nowhere, or rather from the very depths of this unnaturally smooth lifestyle, a nightmare of violence and madness erupts, overturning and smashing the complacency of that calm surface.

One could hardly imagine an apter metaphor for the state of our society: all comfortable, clean and efficient on the outside; all fearful, twisted and neurotic within. *Rabid* presents the spectacle of nice, ordinary, law-abiding citizens transformed into raving monsters, madly trying to satiate their blind maniacal hunger on others. One might speculate that Cronenberg sees these horrors as being the natural end-product of repression, of people pretending to be cool, quiet and orderly machines. Or maybe he's simply paranoid in a manner shared by many perfectly sane people nowadays. At any rate he's obviously driven to express in his art the vast gulf between comforting appearances and disturbing realities (a characteristic he shares, incidentally, with Alfred Hitchcock).

This basic theme in the movie is reinforced in all kinds of ways. The starting-point for the action is an experimental operation in plastic surgery - and plastic surgery is of course the epitome of modern society's desire to remake outward appearances. Rose, the (at least technically) innocent cause of all the mayhem, is a perfect expression of the film's basic thesis. The cool, stylish, forbiddingly self-contained sexiness of her appearance is emblematic of the clinical detachment of present-day attitudes towards sex; though physically she is exactly a beautiful object, the personality inside that body turns out to be surprisingly naive, conventional and innocent. It's as though she's refined her exterior to fit the cool, self-possessed model society asks her to imitate, but her real emotional self just can't adapt to being that. When she becomes the instigator of a horrible plague, she doesn't - she can't - realize what's happening. And we as spectators can't tell the difference between Rose seeking an embrace to find a little human warmth and comfort for her fears and Rose seeking an embrace to suck blood and propagate madness. *Rabid* is a scary movie all right, but not exactly in the way most people will assume.

I sat through the movie twice, and again and again I was struck by Cronenberg's concern with detail - always the mark of a real talent. Rose's first attack, for example, is handled with astonishing sensitivity. Having awoken from her long post-accident coma, she's cold and afraid and seeks warmth in the embrace of a friendly fellow-patient. Then comes the attack itself - Rose in the throes of a passionate

need, her victim thrashing around violently - and after it's over she lies back satisfied, stroking his head tenderly as he trembles and whimpers. The parallel with the act of lovemaking is too plain to be missed. And then later, when the head of the clinic examines the scene, we see nothing but the bright clean yellow-and-white minimalist painting on the wall of the room metaphorically knocked askew and smeared with blood after the victim's exit.

Cronenberg also handles the gradual transformation of the city from normality to barbarous primitivism with splendid control and understatement, achieving some very nice self-contained cameo scenes, and using background radio and television with special deftness. Although he pulls the stops out in the "rabid" sequences, for the bulk of the movie his classical restraint in the treatment of the action produces a kind of melancholy serenity, and the final impact of the film is one of sadness and loss. He gets fine support from his actors, and from cameraman René Verzier.

I earnestly recommend you to put aside your preconceptions (if any) and give *Rabid* a try - particularly if you want to support good Canadian movies. I certainly haven't exhausted its virtues in this review. Don't be fooled by the movie's understated, self-effacing qualities; and don't assume its more horrifying sequences are merely sensational. Behind that rather stomach-turning poster and the unthinking dismissal of "respectable" critics lies a little masterpiece.



IN SEARCH OF THE ANTIPHONAL POLYTONE

by Marta Randall

Last night's Modern Music in East San Jose concert at the Museum of Modern Art finally gave the north Bay Area a chance to experience the exciting developments now taking place in the South Bay

Last night's Modern Music in East San Jose concert at the Museum of Modern Art finally gave the north Bay Area a chance to experience the exciting developments now taking place in the South Bay contemporary music field.

The evening opened, before a packed audience, with Clyde Holstein's newest composition, "Three Rabbits and a Duck," in which Holstein continues his exploration of the uses of the common as expressions of musical interest. The composer himself conducted the musicians, who consisted of Peggoty, Alfred, and Jeeves (actually English Hares, which Holstein claims have more purity of tone than the common rabbit), and Admiral Sir Elmore Duck. Although the aural effects of this composition closely resemble Holstein's prior work, "Fugue in Goose Minor," performed here last year by the Milpitas Modernist Ensemble, it must be noted that the electric prods have been muffled for "Three Rabbits and a Duck," creating a less cluttered milieu. We look forward to another performance from Peggoty and Sir Elmore; services for Alfred and Jeeves will be held tomorrow in Holstein's kitchen.

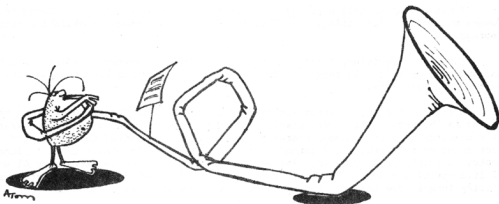
Marybeth Transitas' "The End of the Universe as Perceived Through Three Layers of Cellophane and a Violin" was marred by props left over from the Holstein piece. Nonetheless, the fourteen performers managed quite well, and the cellophane effect was a startling development in the SnapCracklePop school. In Transitas' previous works, the violin has lost successive strings, culminating in End's presentation of a string-less violin on which the performers alternately snapped, crackled, and popped.

Jon Torquemada's "Empirin Codein Number 43" departed from the concert's previous selections in that no audible instruments were used at all; a sole musician performed upon a dog-whistle, while the composer

disrobed on the stage before being covered with a combination of strawberry jelly and vaseline and bugged with a microphone. As in his previous compositions, Torquemada claims that the sounds of the departing audience are part of the composition itself.

The concert concluded with Jasper Jasper's "Earthquake and Aftermath on Broadway Terrace." Jasper is a new composer to the South Bay contemporary music scene, and this piece was performed by the composer, two musicians on hairdryer and thundermug respectively, the composer's dog Rufus, and the R&S Construction and Demolition Company Swingball Ensemble and Pickaxe Band. At the conclusion of the piece, the audience was excavated and presented with a cup of coffee for which he expressed thanks.

All in all, an exciting and enlightening evening. We trust that this presentation heralds a re-awakening of interest in young South Bay composers -- a reawakening which is long overdue.



Susan Wood



Tidepool

I was trying to tell a couple of sceptics from my sf class why I wanted to "waste my time" on fanwriting, when I could be piling up academic-publishing points instead.

The best fanwriting, I tried to explain, does what "academic" writing should do, and, mostly, doesn't. It shows the intellect and the emotions operating together as part of ordinary life.

A friend of mine, an actor/luthier/farmer named David Miller, once wrote to tell me why he "bothers" with books, madrigals, "anything that's not strictly necessary.... it's a matter of sheer, unadulterated greed. I've got a limited number of years to trot about on this orb, and I intend to cram as much into them as I can. A piece of poetry, a painting, a dance may give me the insight to aid me in extracting 61 seconds of life out of a minute. Maybe 65 or 68 seconds, if I work at it. My minutes are getting longer; and deeper. I'm going to live to be at least a thousand."

The writing I value is by people who experience those extra 5 or 8 seconds, and write about it so that I can live them too.

Now this, of course, is personal journalism at its best -- a really perceptive and interesting mind, interpreting the world so we can see it more clearly. Making new connections. It's rare, but you can find it: Annie Dillard's *Pilgrimage* at Tinker Creek, some of Ray Mungo's and Paul Williams' writing, sit within easy reach of my typewriter. Ellen Willis's writing in *Rolling Stone* (especially that gorgeous piece about Israel) is somewhat closer to the specific material I'm looking for,

since she writes about ideas, about books, and the ways they impinge upon and light up our lives.

There isn't much commercial market for this writing, though. We are assumed to want only entertainment and escape, 48 seconds instead of 68; and of course, non-commercial writing is a "waste of time" to the 48-second people.

The writing I want to read is done for love, and from compulsion. The place I know of, where it happens to surface, is in those smudgy little amateur publications where book freaks talk to each other: the fanzines.

Trying to explain, to my sceptical friends, why I "bothered" with "that stuff," I said: "There's one piece I remember, by an Australian writer named John Bangsund. He's writing about John W. Campbell's death, and about working in a meat market. It isn't about John Campbell at all, and yet it is, because it's about what sf means to John Bangsund."

My friends looked interested, because they're the sort of people for whom books matter, in that private way that, in North America in the 20th century, you're embarrassed to talk about. It's almost socially unacceptable. That's why fandom exists, I suppose, defensively, protectively, and sometimes gloriously producing these "uncommercial" tributes to the intelligent mind and perceiving eye.

