

JANUS



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Janus

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15

The co-editors of *Janus*, Janice Bogstad and Jeanne Gomoll, shape the philosophy and goals of the magazine and locate and solicit contributors. However, Jan alone controls the quality of graphic contributions and communicates with artists, and the writers, while Jeanne alone controls the quality of written contributions and communicates with the artists, and executes *Janus* layout. LOCs are edited by Hank Luttrell. Copy editing and proofreading are done by Richard S. Russell, with additional proofing by Jan Bogstad, Hank Luttrell, and Diane Martin. Typing is by Diane Martin and Richard S. Russell. Our printer and offset advisor is Randy Everts (the Strange Company, Madison). Distribution is handled by Philip Kaveny and Hank Luttrell. Published by SF³. // Collation for *Janus* 14 was by Jan Bogstad, Emphyrio, Jeanne Gomoll, Terri Gregory, Steven V. Johnson, Robert Kellough, Hank Luttrell, Diane Martin, Paul M@zke, Lynne Ann Morse, Tom Muhr, Kim Nash, Lucy Nash, Rex Thomas Nelson, and Richard S. Russell. // All of the opinions of the editors or publisher. Any resemblance of any fictional character, written or depicted, to any real persons, living or dead, is coincidental. // Single-issue price: \$1.50 (by mail in North America), \$1.75 (by mail outside North America), \$2.00 (newsstand). Subscription price for four issues (summer, autumn, winter, spring): \$6.00 (by mail in North America), \$7.00 (by mail outside North America). All subscriptions requested at former rates will be credited at the current rates. *Janus* is also available for trade (all-for-all preferred), accepted letters of comment, or other accepted contribution. // Write *Janus* c/o SF³, Box 1624, Madison, WI, 53701.

WHY YOU GOT THIS ISSUE

About a third of the way across the top of your mailing label is the letter J (*Janus*) and another letter which tells you why you got this issue:
C=You contributed.
D=Do you want to contribute? Artwork, articles, letters, etc. accepted.

I=Introductory issue (one time only).
M=You were mentioned or reviewed.
O=Other perfectly good reason.
S=You subscribe. The last issue you will receive is indicated by number.
T=We trade.
U=Do you want to trade? We prefer to trade all-for-all.



NEWS NURDS

Jeanne Gomoll

Welcome to *Janus* 15, folks! Bet you suspected we'd skipped the country with the subscription money. Gracious, no, we wouldn't do anything like that. (It would be wrong.) Jan and I consider ourselves committed to *Janus* at least until the receipts add up to enough for a couple of plane tickets. With that assurance, you can expect *Janus* to be around for quite a while longer.

It's been almost four months since that multi-colored extravaganza, *Janus* 14, was mailed out. (Number 14, by the way, was not rainbow-hued by artistic/esthetic choice, as so many of you kind readers assumed; we just ran out of basic beige paper. But thanks for the compliments, anyway.) The time elapsed since #14 was mailed out might seem longer to you than it seems to us, since in the interim we've completed the equivalent of another issue of *Janus*—that is, the *WisCon 3 Program Book*.

~~Idkik# 14½~~ The *WisCon 3 Program Book* is something all you completists (and repentants who recognize your error at not attending WisCon) out there should have (she said, slyly, beginning her plug). Not only are there nine whole pages of programming descriptions and related mini-essays, there are three articles introducing our three guests of honor: Gina Clarke describes her fannish career as the (other) duchess of Canadian fandom; Paul Novitski writes about his suspicions that John Varley is really an alien visitor, basing his conclusion primarily on the so-called "fiction" written by this Nebula-winning author; and Suzy McKee Charnas is introduced by a collage of impressions contributed by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Liz Lynn, Vonda McIntyre, Susan Wood, Jan Bogstad, and myself. There are bibliographies of the works of Charnas and (an extensive one) of Varley. And last; there is artwork. Besides gorgeous covers by Vicki Poyser and Madison's Robert Kellough, there is an art portfolio with work by Georgie Schnobrich, Robert Frazier, and myself, based on images drawn from Charnas's and Varley's fiction. (Besides all this, there are two interviews that Jan Bogstad conducted with the WisCon Guests of Honor, but these {luckily for you} are reprinted in this issue of *Janus*.)

The *WisCon 3 Program Book* was not available on the newsstand nor was it sent out to subscribers. (We discovered last year that many WisCon attendees were not interested enough in *Janus*, and more recently that our growing newsstand readership is not aware enough of fandom/conventions, to warrant combining the two.) Copies are available on request for \$1.00 plus 50¢ postage from SF³.

Acquiring that, you may discover some of the essence of what we planned WisCon to be. You won't, however, find out what actually happened. For that you should turn to the WisCon reports in this issue of *Janus*. WisCon 3 was enjoyable for the most of

the members of the group and for me, though I find myself feeling somewhat glutted with cons and con-going (having gone to three conventions in the time since WisCon). I remember a conversation with someone between dances at the get-acquainted party that first Friday of the con, that ended up characterizing my reaction to the weekend. "The thing that makes conventions so rewarding and energizing for me," my friend said, "is the mutual ego-boosting that goes on: not fake backpatting, but real, honest expressions of appreciation and respect for one another. Conventions tend to encourage us to look for valuable, praiseworthy things in our friends; and the openness of the con allows us to express those insights." That's what has made conventions good for me too. In my involvement with programming, as coordinator of the art show, and most of all during interactions with the people who came to WisCon, it was happening all the time.

But, as I mentioned earlier, there is the problem of becoming over-saturated with conventioning. Jerry Kaufman has written an excellent essay for *Raffles*¹ in which he points out that conventions sometimes function as fannish equivalents to religious holy days, that the expectations and planning that go into the conventions for us are the essence of what makes (or used to make) holy days pivotal celebrations in the lives of religious communities. Considering my characterization of convention interactions in the previous paragraph, I wonder if a more apt religious simile for the convention might be a retreat. But, just as Christmas (for example) would tend to lose significance if it were celebrated once a month, one could not possibly bring the same freshness and desire to renew friendships to a convention/retreat that has become a frequently scheduled, commonplace event.

Why then in the past 2½ months have I gone to three more conventions? And how could I miss MiniCon when it's so close? An incredibly large contingent—31—of Madison fans drove up to Minneapolis, as did an incredibly large number of other fans. In fact, one Minneapolis fan told me confidentially (so don't say anything about this to anyone) that there were so many people at MiniCon (which was held in the hotel where worldcon would have taken place had Minneapolis won the 1973 bid) that Minneapolis has now essentially had its worldcon!

Mad City programming infiltrated MiniCon with Diane Martin's "Madison Parade of Cats", which premiered as a slide show at WisCon 3. To offset this event, certain individuals felt it necessary to correct this one-sided image of Mad City fandom. As count-

¹*Raffles* 2 (Jan. 1979), edited by Larry Carmody (Box 1091, New Hyde Park, NY, 10040) and Stu Shiffman (88Q W, 181st St. #4D, New York, NY, 10033).

er programming, I hosted an anti-cat program which immediately followed Diane's more "sentimental" revue. Featured in the anti-cat program were out-of-the-closet cat-haters Dick Russell (who brought his neat kitty "noose" leash), Madison expatriate John Bartelt, and a ringer, Jon Singer.

Two weeks earlier there was NorWesCon (in Seattle) a 2-year old convention whose attendance was triple the size of their first convention, and which, like MiniCon, is going to be a regional convention whose size rivals what a worldcon used to be only a few years ago. In spite of the unexpectedly large attendance, the convention was run smoothly and the art show (co-ordinated expertly by Jane Hawkins) especially looks as if it will soon become the BosKone of the West. I went to NorWesCon because I wanted to see friends who had been prevented by a little snow from coming to WisCon; besides it was nearly April, and I was tired of looking at all the snow. Anyway I had a great time.

The third convention was not close to Madison. I didn't know anyone who was attending the con—well, hardly anyone. And I had no reason to escape Madison weather: springtime in wonderful in Wisconsin. I did, however, have an unusually overpowering reason to go to Austin for ArmadilloCon 1: I had been asked to be fan guest of honor. Contrary to some of my apprehensions prior to stepping on the plane, the experience was exhilarating, very flattering, and incredibly fun. I haven't gone to a con in a long time where I'd not known a great many people attending; considering the many warm, friendly, and interesting people I made friends with in Austin, perhaps I should do it more often! High points for me were the post-banquet presentation by GoHs John Varley and myself—an interview/convensation "On Illustrating and Being Illustrated" (which was surprising, since it was specifically that program event that I had been most nervous about); the con parties in the con suite (for which I'd volunteered my room); the hilarious and inspired auctioneering by Howard Waldrop for the original Varley manuscripts and other items; and the authentic gosh-this-reminds-me-of-Bonanza barbeque dinner Sunday evening. Oh, there's lots more, and I'll be writing about that someplace else, but it was a good con, and I didn't even notice my con-exhaustion until I considered how soon WesterCon and AutoClave were coming up.

Back on the ranch—I mean, meanwhile in MadCity, people have recovered from WisCon 3 and have begun planning for an (almost) springtime WisCon 4. We've asked Octavia Butler and Joan Vinge to attend as guests of honor, David Hartwell as editor guest of honor, and Bev DeWeese as fan guest of honor. They all said, "Gosh, wow, sure!" or words to that effect.²

Winding down from the convention, no one had enough energy to create a program for our February open meeting, so Philip Kaveny rescued us by re-enacting a WisCon program, "Symbols in Locomotion", a slide show with accompanying taped music, a project that he'd done considerable work preparing during the months prior to WisCon and which was enthusiastically received by its audience on both occasions. Phil recalls some intriguing images in relation to this program in his con report in this issue of *Janus*. Several months later, Phil presented this same program to the 300 members of a University of Wisconsin SF course.

Unfortunately, I missed those events—I think I was in Minneapolis visiting and finding out how MinnSTFers run their business meetings. (Someone calls the meeting to order and everyone else cries, "Run away! Run away!" and they all get back to partying.)

I also missed the next monthly community program, since at that time I was conventioning in Seattle. The March program was coordinated by Jim Cox (WORT-FM programmer for "The Science Fiction and Fantasy Hour"), who brought a collection of audio tapes and slides for a show used in the Oregon, Wis., school system. Knowing Jim, I'm sure it was entertaining.

I was on hand for the April show, however, and glad I am of that. Lucy Nash invited her friend Marina Hammerstrum to speak to us, and Ms. Hammerstrum's program was so interesting that she's agreed to write about some of the things she talked about for *Janus*, present her program at WisCon 4, and she will also be heard on Jim Cox's Science Fiction and Fantasy Hour on WORT-FM. She's a NASA nurse who was one of the first women in the astronaut testing program. Her recollections of the rigors and reasons behind the physical-testing procedures she was subjected to, and especially the implications she suggested for the censorship of data collected by those tests, were intriguing and kept us eagerly attentive throughout her talk and slide presentation.

Whether MadSTF encourages obsessive work habits or simply attracts people of such inclinations, I'm not sure, but the group here never seems to be able to enjoy the benefits of spare time³ long enough to wonder what to do with it. As if nonstop *Janus* production, several other fanzines, year-round WisCon

²More details will follow, never fear.

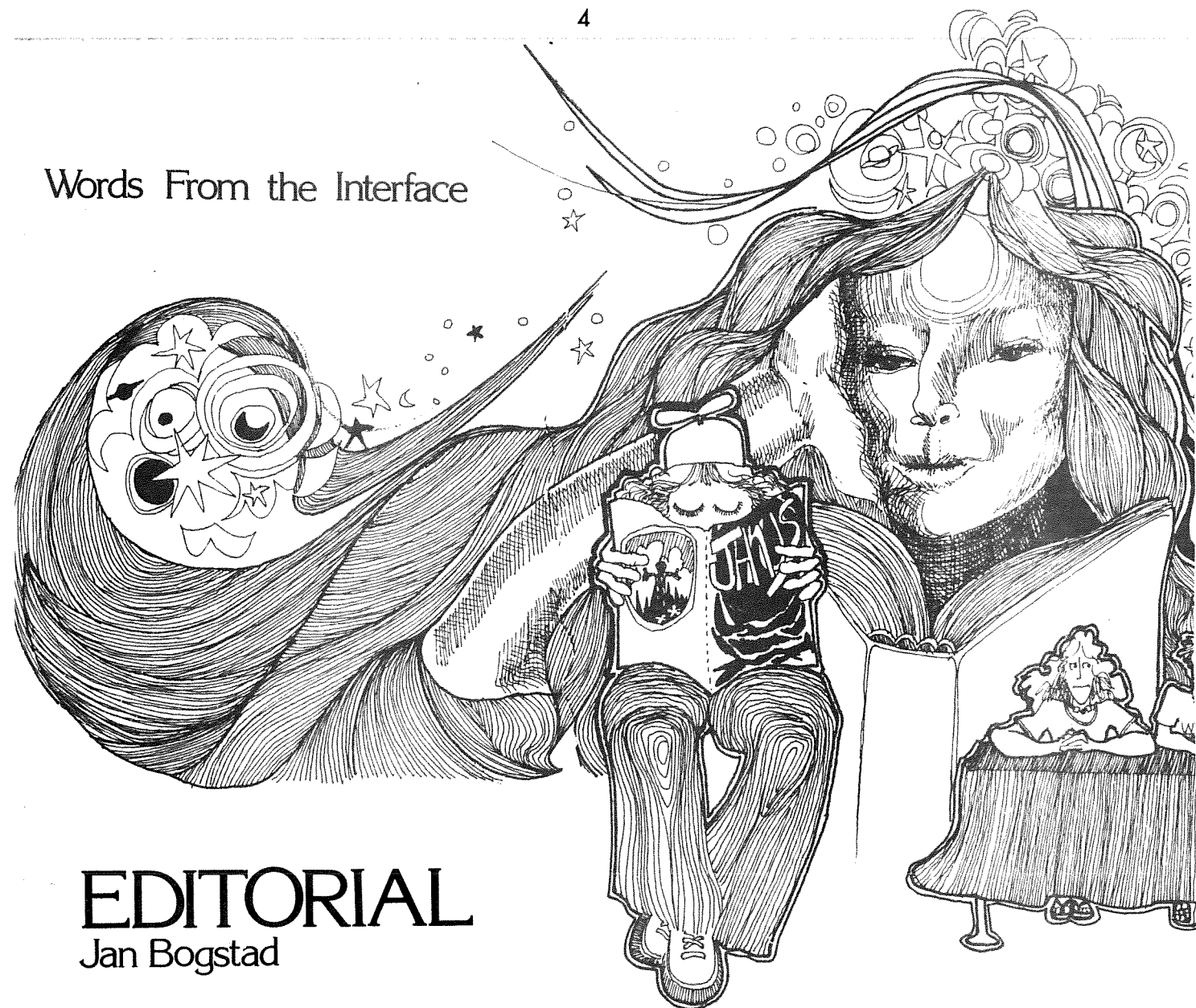
³"Spare time", *n.*, a mythical concept, much like "eternal youth", "over the rainbow", and "real soon now".

Continued p6



Waking up in the horizontal forest on Gaes (From TITAN, by John Varley)

Words From the Interface



EDITORIAL

Jan Bogstad

I must say at the outset that this editorial is a response to my experiences at WisCon 3 and more specifically to the "Violence and Ecstasy in Current SF" panel and the authors' response to that panel. My initial resentment towards the response has withered into a realization that it is really more fruitful to continue a dialog than to chastise either of the several "camps". The next step in this process for me will be to make explicit an implicit consideration in the structure of WisCon and of *Janus*.

I often feel as if I'm being pulled in two directions with my involvement in fandom. On the one hand, we are criticized for not being professional enough in our approach to science fiction as literature, especially with regard to setting standards for the evaluation of SF. On the other hand, groups of fans claim that these same activities—WisCon, *Janus*, and community radio and TV—are too serious; they just aren't fannish enough to be enjoyable. Yet the convention and the magazine seem to have achieved a measure of success despite our supposed myopia.

What is not considered is that our critics might be asking us to fulfill standards which we never set for ourselves and ignoring the standards that we do wish to achieve. I feel most comfortable representing my own position with regard to this

question. What I do with WisCon and what I do as one of the editors of *Janus* is not the result of ineptitude, of ill-derived and ill-executed goals. It is a position. This position is based upon observations that I have made about the effect of science fiction on my life and thinking and on its potential as a forum interacting with the thinking of others. I want the convention and the magazine to set about bridging the gap between professional critics, writers, and editors on one hand and fan-fish readers on the other, because I believe that each has something to learn from the other.

This is really what fandom is all about, and yet "professionals" often seem unwilling to enter into a dialog as equals (hence all of the silly, anecdotal programming), and fans seem reluctant to use their minds when discussing SF as literature or film. Really, folks, I've seen both groups interacting and find it much more fun than either of the two poles which can be represented as various dichotomies.

Critics such as Dwight McDonald contend that SF is only bad literature. Other pro critics say that only good literature is SF; the bad is not true science fiction. Fans are likely to say that we should keep science fiction in the gutter where it belongs, because "We like it here." I do not sub-



scribe to either of these approaches to SF criticism, since I see the field as possessed of a unifying force. To me, SF is not just literature. It's a force as well as a form. Anyone who thinks that evolving a new approach to SF that takes into account both sides of this argument, and both groups involved, should read some of the mail we get concerning *Janus* or should be at some of the discussions where the two groups meet. I don't resent the mail, the discussions, the misunderstandings. What I do resent is the condescension, the belief on some people's parts that we need to be told what to do rather than that we are trying to do things they may not have considered. Think about it.

And to help your thought processes, let me expand my position. (One of the little pleasures of editorship. Perhaps I should say, "Try to stop me.")