For all of us who aren't hermits, but who do live our ordinary lives unwilling, or unable, to talk about *why* books matter, and how; who are unable to talk about how we make connections, all the time, between the internal and the external worlds; whose lives, specifically, are different because of sf: I'd like to reprint "John W. Campbell and the Meat Market."

For myself, there are other reasons.

In the fall of 1971, I was a graduate student in Toronto. Between school, friends and a gazette named *Energumen* that occupied most of my private life, there wasn't much time left for either sf or fanzines. I was, though, vaguely aware of an Australian fan named Bangsund, who produced brilliant, obscure little fanzines with titles like *Philosophical Gas* for obscure little organizations like the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

Then a package came, from John Bangsund: the text, revised from *Phil Gas*, of "John W. Campbell," for publication in *Energumen* if we could get it into print fairly soon. I read it: and a stranger half across the world was a friend talking directly to me. "It's brilliant," I said. "But the next two issues are filled up, so we couldn't publish it til the spring," Michael said. Andy Porter published it in *Algol #17* instead (an issue now out of print) and later John republished it in *John W. Campbell: An Australian Tribute* (an impressive "uncommercial" project, still available from John at Parergon Books P.O. Box 434, Norwood, SA 5067, Australia, for \$5 Australian).

And now I'm republishing it in *Genre Plat*.

John changed a few words here and there when I asked for reprint rights, and said: "Some of Andy's readers (and some of mine) really hated my Campbell-Stalin parallel. Five and a half years after writing the thing, I can't say my views on the

two gents have changed much, and I wouldn't want to alter what I said then. But I do understand why some readers would be offended."

John's only other comment on re-reading was that "It's not a bad piece though, really, is it!" I still think it's brilliant.

I'm republishing it, partly, to give John Bangsund some publicity. He's one of those curious, self-deprecating, possibly self-destructive and certainly defensive creatures who go about looking for bushels under which to hide their lights, or garages in which to store their unmailed magazines. John's been the editor of *Australian Science Fiction Review*, a much-admired serious fanzine which seems to have been a focal point in the growth of the modern Australian sf community. He's edited, and folded, a variety of personal, eclectic magazines with names like *Scythrop*, *The New Millennial Harbinger* and *Revolting Tales of Sex and Super-Science*, most of them available only through FAPA or the Australia and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association. Through the late '60's and early '70's, he started and abandoned any number of fannish projects and mundane jobs, while moving from address to address in the Melbourne area. This practice led Australian fan to regard him with a curious mix of affection, admiration and exasperation. In particular, he was instrumental in this period in persuading Melbourne fan, Down Under feeling out of things, that yes, they should indeed bid for a worldcon, and should moreover invite that interesting new writer, Ursula K. Le Guin, to be the Guest of Honour.

They did.

John then moved to Canberra.

Melbourne fans sighed, shook their heads, and wondered when John would settle down and start using his talents. It's a classic situation, one those friends of mine had me in. Why are you "wasting your time" on fandom?

Canberra gave John a steady job, editing government publications. It also gave him Sally Yeoland, his second wife. What Sally's given John is incalculable, but its first outward signs were the encouragement and support to actually get the John W. Campbell book published.

Meantime, I moved to Regina, found a bit more time for fanac, made a bit more time to read John's sporadic contributions to FAPA. He read my writing, too. By June of 1975, when I left Regina en route to Melbourne, we'd exchanged several magazines, perhaps half a dozen letters: and we knew we were friends.

I, and half a dozen other people, spent three days in Canberra with John and Sally. The conversations and the red wine never ran out; the time did. The wattle tree in the back garden tossed golden streamers in the spring sunlight; we laughed and hugged each other; I felt I'd come home. A week later, I was back in Canada.

Six months later, John and Sally moved again, this time to Adelaide where John is a freelance editor, mostly for Rigby's, a publishing firm which seems to specialize in Australian non-fiction; and a writer, of books like "a guide to the history, activities, properties and so on of the National Trust of South Australia." He is "making it" in the "real world." He has more work than he can handle, an extravagant motor-car, a houseful of books and music, and Sally to tell him he's a success when doubts and claret make him brood that "I'm a man with a great future behind me."

He wrote to me recently that "It's a good feeling to be a big fish in a small pond, as I am in fandom, but is this all I am capable of?" Well, no, obviously. Fandom is fun, but it's also a self-congratulatory little pond, and John is now swimming well in the big ocean.

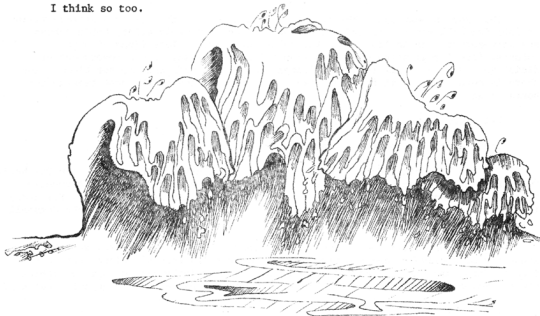
But: but. A good many competent people could write little books about North-West Tasmania, or edit the ghastly memoirs of a minor Australian politician. Only John Bangsund can write me glorious chatty letters about Sally and Vonda McIntyre halfway up a tree picking almonds, about sf, the meaning of success, Robertson Davies and St. Paul, and make connections that start me thinking freshly. Only John could have written the article he enclosed (Leigh Edmonds is to publish it, alas) which moves from kittens and deadly spiders in the laundry room, to Tennyson, and a priest with "a High Anglican super chortle" and manages to be about what life means to John Bangsund. He has that rare gift of being able to take the specifics of his life, make connections out of an eclectic and well-stocked mind, and then make connections with you, so you see something new. Or see something familiar, newly -- that's harder.

I'm really reprinting this piece for me. In it, John says of John Campbell's "Who Goes There" that: "Something gets through. Particularly to me, at this moment."

That's what "John W. Campbell and the Meat Market" did for me. It got through. It showed me ways of writing about what mattered to me. It showed me ways of looking at the world. It showed me John Bangsund.

John ended his letter to me by saying that, despite all his misgivings about the pond (and I share them), "Fandom is...well, I'm not sure what, exactly, but it's certainly a vehicle for communication between John Bangsund in Adelaide and Susan Wood in Vancouver, and for the moment that seems a good enough reason for being a fan."

I think so too.



JOHN W. CAMPBELL AND THE MEAT MARKET

by John Bangsund

This morning, 27 July 1971, I had an odd dream. "Who goes there?" had just won the Hugo. This had been decided by a panel of overalled and bloodied workers at the meat market, only one of whom, a dark, long-haired, bearded young man, looked like a science fiction reader; and everyone I telephoned to discuss this news turned out to be Robin Johnson, who became more annoyed with each successive call.

When I awoke, about midday, I wondered vaguely if the dream meant anything, made some coffee and listened to Prokofiev's "Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution."

That was an hour ago. Whirling around in my mind right now is a strange vision of John Campbell and the triumph of technocracy and the proletariat; Robin Johnson and meat-workers; an Apollo launch and Jules Verne and endless lines of animal corpses; fleeting glimpses of scenes from "Alexander Nevsky" and a government official in a dustcoat, his left hand dripping with red stuff that is not blood. And there is more, some of it from the dream, some from events of the past twenty-four hours or so.

Let's see if we can sort some of this out.

Begin at the beginning; it sometimes helps.

"In the beginning, God..." and then, some considerable time later, John Campbell. Two years before I was born he was appointed editor of a magazine called *Astounding Stories*. I am now thirty-two. Eight weeks ago I found myself out of work. Yesterday I got another job, and Apollo XV was launched. In between, on 11 July, John Campbell, still editor of the same magazine, died.

It could be fairly convincingly argued that my being out of work, and the launching of Apollo XV, and a myriad other momentous and trivial things, can be traced back to John Campbell. It could also be fairly convincingly argued that everything can be traced back to God, but I've served my time at that kind of argument, that kind

of tracing, and when I got back as far as I could go I didn't find anything I could put the name "God" to. Campbell is easier, if only by a small margin, because you can at least finish up with a man: a man, and his ideas, and his work, and his influence.

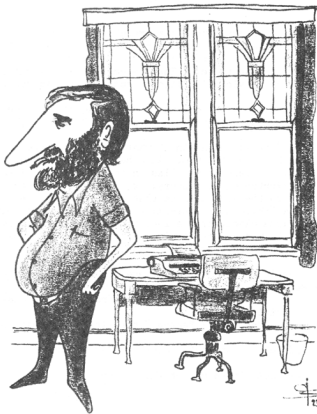
He influenced me by doing what he did for science fiction. What he did (and someone else can tell you about that), someone else might conceivably have done, but he did it, and science fiction flourished. Australians read science fiction and wrote it, and one of them, Lee Harding, got me reading science fiction, too. Not only reading it, but talking about it and writing about it and, eventually, publishing a magazine about it.