Science fiction is sometimes literature; it is often narrative, which can be analyzed along with other narrative forms under the various schools of literary criticism. It can be approached simply (though the explanations are really complex) as signification as per the Formalist, New Critical, or Structuralist Schools. It can be approached historically or sociologically. I have heard it analyzed for its philosophical content, in its relation to politics or religion, or even by the intellectual or

social class of its readership. These are all positions from, or techniques with, which non-genre* literature is explored. Just as mundane literature can be examined as science fiction (our position in 12/13), SF can profit from analysis usually reserved for mundane fiction. Yet the fact of the matter is that science fiction is more than literature. It can be discussed as are other literary efforts, but it can, because of its sociological and technological speculations, give rise to very different kinds of discussions and interactions among different segments of its audience. (It can, for example, become the basis for exploring feminist futures. This is one of the things that we do at WisCon and in *Janus*.) It is also possible to look at SF from an esthetic, evaluative position in some situations. But what interests me is the way that various social issues are explored more productively in SF than in mundane literature. SF unites aspects of existence in contemporary Americana and the world that are not united elsewhere. It allows one to look at how certain elements, certain societies that don't already exist could possibly work.

This sounds like specifically content criticism, except that, since the form of a piece of literature is part of its content, the consideration of form is implicit in this type of analysis. Though SF cuts across traditional genre classifications (novel, short story, novella), it is nevertheless narrative and, even in its movie form, can be treated as such. The narrative focus on an individual or a few individual characters is always a part of SF, be these characters human or alien. These are some of the formulaic assumptions underlying all SF criticism.

When one criticizes the position that SF can be looked at other than from an esthetic or evaluative standpoint, uniting the good and the bad, one is ignoring the fact that this sort of criticism is a respected position towards literature (or narrative in any form) in its own right.

I think that all SF has something in common, and I think that most SF authors would agree with this, though no one has been successful at deciding what one element that is. Therefore, it has a collective basis for its existence and can be evaluated and criticized collectively on the basis of that similarity. In comparison to modern non-genre fiction, most science fiction is formally more conservative; SF is often more fruitfully analyzable with regard to other SF than with regard to non-genre literature, because the experimentation in SF takes place in the cultural forms and settings that confront the classical fictional hero. SF also, as Delany points out in *The Jewel Hinged Jaw*, carries out this experimentation through the device of assuming new meanings for words already in our vocabulary. This use of language demands a certain amount of perception and creative impulse in the reader that not all appreciators of non-genre fiction (mundane literature) seem capable of using. The ability to commune with the text that SF demands is something that traditional critics can learn from fans. It is their excitement and willingness to participate in the literary process that makes them potentially good critics at the outset. Yet they have something to learn from serious critics of narrative literature. Fannish enthusiasm, though often uncritical, is also open-minded and therefore able to pick up on things that a serious critic may miss. The serious critics, however, can add to the fan's enjoyment of SF through their ability to be discriminating and to articulate their perceptions of the text. Trained critics should be able to explain not only what is exciting about a piece of narrative but also why and how this is exciting.

If we can continue to bring these two distinct

*Fans call it "mundane".

and sometimes hostile groups together in a non-hierarchical dialog, the result could very well be beyond my capacity to imagine at this point. For me, *Janus* and WisCon are places for dialog between individuals who do not meet elsewhere in an open and non-evaluative context.

There were many criticisms made of WisCon panels with which I do not agree. I think that too much structure in panels or discussions inhibits the creative potential of those discussions. I do agree that panelists have a certain amount of responsibility to explain what they're doing, but I also think that this was done in the violence and ecstasy panel, for example, where we began with a sociological rather than a literary diagram. Critical rigor is both good and necessary, but it must be directed at the problem, and it must be done in such a way that room is left for more dialog and creative interaction. The creation of a forum where such interaction can take

NEWS NURDS/Jeanne Gomoll CONTINUED

planning, weekly meetings, monthly programs, increasing APAhacking, involvement with WORT-FM radio, the book-of-the-month discussion club, D&D, and art-show stalking (not to mention our mundane commitments) were not enough, many members of the group have become increasingly active with production work at MCAC, Madison Community Access Channel 4. Last month, for example, a new show called "D&D Game of the Month" premiered. It is only one of many media productions that many of the Madison SF Group have been involved with recently. One of the more recent projects by this subgroup has been "The Many Faces of WisCon 3", edited by Hank Luttrell. It is a three-part series of half-hour videotapes. The series will appear on Madison's Cable 4 Public Access channel, and at various conventions where there is video equipment.

Some people call us crazy, and we just smile and say, "Thanks."

And some people have nominated us for a Hugo, for which we also smile (broadly) and say "Thanks."

One great day in late May we received announcements from both the Hugo awards committee and Mike Glicksohn (FAAn official teller). *Janus* has been nominated for best fanzine by Hugo nominators, and by FAAn nominators as having the best editors and best single issues (both #'s 12/13 and 14 were nominated). Also, I have been nominated for best serious artist, and as one of the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards Committee. Wow! We are planning on doing a mailing within the next month, containing the FAAn and DUFF ballots, a *Janus* subscription form, and a WisCon 4 update. You might look for that (Coming to your mailbox soon!) if you are interested in voting or would like to check out the complete lists of nominees.

All this may go to our heads. But there are still more awards to be noted! My ArmadilloCon fan GoH-ship seems to have instigated a Mad City trend, as four more of the Madison SF Group will be honored as fan guests of honor in up-coming months. Douglas Price, Madison fan and co-chair of the first WisCon, will be fan guest of honor at X-Con 3 in Milwaukee July 7-9.

Lesleigh Couch Luttrell and Hank Luttrell will be fan guests of honor at Archon 3 in St. Louis July 13-15. It has been 10 years since St. LouisCon, the 1969 world science fiction convention, and Archon will commemorate this anniversary with Lesleigh and Hank, who were both members of the St. LouisCon committee.

Also, I'll be fan guest of honor again, this time in Detroit for AutoClave, July 27-29, a convention that has traditionally been oriented toward fanzine fans. Seeing what a fine time I had in Austin, I have hardly any jitters about doing this sort of thing. I'm looking forward to being a fan guest of honor this summer, and I'm sure Doug, Lesleigh, and

place is my explicit concern in regard to my involvement with fandom. It is also a position that the Madison group has fought through together, arriving at the mixture that is *Janus*, WisCon, and ultimately SF³, through the interaction of its members. The only attacks I resent are the ones which say that we don't know what we're doing or do not have the right to do it. Now that I have made that position explicit, let the debate begin.

* * *

For those of you who have sent in lists of female SF authors or criticisms of the editorial in *Janus* 14 or are interested in the status of that project, we are compiling these lists and intend to make them into an ongoing project which will be reported on through the pages of this journal in the coming year. Unfortunately, I cannot seem to answer all the letters, but you may rest assured that they are being read and considered in light of the project.

Hank are too.

Jan Bogstad has gotten two jobs recently, largely due to her work with WisCon and *Janus*. She is writing and editing full time for the state this summer, and has already acted several times as a consultant with the Department of Public Instruction, advising state educational personnel on the ramifications of the Federal Sex Equity Act, Title 9. I've gotten many free-lance illustrating jobs through *Janus* this past year. Most recently I've started working with Liz Lynn on illustrations for a wonderful children's non-sexist fantasy, *The Silver Horse*. It is opportunities like these which make our work on *Janus* and other group activities so concretely valuable and worthwhile to us.

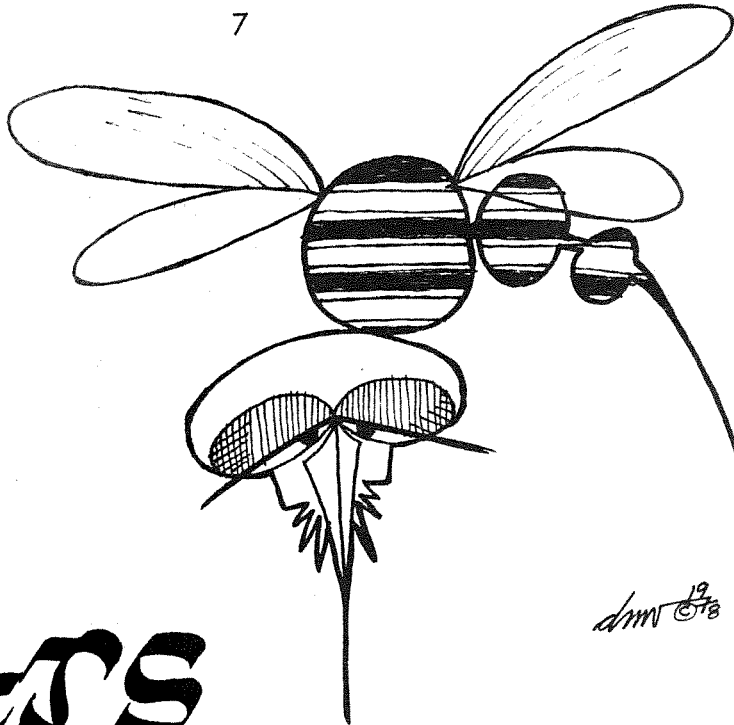
That about brings you up to date with MadSTF's activities. In fact, since I've left writing "News Nurds" till the last, you should be more up to date than is usual for us.

But before I close, there are a few things I'd like to point out about the contents of *Janus* 15, this issue, right here. We always like to receive feedback from our readers, but this time we're asking for some specific comments. Diane and Dick explain their considerations of format changes in "Show and Tell". We've devoted a two-page spread to poetry by Terry Garey and Terri Gregory; please tell us how you like it. Jessica Amanda Salmonson's feminist small-press review column is also a new one, so we'd like to hear your reactions to it as well. If you have noticed that Jessica's column has appeared and the fanzine reviews have vanished, don't jump to conclusions. We will still do intermittent fanzine reviews, never covering all the fanzines we receive, fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it), but printing them when we have enough of them and the space to print them. Space is becoming more and more of a problem in *Janus*. We've never lacked things to print, but increasingly we find ourselves having to be more and more selective, and especially in the letter column having to edit more and more. I'd estimate that Hank Luttrell edited out or WAHFed 50% or more of the letters we received, and we've still got a good-sized LoC column. But some things we can almost always find room for: "The Funnies" are back!

I've been really impressed with the artwork I've received for this issue and as a result have been able to lay out the issue with a more heterogeneous appearance than usual. I hope you like it. But I tend to use up all this stuff at an alarming rate, so in spite of the gratifying quantity and quality of artwork we've received so far I still have to say, "More, please?"

That's all, folks! Considering how close we are to printing this issue I think I can be safe in saying that I hope you're enjoying the summer. But, just in case, enjoy your Thanksgiving dinner!

Jeanne



Letters

Harry Andruschak
6933 N. Rosemead Blvd. #31
San Gabriel, CA, 91775

Outcasts of Heaven Belt, two of the best novels of 1978 and both of which I intend to nominate for the Hugo, along with *Stormqueen*. I am not sure I buy your beans about the why of this [editorial, *Janus* 14]; I distrust that old cliché that "Artists must suffer to produce good work.", which seems to be at the bottom of your reasoning. I cannot give good reasons for this attitude, I just feel it deep down....

Scott R. Bauer
128 Maureen Cir.
Pittsburg, CA, 94565

...I have some questions about Jon Singer's definitions of sexism [IguanaCon report, "Dr. Vuts, MHD, but not MCP", *Janus* 14]. Agreed that our society is sexist. And that men in the society are sexist. And that women are on the receiving end. But one of the ways that this sexism works in our society is by encouraging women to oppress other women, and to oppress themselves. As a shallow, trite example of this, one need only look at the cosmetics industry. Men control it and have often set the standards of how women are supposed to use these products to "beautify" themselves. Women, by buying these things, by buying what the advertisers tell them, are reinforcing this conditioning. And passing it on to their own daughters. The controllers of the society, men, are ultimately responsible for this aspect of sexism, but by playing this and other similar versions of this "game", women are guilty too, by commission, if not by active participation....

Richard Brandt
4013 Sierra Dr.
Mobile, AL, 36609

...The answer to [the X-Con 2] trivia question [reported in *Janus* 12/13] is: your quote is backwards! It's "It was bound to happen sooner or later.", and the book is *Rendezvous with Rama*. (Thanks for this info to D. G. Swanger.)

Linda Bushyager
1614 Evans Av.
Prospect Park, PA, 19076

...Enjoyed the interviews with Joan Vinge and Octavia Butler [*Janus* 14], but I wished you'd had a bit more information on Butler's personal life, like her background, mundane job, etc....

It is interesting that most of the major new writers are women. I think there is probably a correlation between the push in science and math education in the late '50s and early '60s (after Sputnik) and the increased interest in science and SF among men and women now. The push caused a lot of women to begin taking an interest in science, and now we are seeing the women who were in grade and high school at the time becoming readers and writers.... In the next few years more women SF writers will be published. Look for Diane Duane's books from Dell later this year. Also my first book will be out from Dell in July....



Avedon Carol
4409 Woodfield Rd.
Kensington, MD, 20795

...I think I might be able to help [Jon] Singer with his question about how rape could oppress women and advantage men who have never heard or thought of it. Up until recently, it has been pretty easy for companies to refuse to hire women on the grounds that it is dangerous for women to be out at night. Many places still refuse to hire women who don't have cars, although they don't make the same requirements for men. Under these circumstances, if Jon and I applied for the same night job, he might get it where I wouldn't be considered even if I was considerably better qualified for that job, simply because he was a man and I am not—and we might not ever be told why. For years, businesses have justified this because they say they haven't the kind of security that would be necessary to protect a woman who had to leave or enter the building at night from sexual assault. Some places even insisted that the parking lot wasn't safe, and wouldn't even hire women if they did have cars. Whether this was their real reason for refusing to hire women for these jobs, I cannot know, but more than one woman has been refused a much needed job for these stated reasons.

There are also women who wouldn't take such jobs, without ever thinking about why. Our parents, neighbors, and preachers frequently admonish us against lone night travel, without ever being specific about why we shouldn't do it, and, while we may know that for some reason it is considered dangerous for women to be out at night (or maybe we think they mean that it is dangerous for anyone to be about at night, depending on how we are used to having it phrased), we may never really think about why we fear the night. Often, discussion of women who go out by themselves at night is phrased in such a way as to imply that the woman is actually doing something nasty or illegal, rather than simply placing herself in jeopardy (Like maybe they're talking about hookers?), and so we might not think that way about it, yet nevertheless we stay home when it would be to our economic advantage to be out. We don't want to be "bad women".

Then again, there is the young woman who is old enough to have a job, but not yet old enough to move out (or maybe she is just still economically dependent on her parents), whose family has made strong disapproving noises about her staying out late for any reason, including work, and she is in no position to go against their wishes, although rape doesn't seem to be what they are concerned about. (Hell, when I was in high school and my father gave me a midnight curfew, rape was definitely not what he was worried about. At least, not what I call rape, although it's difficult to figure out from my father's warped ideas about female sexuality—or lack thereof—and male aggression just what he was worried about.) But it keeps her from taking that job—the job that you might get only because she, and they, and I, for whatever reasons, can't or won't take it.

Most people don't even think these things through, of course. Just like we don't think through the idea of women remaining weak because men will protect us if need be—or else we'd have to think about what it is that men are supposed to be protecting us from, and we'd realize that we very well do need to become able to defend ourselves, and that men are no protection....

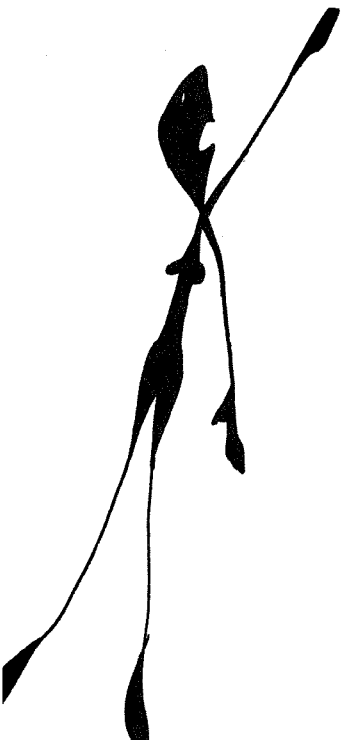
Much appreciated the attention's to Joan Vinge in this issue, too. I loved "Tin Soldier", enough to make a point to try to read more of her work. I quite agree with [Janet] Bellwether's evaluation of that story and "Eyes of Amber". And exchanging about four seconds of conversation with Octavia Butler at Iggy was enough to make me want to read her work. That woman really exuded a lot of presence in those few seconds....

Mog Decarnin ...Paranoid note: Do you require women to have their addresses printed with LoCs? Sometimes, if it's a street address, that's not such a hot idea. Even within fandom, alas. Just thought I'd mention it after noticing your P. 53 cartoon. Most people don't care one way or another, but some make it a point never to publish their addresses, and I think that's a real valid thing to do and would probably do it myself if I were publishing things.

[We customarily print the name and address of each letter-writer so that other readers may establish a direct dialog if they wish. Anyone who does not wish to have her or his name and/or address printed or who wishes to use a pseudonym should say so in the letter, and we will honor the request. As the P. 53 cartoon indicates, though, we do want your full name and address on the letter, not least so we can send you your copy of the issue in which your letter appears. —JAN BOGSTAD AND JEANNE GOMOLL]

Alexis A. Gilliland
4030 8th St. S.
Arlington, VA, 22204

Since there is no theoretical limit to the time a reader can loc one issue of a fanzine, I should like to muse over Ctein's articles on computers [*Janus* 11] and cloning [*Janus* 10, 12/13, and 14], seeing as how they are rather intimately related. Computers first. On Tuesday, December 5, 1978, I attended the fourth and final round of the Ninth Annual North American Open Computer Chess Championship. The level of play showed a rather superficial understanding of the game, but Belle (the entry from Bell Labs) won its game and the tournament with an attack which ended in a very pretty sacrifice. At the tournament there seemed to be a consensus that in about 10 years, 20 at the outside, machines would be playing at the grand-master level. In an article in *Science* (January 8, 1979), Dr. Lewis Branscomb, chief scientist at IBM, says that in about the same time machines will "...fully develop speech capabilities...", which means talking, and listening, and perhaps



putting out fanzines. Taking the two capabilities together, we will have a talking machine that plays grand-master chess along about 1990. It might cost 5,000 vintage-1978 dollars, or even less. Now cloning is not all that easy, especially in mammals, but say that in 10 years with available funding we figure it out. You can be sure that the hard, exacting tedious techniques will very quickly be assigned to the capable hands of some robot, who will swiftly become an adept, and who will then train other robots to perform as well. Ctein's estimate of the cost, if the thing is possible at all, is maybe two orders of magnitude too high. (The related technology of extra-uterine life support for the fetus is developing piecemeal, as we seek to save the lives of younger and younger premature infants. Maybe in 10 years this too will be available at some cost.) In short, we may soon see the technology not only for cloning and extra-uterine birth but also machines with the capacity to read the genetic code and to write it—first as editors, correcting mistakes, then as authors, making their own statements. A machine might learn a great deal by crossing a human, *homo sapiens*, with its nearest primate cousin, the chimpanzee, which might well have a few genes we could use. And why not a machine designing human beings?