The writing and the publishing started releasing something in me that most people who have known me have vaguely felt or suspected or known was there, and is there. It's something unique and universal, and what exactly it is I don't know. It scares me a bit, sometimes it scares me a lot, but I want more and more to get it out, and so do a lot of people, good friends, who know as I know that I am thirty-two and lazy and this thing inside me waiting to get out.

How lazy? In more ways than I care to mention, but here's one example: I publish a magazine about science fiction, but I don't know the field, have not read five per cent of the standard works known to most sf readers, and am doing nothing about it. I love science fiction, but I do not love it the way most sf readers do, certainly not the way John Campbell loved it.

Anyway, yesterday I rang up about a job as a clerk at the meat market and went for an interview at 11 and at 3:30 rang again and I had the job. Hours 4 am to 1 pm, don't wear good clothes, and someone will find you a dustcoat when you come in.

Somehow I didn't feel the excitement, the relief, I had expected to feel when I got a job at last. I had a drink with Carolyn and Sandy, officially a celebration, but we talked of other things. Then I slept for an hour or so before setting off for another kind



of celebration. My birthday was three months ago; Diane had rung during the day to tell me the birthday present she had ordered months and months ago had finally arrived and would I like to come around for dinner?

I would and did and it was excellent as usual. The present was Prokofiev's "Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution," composed in 1937 and not performed until 1966. I had not heard it before. The very pretty record sleeve depicts the Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations in Red Square, and this is rather tactful since it is a Russian recording and there's a face that used to be familiar to us missing from the banners. The face of a certain Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, who flunked out of theological college sixty years before I did, although for slightly different reasons. Diane and I talked a bit and I came home and tried to sleep, and I failed.

After an hour or so tossing about, I turned the light on, lit up my fiftieth or sixtieth cigarette for the day (I lose count) and wondered what to do next. In five hours I was due to start work at the meat market. I began to think about John Campbell, and what I could write about him. I decided that no one could say anything about John Campbell that could be of interest at all who had not even read the man's most famous work, "Who goes there?"

What had George Turner said? "In this story he reached his personal perfection ...one of the most dramatically effective stories in science fiction." Something like that.

(George slaved over that article all last Sunday, denying himself alcohol - the ultimate dedication? - to say exactly what he wanted to say. I told him that night, "This is the most beautiful thing you have ever written for me." He said, "That's what it was meant to be." Then he demolished a large can of Foster's and two and a half bottles of Victoria Bitter: such was the virtue that had gone out of him.)

So I felt my way out into the living-room, found the Healy & McComas anthology in the dark, and brought it back to read "Who goes there?"

Now I've looked again at what George said about it (and find I've misquoted him), and I agree with him: it's harsh, much too soulful, brash, and one of the most dramatically effective novellas in the genre (that I've read anyway). I didn't find it very frightening as a story: there have been lots and lots of alien beasties in books and on the screen since that story was written. But although the melodrama of Campbell's "three mad, hate-filled eyes" blazing up "with a living fire, bright as fresh-spilled blood, from a face ringed with a writhing, loathsome nest of worms, blue, mobile worms that crawled where hair should grow" fails somewhat to convey now the intended horror, something else gets through.

I can't believe in the bronze McReady and the steel Norris, and can't imagine rooms stiffening abruptly, and detest writing exemplified by:

"Are you sure that thing from hell is dead?" Dr Copper asked softly.

"Yes, thank Heaven," the little biologist gasped.

And yet... And yet, something gets through.

Particularly to me, at this moment.

You will recall that for the first half of the story all of those metallic gentlemen debated ceaselessly three alternatives: Do we let this Thing stay entombed in its block of ice? Do we destroy it absolutely? Or do we thaw it out and see what happens? (And a fantastic debate it is, too. This is real science fiction, and even if the characters fail to convince, the ideas are tremendously exciting.)

Okay, you probably read the story ages ago, and I only read it last night. You possibly know something about symbolism in literature; I know very little. But the way this story got through to me last night - the level on which it got through to me, if you like - was frightening and ironic.

Frightening, because it brought into focus some of my private fears and hopes. Ironic, because it was written by a man who professed to despise what he called "litterateurs," who championed the straightforward old-fashioned "story," and yet - as far as I am concerned - wrote this masterpiece of symbolism.

Make of that what you will.

We haven't got to the meat market yet.

The place stank. No, I expected it to, but it didn't. After finishing the story and thinking about it a bit, I drank a lot of coffee, drove into town, and at 4:02 am walked into the meat market - not in old clothes, but in my normal clothes which are a bit dirty at the moment anyway.

The place - the Metropolitan Meat Market in North Melbourne - looks, inside, like one of those marvels of Victorian engineering you see in books about marvels of Victorian engineering and hardly anywhere else these days. There is an immensely high ceiling, supported by flying buttresses, and the columns are decorated with cast-iron heads of cows and things. There are poky little offices, dingy little staircases leading god knows where, and miles and miles of carcasses. Dead animals on hooks. I'm sorry, but that's how I saw them, and that's how I kept on seeing them, and it revolted me.

There's a network of overhead gantries (I think that's what they would be called) with switching devices at the junctions. Each carcass is slung on a kind of inverted T-bar (weight 1.3 lbs) which hooks onto the gantry, and the workmen push the carcasses along the gantry-thing to the section where they are weighed. Lambs, sheep, calves - ten at a time, usually. Pigs, one or two at a time (they're very heavy). Then there are special hooks for the odd bits and pieces - hindquarters, sides and parts I couldn't identify.

The man I met first was doing everything - weighing, recording weights and brands and purchasers and peices, and, most expertly, cutting bits and pieces to order. (The weighing and recording part of the job was apparently where I was to fit in, eventually. Then, later in the morning, transfer all the records to books and statistical charts and invoices and so on in the office.) I think his name was John. Everyone seemed to be named John or Jack.

I had never seen a pig cut in half before. I don't think I ever want to see it again. Not through the belly, you understand, but right down the back, from tail to snout. John did it quickly, energetically, efficiently. The two halves weighed almost exactly the same. For the next couple of hours he performed many operations

like this, but I didn't watch. The pigs, I think, upset me most, because they were complete, heads, tails and all. And the large box of calves' heads about four feet away from where I was standing. The second person I met was Jim, a young man who looked after the offal. I watched him doing his job for about forty seconds.

Then a second John turned up, and took over the weighing and recording from John. This John was a young Greek, Australian-born from the sound of him, with long, unruly hair and bushy sideburns, and stitches in his forehead. By this time, about 4:30, the place was full of movement. Trucks backing in every few minutes, drivers in greasy, bloody, blue and grey boiler suits with little floppy caps to match, loading, unloading, pushing things up and down, back and forth; animal corpses flying past on the gantries, stopping for a few seconds to be weighed and recorded, then on again, and seconds later more flying back from the other direction. Three men staggering out of the nearest truck (I should be more accurate: not trucks, but refrigerated vans) with great, heavy, bleeding chunks of something, and with a strength and finesse I could only admire, flinging them over their heads, impaling the things on overhead spikes. I realized then why they wore caps. The blood I only became aware of after a few minutes when the impaled things started dripping slowly on the concrete floor.

During this activity I spent most of my time stepping out of the way of men and their burdens, and out of the way of flying carcasses, trying not to catch sight as I did so of the heads in the box and what Jim was doing with the offal. Greek John talked to me about the job and about himself, how he had smashed someone else's car, spent weeks in hospital, owed someone two thousand dollars, didn't have a driver's licence and there was a court case coming up. He intended to plead insanity and sounded quite cheerful at the prospect of being confined to a mental home with free bed and board. He suspected I was there to replace him, that the boss intended to sack him, and sounded just as cheerful telling me this. He smoked incessantly, despite the enormous No Smoking signs all over the building, and so did others. You don't smoke when the inspector's here, he said. There's a forty-dollar fine. Contaminates the meat. I was dying for a smoke but thought maybe I wouldn't my first morning on the job. I wondered, though, about the contamination, especially seeing the trucks, dozens of them, backing up to the gantries to load and unload, belching exhaust fumes everywhere.

How do you know when the inspector is here? I asked. You'll see him. Bloke in a dustcoat, with a torch. And when Mac spots him he starts singing, so we know. Shortly afterwards Mac started singing and John put his cigarette, still alight, in the drawer of the weighing desk. The inspection took about five minutes.

Later another council inspector did his rounds. He didn't seem to be as important as the earlier official, since everyone went on smoking and doing whatever he was doing. This inspector went up and down the lines of carcasses, stamping everything in sight with a red rubber-stamp. He held the stamp-pad in his left hand, and the ink was running all over his hand, up his sleeve. He didn't seem to mind. About six, John said I could go out for coffee any time I wanted to. Coffee? At six in the morning? Sure, he said, several places open - one just over the road. So I went out for coffee. And a cigarette: it was the longest I'd gone without one for ages.

I can't describe the place. I don't think I've ever been in such a bare, unshop-looking shop in my life. Three or four truckies were there, in their dirty blue boiler suits and caps, having breakfast or lunch or dinner: no way of telling, really,

since some of them drive through the night from places like Albury and Yarrowonga. Behind the counter one of those salt of the earth type middle-aged ladies with names like Florrie and Connie asked me gently, What would you like, love? and I ordered coffee. It was instant coffee, straight out of the tin, made with boiling water from a kettle on the gas stove in the corner, and it was delicious.

At this point I began to experience a weird sensation of unreality, as if I hadn't woken up and gone to work at all but was in the middle of a dream. The shop was unreal. The customers were unreal. At least, they were real enough until they started talking, and then...

Well, on the counter was a copy of the morning paper, with a shot of the Apollo XV launching, and these men started talking about it. You know, said one man, my old man used to read Jules Verne to me when I was a nipper, and he used to say, One day you'll see these things happening, son, and I never would of believed him, but... Yeah, said another man, things are sure happening on one would've believed even a few years ago. Then a third man said, You know, years ago I useta read a magazine - *Astounding*, it was called, or something like that - and there was this bloke who useta write about all this kinda stuff, and I useta think it was all a lot of bull-dust - you know? - I mean, it was all right in stories, but he talked about things like they was going to happen - and, god, he was right, you know - it's all happening like he said.

I finished my coffee quickly and left. Everything was getting just a bit beyond me.

I went back and stood around and watched and kept out of the way of men and things, for about an hour or so. An older man, named John, replaced Greek John at the weighing-desk. There was constant activity, if anything speeding up. I felt, still, nauseated. Almost literally. Job or no job, I could not see myself becoming accustomed to this place. I mumbled something apologetic to John and left. Came home, went to bed and started dreaming.

What has all this to do with
John Campbell?

All I can say is: This is the John Campbell I know. A massive influence, affecting my life right now, reflected in the conversation of working men in a tea shop opposite the meat market at six on a freezing morning in Melbourne, reflected on the front page of every newspaper this morning. An influence, massive, pervasive, incalculable. And it - he - will go on and on and on, way on into the future he loved so much, the future that men will one day perhaps realize he invented.

As editor, I know that would have been a very neat place to stop.



As writer, I know it can't stop there, because there is more to be said. Loose ends to tie, unresolved thoughts to be straightened out. There is, for example, the business about Prokofiev and Stalin. Cranky old Stalin, who didn't like Prokofiev's cantata celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the glorious revolution. Ruthless Stalin, who had made the revolution inglorious.

But Stalin saw the future very clearly, and loved it, and shaped it. Dead, he will not disappear from man's memory as quickly as John W. Campbell will. He will live on in the future that he invented.

Campbell's future and Stalin's future are ultimately the same: a future where the scientist and the engineer and the technician and the working man who gets things done run the place, in fact if not in form. And there's an irony for you, that two men as widely apart as John Campbell and Josef Stalin in ideology should point to the same future.

The Campbell/Stalin technocracy looks pretty frightening to me, and pretty inevitable.

Almost as if, somewhere back along the line a bit, someone found a Thing in the ice, and thawed it out, and it got away.

Good times forbidden

BEAUFORT, Que. (CP) — Residents are forbidden to fly kites in town, to leave carcasses in the street and to take part in rebellions.

They may not play pianos outdoors.

These activities are forbidden by a peace-and-good-order bylaw passed this week by the town council of the Quebec City suburb.

The bylaw also bans exhibitions of "hideous or monstrous things," cockfights and dog fights, dung disposal in the streets and allowing nauseating odors.

It also forbids answering the call of nature in a public place.

Beaufort town clerk Jacques Simoneau said the bylaw was inspired by a similar regulation in effect in Quebec City.

Q. Is it true that the astronauts on the last Apollo flight ate fresh bread? If so, how could it stay fresh that long, who makes it and how much would one loaf cost? —A. F., Shirley

A. The 15 slices of white bread and 14 slices of rye (seedless) that were part of the astronauts' food supply were taken from two of the three-dozen loaves that had been baked and packaged in Pepperidge Farm's Connecticut plant in a way that insures freshness for almost a year. The same kind of thermo-stabilized bread also was used on the three previous Apollo flights and the method used by the firm that advertises its "home baked" breads was one that no home kitchen could possibly duplicate. Here's how it was done: Each loaf, as it was baked, passed through a 3,000-degree flame to eliminate any possibility of surface bacteria or mold. It was then sliced on a machine that had been washed with a chlorine solution and further sanitized by passage through flame. The sliced bread was then placed in plastic-coated cellophane bags that had been sterilized by a 12-hour exposure to ethylene oxide followed by a minimum of six hours' aeration period. Each heated, sealed package was then placed in a polyethylene bag closed by a twist tie. The bread was processed on March 24, then flown to the University of Nebraska where it was given a low dose of irradiation, then flown to Houston where the individual slices were sealed in a nitrogen atmosphere in transparent nonflammable plastic film. The bakery wouldn't give any cost estimate on the process or per-loaf price except to say it obviously is too expensive for commercial purposes.



COLLATION



Terry Garey
San Francisco, CA

Upon receiving 'Genre Plat' I sat for a long time staring at the cover, racking my brains for the deep literary reference or pun that I was missing. I know what 'genre' means; I can even spell it and pronounce it in polite company without embarrassing myself or others; but 'plat'...what who or how is 'plat'? After a few minutes of contemplation I decided that the word had to be either Japanese, Finnish or French, because when ever I don't know a word it turns out to be from one of these languages. Because of the 'r', I didn't think it was Japanese, and because of the syllables (lack thereof), I doubted that it was Finnish, so taking into consideration that the magazine had come from Canada and the first word was of French origin, I decided that 'plat' must be, as well. But I still didn't know the meaning of the word, I didn't have a French dictionary, and I wasn't sure where

Debbie Notkin was that day, so I couldn't call her.

However, I took a chance and looked at the title page. Ahhh... I recognized some of those names, especially Divers Hands, an old friend of mine from my high school newspaper days. Well, I thought, maybe this thing isn't so esoteric and New Wave after all, and maybe I will be able to understand some of it.

I hate reading Little Magazines and Fanzines like that. Afterward I feel that I have attended an elaborate banquet with a bunch of people I don't know and don't like and that every dish has been concocted of coloured, forced meringue, and following that I invariably have an attack of flatulence.

Bravely, I trundled through the material and, to my delight, found that I was able to understand and appreciate at least 85% of it. I particularly like the Allyn Cadogan article, in spite of my feelings about Harlan Ellison, but best of all was Susan Wood's 'Tidepool'. It is my fond hope that every

person who ever plans to teach or attend a class on Science Fiction will read that article at least one hundred times before doing either. I was especially touched by the fact that Eli had worked so hard on his birthday, and I can imagine his sincere, dedicated smile as he wallowed in ink while trying not to make it apparent that he'd rather be programming his HP67.

Later, as Ctein, my housemate, was reading through the magazine, I noticed the blurb on the back, hidden as sort of a final offering. In a spate of intuition I added two and two, discarded it, and in one swell foop ((hey, Glicksohn - she did that one, not me -A.C.)) figured out the mysterious origins of the title. Even Ctein was impressed.

In addition to enjoying Genre Plat very much, hoping I will see more of it, and being impressed with the writing, I will be forever grateful that someone has found yet another use for flat style tooth picks that does not involve procuitto and/or melon, or teeth.

Eric Lindsay
Faulconbridge N.S.W.

It seems to me your first fanzine is somewhat in a rut, in that the name tends to imply a concern with a limited section of literature and of the world, rather than taking as its concern the entire expanse of nature and experience as do modern novels for example, with their defeatist protagonists and multiple viewpoints. Of course the latter is an attempt to imitate TV, where the viewing situation is typically a family one, and multiple protagonists are required so as to give each member of the family a point to which to cling. Books are an individual experience, and sf remains popular because it remains stuck in the old formula of single hero(ine) against a hostile world. Of course, its readers are probably all alienated and frustrated and going round gnashing their teeth (or mandibles, if really way out), but you can't dig up a cliché, trendy idea without treading on someone's (thing)... ((Oh.))