We stray a little from the essential point. The cost of cloning a child and bearing it may be trivial. If the birth rate keeps falling, the state might propose tax incentives, or even truly fair welfare payments, to would-be parents. It should be noted, however, that a vague desire to have children is not the same thing as going out and making a commitment, which is what actually having children entails. As Alexis Zorba put it, "Wife, children, house. The full catastrophe."

In nature, parents take care of their children because each has a 50% share in the undertaking, but who will help care for your 100% clone-child? And what will they get out of it? And what legal obligation will they have, and why? Possibly machines again. The next 10 years have been taken care of, but it's still a ways to the year 2000, let alone 2005. No doubt the state will be happy to provide robot nursemaids, unless it should need them to fight a war or quell riots or dig coal, but you may be sure that, if it does, the robots will be raising the state's children, and none of your own. More subtly, some programs may be eligible for subsidy, and some may not. A person is never free of the psycho-financial force fields which property generates, and a tax may coerce the most resolute.

Clones and robots and a just society. Probably real society approaches just society as the ratio of human beings to robots approaches zero.

[Philip] Kaveny's "Phoenix 2478" [*Janus* 14] suggests that in time the computer might corrupt the innocent. No species capable of interacting with a computer is likely to be innocent, and space travel is one end product of war. Besides, 1 P-K4 P-K4, 2 N-KB3 (best) N-KB3, the Petroff or the Four Knights Game draws rather easily....

Jeff Hecht
54 Newell Rd.
Auburndale, MA, 02166

Janus 14 just surfaced among the desktop debris, and before it vanishes again I want to pass along my own half-baked speculation about the emergence of more woman SF writers.

First, I tend to accept your basic premise without attempting to hunt through piles of magazines to verify it. I've noticed more woman writers in the past few years than ever before. I've also noticed that they seem to cluster more in the literary SF subgenre than in old-style "hard" SF, perhaps paralleling my own evolving interests. A lot of the outstanding new writers are women.

Obviously much of this is tied intimately with the emerging female consciousness. But I think there's another factor that's tied into the dynamics and economics of writing: some of the best women writers have lots of time to spend writing but don't have to make a living at it. One immediate example is Ursula LeGuin; James Tiptree/Alice Sheldon is another, although it's never been clear to me how much of her time was devoted to writing. A good writer can't help but benefit from having time to lavish upon her creation.

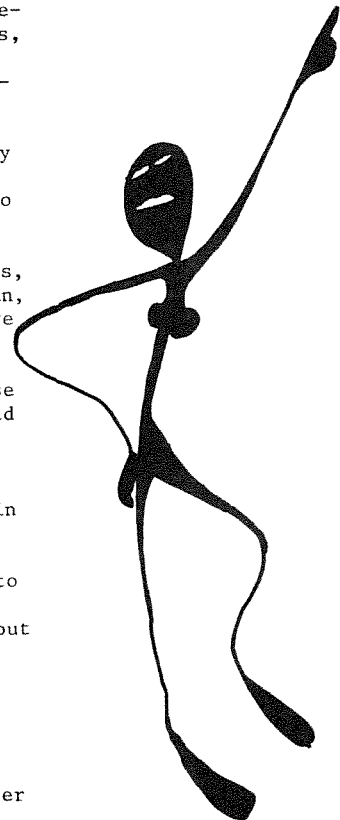
There are male writers who don't have to make a living at SF (Larry Niven jumps to mind immediately.) and women who have to write to keep bread and beans on the table, but the savage facts of socioeconomics in our culture make it more likely that the female won't have to work than the male (assuming heterosexual couples). That, in a sense, stacks the deck somewhat in favor of the woman creative artist, which is a useful counterbalance to other social forces.

At least, such is my speculation. One thing you might try sorting out in your investigations is the interplay between economic and creative factors. Do the most artistically successful woman writers spend years making a sub-subsistence wage from their writing? Do woman writers with the most severe economic pressures upon them end up cranking out hackwork? We know precious little of the socioeconomics of writing, and some answers could be fascinating from many perspectives.

Arthur D. Hlavaty
250 Coligni Av.
New Rochelle, NY, 10801

...I do have a few disagreements with Jon Singer. While I agree that rape is bad for women—not only the victims but those who have to live in fear of it—Jon has not convinced me that men derive advantage from it. He simply restates that rape harms women but does not harm men. Granted that zero is greater than a negative number, it seems a bit strange to speak of not being raped as an advantage. By his reasoning, men "derive advantage" from diseases of the ovaries.

And while I agree with Jon that "society is sexist" in the sense that institutional and ideological sexism are so pervasive that no one can plausibly claim to be absolutely free of them, I can see no point in defining men as sexist because they are part of a sexist society (or even because men are more likely than women to be



OF COURSE!
THAT EXPLAINS THE
GREAT PROFUSION
OF WOMEN ARTISTS
WHO GAINED FAME
DURING THE 1950'S!



the beneficiaries of institutional sexism). By all means we should do what we can about sexism: confront it, or set up alternatives to it, in its institutional sense; try to cleanse ourselves of it, in its individual sense. But striking the "sexist" label on men who are not individually sexist seems counterproductive....

Once I tore my eyes away from Ctein's fascinatingly yonic drawing, I found his article most informative. One demurrer, though. While he may be correct that moralistic pressures will prevent host-mothering from becoming a business, I feel reasonably certain that, if the technology becomes workable, it will immediately begin to exist in the form of crime. (Crime is usually at the forefront of technology, you know.)...



Jerry Kaufman
303 16th av. E. #102
Seattle, WA, 98112

...I enjoyed both the Joan Vinge and Octavia Butler interviews. (Even picked up *Mind of My Mind* yesterday because of the latter.) I believe the story mentioned by Octavia Butler about the parasitic life-form that took on the female

form of different species to be "The Lovers" by Philip Jose Farmer. I've puzzled over the assumption mentioned, that "the females would be taken care of by the males", and wondered if another assumption might explain why the alien creature would always take the female shape. In other words, if Farmer wanted to, could he have found a better rationale for the story's gimmick? (I was sure that Ms. Butler pegged the story right; in the Farmer story I'm thinking of, the alien was going to die as the fetus came to term, since it would eat the mother like a parasitic wasp eating a caterpillar.) In many mammalian species, like bears, the mother raises the children and the male stays away altogether.... The whole original idea holds no further interest beyond the original punch: Gosh, it isn't a woman, it's an alien creature! (Which Susan Wood points out as leading to/from: Gosh, women are alien creatures!)

I was surprised, though, when Ms. Butler referred to the Walter Farley books as being "a girl and her horse" books, because I read 10 to 15 of them myself and remember all the protagonists as being boys. They were wonderful horse books, and perfectly satisfying to someone who'd never been on a horse. Vonda N. McIntyre, who is an expert on horses (and has ridden horses for years) liked them too, so I suppose they're acceptable....

Jessica Amanda Salmonson
Box 5688 University Stn.
Seattle, WA, 98105

...I especially like Janet Bellwether's perspective. I wish she'd elaborate a little more, since her writing is so terse.

Both the interviews were wonderful. I think the "official" commitment Janice states as *Janus's* policy, to strive specifically to present interviews with women authors, is exceedingly commendable. I don't read every author for happening to be a woman, and my copy of *Mind of My Mind* had languished in a deep pile for a long time. The coverage of Octavia Butler has encouraged me to get it out and read it, and so far I'm quite impressed.

I liked the honesty of Rapunzel's review ["The View from Rapunzel's Tower" by Jeanne Gomoll in *Janus* 14]. I expected the three women's SF anthologies to be praised no end without a definitive statement about *Cassandra Rising* especially including poorer stories. I think *Millennial Women* was flawed too, though compared to most anthologies it holds up better than average. *New Women of Wonder* is of course the best by far, an absolutely amazing collection that "happened" to bring together most of the stories of the last few years that had stuck in my own mind as the nicest specifically feminist science fiction to happen; it's nice to have them all in one place, and it's a bigger treat even than the previous collections, which were themselves above average but, in showing "where we've been", weren't always exactly feminist. I wish *Cassandra* had been better; and I wish Virginia Kidd hadn't included LeGuin's novel in *Millennial* but had given us a wider variety of material by more women; but *New Women of Wonder* is flawless. Anyway, back to the original point, that Rapunzel was willing to say some of the stories weren't up to par, is more important than blindly praising anything by women. Feminist critics lose all credibility when this happens, and it does happen. Though, let's not forget, non-feminist critics are wont to boost sales of rotten work, too, either because they dote on rotten stuff or because the authors are friends. Some of the Bay Area writers do so much mutual back-patting that they've become credible reviewers only of East Coast writers!...

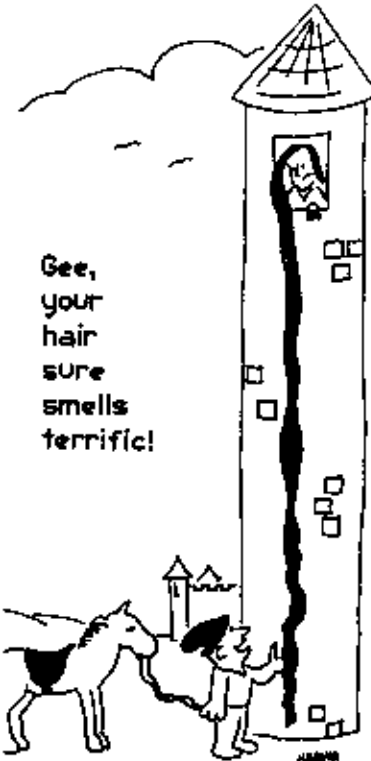
Noah Stewart
261 Seaton St.
Toronto, Ont., M5A 2T5

...[You have my appreciation for] your Delany piece ["The Word Is Not the Thing", guest editorial in *Janus* 12/13], Delany being my particular interest in literature at the moment. Papers on Delany have seen me through three years

of university, in such varied fields as information theory...and literature. I'm always interested in anything I can find to help me get a little more enjoyment out of his work, if it's possible to do so at this point. (I may be the first person to have memorized *Triton*.) I won't comment on the piece itself: having only had two or three readings last night, I'm not prepared to commit myself.

I do, however, want to commend the production person (Ms. Gomoll? {Yup.}) who puts together *Janus*. Magazine production is my business, and it is a difficult and extremely under-appreciated field. (I work for the largest magazine publisher in Canada, Maclean-Hunter. We publish over a hundred magazines monthly that very few people read—and I can't understand why anyone would want to read them, either. On

Gee,
your
hair
sure
smells
terrific!



my desk at the moment I have two layouts from *The New York Monthly*, which gives you some idea.) Anyways. Considering the budgetary limitations which are inherent in the fanzine process, you (either collectively or individually) are to be congratulated for a really excellent piece of work. One of the reasons for my forcible gaffiation was that I simply couldn't stand to read fanzines any more. I wanted to take them all over and redo them. Yours I can live with....

Angus Taylor
Fleerde 34 Bylmermeer
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Arthur Hlavaty wonders what name we can give to that fiction that lies in the fuzzy region between SF and mainstream ("DMZ" in *Janua* 12/13). But what is the obvious name for a type of fiction that provides a gateway between SF and mainstream, that in effect faces both ways? Why, Janua fiction, of course. (See diagram.)

THE LITERARY SPECTRUM

| Science Fiction | Janua Fiction | Mainstream Fiction |
|--|---|--|
| | subdivides into (1) FORMAL DIMENSION | |
| Fantastic | | Mimetic |
| typical individual in mutated context | and (2) CONTENT DIMENSION | unique individual in normal context |
| The Human Potential | | The Individual Personality |
| permeable boundaries | | |

Joan D. Vinge
31 3rd Pl.
Brooklyn, NY, 11231

I recently was shown a copy of the latest *Janua* by a friend who'd found the interview you did with me at worldcon in it, and a lot of other very nice surprises—reviews of my stories, reviews of other stories, general articles on all kinds of interesting subjects, and even pictures from 1989. I really enjoyed it very much.... I particularly enjoyed the essay/review by Jeanne Gomoll, "The View from Rapunzel's Tower"; it's beautifully written....

Ed Zdrojewski
1891 Union St.
Benton Harbor, MI, 49022

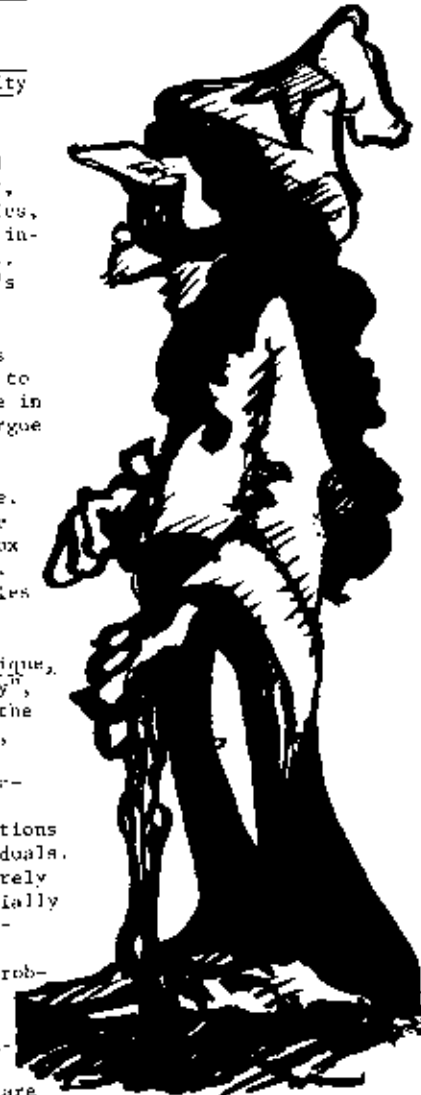
...Jon [Singer]'s article involves an argument that is rather complex, but I'll tackle it anyway. "It seems to me that as members of a sexist society, we all must be in some ways contaminated by it. (Is anybody going to argue that?)" I'm going to argue that by a rather radical statement: there is no such thing as society, in any objective sense.

This philosophical viewpoint is rather basic, so let's start from Square One. Take a box. Take 100 apples. Put them in the box. Now, do you have a collective apple? Nonsense! You have 100 apples. The fact that they are together in the box doesn't make them a separate "collective" entity apart from what they were before. In fact, the only way you would ever have something other than 100 individual apples is to eat some of them or make them into applesauce.

Now take 220 million people. Put them into a box the size of the United States. Do you have a collective person? No! You have 220 million separate, unique, individual persons, not one exactly like another.... You can call them a "society", but only in the sense that the word "society" is used as a shorthand term...with the purpose of saving breath and paper space...a symbol. And symbols are not reality, but rather a representation of reality. Many, probably most, people mistake the symbol "society" for reality. This is the error which lies at the heart of collectivism. Not only do people personify society and pretend that it is some great thing that exists apart from separate individuals, but many base most of their actions on trying to affect and change "society" and forget about the existence of individuals. Individuals, as I have said, are the beings that exist in reality. Society is merely an abstract concept that does not exist in objective reality. Many people, especially those in positions of power, work to change something that does not exist, the abstract concept society, without considering the effect that their actions have on that which really exists, individual people. This is the source of most of the problems troubling the world today, and, at least to some extent, of sexism.

When you say "society" to people, they often think of such things as laws, ideals, morals, values, even the institutions of government or churches. Superficially one could argue that these are "collectives" that exist on some imagined higher plane than mere individuals. But laws, morals, governments, and churches are merely the product of individuals. A great many individuals have contributed to their construction...but they remain the work of individuals. Individuals create the reality. Reality does not create the individuals....

A close-to-home example, as close as the price on the corner gas pump. For more than 25 years the shah of Iran lorded it over his country with a government almost unrivaled in repressiveness, tyranny, and bloodthirstiness. From our somewhat libertarian American viewpoint, the individuals in Iran should have risen up and overthrown their oppressor. Yet the fact remained that the shah faced no significant opposition until the last year he remained in power. You can attribute this to US military assistance, CIA interference, the strength of the shah's army and secret police, etc. But it isn't the entire argument. Because in the minds of a majority of individuals in Iran, the shah's government was allowed to exist in



reality. And the proof of this lies in what happened at the end. Take a look through your old newspapers. When a majority decided that they preferred the reality of a government led by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini rather than a government led by Shah Reza Pahlavi, the shah's government virtually ceased to exist. Oh, the shah could send his soldiers to fire on unarmed crowds and make pretentious statements to the press, but that did not change the reality that his government no longer existed. When the shah fled to Morocco, he was merely acknowledging reality....

To the extent that our institutions are sexist, it is because the individuals who contributed to their creation held sexist beliefs. Of course, that's virtually everyone who lived for the past 2,000 years or so. I include women, because most of them believed that crap about male domination, too.

The conclusion? You can pass all the laws and get all the court orders you want. You won't succeed in eliminating sexism that way, because sexism is the result of individual attitudes, not abstract concepts like "society". Laws and court orders have their place, insofar as they prohibit specific acts of discrimination. But if you're trying to eliminate sexism, you're going to have to change people's attitudes. And, to my observation, that's what feminists do best: one individual using rational arguments to try to change another's viewpoint. It's working, slowly but surely. More and more men are reassessing their attitudes and working to change them—a lot more than before there was a feminist movement.

And when the majority of individuals have abandoned sexist attitudes, I predict that something very magickal will happen. Sexism will disappear from American institutions. Just like that. After all, individuals create the institutions, and they will simply create non-sexist ones. It couldn't happen any other way....

[You contend that a box of 100 apples and a society of 220 million human beings are each simply the sum of their constituent parts. Check out the concept of "synergism", which holds that a collection of units can be different than the sum of the units due to interaction. (This is a fancy way of saying that one rotten apple spoils the barrel.)

[It is simply untrue that "majority" opinion—however it is measured—can cause the inertial mass of societal laws and mores to "magickally" disappear. As counter-examples, I cite (1) the failure of the supposed overwhelming majority in favor of gun control to change the laws of the land and (2) the continued existence of pockets of racism despite public opinion and federal law opposing it. Therefore, we must recognize that feminists are competing with anti-feminists for the minds of the uncommitted, and that it's going to be a long, tough battle, not over by any means just because feminists will someday achieve a majority. Certainly we should, as you suggest, attempt to convince individuals one-on-one of the merits of our position. But we should also recognize that the mechanisms of society are available to reach people on a much broader scale than one-on-one, and that, if we don't use them, the others will. —RICHARD S. RUSSELL]

YOU DIDN'T SEND JANUS YOUR COAT Grrrr...



AWAY

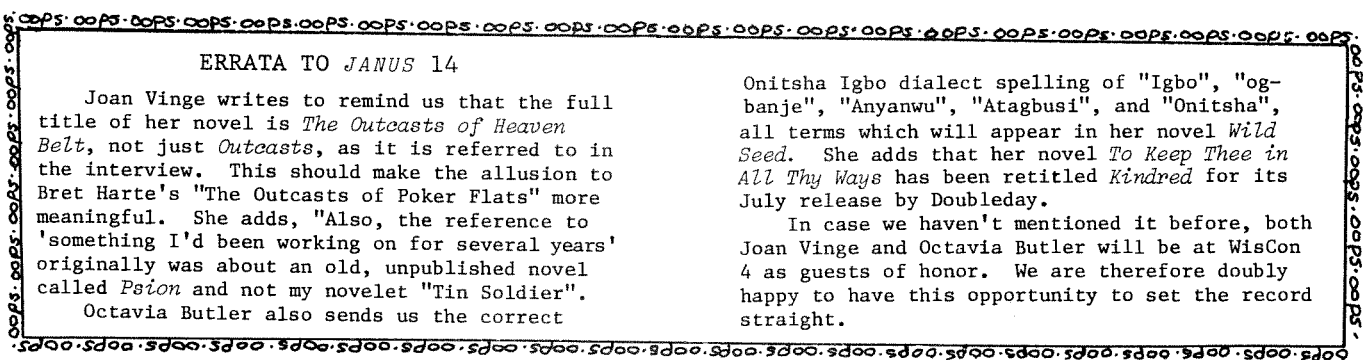
[We also heard from Martin Morse Wooster, Susan Wood, Clifford R. Wind, Taral, Erwin S. Strauss, Bob Soderberg, Jon Singer, Marc R. Sharpe, Georgie Schnobrich, Vicki Poyser, Lee Pelton, Ro Pardoe, Paul Novitski, Pat Mueller, Ian McDowell, Tim Marion, Rebecca Lesses, Paul Lemman, Irvin Koch, Jeff Kleiman, Mary Kilgore, Annabel Kendall, Harry A. Hopkins, Teddy Harvia, J. Owen Hanner, Joan Hanke-Woods, Bob Frazier, George Flynn, Don Fitch, Adrienne Fein, Don D'Amassa, Buck Coulson, Tom Cayley, Debra Byrne, Richard Bruning, and Brian Earl Brown.]

ERRATA TO JANUS 14

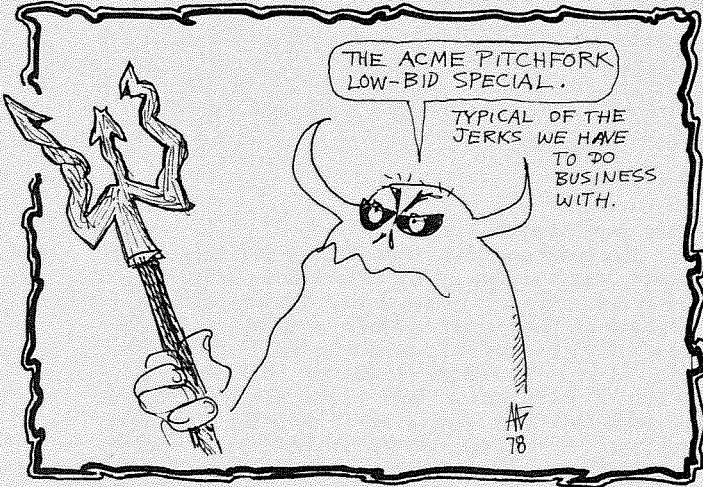
Joan Vinge writes to remind us that the full title of her novel is *The Outcasts of Heaven Belt*, not just *Outcasts*, as it is referred to in the interview. This should make the allusion to Bret Harte's "The Outcasts of Poker Flats" more meaningful. She adds, "Also, the reference to 'something I'd been working on for several years' originally was about an old, unpublished novel called *Psion* and not my novelet "Tin Soldier". Octavia Butler also sends us the correct

Onitsha Igbo dialect spelling of "Igbo", "og-banje", "Anyanwu", "Atagbusi", and "Onitsha", all terms which will appear in her novel *Wild Seed*. She adds that her novel *To Keep Thee in All Thy Ways* has been retitled *Kindred* for its July release by Doubleday.

In case we haven't mentioned it before, both Joan Vinge and Octavia Butler will be at WisCon 4 as guests of honor. We are therefore doubly happy to have this opportunity to set the record straight.



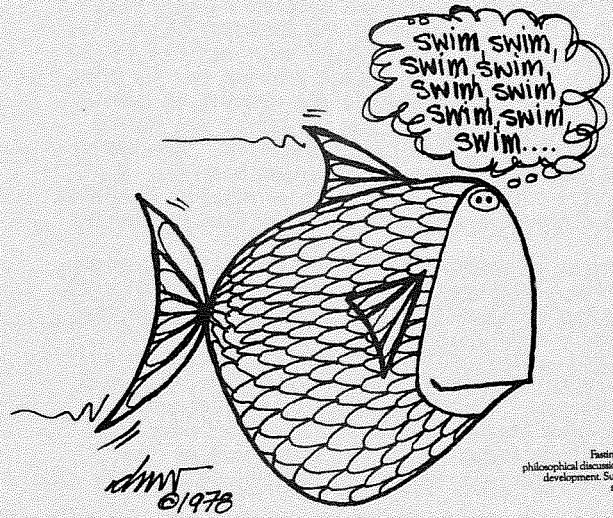
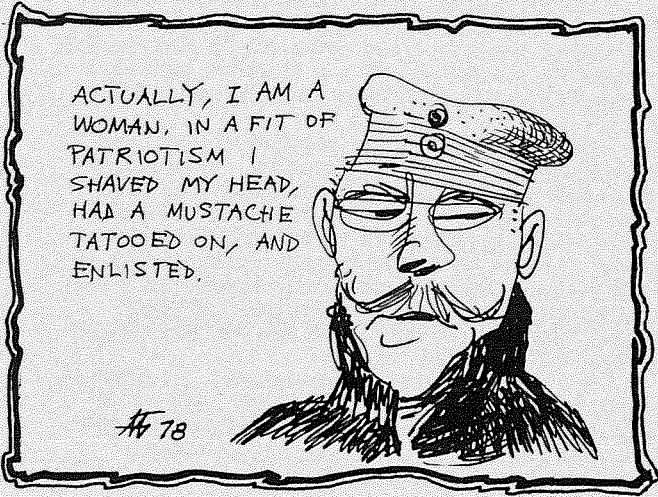
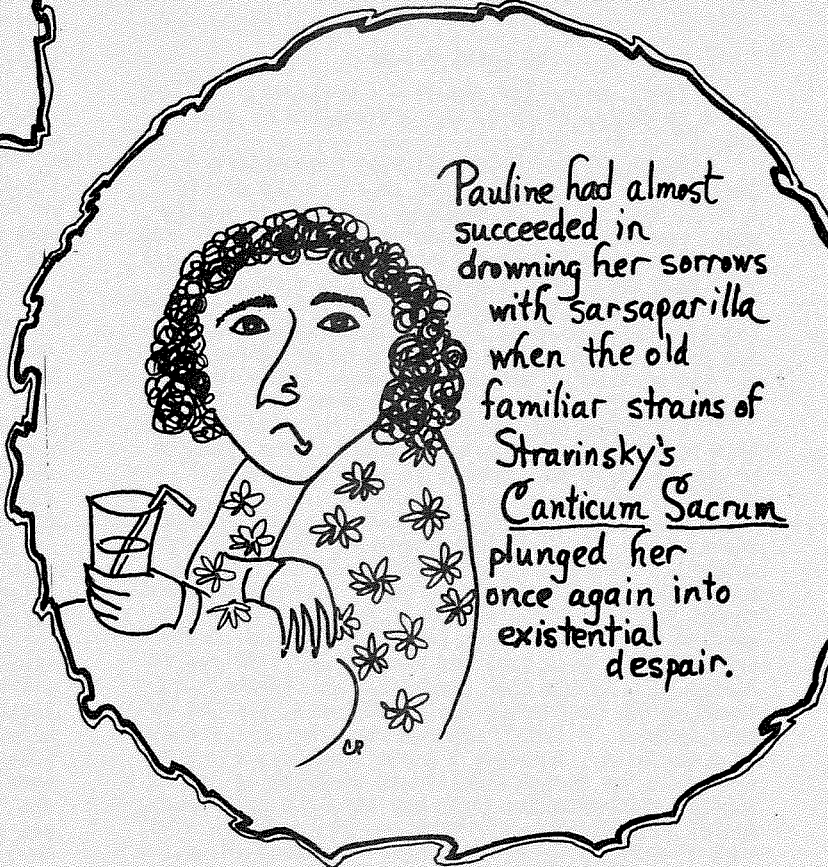
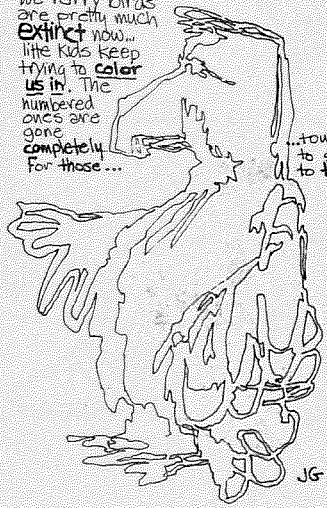
TUNNIES



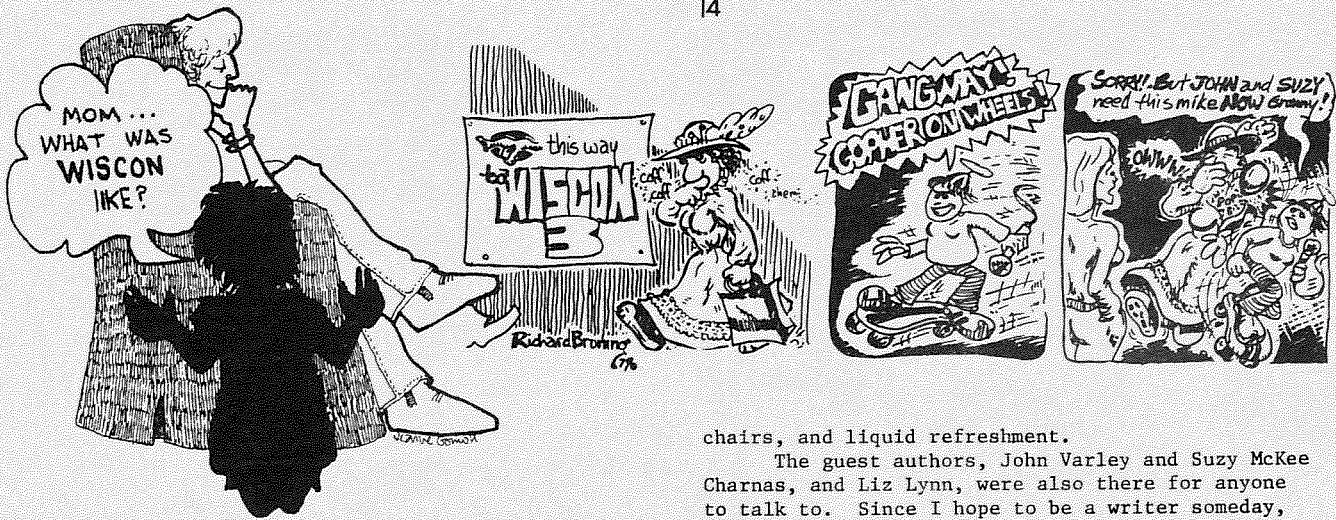
READ ANY GOOD BIRDS LATELY?



We rarry birds are pretty much extinct now... little kids keep trying to color us in. The numbered ones are gone completely for those...
 ...tourists used to go long way to tint a rarry...



Fasting, abstinence and lofty philosophical discussion may not be the best paths to spirit development. Sufis have found that jokes can often speed the progress.



by Gerri Balter

[This convention report was originally written for a sociology class at the University of Minnesota.]

People go to science-fiction conventions for many reasons. Some go to see those "weird sci-fi folks", some go out of boredom, some out of loneliness, some to see old friends and make new ones, and some to discuss science fiction. But underneath all this is a more basic reason to attend a convention. It is a time and place where we can rid ourselves of the alienation we feel in our daily lives. For during a convention we can go and do as we please. We are the masters of our fate. Things happen because of what we do, not in spite of what we do.

I started out in the huckster's room. In this room one can find anything from the latest books on science fiction and fantasy to jewelry, artists' drawings, and information on the occult.

At 5:00 p.m. on Friday I went to my first panel discussion. The topic was space colonies. Before attending this discussion, I was ready to pack my bags and leave for the first space colony that would accept me. But after hearing that there is no discovered L5 orbit than can be maintained, and hearing about the political and social ramifications of living on a colony with the elite (The inhabitants would be the best minds the world has.), I began to have doubts. I always assumed that the colony would be democratic. However, I never took into consideration that my fellow inhabitants would be my intellectual superiors and might not have the same idea. And if they didn't agree with me, there wouldn't be much I could do about it. After listening to that panel, I unpacked my bags and decided to stay here on Earth. What impressed me the most was that, although none of the panel members were experts in the field, all of them knew a great deal on the subject.

Next on the agenda were the opening ceremonies. They started out with a magic act where the female assistant was more than just decoration. She had a mind of her own and let the audience know it. Next came a skit where members of the convention committee gave us a humorous look at a science fiction convention.

After an introduction of the committee members, we went to a get-acquainted party. As you walked in, someone put a removable tag on your back. The tag contained a name of a science-fiction or fantasy character, author, or book. It was a great way to meet people. You didn't have to think of something clever to say. You could just walk up to anyone and ask them questions about what was on your back. The questions would only be of the "yes" or "no" variety. There was music for dancing, tables and

chairs, and liquid refreshment.

The guest authors, John Varley and Suzy McKee Charnas, and Liz Lynn, were also there for anyone to talk to. Since I hope to be a writer someday, I grabbed at the chance to talk to them. I talked to John Varley about his twisted plot in *The Ophiuchi Hotline*. He thought it was too twisted, but I don't. We both agreed that no one wants to read a book when they know exactly what is going to happen every step of the way. We also talked about Oregon where he lives. He loves snow, but doesn't see much of it. I promised to send him all the snow he wanted. I talked to Liz Lynn about worldcon, where I first met her. Suzy and I talked about what kind of support a struggling writer needs. She says you need all you can get, and I agree.

When the get-acquainted party served its purpose, I went up to the con suite to see what it had to offer. It was a hotel room with soft drinks, beer, munchies, and a more quiet atmosphere for talking.

The first panel discussion I attended on the second day of the convention was called "Amazons Then and Now". Each member of the panel told us about strong females, both actual and mythological. Then the audience asked questions. A point was made that, although women have strong role models in female warriors, they may not be the most desirable models for future generations to look up to. I know I don't. I firmly believe that you can be strong without being a warrior.

"Getting Published" included funny stories from the authors on the perils of trying to get published, and serious remarks from the science-fiction editor of Pocket Books, David Hartwell, on what really happens to the manuscripts he sees. I learned that everyone gets plenty of rejections, some of which don't make sense, and that if someone rejects your work with personal remarks you are getting better. I also learned that authors have no control over artwork and blurb writers.

The last panel I went to on Saturday consisted of John Varley and Suzy McKee Charnas. They both talked about how they write, and I learned that everyone works differently and that the road of success is paved with different experiences for each of us.

In between all this I visited the art show and bid on a couple of the pictures. Therefore, I attended the art awards and auction to make sure I got what I bid on. The artwork at the art show represented many phases of science fiction and fantasy. There is no way I could describe what I saw there. Later I watched the convention's two feature movies, *Forbidden Planet* and *Fantastic Planet*. (Movies are shown all the time for those who are into movies.)

On the last day of the convention I returned to the art auction and got the second work of art I wanted. (There had not been time the night before to auction all the pieces.) After that I joined a discussion in the lobby about what is and



is not good literature. Everyone has his/her view, and it was interesting to hear them all. From there the discussion progressed into like styles. There are those who think that men and women should live completely separate from one another. There are women who have been so bruised by the patriarchy that they cannot function when men are around. I am not one of those women. I enjoy conversing with men. I enjoy the give and take of a relationship based on equality between the sexes. If men and women separate, no one will enjoy that phenomenon, and that would be tragic for both men and women.

What started out on Friday as a group of strangers, ended up on Sunday as a group of friends. Everywhere you went people would stop and talk as if they had known you for a long time. Any fear of appearing foolish or unknowing that was present at the beginning of a convention disappears at the end, as we all find we are foolish and unknowing about some things and possess great wisdom about others. We learn at least to understand a little the viewpoint of those who don't agree with us even though we don't agree.

Margaret Mead would have said that conventions are a way for us to learn about others by interacting with others. I, for one, would totally agree.

by Philip Kaveny

I must write this con report before WisCon 3 fades into an undifferentiated memory. WisCon was a landscape of bas and high relief for me.