White Sport Coats are OK, but pink crustaceans are unnatural, unless you boil the lobster first, or something. I wish I had a

whole committee of people to help edit my fanzine; then I could sit round talking and not feel guilty about not getting it done, instead of sitting round not getting it done and feeling guilty. ((Now the way we work it is Susan marks English 100 papers; Bill paints his house; I spend a lot of time flitting from job to job (mundane money-paying jobs, I mean); John does experiments in inorganic chemistry; once every three months we all get together and tell each other that we'd better get to work on the fanzine; Susan gives me a column; Bill does some artwork; Susan asks when I want to come use the typewriter; Eli programs his HP67 - but then Eli isn't an official member of the editorial co-op. And nothing gets done and I feel guilty. So we have another meeting.)) 6.30 is a peachy hour to start the day, Allyn. ((I agree, but not when you've only just got to bed at 5:30)) I'm walking two miles to the railway station by that time of a morning (well, actually, it is usually 6.35, and I'm running because I didn't leave at 6.30). You look like a certain cheshire cat in the cartoon tips - are you really disappearing? ((I was until I decided to quit smoking - now I'm reappearing again in hunks. I don't know the cat in the cartoons - send me one, will you? I collect cats, real ones and on paper.))

Dave Rowe
Wickford
Essex

Why, oh why, didn't you credit your cover artist? (Was it ripped off from someone?) ((Absolutely not! or at least not quite.)) It's brilliant, one of the best covers in a fair amount of time, and a lot more original than most. ((Due to popular demand, all last issue's artwork is credited on the title page of this issue. Satisfied?))

Stu Shiffman
New York, NY

I might think Eli a better choice for Jewish Mother than Susan - but perhaps there is a shortage of Genuine (Take No Substitutions) Jewish-type Mothers of Hebraic Lineage in your neck of the Tundra. (BC does have

a Tundra, does it not? All we chauvenistic US'ers know that Canada is all Primeval Forest and Tundra.)

((Susan's got a Jewish accent, you see, and Eli doesn't, or at least not as much, and anyway his cookies aren't as good as Susan's. I suppose it's entirely possible that BC has tundra, but I haven't noticed any in Vancouver. Yes, I know about chauvinistic Americans; shortly after I became a chauvinistic Canadian - which happened after a summer in southern Ontario spent dealing with truly obnoxious American tourists - I developed a certain malicious joy from directing tourists who arrived in July with snow skis attached to the tops of their cars into downtown Toronto traffic; or sending those looking for a moose to Orillia; or simply sitting there giggling in my cut offs and halter top while the Americans from the southern states panted and sweated in their stylish wool clothing (even my own mother didn't believe me when I told her Canada gets hot during the summer, and she spent the better part of her holiday sitting in a tub of cold water just trying to fight off heat stroke.))

Harry Warner, Jr.
Hagerstown, MD

The only fault that I can find with your fanzine is the way it disorients me, but many other first issues do the same thing. I flourished in the era when first issues were incoherent, illegible and emanating the atmosphere of the house organ of a 19th century lunatic asylum. It's awfully hard to get accustomed to first issues that nowadays fail to conform to any of those distinctive characteristics.

Right at the start, on the very first page of the editorial, I realized that you people are superior to many fanzines in much later stages of development than the first issue. This is the first time I can recall anyone in a fanzine using the correct title for that television show which everyone else persists in referring to as Saturday Night Live. The joint editorial had the further advantage of creating a visual mental image of those in



your group. . I don't attend conventions frequently and Susan is the only one of you I could fit to a picture. I keep worrying about all the people in the early years of fandom who dropped out decades ago, never got described thoroughly in print, aren't shown in any known photographs, and will probably suffer the fannish fate of being even shadowy individuals than Shakespeare, of whom we have at least one portrait which might be authentic. ((Can't you just see historians 400 years from now pulling their beards, scratching their heads, muttering perplexed, consulting and reconsulting the myriad written descriptions they have in surviving fanzines, trying to decide if the photograph they have just discovered is of John Berry, Mike Glicksohn or Loren Mac Gregor, or possibly even Ctein??))

I don't think many fans would complain about Doug Barbour when they mutter about science fiction falling victim to creeping academicism. Maybe the other worriers have different sets of fears, but the things that I dread are basically these:

Prominent men of science fiction letters who hate or profess to hate almost all science fiction stories, with a dozen or so exceptions which they praise endlessly. There's never any sure way to confirm suspicions that these individuals have never read any science fiction except the few they keep writing about. Criticism which

consists of criticizing other critics, not science fiction. Forgetting that science fiction is just a bunch of stories after all and one mustn't feel like weeping if a new story fails to create a new eternal verity. Adopting a jargon which is unreadable and meaningless when writing criticism and learned essays. Adopting the attitude that a new story can't be good if it sells a lot of copies. And perhaps a dozen others which I can't remember for the moment.

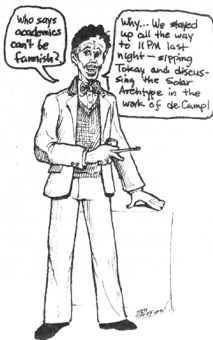
I think Doug inadvertently offered a significant parallel when he mentioned jazz as one of his other enthusiasms and compared it briefly to science fiction as a popular art. ((I doubt very much it was an inadvertent offering.)) Isn't it possible that jazz lost its early spontaneity and inventiveness when people in high places began to take it so seriously that its practitioners became self-conscious over the importance of their calling? Jazz got along much better when it was just something that people liked to hear than it did after some academicians had decided that it was music which must be respected because it was the only truly American art form or because it was the embodi-

ment of the psyche of the blacks of North America or for other reasons that overlooked altogether the simple pleasure of hearing (and performing) jazz. Isn't there a danger that science fiction will find itself suffering before long the same near-extinction that jazz has undergone in favor of rock, if too many creative people in the science fiction field take seriously the claim that their mission is to effect a fusion between science fiction and mainstream literature, or to illustrate to the proletariat the solutions of all the social problems which will occur six months from now, or to do various things other than writing good science fiction?

Alan L. Bostick
Irvine, CA

Doug Barbour's piece was a joy to read. I have read several justifications for the academization of SF, but this was the first that made any real sense. Unfortunately, while Doug's article puts forth very good support for serious criticism of SF, it does very little in dealing with the objections to the same. All too often, criticism carries no real merit, but is instead a concatenation of obfuscation and literary establishment is more of a mutual admiration society than anything else, with the membership incestuously analyzing each other's work. (The same might be said about fandom and the SF community, but it's alright for us to be that way, because we are nice, ghod, benevolent fans, while they are mean, bad, and nasty academics.)

I can see, though, that you are all aware of this, or why else would you have printed "M.L. Petard's" insightful criticism of *Lord of the Rings*? Seriously, this article says it all, and we cannot but benefit from the example it sets as a model of modern literary criticism. (Did I hear someone back there say "Serious and Constructive?" Stop that snickering.)



Taral/Wayne MacDonald
Willowdale, Ont.

Doug Barbour's defense of multi-level understanding of sf has other applications. How many romantics wall about the mystery of life being destroyed by cold, unfeeling scientists? George R.R. Martin began his career on that premise. Or, at least that question. Was Mistfall's allure being ruined by investigation or not? My answer is no.

To the ancients the stars were mythical figures, or astrological allusions. The Christians added notions of the heavenly firmament and crystalline spheres. It was all quite moving. But was it as moving as the aching infinite distances between the stars we know? Are thoughts of steel hard white dwarfs, flourescing near-vacuums, exploding galaxies, and rotating, naked singularities dull and lacking in romance? Hardly.

Could the poets of the eighteenth century ponder the nearly mystical symmetries of sub atomic particles? Did Cicero know that a common rock had been buried under miles of earth tens of millions of years ago and had, perhaps, been melted to a liquid and spewed forth only a million years ago, and then eroded to sand by a stream trod in by a dinosaur, later to harden again into an impression of a vanished beach, and finally to be dropped in Italy long before Rome stood by a mile thick Alpine glacier? Could an Amerind shaman know how the forest trees, and bushes, and flowers dance in slow diurnal rhythm? Of course they could not.

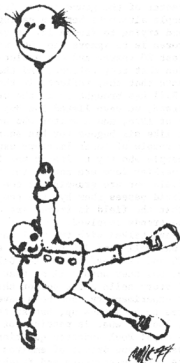
It took men who were curious about these things and who were willing to try to understand how they worked to uncover mysteries and beauties far more entrancing than the clumsy romances of their contemporaries. If you were receptive to original insights....