Conrad the Magnificent (Scotty Spaine), the magician who performed at the opening ceremonies for WisCon 3, told me that magic and science fiction have something in common: "Magic is performed and sustained by the art and craft of the magician. The literature of science fiction is sustained by a writer through the magic of language." For the purpose of telling you about WisCon 3, I will borrow some of Kurt Vonnegut's magic and ask you to think about the Tralfamadorian novel as mentioned by the robot Solo in *Sirens of Titan*. The novel stood outside of time and space: everything in it was always happening, and at the same time. Solo asked the reader to think about the novel as a visual phenomenon, a burst of light and creation with subplots as points of light bursting off in all directions against the perfect void. Pretty heady language to describe a con from a personal standpoint. You bet it is.

The opening ceremonies were a combination of comic opera, high drama, some beautiful skits. Right, you criticlones who were so much alike, Terri, 4'7", and Jan, 7'4", that we could not tell you apart. All in all, the opening ceremonies had the beauty and finesse of a hockey game.

Operations is that part of a convention which puts all the planning and detail into effect after all the planning and preparations of the previous year have been countermanded and finally ignored. The responsibility for this was placed on my candidate for the person with the broadest shoulders in fandom,

Hank Luttrell, who also happens to be able to hold me in arm wrestling though I outweigh him by 200 lbs.

Coordinator is the worst job in the convention. It was not so much that she had to make the judgment of Solomon every five minutes (a decent surgeon could have done that.); it was more the case of Jan's having to make the judgment of Paris at least ten times a week. Luckily, our coordinator had the beauty of Diana, the intelligence of Athena, and, more important, the patience of Job.

We called them groundhogs, but to me they are still gophers. This year, I got rid of a prejudice against D&D by sitting in on one of their games after the hotel has donated them a room to play in. It is really something to see these kids sustain a complex narrative as it moves around the room. If you don't think they're important, try to do some work without them. You will be stuck with the job.

Guests of Honor. I listened to an interview with Suzy at worldcon in which she related writing to composing elements as in opera. Well, I saw Gonad's *Faust* [*sic*] and I think I see what she meant. John Varley, on the other hand, said that after ten hours of good writing he felt like jumping over the house. John claims he isn't much of a talker. He doesn't need to be. This is often true of good writers.

As the generalissimo and field marshal of the WisCon security force, let me explain my philosophy of security. You probably were not able to see us, but we were watching. It has always been the feeling of the WisCon committee that it was not necessary to have a paramilitary organization goose-stepping around the con in order to do an adequate job of security.

I was the producer of the magic-lantern media presentation. In this I had the help of Diane Martin who did the photography and made me say what it was that I really wanted to do. Hank Luttrell provided the best mixed music east of the Mississippi. Steven Vincent Johnson, Madison's own worldcon-prize-winning artist, donated the use of color slides of his art work to the show. Terri Gregory, who archives DMSP satellite imagery, provided copies of the pinball-machine landscape that is the eastern United States. And Lesleigh Luttrell gave me a zeppelin poster which started me thinking about symbols in locomotion.

Since it would be impossible to present the slides or the music here, I am including a portion of the script, to give you a taste of the presentation.

The automobile presents itself to the social scientist as a specimen upon which to dissertate: urban sprawl, demographic distribution as a function of highway systems, Thorstein Veblen's thesis on conspicuous consumption as applied to the automobile, the effect of compulsory driver's education and high-school grade-point on insurance risk factors. We have all heard it.

But have you ever owned a
1955 Chevy 283
With twin four-barrel carbs,
Modified positraction,
Full race cams,
Four on the floor,

Set with a rake,
And cruiser skirts?
If you have, I'd like a picture of it for my
slide show.

Some of you probably don't know what I'm talking about. Kids today talk about computer capabilities in the same way we talked about engine specs.

"Images of Work in the Future" was a modestly attended but nevertheless worthwhile examination of the interplay that existed between writers of science fiction and social scientists in understanding the images of work in a changing world. (Tapes of this panel—and most of the others—are available for \$5 each from SF³.)

I think that WisCon sort of established the identity of the Madison Science Fiction Group, though others might have different opinions. But I think we are political and concerned about politics and feminism. This does not necessarily mean that this is so much serconicity and therefore boring. It was also not a bad idea to have a little free beer in the con suite.

Additional thanks to: Oarlock, the barbarian (Richard Russell); Perri Corrick-West, who made the films run on time; Jeanne Gomoll, who wrote so many of the letters and made so many connections. Last, we have a video recording of WisCon because of the devotion of Carl Kucharsky, technical director of the Madison Community Access Center, Andy Garcia, Paul Wells, Jack Dunn, Ellen LaLuzerne, and Dennis Hackbart.

You can read about the rest of the convention in *Starship*.

By Jon Singer

I need to thank the committee and the attendees of WisCon 3. I can remember only one or two other conventions that compare. I am still boiling with ideas, still filled with a most marvelous warm feeling; it is a long time since I have found that much friendship and loving in one place at one time. I came away, also, perhaps a notch more radical than I arrived. The discussion in the lobby just after the Liz Lynn/Suzy Charnas response panel was enlightening in several respects, in regard to both feminism and literature. I am still sorting things out, but in general it seems to me that, indeed, starting from the basis of the conclusions to which I was brought at IguanaCon, I am led easily to certain further statements made by various people (including Judith Clark, Betty Hull, Susan Wood, and Candice Massey) at the floorcon; for example, once one accepts the idea that in this society women are forced to operate from a powerless position, it ceases to be surprising that some women should want to form communities without men: they need to develop their own sources of strength and power, and, for many, doing so involves removing themselves as completely as possible from the extant patriarchy.

What gets to me now is that I could ever have failed to see it. We all know that hindsight is much easier than foresight, but coming to the abrupt realization that one has been operating with a head full of mud is always painful. The massive warmth and support and encourage that I have been receiving from the people in the movement within fandom has made the pain considerably less strong than it would have been, for which I am thankful, but herein lies a strong caution: one of the points made at that lobby discussion (mostly, I seem to recall, by Susan Wood and Liz Lynn) is that men must not either expect or ask for that kind of support. Women have

enough trouble already; don't give them more. In fact, my current state is such that I am rather surprised at just how warm everyone was, and is. As I get a slightly clearer view of the situation, of the degradation and pain and powerlessness forced upon women in this society, I become more and more amazed at the compassion, understanding, and lack of rage that I find.

Susan Wood told me of a magazine article she read in which the writer demanded that feminist women devote considerable time and energy to soothing the deflated egos of men who find themselves (How shall I put this?) "squashed" by the movement. This is not merely bullshit, it is criminal. Most of us have to make changes within ourselves with as little outside help as possible, and surely those men who get bruised egos should look first to themselves and then to other men for assistance. It is, of course, understandable that people who don't really have much of an understanding of this situation will unavoidably get their egos bruised, but that should cause them to take a hard look at their motivations right away.

This brings up another point: it is quite clear that one of the reasons we now have a patriarchal sexist society is that men occupy positions of power and do not want to give up the status quo. Unless we see to it that men are brought to a full realization of the enormity of this, change either will be much slower or will happen only in violence, which is self-defeating, as it would lead not to a society in which people were people and everyone was free, but to a restrictive mirror image of the shit we have now, in which nobody would be free.

convention committee:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| George Harpung & Sis Kopp | .. UW liaison |
| Janice Bogstad | overall coordinator |
| Lesleigh Luttrell | .. deputy coordinator, scheduler, secretary |
| Diane Martin | treasurer |
| Jeanne Gomoll | program coordinator |
| Perri Corrick-West | ... film programmer, program expediter |
| Steven V. Johnson | art show |
| Karen Axness | huckster's room |
| Philip Raveny | security* |
| Nancy Smith | groundhog captain |
| Hank Luttrell | public relations* |
| Richard S. Russell | registration, hotel liaison |
| James A. Cox | master of ceremonies, auctioneer, handicapped accommodations |
| Terri Gregory | opening ceremonies, child care |
| Greg Rihn | head projectionist |
| Paul Matzke | games room |
| Bill Hoffman | head dungeonmaster |
| Ken Konkol | hospitality suite |
| Ellen LaLuzerne | music, media room |

*also equipment and facilities

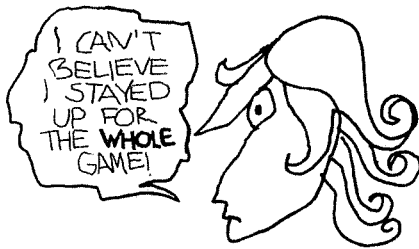


Guest Authors Exchange Interviews

John Varley and Suzy McKee Charnas are both known for writing stories set in worlds with peculiar assumptions. Suzy Charnas's latest novel, *Motherlines*, for instance, presents us with an all-woman culture which reproduces itself parthenogenetically. John Varley's world in *The Ophiuchi Hotline* is peopled with individuals who have nearly all had one or more sex changes in their lifetimes and who casually replace parts of their bodies for other more "convenient" parts. Hearing these two authors interview one another and exchange ideas in regard to these peculiar assumptions with which they construct their fascinating fictional worlds should be... interesting. To say the least.

It seems to me very important that we attempt to achieve a society in which everyone is free to develop to the full extent of their potential. (This point was made by someone on one of the panels at WisCon and is not of my invention. In fact, I can lay claim to having invented remarkably little of this letter.) It was suggested at that same panel that part of the reason we now have a patriarchal society very likely was that men, in attempting to find or produce a need for themselves, invented the need for defense, which led, in a fairly straightforward and obvious way, to wars. (After all, it was the women who had the babies and were thus very obviously indispensable to the continuance of the species, not to mention that it was mostly the women who enculturated the kids and thus were indispensable to the societies and cultures.) Not that I think that this is necessarily the entire and total truth of the matter, but it is far from inconceivable.

Everyone needs to be wanted, or needed. In a culture it which everyone is free to develop, nobody will be unneeded or unwanted, unless something else is very wrong. I am not suggesting that the patriarchy will just wither away and this wondrous phoenix arise from the ashes. But if we don't all work for it, it will not ever happen. ☹



by Bill Hoffman

The 1979 WisCon marathon Dungeons and Dragons game was the culmination of two months of sporadic and two weeks of intensive effort to get our D&D system up and running on Paul Matzke's Sol 20 micro-computer. A week before the con, I got a letter from Emerson Mitchell in which he speculated that we either had the program up already or we probably wouldn't make WisCon. He was right. We didn't make it.

Rex Nelson spent most of his waking hours that week sitting in front of the computer. Vicky Loebel, Carl Marrs, John Woodford, Greg Rihn, and Kim and Lucy Nash worked on encounter tables, stock characters, fixed and average monsters, gold dragons, and instant cavern complexes. Lynne Morse helped enter the weapons table and both she and Mary Kean contributed time and moral support. Throughout all this, Paul was unnaturally calm, even when I was leaping into the air and howling. He wrote several support routines for the cause and put up with numerous all night encampments at his apartment. He doesn't even play D&D!

For our pains we produced programs to generate monster-encounter tables from rough data, a routine that calculates the expected characteristics of all our monsters, a program to choose monsters at random from an encounter table and calculate their characteristics, the first draft of a program that updates character files and runs melees, and 99.99% of Rex's data-base driver. Much of this is useful now, especially the encounter-table editor and the average-monster routine. But just wait 'til next year!

Even though we didn't finish our computer support, the game itself went smoothly. The pocket universe in which the action occurred took on even

more definition for this game. The dungeon masters (myself, Carl Marrs, Vicky Loebel, Greg Rihn, and Mike Luznicky) discussed motivations and possible courses of action of many characters and factions that had existed only vaguely or not at all last year. Increasingly, there is a lot of action that goes on behind the scenes that the players are sometimes never aware of. Many of the stock baddies took on new dimensions during play and became complex personalities with backgrounds and motivations unique to themselves.

This game was, on one level, a workshop for DMs. We found out just how powerful certain high-level character classes were. We saw what spells were too powerful, or needed work. We also learned a lot about dungeon techniques that either slow a party down or allow it to pass quickly. Numerous deficiencies, advantages, and oddities of our combat system were made apparent during the melees. The whole Emersonian system, as well as our personal philosophies of DMing, underwent a lot of growth and change.

The real action, of course, was out there amidst the coats and Coke bottles—with the players. I took the time to watch them this year and try to find out what was in this for them. Obviously, motivation will vary, but there are some safe generalizations. Many people just dropped in to see what was happening, picked up a character and sat in on a piece of the game. This can be confusing for people who have never played before. Much of the action is unfamiliar to the players but not necessarily to the characters. The assistant DMs and experienced players were very helpful with drop-ins, but I fear it was these people who were least well-served by the structure of the game.

Another interesting group of players are those used to the standard game and other game philosophies. The Emersonian system is different; the combat structure makes melee strategy quite different in many respects from the simpler (and less time-consuming) combat system used elsewhere. This often results in either frustration, boredom, or bewilderment for those familiar with another way of doing things. This category of person would probably be helped by a written explanation of our combat and magic system and reasonable strategies associated therewith. What wonders the future may hold.

The most interesting category* consisted of the addicts who, for one reason or another, found themselves drawn into the game universe and surrendered some of their identity to their characters. Some of them are experienced players: Scott Brunkow was back this year with Fingal, the ol' elf; John Woodford, with Sarah Tolas; and Andy Hooper, with Tomar Tolas. A brand new player, Gene Masters, picked up the magic user, Erutha, and developed her into an interesting character and himself into a superb player. There were numerous other players whose names I don't remember, who played memorable characters. I remember Elmo and Mug and Jug and Abraham Orel-Nysa. I remember people slowly grasping the true abilities and powers of their characters.

This is where the game is at. People staying up all night, reluctantly hurrying off to other con events and then hurrying back. All of this not out of concern for "treasure" or simply trashing monsters, but because they wanted to see what happened and, as much as possible, influence the outcome. Herein lies the true fascination of the game: the DM and the players become co-authors of an elaborate fantasy/adventure novel the ultimate outcome of which is unknown. You can't look in the back of the book. ☹

*All right, so I'm prejudiced.

[Elizabeth A. Lynn has been writing for about eight years, the last four of them full-time, except for small-load teaching commitments (first aikido, and then feminist science fiction and fantasy). Her first story, ("We All Have To Go") was published in 1976, in that year's *Mystery Writers of America* anthology; it is a crime story set in the near future. She has had about a dozen short stories published, and has sold five novels, the first two of which are currently available from Berkley-Putnam Books.

In my opinion, Liz is one of the most talented new writers whose work is available today. It's impossible for me to be objective about her writing, however, since we discuss writing interminably every chance we get, and we tend to agree an astonishingly high percentage of the time. When I sat down with her and a tape recorder, I had nothing new to ask, no new ground that we hadn't covered. But she is very articulate, and can be informal even with the tape machine whirring in the background, so we spent yet another evening talking about writing, and this was the result. --Debbie Notkin]

DN: Why do you write fantasy and science fiction?

EAL: Because I enjoy making up worlds. The world that we live in now is all too familiar, and I really like going to other worlds—making up the details and changing them, and out of the changes I learn things.

DN: Do you believe that it is possible to write non-sexist, non-heterosexual fiction? Is that what you're trying to do?

EAL: Yes. And sometimes. Yes, I do believe it's possible. But I don't do it all the time—that is, I don't sit down and consciously plot a message, but I think I write from a non-sexist perspective. I don't sit down to write a tract or a piece of propaganda, but I can see where anything I write might be seen that way by people who are not comfortable with that way of thinking and who see it as lecturing them.

DN: There's a lot of pressure from feminists for more science fiction and fantasy with female protagonists, yet your first three novels all have male protagonists. Is there any reason for this?

EAL: Yes, I think so. Most of what we read is by men and most of what we read is about men, because in the patriarchy men are more important than women and the things that men do are by definition more important than the things women do. "Adventure story" means going out and conquering the wilderness or the galaxy. Women don't do these things in the patriarchal society from which all our writing comes. Women stay home and take care of the babies and knit, and that's not adventure. The thought that there might in fact be adventure in bringing up children is so antithetical that it's impossible even for women to think about it that way. So you start out with the patriarchal attitudes toward what women do and what men do, and the fact that most writing is done by men about what men do is your only model as a writer. If you're writing science fiction, your tendency is to start writing adventure, and adventures are things that men have. I think a woman writer has to work through that to her true voice.

DN: You have written one story dealing with a woman's culture ["Jubilee's Story" in *Millennial Women*, edited by Virginia Kidd, Delacort. Books, 1977]. Is there more that you want to do along those lines?

EAL: No, it's not something that I see myself doing. But then, who can say? I change. I may all of a sudden go, "Oh, wow! Here's this wonderful world that just popped into my head and I'm going to write about it and strangely enough there are only women in it." But I guess that it's just not some-



thing that interests me all that much. I like writing about women and I like writing about things that women do. There are children all over *The Dancers of Arun* [forthcoming from Berkley-Putnam, May 1979]. I was looking at that and thinking, "That's not usual for an adventure story. Most adventure stories don't have any kids in them." I think that has something to do with the fact that women in this culture are taught to see children. Even I, who have no kids now—children seem to me to be an important part of the community. They showed up all over *Dancers* and they showed up in *Watchtower* [Berkley-Putnam, January 1979] and they will show up in *The Northern Girl* [forthcoming from Berkley-Putnam, October 1979].

ELIZABETH A. LYNN INTERVIEWED

BY DEBBIE NOTKIN

DN: Would you say a little bit about the structure of that trilogy [*Chronicles of Tormor*, consisting of the three above-mentioned novels]?

EAL: Well, it's not your standard trilogy where you have one story broken up into three parts. It's three stories, with a common history and a common culture and a related theme, but you can't read the first story and expect a sequel in the second book, and there's a hundred years between the first and second book, and there's another hundred years between the second book and the third book, and things change accordingly in the country in which they take place.

I first wrote *Dancers*, the story about the characters in that book, in 1971. I didn't see any market for it. No one was going to buy it because it was a love story between two brothers, and if they could stand homosexuality they certainly weren't going to be able to hack the incest, or vice versa. I could understand that, in 1971. So I put it away. When I pulled it out again I looked at it and went, "Wait a minute. There's a story that happens before this." And that turned out to be *Watchtower*.

Watchtower has a funny history. There's a song called "All Along the Watchtower" by Bob Dylan, and ever since I first heard it, it seemed to me that Dylan was telling an adventure story in that song that never quite got told. *Watchtower* is that story in my mind. The final lines of "All Along the Watchtower" are: "Two riders are approaching/ The wind began to howl." There is a scene in *Watchtower* that is very specifically and very deliberately that. The jester and the thief talking on the balcony became Ryke and Errel talking. Errel, of course, is the jester. The thief turned into Col and the conversation is not exactly the same, because of course it turned into my story. I wanted to show an order changing, and the way I wanted to do it was to show it from the point of view of the old guard, who could see it but not necessarily understand it and who could accept it with his own values, even at the same time as he could see that those values were being threatened with destruction by what was changing.

As soon as *Watchtower* had been written, it became very clear that there was a story that came after *Dancers*. And that became *The Northern Girl*. But *Dancers* was first. While *The Northern Girl* is the culmination of the trilogy, and *Watchtower* is its foundation, the story in *Dancers* is really its center; it's the center around which the other two dance. *Dancers* was always very clear to me and the

relationship in it was always very clear to me, and very lovely. The book wouldn't go out of my head, even when I put it away, so that eight years later it will be published, in not very, very different form than when I first wrote it. It surprises me when I look at the finished product and see that basically it didn't change. It got better; it got stronger and fuller and more realized and richer and more textured, but the basic feeling of it is the same.

One of the things that I very consciously did not put into *Chronicles*, at least into the first two books, was a religion. The idea of making up a religion, either a god or a goddess or any other kind of worshipping religion, didn't really interest me. It has always seemed to me that religions create certain kinds of class boundaries and certain kinds of struggles that I didn't really want to write about. In *Chronicles*, oddly enough, what begins in *Watchtower* as a cultural change without reference to religion (though there is reference to spirituality) begins, in *Dancers*, to gather to itself certain trappings of a religion which have not yet been recognized as such by the people who create the trappings. But in *The Northern Girl* those things turn into a more codified way of thinking and become a religion. I was surprised by this, because I had not envisioned it when I was first working on the trilogy.

DN: In what order does a book tend to come to you? Do you start with plot, or characters, or setting, or theme?

EAL: Characters. Almost always characters. Once I thought I was getting plot first, and I was really excited about it until I realized that I already had the characters, but they simply hadn't liked the plot I was writing about them, so they drew me a new one. I get the characters first, they sort of mumble around in my head and pick at the bits of glass and paper in there and go, "Well, I guess we're doing this and this is how we stack up and this is a relationship we're in." I tend to write about relationships of characters, and the setting forms around them. The theme comes, again, out of the characters, and out of my head and I don't know where else—what I'm interested in, the way my own life seems to be heading, the way the world goes.

DN: So the characters have lives and decision-making power of their own?

EAL: Oh, yes. They fight back all the time. The best example of this is the ending of *A Different Light* [Berkley Books, 1977]. All my writerly instincts and habits said, "You can't kill off your protagonist, your point-of-view character. Who tells the story? Right?" Because it was clear to me that Jimson's death could not in fact be the end of that book—something had to come of it. I've had people bitch at me about that and say it should have been the end—he should have reconciled himself with Russell in person and then should have died happily ever after, I suppose. No! I tried to write that. I tried and I tried, and I tried, and my friends went quietly nuts around me while I wrote that chapter ten times. It would not happen; it would not go. It was very clear to me that I couldn't pull a rabbit out of a hat and have him survive; that would be totally impossible to the book. And I sat around and bit my nails and said, What the fuck do you people want out of me? and the characters just sort of mumbled. And, finally, it became evident to me that Jimson both died and survived. And that's the ending of that book. That's the only way the characters wanted it to end.

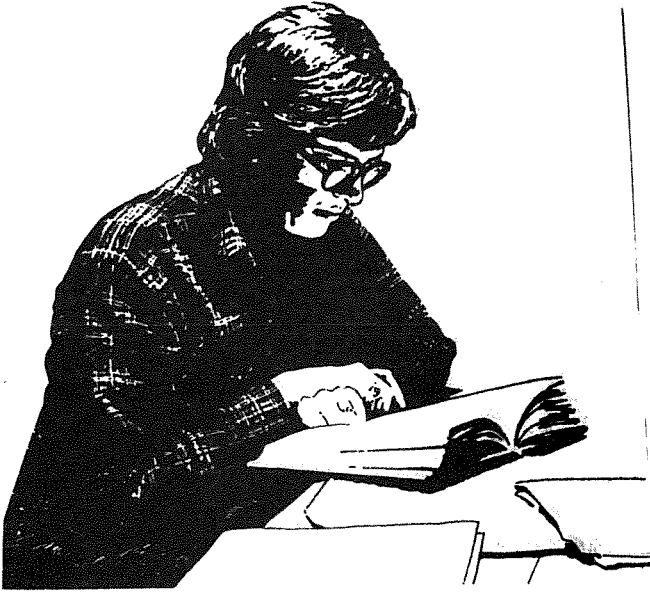
DN: So you have a working relationship with your characters?

EAL: Yes. Sometimes they win, and sometimes I win. Always I win, of course, because the books are

Continued on p25

JANICE BOGSTAD INTERVIEWS

Suzy McKee Charnas



JB: *Walk to the End of the World* is your first published novel, right?

SMcKC: Yes.

JB: I read it first some years ago. How long have you been writing?

SMcKC: I've been writing since I was a little kid, for a long, long time. But in fact that book was begun, I guess, about 1968, 1969, and it took a long time to do because it was done all wrong at first. It had to be done over.

JB: I see. And when was it published?

SMcKC: It was published in 1974.

JB: And didn't you just publish the sequel to it this year?

SMcKC: Yes, the new book came out this summer, that is, the summer of 1978. That was *Motherlines* and that was about three years in the writing too. I'm slow.

JB: And this was in hardback this time, wasn't it? From a different company?

SMcKC: It was a very nicely put-out hardback from Berkley-Putnam.

JB: I recall that I found the cover very attractive. Did you have any input into the design of the cover?

SMcKC: Well, not really. I had, in that, when I talked to my editors, I had expressed some reservations. I was a little worried because I'd seen what had been done to other people's books and had some experience of my own of covers that I felt were not really appropriate for the material inside. And by the time I was sent a proof of this cover it was already pretty much set, except there was a change in the lettering. I was pleased with it, though. They did a good job.

JB: Yes, I do know that authors have that problem not having too much input, but I like the cover, too, so maybe it came out well for all con-

...AND

John Varley

JB: I wanted to start by asking you how you actually get down to writing a story.

JV: Each story is a little different, but I would say that my general way of working is to begin with a picture that just comes without any kind of searching for it...some kind of picture that comes into my head of some odd thing happening, and I begin to think about it for several nights in a row and begin to put together a story around it that would make this rather odd picture become believable. Often, at the time I start writing, I know how it's going to begin and how it's going to end, with really very little difference between the two, and of course the ending is not always what I thought it was going to be.

JB: Do you prefer writing short stories to writing novels?

JV: Emotionally and for my own satisfaction, I prefer the short stories. In some ways they take the same kinds and almost the same quantities of thought and preparation as a novel does and yet, when you finish them, they haven't taken so long to write. You feel nice about it when it's done. It's something that's right there, and you can really grasp it fairly easily, and that's a lot of fun. When I finish a novel, my immediate reaction is, "Thank God, that's over with; it was such a huge

project." But I have to say I prefer writing novels... because it's the only way you can make a living in this business unless you've been in the business for 20 or 25 years and have so many royalties and reprint books that you have a steady base income. Then you can go back to fooling around with short stories. I'd like to. I like to find more time to do it. People keep coming up and asking me to write more short things.... With *Omni*, Ben Bova came up and said to write something, and just at the convention I must have had a dozen people say something like that. I can't give them all stories. There's no way it's gonna work. *Omni* is paying quite good money but still nothing like in the range of what you can get for a novel. And of course an *Omni* sale is once; you may try to sell it again but you're not going to get that kind of money again. In a book, theoretically, if it sells well you have a stake in it, and you get royalties. I hate to, but you always have to look at the money side of everything.

JB: Sure, especially if you have to support yourself.

JV: And that's what I've been doing, with varying degrees of success. I do fairly well for awhile and real poorly for awhile, but novels are what you have to do.

JB: Then short-story collections aren't very lucrative either?

JV: No. You get a fraction of the money for a short-story collection that you do for a novel. Story collections used to be very popular, but they don't seem to sell so well now. I don't really have any figures on the one of mine that's just come out. It's been reviewed very well, and I hear that it's selling all right, but even a short-story collection that sells very well—for a short-story collection—is really not doing that well; it's just not approaching the novels in sales.

cerned. Do you also write short stories?

SMcKC: I didn't used to, and I didn't think I could, but not too long ago—I guess a couple years ago—I was asked by George Martin if I could contribute something to his *New Voices* series. You know, he's doing those collections by people who have been nominated for the John W. Campbell Award for best new writer.... At first I said, "No, I don't do that kind of thing." But then something came up, and a story kind of boiled out of it. It wasn't very short. I don't like very short stories. My stories run anywhere upwards of 12,000 to about 25,000 words. And now I'm writing this series of more or less short stories about a vampire.

JB: Oh, really? That sort of thing seems to be interesting science-fiction writers lately.... Chelsea Quinn Yarbro wrote something about a vampire recently. I guess I don't know too much about it, since I haven't read it yet.

SMcKC: Yes, it's called *Hotel Transylvania*, and it's a kind of a historical.

JB: I see. Don't you also write essays about SF? It seems to me I read something like that in a magazine.

SMcKC: You probably read some letters that I wrote as part of a thing that Jeff Smith in Baltimore did in *Khatru* [the symposium on women, *Khatru* 3 and 4, 1973]. I think that's his regular fan magazine. And he put together a double issue on sexism and women in science fiction. And a whole bunch of us were invited to contribute to that. Somebody suggested my name, so I put in some letters. I wouldn't say they were essays exactly; I'd hate to get trapped into anything as dry as that....

JB: Maybe it was that interview in *Algol* that I am thinking of?

SMcKC: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that actually was written material. My interview was done as a

series of questions submitted on paper, and then I wrote answers to them back. I like that very much because it gives you a chance to think and go back and make it all come out right.

JB: It seems that you prefer writing books, that is novels, to writing short stories.

SMcKC: Well, I did until...the vampire stories, which I'm really enjoying doing very much. I think mostly it's because it's for the same reason that I don't write really short short things. My major interest in fiction is character, people, not situations, and when I either read or try to write short material I find that it's very boring, because as soon as you get interested in the people they disappear. The situation is over. And the story stops.

JB: Yeah, I see that. Why do you write science fiction? Because it gives you more chance to be creative with your characters or something like that?

SMcKC: I started doing it because I had these characters I wanted to write about and I could not find a realistic setting that would let me open them up as much as I wanted to and let them exercise their capacities. Well, it finally dawned on me that the thing to do was to go invent one...that would be tailor-made to what I wanted to be able to show—what I wanted to be able to do with them. And I think now I'm kind of spoiled; I really like the freedom of invention and I like the exercise of, I guess you have to call it, logic. That is, there's the setting up of a premise, and the working out of that premise in the story. And that premise is usually about background, the conditions of life of the people in the story. And I find that that gives a certain "spice" to the situation. Even vampire stories now, they're very realistic, I think. And their background is present-day, but the thing that makes it pleasurable to me to write about present-day ordinary

JB: It seems that what people mostly read for a long while were short stories. I remember I did read novels, but I got my introduction to science fiction through big short-story collections like those of H. G. Wells.

JV: Science fiction seems to be the only place where that kind of stuff survives with any strength at all. But, even then, the majority of people would rather read a novel. I'm not that way. I'm about evenly divided. I like to read a good novel, but there are so many good short things available in science fiction that I like to read them too.

JB: It always surprised me that there were only two major regular magazines, and one of them isn't that regular anymore. You know it's easy to read a magazine story on the bus or something like that.

JV: Well, I guess we should be happy that people are still reading at all. I keep expecting that any year now they're going to say that we don't need to teach reading in school any more because who needs it? Of course they're doing it *de facto* already.

JB: Well, to change the subject a little, do you have any hopes that your writing changes people's minds, or do you write with that end in mind?

JV: I don't know about changing people's minds, really. I'm not aware of ever having written something whose purpose was to say, "You believe this and you're wrong. Here is the way things really are." So, not in that sense, but you want to move people, you want to affect them. And if changing people's minds is showing them another way something might be and something that might be better without actually shouting at them or preaching at them, and getting them to see it in the context of a story which is entertaining at the same time, I guess I definitely like to do that. But I don't have a hard and fast political philosophy that I could really expound on and wouldn't want to anyway if I did.... I myself

am exploring, and in most of the stories that I write I'm trying out different ways at looking at things. When it's successful, the people that read it see the kinds of things that I was trying out, and so in that sense they try these new ideas out too. And it's either valid or not for them, depending upon what they bring to it and what kind of things they like, I guess.

JB: Is that why you write science fiction, rather than try to write other kinds of mainstream

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things is that there's this injection of the very unordinary and the premise that there is the vampire who is a kind of beast of prey and how does that work out in terms of the world.

JB: Do you also work with it in terms of what it does to an individual?

SMcKC: Oh sure: the people and the situation both.

JB: It sounds very interesting.

SMcKC: And the whole setting is involved. That's one of the reasons I like to do a whole book, because it gives me enough scope to work out some of the finer points.

JB: Well, since you concentrate on characterization, I guess it's interesting to me that you have so many female characters developed in both of the books, but especially in *Motherlines*. Did you focus for a particular reason on female characters?

SMcKC: Well, I didn't intend to so much. That was kind of by accident. What happened was that I started with the idea that, as a kind of counterpoint of the first book—which was about a very male-dominant society—I would like to write a book about an Amazon society. I didn't intend that it be all women when I started out. Only, as I was writing, I discovered that there wasn't any place in that story for men. And I tried to put them in but they wouldn't fit! So I just had to give up on that and go ahead, and it was a little scary—to develop all female characters for that story—and I thought, "This isn't going to work.... Nobody will read a book that's all about women. The characters won't be interesting." I didn't have any confidence in it. But I think those problems were solved.

JB: Yes, I do think the book is quite popular. I know I keep passing it around to friends and they keep being very pleased.

SMcKC: I hope so!

JB: A lot of people whom I've discussed the book with point out that perhaps you were exploring different futures that are outlined in the feminist movement presently with your different societies of women that interact. Did you have that in mind?

SMcKC: I don't think I really worked it out in those terms. I really was looking backward rather than forward. I don't see that book, *Motherlines*, as a "blueprint for the future" and I don't see it as a realistic development for the future, although I wouldn't mind. It just doesn't seem to me to be very likely. No, it was much more an exploration of a premise again...just suppose that there is this kind of society. What kind of life would they live, and what kind of people would they be? But I don't think of science fiction as predictive, anyway. I think of it as very much present-oriented, and very much present-related. It's not really about the future. We don't know anything about the future. It's about what's in our heads right now. About our own situation.

JB: Well, I think some of the parallels that some people have been drawing have been between certain feminist-separatist movements, that they would associate with the horse women of the plains in your book, and certain other movements that say that we should try to have marginal contact with men. That's the sort of thing that they were talking about. Well, maybe I can just go on to ask you if you see yourself in any way in the context of the feminist movement.

SMcKC: Oh, sure. I have to go back and say that actually one of the things that was most important in the development of *Motherlines* as a book that was entirely about women was the fact that at the time I had been very active with a health-consciousness-raising group...in Albuquerque. And they had kind of brought out the female character, Alldera, in *Walk to the End of the World*. I guess that had kind of grown along with my work with that group, so that when I finished that book I was all

ready to start a book all about women. Certainly the feminist movement has sparked a lot of my thinking and helped a lot of my thinking and given me some of the directions I've been going in. But again, I kind of draw the line between theoretical work—like some of the really good theoretical texts that people have written recently—and fiction. I don't like to confuse them. Because then the fiction gets unfree. You begin, like propaganda, you begin to think, "Well, it has to work out this way." And I don't ever want to be in that kind of a trap. So, whatever the book comes out to be is organic to the book. It's not the sort of thing where I sat down and said, "Now I'm going to illustrate certain kinds of thinking and the direction of separatism for women."

JB: Well, but, just going along with that, would you agree that writing (fiction, that is) does change people's minds about things, just in changing their self-images?

SMcKC: Well, I sure would like to think so. I'm not sure I really agree. I think that good, honest, exploratory fiction can help people to move their own thinking in certain directions if they've already started that way. I think it's very seldom that a book will come along and change the mind of somebody...into a different set of values, but I do think that this kind of fiction can, first of all, reinforce people's thinking if it's going in the same direction as the fiction and...kind of flesh it out, make it alive, make it fun, not just dry didacticism. And I think it's useful, but I'm a little skeptical about people who think that fiction is really a major tool of changing people's minds.

JB: Well, maybe I can just tell you a little about an experience I had while reading your book, because it was a matter of the book giving me a chance to look at something through eyes that I had not used before. You know, I was sitting reading the book and I got on the bus and watched the interactions between a young woman and some young men.

The young woman was all very drawn in and defensive because she had to be, and it was such a shock after reading the book. I'd been sitting in the sunlight reading *Motherlines*, where the women act totally differently and there's no teasing and such about one's appearance and that sort of thing. And I guess the question I was trying to get to was, "Do you see your work in that context?" In the context of allowing people to create or to see the world in a different way juxtaposed with the one you create.

SMcKC: Oh, sure. I think that it helps to illuminate and throw light back on the way we really do live. There's no question about that. If you're already seeing that. Again, I don't think it's too common to actually bring enlightenment to somebody who hasn't really seen it in their own lives. But, yeah, once you've begun to see a little bit around you, if somebody gives you a vision of something totally opposite to conditions you're living in or really very different from them, then I think it's very helpful in lighting up the differences and making appear what you'd like for yourself, if you could make your own life.

JB: Your characters, at the same time as they're in a world that is very different from our own, don't seem all that different from people that I know.

SMcKC: Hmmm. Well, that's good. Gee. Say that again: that's great!

JB: Well, I think that it might help in creating a certain amount of rapport between your reader and the characters that these women seem like something we could become. But maybe you don't agree with that.