Science only brings us more to amaze at not less. And I enjoy my universe all the more, and with much more feeling and depth, by understanding it a little better. And that must be what Doug Barbour feels when he understands a good work of science fiction.

Jane Hawkins
Seattle, WA

The controversy over whether SF should be 'polluted' by academia is itself academic. If academia desires to examine SF, it will whether we say yea or nay. I admit to qualms: I loved Shakespeare before high school english classes. I don't like the idea that that's being done to SF. But the only thing fans can do about it is hope Susan Wood and Doug Barbour will clone themselves.

I thoroughly agree that intellectual appreciation of an art form can enhance emotional appreciation. Some SF can not stand up under such scrutiny - but the stories that do! Wow! I only wish I had more of Doug's background. My engineering degrees aren't much use in this area. Doug, can you recommend some good books on criticism? A basic grammar text might help me as well...



David Stever
Marlborough, Mass.

There is still the reaction that we are not going to get away from, and that is when the critic uses his tools for doing to a book, story or author something that the fan of that whatever thinks shouldn't be done. In my own case, I know there are certain authors or bodies of work that I love - E.C. Tubb, Mack Reynolds, and others, and I know how poorly these works are looked upon, but don't ever try to explain to my why I shouldn't like them, since I bite. Then of course, there are the authors that I like that I think everyone should like. Poul Anderson, Jack Vance, Mike Bishop, M.A. Foster and others. These are the people that I like to write about. As Doug says, when it touches you on many levels, you like to talk about it at many levels.

Needless to say (why needless? I don't know; I seem to be talking about it, needless or not), I disagree with Peter Nichols. The center of the genre is not frozen, even if people alternate between saying that it is, and trying to freeze it. To say that it is frozen is to ignore the Hugo winners for the last 20 years, and the evolution of the fiction that they reflect, and the evolution of taste that they reflect. In the examples that Bill has brought up in the previous paragraph, we have listed the Hugo winning novel of 1976, and a writer who now has something like six huggoes for his short fiction, and a couple of loser literary experiments. The people who try to freeze the field in some earlier form are not at the center of the field but are grasping at coattails as the field passes them by; the people who say that the field is frozen are not aware of the trends involved.

I have talked with two well known editors, Dave Hartwell and Jim Freikel, editors of COSMOS and Berkley/Putnam, and Dell's SF lines, and they both tell me that an "adventure" story sells a lot better than the literary experimenters, and both have sales figures to back them up, but at the same time, look at what is passing for "adventure" these days! Poul Anderson questions the motivations and drives of empires and imperialists, free marketers and freebooters. Joe Haldeman tells us of the lack of patriotic

motivation in soldiers fighting a war in its name. Ursula LeGuin explores new forms of sexuality, and its effect on the race. These three people account for ten Hugo awards (they are popular to the fans), and they account for massive sales (they are popular with the readers). Those who tried to 'climb' onto the SF bandwagon, like Laser Books, are folded and gone away.

My belief was first expressed in an introduction to an ANALOG collection, by John W. Campbell. He said that SF is the Whole Thing. Not the whole other thing.

doug barbour
edmonton, alberta

what i liked about gibson's piece was its basic point of view, with which i wholeheartedly agree, even as i also occasionally tend to agree with those who say that sf includes the mainstream rather than the other way around - but then my sf is very elastic when it comes to definitions, tho i do like delany's & russ's one based on the concept of 'sub-junctivity.' on the other hand, as i have written many elsewhere, like my friend bp nichol, i like the concept of 'border-blur'. the basic problem with definitions is that they establish borders, build walls, & it's much more fun to bust em, to blur em, as even that supposedly most basic one, between 'poetry' and 'prose' is being blurred today by such writers as bp. so i'm with the erudite & intelligent peter nicholls here & can thus turn with pleasure from the latest keith roberts or brian aldiss say (i'll not mention DHALGREN as that seems to be a sure way of raising hackles - see, isn't it nice i didn't mention it?) to a truly marvelous novel like jack hodgins's THE INVENTION OF THE WORLD (a canadian novel concerning a number of events on Vancouver island) & not really notice that much of a change taking place. the best fiction of our time is turning away from stark realism anyway, back to the roots of fiction in what robert scholes calls 'fabulation' partly because the best writers are aware of how wholly & utterly verbal/linguistic literature is anyway.

Patrick McGuire
Cincinnati, Ohio

The Heinlein declaration is not necessarily a symptom of delusions of grandeur. It may simply mean that Heinlein feels sf writers set themselves so large a task that they are almost sure not to do it well. There's too much new information to get into too small a space, and anyhow the genre produces an inevitable distancing effect which may exclude the most profound emotions. (LeGuin has said something along this line.)

Anyhow, once one has decided that no, sf isn't the greatest thing since can openers, and no, it doesn't really question all the everyday certainties (I like many everyday certainties, and it should be obvious that many of the better sf writers are political and social conservatives), it does not automatically follow that we want to give up genrehood and enter the wide world. (Few good sf authors have written exclusively science fiction, or even exclusively sf and fantasy - I've just found and read two of Cordwainer Smith's non-sf novels, respectively a psychological and slightly propagandistic espionage novel as Carmichael Smith, and a psychological novel as Felix Forrest; I just took LeGuin's *Orsinian Tales* back to the library. But such people follow the rules of the game when they're playing the game.)

So long as it lasts, there are distinct advantages to belonging to the Commonwealth. (I think Australia now has visa requirements for the U.K. ((Yes.)), so I'm not sure Nicholls could replicate his feat today. But you Canadian residents still get cheaper British paperbacks ((cheaper than what? I don't find them so cheap.)), and I think Canadians can still live and work freely in the U.K., no?) ((Absolutely no. Canadian citizens who were born in Canada, and whose parents were born in Britain, seem to have a slightly easier time getting work permits but everyone needs a visa even to visit.)) I see no indication of sf's imminent demise, so in the meantime let us recognize its manifold special advantages (such as fanzines, fandom, and sf magazines for Bill Gibson to sell stories to), and keep a civil tongue in our head when we talk about it. Long live the Queen!

((I've lived in Canada for ten years now, and though I consider myself a monarchist, and like the Queen and Prince Charles and all that, I really can't think of any real advantages to belonging to the Commonwealth. Well, belonging *does* make Canada eligible to host the Commonwealth Games, but I'm not so sure that's an advantage since it's going to cost some Canadians several million extra dollars in taxes this year to pay for hosting them. Belonging to the Commonwealth also means we get to have the Queen's Representative overseeing our governmental processes in Ottawa, and we also have a lesser representative in every provincial capitol, overseeing those governmental processes, and we can't really do anything without these representatives' written approval. In return, we get to play host to the Queen and various members of the Royal Family every so often, which is nice, but the Royal Family doesn't eat at MacDonald's.... What advantages?))





Mike Glicksohn
Toronto, Ontario

Thanks for GP #1 which, if nothing else, has caused me to part with the enclosed personal treasure which is at least six years old. ((He sent us a toothpick box.)) Sort of time-binding, isn't it? And what can you buy for eleven cents nowadays? Not a cup of coffee, not a newspaper, not a comic book or a candy bar. Hell, you can't even buy a dime for eleven cents anymore! "GENRE PLAT, The Nostalgic Fanzine!"

Not unlike your other fanzine, GP strikes me as enjoyable to read but personally difficult to respond to. In fact, were this your forty second issue (or even your fifth) I'd probably simply file it away after having enjoyed the considerable writing talents of your impressive stable of contributors. However, my contract with the Letterhacks Union demands that I reply to every first issue of a Canadian fanzine or they take away my licence to make references to scotch and other types of alcohol in locs and that would render me practically speechless. Besides, can someone who locs BOOWATT do anything less for a superior new example of indigenous Canadian fan craft?

GP looks extremely good for a first issue, although a heavier quality of paper would certainly improve things appearance wise. (Failing that you might opt for a less

OVERPOWERING style of lettering for the major titles to cut down on see-through. I'm allowed to say these things because the first few issues I published contained the most godawful ugly microgramma lettering style imaginable but when you've only got enough money to buy one sheet of LetraSet for the first year, well...) ((Good, then you'll understand: we got the paper for \$1/ream, the letra-set was free, likewise the ink, and we blew our remaining \$5 on the sheet of Picadilly lettering for the logo.... Honey, we is poor faneds.)) In most other respects, the fanzine looks very good.

I've never actually set out to co-edit a fanzine (an exercise I've always considered the essence in futility in a medium as highly individualistic as fan-publishing, and the almost total lack of successfully co-edited fanzines tends to bear that belief out. And, yes, I know all the exceptions: both of them...) but your description of what it must be like to sit down and try to really organize such a venture certainly has the ring of fannish truth to it! Even the dual construction works pretty well, once one knows who is doing what.