SMcKC: No, my thought was, "What really might we be if our conditions were so changed? What might women be like if they lived in that kind of freedom and didn't have to deal with a whole lot of constraints that we all live with presently." And I am surprised when I come across people who say they know people

who were like that, because it seems to me it would be awfully difficult to be that sort of person in our present-day life. But then, when I wrote *Walk*, people said, "This is just like my life right now." And I was surprised then, too, because I had forgotten that for a lot of people living in the real world now as a woman is very much like slavery. It really stunned me, because you know I'm a middle-class woman. I live a lot more freely than a lot of other women do.

JB: Yes, much more different than, say, the characters that Marge Piercy described in *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

SMCKC: You bet.

JB: Well, moving on to something a little bit different, but that is still connected to the feminist movement, it seems to me that a lot more women science-fiction writers are being published lately. Do you think that's because of the feminist movement making us aware of women writers, or the writers themselves, women themselves, being aware now that they can write science fiction and see it, or a combination of the two?

SMCKC: I think all of those things are important, and I also think it doesn't hurt a bit that women who are writing science fiction have a tendency to get in touch with each other. There's a lot of support from one to another. You don't just kind of strike out on your own and then there you are swimming out in the ocean all by yourself. I think there's a lot of support and I think that's due to the creation of the feminist movement. You write and you find out that you have colleagues who are at least in sympathy with what you're writing. You don't just draw a lot of flak from people who think you're propagandizing and you're being a radical and all that stuff. And certainly there's been a blossoming of this sort of thing. I hope that it continues and it's not going to get snuffed out by the next decade. It seems to be very retrograde in all kinds of directions already. But so far... people are willing to publish, and that's due to pressure of a certain kind, and... people are willing to read books that may have only women characters or be about women's subjects, so called. This has called out this potential in science fiction, as it has in regular fiction, where it existed before maybe, but it just was never exercised.

JB: Well, in that context, how do you see a relationship to science-fiction fans?

SMCKC: It's funny, because, you know, when I was reading science fiction as a kid I didn't know there were such things. I was never a fan myself, and now that I write I have come across this big world of, what, 3-4,000 people who tend to show up at conventions, and I know that there are more who never get there! First of all it's a pleasure to have a kind of ready-made audience, although of course a lot of those people don't read my stuff and don't want to read my stuff and never will, and if they do they hate it! But a lot of them do find it pleasurable, and that's delightful to have that kind of built-in response there, because there's this close tie between the fans and the writers which I don't think exists in any other genre of fiction. If you write something you get something back! They talk to you and write you letters and yell at you! And, secondly, I think that there are a lot of people in fandom who grew up on very reactionary, sexist material in science fiction and who are ready to be thinking in different ways, and science fiction can help them to expand their thinking a little in non-sexist areas, and I like to think that maybe I'm having some effects on some of those people, especially since so many fans are young. It's really important to reach people who are still youthful and are still changing their minds pretty flexibly. (At least you hope they are!)

JB: Well, I know that I had a similar experience to yours in that I wasn't a fan until I was in my 20s. I think that that's the case for a lot of the

women who are in fandom right now, that it was also a male-dominated field and that might be why we're seeing some of the interest in women's writing in science-fiction fandom that we weren't before. Because there are more women in it.

SMCKC: There are more women fans as well as more women writers, yes.

JB: Have you been going to conventions very long?

SMCKC: Not so long. I went to Kansas City in '76. That was my first convention; I'd never been to one before. And it was huge, and it was a lot of fun. I think I kind of got bitten by the bug. I don't know how long I will be, but I went to Phoenix, and I'd like to go to Brighton, and I'd love to go to Boston. I really enjoy the kind of... Well, there are a lot of awfully bright people in fandom, and it's a lot of fun. I took my step-daughter to the one in Phoenix, and at first she was very shy and hung around me and sort of looked at things. And then she started talking to some people, and she met me for lunch and she said, "My god, these people are smart!", and she really started to enjoy herself and go around to some of the parties and so on.

JB: Do you have any special ideas about what you'd like to do at WisCon? Do you have any ideal in your mind of what you want it to be like?

SMCKC: I'd like to have a good time. I'd like to not catch the flu. I'd like to not be frozen to death. And I'd like to get enough sleep.

JB: Oh, well, that last one might be difficult.

SMCKC: And I'd like to talk a lot. I'd like to talk to people and see what they've got to say. And I'd like to do some readings, I mean to say reading out loud. I've got some stuff I'd like to read. What else? See some friends. I know a lot of people are coming down from Canada and some people coming from the West Coast. And I know some of those folks from one of the WesterCons that I went to that was a lot of fun. That was up in Vancouver. It was terrific. And of course I'd like to hear from people who've read *Motherlines* and hear what they think and get some feedback. One of the peculiar things about this book is that, although it came out in July of 1978, outside of fandom—and even inside of fandom to a degree—there's been almost a complete silence in reaction to it. It's been really quiet out there. I think I got my second letter from a reader last week. And I'm really surprised because I got a rather warm, voluminous response on *Walk*, more than I did on this book. It's got me wondering what the silence is due to.

JB: Maybe people are just so floored by it, being fascinated by it.

SMCKC: You think that they're just flabbergasted!

JB: Well, let's see, I did have to ask you a couple of things, not related to the interview. Is there anything else you'd like to say to people in Wisconsin?

SMCKC: Well, people of Wisconsin, I'm looking forward to coming out. I hear Madison is a lovely town.

JB: Yeah, there's a lot of things to do; it's kind of colder, though.

SMCKC: Well, I'm looking forward to seeing it and seeing some of my friends there, you folks and others. It's really kind of a surprise to me that parts of the country like Madison, which I tend to think of as being out in the god-knows-where (since I'm a New Yorker originally), have so much activity going on and can really mount something like this, apparently with a fair amount of confidence and ease. Which WisCon is this?

JB: This is the third.

SMCKC: It's still young, but it looks like you've really got things rolling, and I'm very impressed!

JB: Oh, good! That sort of response makes all of the work worthwhile. ☺

Varley

literature? Because you can try out ideas? Or is it just that it's the first thing that you started writing?

JV: A little of both, I guess. It is the most flexible medium for being able to write absolutely anything. Like Delany was saying yesterday, he could see other fiction as sort of a subset of science fiction because, just on the sheer numbers level, there are more combinations of words that you can put together in science fiction that make sense. Whereas they would be nonsense sentences if you were trying to put them into a mainstream novel. That's a very pragmatic way of looking at it. I can see what he's talking about. The universe of science fiction encompasses not only the real world but everything else, too, and the real world is all that mainstream fiction can deal with—the absolutely observed real world. You can argue that, as mainstream begins to depart from it, even in psychological fantasies or satires, it begins to get into the realm of fantasy, which science fiction might more properly claim.

JB: One of the reactions I've heard from people who don't read a lot of science fiction is that, as you say, the things that we consider to be sense if we read a lot of it and know something of science fiction, come out as nonsense to them. Do you read a lot of science fiction? Did you start out reading it?

JV: Yes, I did start out reading it. I read less now than at any other point in my life, I guess, except for a time just before I started writing again when I read none at all.

JB: I get the sense that in contemporary science-fiction writing one writer builds on what another writer has done already.

JV: Yes, that's true in a lot of ways. I do a lot of that myself, and I know that my novels and stories are not likely to be very accessible for somebody that has absolutely no background in science fiction.

JB: Someone who gets put off by something like faster-than-light travel, or black holes, or...

JV: That probably wouldn't bother the reader so much as when you try to bring in social changes. They can accept as a given that a black hole does this, or that a ship can go faster than light. They may not want to follow all the mathematical reasoning you put into your faster-than-light drive. If you make some kind of fancy-sounding line, say how a ship could actually do that, they are more likely to accept that, but I think the kind of social extrapolating that I do is so foreign to what you see as almost natural laws of the universe, the way your society operates, that it may be harder for you to accept that than that something would go faster than light, which, after all, is just an abstraction to most people. You can see that light goes at a particular speed, and you can't feel that nothing can go faster. You just have to take Einstein's word for it, and most people don't know Einstein from anything.

JB: Do you consider part of your extrapolation to be on the influence of technology on society?

JV: Right! That's always been the most fascinating part to me. Like, if this could be done what would it do to the people who had this device, or this new process, or this new biological possibility?...Not just the nuts-and-bolts terms, but would it change their thinking, the way they relate to the people around them? And, if that happens, what social institutions would evolve to take care of that? It's very complex, and you can't do it with any assurance at all of getting it right, but you try to speculate and say this is what might work,

or this is what might come about in this situation.

JB: So you're not being precisely cautionary or predictive when you write?

JV: No, I would never say that I was predictive. I wouldn't bet a penny on any prediction I've ever made in science fiction. There are just sorts of things that I take as possibilities. I say, "Take this thing, and this is the way it might come about," but there is no reason why somebody couldn't make very good arguments that it would come about exactly the other way. I've never seen science fiction as prediction. The things that science fiction has predicted are just items of hardware, things that could be seen in the future by someone who was sufficiently involved with the technical culture—which most people never hear about, so they think these predictions are miracles. The atom bomb was no real trick. I mean, I'm not putting it down: when the guy predicted it in *Analog*, way back, it was astounding. But the information was there; people were working on it.

JB: Or things like waldoes?

JV: Yeah, that's a nice device, but SF is not like crystal-ball gazing or anything like that.

JB: Do you ever think of your writing in terms of cautioning people that, if they don't watch out, such-n-such might happen and that wouldn't be a good way for the human race to go?

JV: I haven't done much of that, no. I'd rather just present something, say: "Here it is. You can like this or you can not like it, but I want you to see that the people who live in it probably think it's just as perfectly normal as can be"... One of the central themes of the series of stories that I've done is something which I postulated that might exist quite a ways in the future, which is that at some point it will become cheap and easy to have a sex change anytime you want one and that it will be a natural and complete sex change, so that a man who changes into a woman is able to bear children. It's functional, it's not just a surface rearranging of skin and genitals, and things like that. Don't ask me if I think that's possible, because I really doubt it, but it might happen. But that's really beside the point, because what I try to explore in those stories is what this would do to the people to whom it was available. First of all, would they use it frequently? Would people cling to the sex they were born in, or would even children begin to get sex changes if their parents approved? Raise a boy one week and a girl the next and you wouldn't get the kind of cultural imprinting that we have now, so that you really don't know what the difference is between men and women, because so much of it is the way you're raised. If you raised a boy as you would a girl, the boy would probably be quite different, but you don't know exactly how. It's so hard to do the research. I got kind of off the track on that. The stories just try to explore my own ideas of what that kind of thing might do to society, and there's a lot of possibilities. I've selected a few and built them into a series of stories.

JB: In this series does each of these stories explore a different possibility?

JV: Well, to some extent, yeah. Some of the stories, I guess, try to explore social things in a more outfront way than others. Some are more concerned with just telling a good story and a good adventure. But the background is all there. What you try to do is to drop these ideas in painlessly, or almost as invisibly as possible. You have these characters moving through their world just as competently and as unamazedly as we do through ours. Nothing about the world outside here really amazes us. We see new things come along every once in a while, but they're quickly assimilated. Before long any new development becomes as common as the kitchen sink.

JB: Some developments seem to have profound

ramifications.

JV: They do, but they diffuse through the culture gradually. And there may be opposition. It may take a long time for something to really become accepted, but eventually, except for the transition time, it rearranges the culture to fit itself. It makes a new culture if something is sufficiently different. Television is the best example, for something that has totally rearranged society. The automobile is probably an even better one, because our entire cities are built for automobiles. People are definitely secondary.... I read somewhere that virtually every living room in America is arranged for the viewing of a television set. You know people tend not to arrange rooms for conversation anymore. The prime consideration in placing a chair is can the TV be seen from it when someone is sitting in it. If it can't, it means you're going to be moving it around a lot, because the TV is on and nobody is going to be using that chair. That's a very minor little thing there, but that's the kind of thing you want to consider when you're trying to see what an invention is going to do to a culture. And the more profound thing is that if people are sitting in the chairs all the time watching the television set, what happens to the conversation and what happens to people's minds and their desire to read, for instance?

JB: You can't interact without a television on.

JV: Yes, you sit there and stare at it.

JB: Another thing I'd like to ask you about is how you feel about being involved in a kind of writing that gives you contact with fans?

Except for the super-best-seller writers, I don't think writers get very much mail. Ones that I talk to don't.

JB: They don't?

JV: No, not very much mail from readers.

JB: Gee, that's amazing. I always would write letters to writers and never send them because I thought they'd never notice.

JV: That's what most people do. They write them and they don't send them. You get a letter here and there, but nothing like the flood that a lot of people seem to think that writers get. Of course Harlan Ellison gets a lot. These are the superstars of the field, and there are any number of best sellers in the mainstream field that I'm sure get an awful lot of mail. But talk about millions of books there, and you've added up a lot more readers that actually do get that letter in the mailbox.... I always answer my mail, and the people seem invariably surprised that I took the time to answer, as though I'm snowed under by mail or something, but I'm not.

JB: So you enjoy that sort of input?

JV: Yeah, I do. That's why I come to the conventions. There are business reasons I come to the conventions, also, but I know a lot of authors—or some authors—who really seem very contemptuous of conventions and come only to talk to editors.

JB: How do you feel about coming to Madison as a guest of honor?

JV: It feels real good. I've been a guest of honor once before, and I know it's a little frantic, but it can be fun, too. ☺

LYNN INTERVIEW continued

better when I listen to them. But I have to be able to be ruthless too. I mean, there are times when they would have me writing everything in sight. And I have to be prepared to cut.

DN: The universe in which *A Different Light* takes place is also the setting for one of your short stories, and it's a very open-ended setting. Have you done any more writing in that universe?

EAL: "Mindseye" [in *Chrysalis*, edited by Roy Torgerson, Zebra Books, 1976] was quite an early story—I didn't quite like it and I couldn't figure out what was wrong with it. First of all, it was originally written with a male protagonist. It took me a little while to realize that was one thing that was wrong with it. I had to go back and change some of the perceptions in the story. By this time, I had started *A Different Light* and I realized that they happened in the same universe, that Phillipa's story was really important to that universe. But I didn't know quite how until I got about two-thirds of the way through *A Different Light* and then I went, "Oh! Right! Of course! This is how it ties in." And then, of course, Goryn uses it as an example in *A Different Light* to say to Jimson, "This is why we want to tear your mind into little bits and pieces and parcel it out to people."

There is a book, *The Sardonyx Net* [forthcoming from Berkley-Putnam, January 1980], which happens about six years before *A Different Light*, in that universe, the universe of the Living Worlds and the Hype, but on another planet and to another set of people. I would think that writing a series about one set of characters would be very hard, and I haven't tried to do it yet.

DN: How does your own experience doing aikido turn up in your books? [Liz had attained the rank of first *kyu*, one rank below black belt, when she had to stop doing aikido for health reasons. She hopes to return to the practice of the art soon.]

EAL: All over. In *Chronicles*, I decided to invent something, with which I am pleased, out of Japanese culture. My aikido instructor used to yell at us, "Aikido is not dancing. Don't do it as if you were dancing!" Something out of that struck my head and I thought, "What if there were a martial art that was also dancing? What if you had a group of people who were not only superb dancers, entertainers, but were also extraordinary martial artists?" And out of that came the *cheari*, as they exist most specifically in *The Dancers of Arun*. I like to think that my fight scenes in *Watchtower* and *Dancers* are realistic. There is a dedication at the beginning of *Watchtower* to my instructors. And I meant that.

As is probably evident in *Chronicles*, I am somewhat of a pacifist when it comes to institutions. I think war is vicious, and degrading, and basically inhumane and silly as a human behavior pattern, something we should have left to the chimps, or the baboons, or whoever it is who are constantly being pointed to as where it came from. The fact that baboons do it does not seem to me to be a justification for human behavior. On the other hand, personal combat has always seemed to me to be important and in some way attractive. I mean, what do you do when somebody wants to rape you? And I can write about that with a lot more sympathy than I can write about the movement of the armies.

DN: For *Watchtower*, you designed a deck of tarot cards. Do you read tarot yourself?

EAL: I did once. I stopped reading tarot when I started getting answers I didn't want. I don't really have any kind of a set theory about the occult or the psychic. I don't understand it. I don't consider myself to be psychic, but I can certainly write about it. I can write about anything. I could write about mountain climbing without ever having climbed a mountain. I can write about what it feels like to do surgery, without ever having been a surgeon. That's why I write science fiction, because I'd like to do all this stuff. I really want to go to Aldebaran, or wherever. I really want to be a spaceship captain. It's all wish fulfillment. ☺

WOMANDREAM (FOR JAN AND JEANNE)

It is that dream again,
 perfect and warm, showing me
 where I could be:
 Your voice calling
 from strange suns,
 faint,
 each decible
 separated-
 lonely,
 but followed by another, tasting
 of different lightwaves,
 an odd speed of heat
 like the air from a far far mountain.

I sigh back,
 breathing out star calls,
 pushing molecules huge distances,
 scented
 with lavender.

No one hears.
 Particles shoot by
 and I count them.

Terry Gary



FOR VONDA

I push through the grasses
 like a snake,
 a slim green snake
 who only knows
 what she tastes is you,
 sleeping
 no colour at all under the stars.

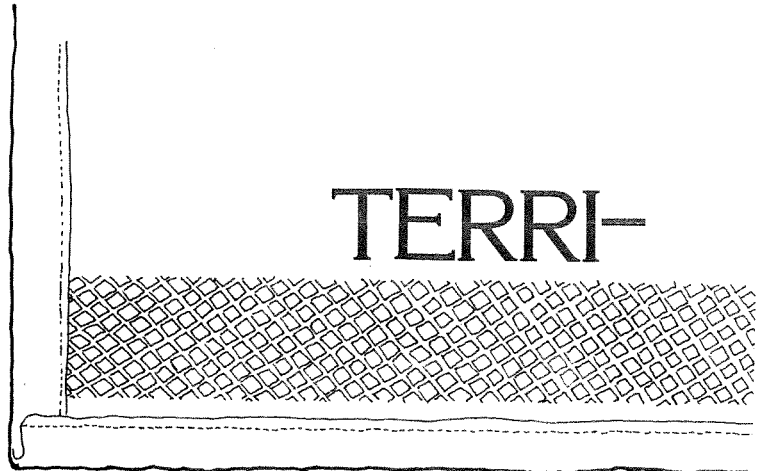
I retouch you with my tongue,
 a paintbrush
 of pointed sable,
 wet,
 giving you lines, tints,
 a form surrounded
 by my shadowy coils.