I've never found anything particularly interesting when moving into a new residence and I doubt I've left anything more exotic than large piles of dirt and a few empty scotch bottles behind me when I've moved. But the best "found upon moving in" story I know has to be one that Jay Haldeman told me about the house he once bought in Baltimore. When they looked the place over on actually taking possession they found a root cellar they'd not even known the place had; and on a shelf inside it was a brain in a bottle! True story, honest. Makes you wonder just what sort of people lived there before Jay moved in! ((Aw, c'mon, there's nothing so wierd about a brain in a root cellar; I've been told brain and scrambled eggs go very well together; perhaps the former tennants had intended it for breakfast.))

The most personally appealing piece in the issue was Allyn's article on Ellison, although even here there is

nothing I can really add to what was said. ((somehow I've a feeling you'll think of something, Mike:)) I happen to be an Ellison fan myself, both of his writing and of the man personally. And since that results in writing a fair number of letters each year defending Harlan against the people who attack him in fanzines without having the slightest idea of what they're writing about, it's a nice change to see an article that describes Harlan pretty well as he is, both the writer and the man, the image and the reality, and the way people react to him. I happen to think Ellison is one hell of a powerful writer (a recent Canadian magazine - I'm not sure which one - called him "the greatest living short story writer" without any reference to sf whatsoever) and a fascinating human being. In short, I like him, and I'm moved by much of what he writes ("Love Ain't Nothing But Sex Misspelled" moves me enormously, so you might be right that sf isn't necessarily his forte.) If I know fans, you'll have sent Harlan a copy of this fanzine; and if I know Harlan, he'll send you back a couple of pages of appreciative response! Should be interesting to read! ((Well, we did send Harlan a copy of the zine, but he never did write. Actually, I met Harlan because of that article: When he visited Vancouver last October, he contacted the local fan group and asked to meet me; he wanted to tell me how much he liked the piece. Goshwow.))

In SCINTILLATION, John Shirley attacks Ellison by claiming that he *doesn't* really let you know what the seamier side of street life is like, that his impressions are all academic and invalid because he doesn't *know* what he's writing about. I don't happen to agree with Shirley on most things, but I wondered about that point. He might be right, if he knows what he's talking about. Your comments would tend to take the opposite view from Shirley, but I suspect you're as unqualified to tell as I am. I've never lived in the streets, and never will: Shirley claims to have done so, and he says Harlan's depictions aren't valid. It's one of John's few intriguing observations.

((As a matter of fact, I have lived in the streets - literally, as well as merely associating with street people - and with bikers, and have met a few people like those Harlan describes. Harlan also claims to have lived in the streets, doesn't he? I have a feeling I wouldn't really recognize Shirley's street people any more than he would recognize mine, or than he recognizes Harlan's: I would imagine street scenes vary from one location to another, and undoubtedly change with the passage of time, the same as the rest of society. I would also imagine that all three of us were in the street at different times and different places. That's not an answer, just a thought.))

Everyone has a wealth of Ellison stories, including all those fans who've never met the man. I could fill a fanzine with Ellison Stories but I won't impose that on you. (I won't even mention the sunken bed he recently had built in behind his bookcase in Ellison Wonderland: no one would believe that anyway!) ((Sunken bed? *yawn* I want to hear about the sensory deprivation room and the rooftop garden!)) But with all his notoriety and fame, the legend can still err: He was in town recently and surprised the hell out of me by calling and inviting me down to his room, at the Royal York hotel. Naturally I went there: the Royal York had never heard of Harlan Ellison! Eventually we did spend a very enjoyable few hours together after he'd taped a local tv show



in his room...at the Hyatt Regency, several miles away from the Royal York! Even the greatest can have feet of clay now and then.

Harry Warner, Jr.
Hagerstown, Maryland

I don't know Harlan Ellison well, because I was semi-gafiated during his years in fandom and I haven't been in his orbit at the cons we've both attended. But from this and that observation and conversation, I've decided that Harlan is a very different person in an amorphous group than the Harlan Ellison surrounded by a few friends or a special crowd with a common interest. ((But aren't we all?)) The show biz, show off characteristics of the former Harlan vanish and the real Harlan appears in the latter circumstance. I'm the exception as a reader of Harlan's fiction, a middle of the roader in my reactions to it. I've always felt that Harlan needs desperately the kind of editor that Thomas Wolfe found in Maxwell Perkins: an editor flexible enough to yield where advisable to the creative person's impulses, but strong enough to persuade him of clear miscalculations about the quality of the less inspired portion of his output. ((Very good point.)) I don't think Harlan's true ability as a writer will ever emerge in full scope until he is writing long novels.

David M. Vereschagin
New Sarepta, Alberta

For me the best part of the issue was Allyn's piece. I like to think of myself as being one of those rare people who is neutral on the subject of Ellison. If I was confronted with Ellison, I honestly don't know what I'd do. Which is not saying much because that's the same case with almost an everybody.

What will we do when Harlan Ellison is gone? I'm sure that most of the reaction he gets is because he dares to do the things he does and he's alive and kicking and still doing it. When Harlan Ellison ceases to be (which I always think will be any day now - he's like a shooting star that you just know has to burn out any second) will his writing lose the spark and vibrancy it has and that a living myth attaches to it? I wonder.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson
Seattle, Washington

I guess it is always nice to see Yet Another generalized article about Harlan Ellison, because it is one of those dreadful fannish traditions, albeit a fairly new tradition. Personally I'd like to see a little of the doting siphoned off for writers like Doris Pischerchia or Carol Enshwiller or even Herb Varley who could each write Ellison into a hole emotionally and stylistically but who are rarely mentioned anywhere because they don't stand on their heads in public. I don't begrudge H.E. his, but I think some other folk who are equally and more worthy of notice should get some attention too. I suppose I'm mostly peeved, though, because a body of writing that uniformly degrades women would be picked out by a woman as Good Stuff, while nowhere in the fanzine is there anything for balance except a ha-ha cartoon about bull dykes and faggots.

Bruce Gillespie
Melbourne, Victoria
(Australia)

The only thing I don't agree with you about is Harlan Ellison. Okay, so I've never met him. But I am one of the people with strong opinions about his fiction. I hate it. In an article published recently here (in a Rolling Stone type magazine called *Bottom Line*) I called Ellison "the clumsiest writer in the known universe." But you have met him. Maybe that makes the real difference. ((But I hadn't met him when I wrote the article, so what difference?))

And I enjoyed the editorial. More about yourself/ves please. The personal bits are what I really like in fanzines.

Richard Labonté
Calabogie, Ontario

Susan Wood is no doubt the reason I received *Genre Plat*, another odd magazine for the Calabogie postal people to mull over ("Punk? Punk?? Who would want a magazine about totten wood? High Times? Aren't no mountains around here. Punch?

Must be a violent sort of fellow...")

It was a delight. Of the hundreds of fanzines to which I have not responded in the past half-decade, it stands as one of the most enjoyable; of the seven fanzines to which I have responded in the same half-decade, it stands as pretty pleasurable.

That thought doesn't parse too well, but it is honest.

Which is more than can be said for Susan in her Tidepool column.

Like Susan, I too was a terribly earnest undergraduate in English (and Political Science) at Carleton University 10 years ago. I was there, and Susan has it wrong. There were Elvish scrawls on the tunnel walls, to be sure, and I did push Delany like the dickens he is, and I probably was as responsible as anyone for setting Susan, knock-kneed and pig-tailed, on the road to terminal silliness. But the phone number on the notes I left on tunnel walls was not 733-2811; it was in fact 731-5996, and anyone who calls the right number will get a quite sympathetic lady or gentleman who still remember the strange boarder who got more brown-envelope in a week than they got in a year, and who established a printing press in their garage of which they are, even years later, still somewhat chary.

In retrospect, of course, I haven't lived at that phone number since 1969. But I still remember it. Never trust a scholar, I say; they're always making up facts to fit their footnotes.

Still, Susan is quite right in her assessment of sf's validity as a university study. Teachers with her enthusiasm commitment, intelligence and, uh, her cup must be running over by now - teachers with her joyous passion can't help but help science fiction prosper as a literature as well as an entertainment.

I think that's the first time in 10 years of writing, the last five as a professional journalist, that I've ever used "as" four times in nine words.



Marc A Ortlieb
Elizabeth Downs, S. Australia

From a professional point of view I enjoyed Susan's article on teaching sf. I did however feel a little guilty, as there are times when my sf teaching degenerates into something that I'd rather not sit through. As with all teaching, a class works best when the students aren't forced into a course that they'd rather not be doing. Sf is good from this point of view, as very few students elect to do it unless they are genuinely interested.

Susan doesn't mention the panel which she moderated at Aussiecon which gave us Aussie educators something to think about. I know a lot of us came away from that panel with the resolve to do some fun sf teaching. Now, in the South Australian system, that isn't easy. Sf, until very recently was the Compulsory reading of *Day of the Triffids* in year ten (Age about 14-15). (I love the cover blurb on local editions which states that "This isn't sf; it's carefully written and well thought out.") Since then sf has become a lot more respectable. Though my headmaster did come up to me the other day to ask me how the sf course was going. When I said fine, he replied something to the effect that he thought that a little escapist literature was good and that he read Westerns himself. Hmmm.

Angus M. Taylor
Bylmermeer, Amsterdam
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Genre Plat is certainly a welcome addition to any fan's bookshelf. Why, just the other day I was writing a letter to Susan saying, why don't you and Eli do something to justify your marginal existences and publish a genzine? Presto! Genre Plat arrives, perpetrated by Susan and others.

I began to foam at the mouth when I read Susan's Rule 6 for teaching science fiction. I always start foaming at the mouth when someone comes out with "There are no easy 'definitions' of anything as alive as sf." Sure there are. I'm about to tell you exactly what sf is. You've all heard that bit about "Science fiction is anything you point your finger at when you say 'science fiction'." You've probably said it yourself. It means "There are no easy definitions of anything as alive as sf." Rubbish. Just consider: How is it possible to point your finger at a story and say, "This is science fiction" if you don't know what science fiction is? Of course you know what science fiction is. You just haven't articulated the definition you hold. It's lurking around there in your head in a somewhat murky form. You read a story and you say, "Aha, another sf story!" That is, you say, "This story more or less fits my definition of science fiction." People get a bit confused about that "more or less." Stories slop over the boundaries of their murky definitions and it all seems rather hopeless to define things accurately. But never fear. Here's what you've been waiting for:

I would say that not only is it pretty easy to define what science fiction is, but that there's also pretty widespread agreement about this definition among sf critics. It's just that no one's realized this marvellous fact until I came along and pointed it out. Call this "Taylor's Synthesis".

If you go out and collect all the definitions of sf you can find, you'll see that nearly all of them fall into one (or both) of two types: (1) some



talk about how sf is a "fantastic" or "non-realistic" or "non-mimetic" or "world-beyond-the-hill" kind of literature; (2) some talk about how sf deals with "the larger issues", with "man's relation to the universe-at-large", how sf helps people prepare for changes in society, etc. If you look at things closely, you'll see that these two categories are really quite closely related. The people in (1) are talking about *form*, the people in (2) are talking about *content*. Now, if you keep looking, you'll realize that of course, ideally, form and content must complement each other. Science fiction has two aspects, form and content, and can be defined in terms of these complementary aspects. ("Science fiction is that type of literature which employs such-and-such a form to present such-and-such a content." Fill in the blanks from (1) and (2) above.)

Now of course no given story is going to precisely fit the definition. This is the slop-over effect. But no sweat. Definitions are ideal types. Science fiction is an ideal type. So is so-called "mainstream" or "realistic" or "whatchacallit" fiction. Sf and mainstream are totally distinct forms of fiction *only as ideal types*. (Mainstream can similarly be defined in terms of form and content.) Every real story is part sf and part mainstream. When you say, "That's an sf story," you mean it's mostly sf, though of course it slops over the ideal (definition) a bit. In actuality, there's a spectrum running from "pure" sf to "pure" realistic/mainstream.

Now comes an interesting part (I think so, anyway). When you get hold of this dual form/content character of sf (or any) literature, then you can do neat things with it, analysis-wise (as we sports commentators like to say). Because, although form and content should complement each other, this is the *ideal* situation. In actuality things seldom work out so neatly. You often get a disparity between form and content, and sometimes this disparity is quite marked. I would throw out, as a provocation, the suggestion that the work of Harlan Ellison, for example, is characterized by a distinct disparity between form and content. Ellison

writes in the science fiction *form*, but with damn little in the way of science fiction *content*. Lots of people are obviously turned on by this state of affairs in Ellison's work. I'm not. I prefer writers who integrate their form and content - such as Ursula LeGuin. I feel that this integration is one strong reason for regarding LeGuin as a better writer than Ellison; certainly she is more of a conscious artist than Ellison (though being "conscious" of what you're doing is not in itself a guarantee of excellence).

I talk about this subject at slightly more length in an article called "The Double-Edged Sword Meets the Socio-Economic Root," due to appear in the next issue (11/12) of the British journal *Foundation* - assuming the journal is still alive (the issue is many months overdue now). And in case you ever wondered what on earth Darko Suvin was talking about with his "literature of cognitive estrangement," I think he was trying to tell the world about the dual form/content character of sf. But his mouth was so full of fancy academic jargon that no one understood. So the momentous discovery will just have to go down in history as "Taylor's Synthesis". (Just like it's called *Darwin's* theory of evolution, even though a man named Alfred Russel Wallace hit upon the idea of natural selection at the same time.) Well, that's the way the crustacean crumbles, I guess. Fame and fortune, here I come.

((And even good old M.L. Petard got a letter))

H.O. Petard
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Monty,

Have read with interest your "Lord of the Rings: A Fond and Scholarly Retrospect" and was touched to observe, in passing, the homage you paid our mutually beloved mentor, Trilling. Although it is now many years since you and I were eager young undergraduates in his exciting "Druid Chants" seminar or his unforgettable lecture on "Pre-cartesian influences on Fanny Burney's *belles lettres*," I'm sure I speak for both of us when I say,

for both of us, that we both hold dear to both of our hearts the cherished ideals and highest aspirations of our now-defunct tutor. Though I may appear to be a bit too blunt, dear coz, let me assure you that I write with only the best of intentions and in the memory of him who was our literary guiding-light. You recall how seriously and with what reverence, did Trilling take the duties of literary critic. How well he put it when he said, (on April 17, 1923, I believe - at about two o'clock during tea), that "literary criticism, the separation of the wheat from the chaff, is what ensures the rising loaves of English civilization." He was, as I'm sure you'll recall, possessed of a keen analytical mind, and could never be accused of Muddled Thinking. (Pray forgive me if I offend.)

Therefore, it quite frankly grieves me to see you, it appears, stray from the path so clearly pointed out by our great Predecessor. Would one confuse the cup with the contents? Would one mistake the style for the message? Would one speak of the theme in the same breath as one discusses the plot? Of course not, I can hear you laughing, in that delightfully droll way you have, at the very idea!

Yet I fear, dear relative, that you have done that very thing!

In your discussion of *Lord of the Rings*, I grieve to note, you must surely hopelessly confuse the hapless reader by writing about the Theme of the Style of the Message, when you infact mean the Ambience of the Theme of the Style of the Message. You repeat your error in your analysis of the effect of Tolkien's relations on his characterizations. Surely you were aware that one of Tolkien's uncles was left-handed. Why isn't this fact mentioned in your work? I would not have expected such sloppy scholarship from you, dear Monty! Could there perhaps have been a printing error?

How you rush over your dissection of the Content of the Form of the Setting of the Factors, when surely more attention is required for such an important subject. How perilously close you come to confusing the Mood of the Conclusion of the Rising of the Action of the Conflict, with the Symbolism of the Organization of the Structure of the

Character Interactions!

By God, Monty, we're literary critics, not vivesectionists!

((Monty has just informed me that he is currently doing an exhaustive study of "Dickensian influences on Frank Herbert's *Dune*, in which I hope to illustrate how liberally the author has borrowed from *Hard Times* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the first installment of which should be available shortly." Ghu, I can hardly wait...))

We Also Heard From: Dave Piper, Wayne Hooks, Elsie Wood, David Bratman, Leslie Luttrell (twice, and she also sent us some xerox copies of some of the fanzines and apas Bill worked on when he was, can you believe it, 13 years old!), Jodie Offutt, Bob Barnes (twice), Ole Kvern (twice), Brian Earl Brown, Rich Bartucci, Andy Andruschak, Jeanne Gomoll, Julian Reid, Jim Andersen, F.M. Busby, Frank Denton, Steve Fahnstalk, Jan Howard Finder, Jeff Frane, Mike Glycer, Gil Gaier, Jon Gustafson, Denys Howard, Terry Hughes, Moshe Feder, Jerry Jacks, Rob Jackson, Paul Novitski, Jack & Pauline Palmer, Dave Rowe, Bob Silverberg, Marta Randall, Stu Shiffman, Alan Bostick, Ben Indick, and others whose letters I've misplaced. Many thanks for writing.





H.M. the Q.