I glide away
 and you don't know about my
 explorations,
 the soft hissings
 in the hills between the lights...
 slithering hues you have never known.

So, we're both mortal this year,
 quick to learn,
 scared the world will roll without us.
 Each new minute is a story
 disappearing round the corner,
 blown into a book...

You'll help me through the dust and spiders,
 I'll stop the earthquakes
 and we'll leapfrog
 the chapters till dawn
 scarcely stopping to
 punctuate.

Terry Gary



THIS IS JUST A SMALL ONE

Red and gold, tiny jeweled frogs
 are sunning themselves on stones
 above the rushing water,
 unafraid of my fingers.

Under the ferns, impressed in the mud,
 I have become slick and brown
 a new edition
 of an old diversion.

Terry Gary

CANYON DE CHELLY

Like a deep red womb
 sufficient
 with her own children
 of rainbow and sunset,
 she sings one song, a goat bell
 which quavers on the rim-
 falls to the canyon floor
 like raven's feather

Her slow round dance is the river,
 wearing the sandstone, bending
 and bending again
 to give her water to cottonwoods
 and green corn.

"My children,"
 she hums with her hands,
 "always remember I am here,
 the only woman in a desert of men."

Terry Gary

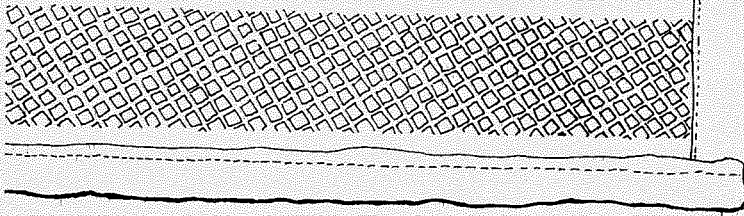
WINTER

Images click upon each other
Tires, feet, crunch against snow
Thoughts arrive in strings of ice cubes,
Discrete, the moments klink.

Kisses freeze in mid air
Pieces of remembered warmth
To be plucked where they stand.

Terri Gregory

CLOTH



DIVORCEE'S COMPLAINT

I have the housewife's syndrome

Pain, depression, clings to me
shroudlike. Yet
I have no husband, no children to
suck the strength from me.

What excuse, this continual
weariness? Wherefore
the little purple half-moons
wrong-side my eyelids?

My doctor says

You have many allergies. You
serve too many organizations,
wear yourself thin

like an old dish towel, formerly
a diaper. They make the
best kind, you know.

Why won't this woodwork
ever be clean? I wash it
nearly once monthly. Too
tired to clean the sink, to
make the bed. Expending energy

on these foolish words, that
string themselves into stanzas,
copies of better poems.

No one depends on me. I
have no excuse
to be so tired.

Terri Gregory



PING!

The bubble
of my universe
burst

Disintegrating fragments flash
past, rainbow-hued
shards of child's bubbles blown

And all the creatures of the night
barricaded by that thin membrane
flood in. Cynicism
is my bed-fellow; bitterness,
my sister in crime

All that inner core of
strength expanded, burst,
leaving a raw gaping
hole, with edges
all around.

Terri Gregory

THE GUARD CAT

The guard cat sits
at the baseboard behind
which mice play. Watches,
hoping for their escape,
to pounce half the fun;
watching, the other half.

The guard cat, obsidian, black
as night, as some Egyptian
princess, long ago sentenced
to a cat's life. What transgression
cost her this price? Loss of
sex, of motherhood, of comfort,
though cared for well enough,
loss, worst of all, of power.

Her price, for what? Did
she take life too lightly, dispatching
those of loyal slaves? That power she
held, did she squander it? To live
forever as a stone-black cat? or work
back through, cat to
what?

Terri Gregory

GEMINI

Tenacity is the crab, they say
but I hold on to any love
that's ever given me. I
always expect to lose it, and
holding on too late, I grasp
thin air, my tears chasing it
into the sunset.

Terri Gregory



BOOK REVIEWS

WATCHTOWER Elizabeth A. Lynn

There is something about the circus that fascinates SF writers, among others. Several generations of SF writers have chosen the circus as a setting for their novels and stories. From Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* and Theodore Sturgeon's *The Dreaming Jewels* (newly released as *The Synthetic Man*), up to the contemporary posthumously published work by Tom Reamy, *Blind Voices* (Berkley-Putnam), the SF author's look at circuses shares with Elizabeth Lynn's story, "Circus", another important element, a seemingly universal perception of circuses as being in some way an evil but attractive phenomenon. Liz Lynn, whose story just came out in *Chrysalis 3*, edited by Roy Torgeson and published by Zebra Press, participates in this rendering of the circus as an alien lifestyle by making it exactly that.

What interests me is, first, why circuses seem that way to us outsiders and, second, why Liz, among other authors, chose it as a subject. Of course, I can only speculate about the reasons. Perhaps it is that circuses affected us in this way as children, as something fascinating and yet spine-chilling in their alienness. Leaving with a circus, getting away from "normal" family life, is something we've probably all thought about in childhood, but its virtual alienness, socially and culturally, to any-

thing that we've known somehow kept most of us safe at home like good little children until we outgrew the fascination. This fascination and its tinge of the alien have resurfaced in our imaginative fiction only to be pushed further and further away from the "normal" way of life. Liz Lynn in fact exploits this perception of alienness and evil that we all sense as a part of circuses in order to create a truly eerie story, complete with a starstruck kid who gets in over her head. With "Circus", she has taken a heretofore unvoiced element of imaginative circus stories to a logical end.

Another setting which reappears in imaginative fiction, especially those stories which defy classification as fantasy or science fiction, containing elements of both, is an imitation of our understanding of medieval European culture. Of course, each of the science-fictional renderings contains some setting-twists peculiar to the specific other-time culture created by the specific SF author. Thus it was to be expected that, when Elizabeth Lynn set *Watchtower*, the first book of her series, in a medieval-analog context, she would exploit the "classical medieval adventure" form for her own purposes.

When I spoke with Liz at WisCon 3, my first question was about the main character of *Watchtower*. The central figure, from whose viewpoint the story is told, is male and, since I had read only the first few chapters at that point, I thought that this was a good way to probe for the political position which she might have taken in the novel. She explained that she had chosen a male rather than a female

character as the central character because she felt that too many cultural assumptions would have to be altered at the outset of the novel if she began it from the perspective of a female character. A female hero would not have been acceptable or believable at that point in the world-building process. Yet, this is the problem she had begun to attack by the end of the novel. She had managed to tell a fascinating story of a culture in flux, complete with its own Erewhon, and also to totally surprise me with the identity of certain characters and with the outcome of the novel. Best of all, since this is part of a series, she left several questions hanging unanswered in my mind, a sure indication that the next novel will be of interest to me.

I read a recent review of *Watchtower*, along with *Motherlines* (by Suzy Charnas) and *Godsfire* (by Cynthia Felice). It was written by the novelist Marge Piercy and published in a recent issue of *Sojourner*, a feminist publication. In it, Piercy claimed that the characterization of *Watchtower* was not very accomplished. I have to disagree with this opinion, as I found the characterization to be the most interesting part of the novel. Especially interesting was the clash between individuals who represented different perceptions of social order and, by implication, human nature. This is represented in the meeting of Ryke, main character and refugee from the main medieval-analog culture, and the cheari, or "dancer", people who eventually help him out of his dilemma. What made the characterization itself so interesting was the interplay between these people with regard to two elements: sex roles and cultural conflict.

First, there was room for a certain amount of exploitation of gender and sex-specific behavior as it appeared in both cultures. Two characters, Sorren and Norres, outside the cheari culture, are thought of as "ghyas", people whose sex is not specified and whose gender is therefore male/unspecified. They are rendered believable as functioning males as far as the culture is concerned without adopting all of the characteristics of that sex. Ryke's reaction to their appearance and actions is very illuminating in that he first accepts the cultural assumptions indicated by their dress¹ and behavior, and then, upon further contact, begins to question these assumptions.

Another sex-related exploration made in Lynn's novel is found in the relationship between Ryke and Errel, his liege. There is no indication that the relationship is specifically sexual, and yet it is comprised of a physical attraction that is something more than the love of a vassal for his liege.

Finally, in terms of positive comments on *Watchtower*, I find the focus of culture in flux to be of great interest. The main cultural construct of *Watchtower*, as I mentioned earlier, is a medieval analog. Not only is its permanence called into question by a revelation of its historical economic basis², but also the "timelessness" of its existence, which we expect to be static, is being invaded by two forces of social change, a useful concept that only too rarely appears in science-fiction novels about medieval-analog cultures. First, the cultural stereotype of the functions and the abilities

of women is exploded by the activities of Sorren and Norres, and by the imminent rule of a female lord holder, as well as by the vitality of the two cheari women, Maranth and Amaranth. Second, the assumption inherent in our own time also, that cultures must naturally be in conflict with each other, that individuals' economic interests must conflict, is exploded by the cheari group, which clearly represents another pattern for human interaction in social contexts. In this sense, it's a compelling work.

Yet I have reservations about some of the statements made to represent the mind-sets of certain characters, in that their perceptive abilities on other issues seem somewhat backward with regard to these specific statements, which I'd like to reveal in the light of two feminist writers. Near the end of the novel, one otherwise very perceptive character, Ryke, comments on the rape and murder of his sister:

From the outline of her body under the blue silks, he could see what they had done to her. He wondered if the Pel Keep soldiers had known she was Col Istor's woman, his property, and killed her because of it. The other was unimportant. It happened to all women. In war, you could not even call it rape. (P. 234.)

I don't know if Lynn also shares this belief with her character, or rather means to call attention to its falsity, but the ambiguity in this case seems jarring. Up to this point, Ryke has exhibited an astute ability to sidestep cultural assumptions in dealing with his mother, sister, and Sorren and Norres. He is willing to submit to a degrading personal situation in order to save his liege, and to take an open-eyed look at the women in his and the dancer cultures. That he comes out with such a pronouncement as "in war you could not even call it rape" lends the statement more credibility than, I hope, the author intended.

Just to be sure, let me take this opportunity to cite Susan Brownmiller's landmark study, *Against Our Will*, in which she links rape in war with the entire social fabric of Western culture which permits it in peacetime. Comsummate with her well documented thesis, let me reiterate that rape in war is rape. It's just easier to get away with on a mass scale. As long as women are considered property, and their children "men's" children, then rape in war or peace will be their, and not the rapist's, degradation.

My main criticism of *Watchtower* is both structural and ideological, one in which I implicitly agree with Marge Piercy's article. I see the creation of an alternative culture, which begins to destroy the main social construct of *Watchtower*, under a male, or patriarch, as another inconsistency within the novel. Piercy laments the dearth of strong female characters in *Watchtower*, but I think that this dearth amounts to an inconsistency that verges on a structural flaw. One of the points that Mary Daly makes in the early chapters of *Gyn/Ecology* is that there is an internal (philosophically so) link between patriarchy and hierarchical struggles. She goes so far as to call patriarchal cultural "death oriented" or necrophilic. I seriously question whether a patriarch like Van of the Erewhon country Vanima would have existed in that other-world context. Why would a male leave a male-oriented culture to create one in which his position was socially and politically weaker, and why would a culture which is supposedly non-sexist be initiated by a patriarch? These are two important questions that are not answered in the novel, and that I don't think can be answered. I think that Vanima would have been more internally consistent (that is, represent a more believable break with the main medieval-analog *Watchtower* culture) if there were no patriarch like Van seemingly in control of the activities of a large

¹The sex and gender associations made with forms of dress are explored in another recently released novel, *A Voice out of Ramah*, by Lee Killough. But in the latter novel, the sex-role obfuscation goes in the other direction, with a man being free to move about in his world only when he adopts the clothing, and therefore the identity, of a woman.

²Errel's father was a southern conqueror, just as is Col Istor, his enemy.

group of people. As long as you have a figurehead, a male that everyone is expected to look up to and emulate, you have a hierarchical structure which precludes the very social organization that Lynn is hinting at for Vanima. The point is, you not only don't need a patriarch in this context, but having one makes the cultural form unbelievable. It is male-oriented and therefore carries the seeds of its dissolution as an equal culture with its very structure.

Lest the reader think that this article represents a wholesale criticism of *Watchtower*, let me remark that it is a novel which leads to such speculations as written above. In this sense, it is an interesting and speculatively enticing novel, fraught with enough ambiguity to allow for a varied interpretation. In other words, it's fun to play with, as well as to read. ☺

—Jan Bogstad

DOOMSTAR Edmond Hamilton & DIFFERENT LIGHT Elizabeth A. Lynn

**Doomstar* by Edmond Hamilton (Belmont Tower, 1978).

**A Different Light* by Elizabeth A. Lynn (Berkley, 1978).

There are surely few science-fiction readers don't enjoy or haven't enjoyed a rousing space adventure. The only problem with these stories has always been that they are just too numerous, and after one has read a few, the similarities become tiresome. This is true now more than ever, since space opera has become a mass-media staple. On the other hand, readers find some undeniable value or worth in popular stories written within strict conventions, as witness the existence of all sorts of stories: nurse novels, gothics, spy novels. Sometimes the slight departures from the norm in these stories, the slight variations on familiar situations, can be interesting and entertaining.

These two examples of space adventures contain most of the formula components of the genre, but also feature characterizations which are unusual for science fiction. The familiar elements include spaceport cultures (especially bars), curious aliens, interstellar traders and outlaws, exotic planets and faster-than-light mucky-muck. Both stories involve stealing treasures, idol-gods of primitives. And both novels have central characters who are most remarkable, though rather different than the standard space-opera Captain Future.

Edmond Hamilton, of course, wrote the book concerning the standard space-opera hero, but in *Doomstar* he depicts a character named Johnny Kettrick with a much wider range of human feelings than the usual superman. Kettrick is a trader and sometimes outlaw, motivated at first by greed, and then by turn paralyzed and motivated by fear and hate.

Elizabeth Lynn has obviously studied the space opera, and in *A Different Light* she sets out, like Hamilton, to place some unusually human characters into a typical interstellar adventure. Jimson is a renowned artist, and his idea of an adventure is a trip into space to pursue his art, even though it means his life will end in as little as a year because of a rare disease. The story reunites Jimson with a starship captain, a lover who left Jimson

because he was unable to accept the concept of death. A homosexual artist and a starship captain afraid of death? This is a long way from the usual roster of characters in *Thrilling Wonder Stories*.

The added interest provided by the characters in *Doomstar* and *A Different Light* guarantee that the novels are enjoyable even while the plots creak through very familiar changes. Some of the more interesting portions of both of these books concerned the relations between the characters while they traveled in the close confines of their starships. In the Lynn book, the sexual tension is openly considered in the story, and the effectiveness of this simple device is obvious, especially after reading hundreds of stories in which the characters are sexless, emotionless, or just plain lifeless. There are no explicit mentions of sexual tension or relationships between the men on Johnny Kettrick's ship in Hamilton's *Doomstar*, but somehow this story suggests the same sort of realism which became explicit in Lynn's novel. In Hamilton's story, the relationship of the men as they try to share their fear, as they help and support each other, weaves itself into the same sort of believable relationship than Lynn constructs with her love story. I was impressed with the subtle power with which Hamilton imbues his characters; for instance, one crewman sits and complains and foretells doom, because he is badly injured and can't help repair the ship, but then he sits there anyway and hands the tools to his close friend. When the starship crew is joined by a woman guest/prisoner, a former lover of Kettrick's, her presence causes difficulties which extend beyond overcrowding and which reveal just how closely the men of the starship live together and comfortably share their personal space. The closest incident in *Doomstar* to the open homosexuality of Lynn's novel is a brief fond pat on the behind, so readers may prefer to believe that I've read too much into this story. Originally published in 1966 by Belmont, this recently reissued novel is a minor work that nearly everyone had forgotten. But it causes me to wonder if Hamilton might have wanted to write more about the relationships between men of his space adventures, and I wonder if he might have actually written more, which was subsequently removed from his stories by editors who considered it unacceptable for young science-fiction readers. Hamilton wrote millions of words of formula science fiction, but he also frequently became determined to transcend those formulas and wrote stories which challenged accepted conventions of the field. His story, "What's It Like Out There?" is frequently cited as an example.

Lynn's novel was entertaining, and I look forward to her forthcoming novels because I'm certain that she will become a fine storyteller. *A Different Light* seemed to me to lag a bit now and then, something a Hamilton space opera would never do. It does seem a shame that the editors and publishers which Edmond Hamilton dealt during his career were never able to offer him the chance to become the mature, unsuppressed writer that people like Liz Lynn now have the chance of becoming. ☺

—Hank Luttrell

"OLD FOLKS AT HOME" Michael Bishop

"Old Folks At Home", Michael Bishop, *Universe* 8.

The anthology premise behind *Aurora: Beyond Equality* was a fine concept. Occasionally in the handling of a story, an author will delineate a future which lies beyond a time of equalization between the sexes. Joan D. Vinge tends to write from this place in her work; so do many female SF writers. Few male writers seem sensitive enough, or, perhaps,

aware enough to be consistent in this: Delany comes to mind; recently, John Varley. Another, consistently a builder of humans as opposed to men and women, is Michael Bishop. His Urban Nucleus future history has showcased many finely wrought, realistically portrayed women; "Old Folks At Home" introduces the final and most compelling of all. Zoe Breedlove is an officially "retired" woman, 67, who has become extra baggage in her pregnant daughter's cramped living cubicle. "Sold down the river" to the city's geriatrics hospital, Zoe finds herself accepting candidacy for a seven-way marriage, a septigamoklan, experiment. Wized up but not dried up, tough, sharp-witted, silver-tongued, Zoe discovers her more sensitive sides; adding her own flavor to a unique, zany flock of phoenix birds.

Charles N. Brown has said of *Universe 8*: "an anthology of eight stories including an excellent Michael Bishop piece." Susan Wood has said of Zoe: "There are some real women, some real people who move convincingly off the page—my two current favorites are Odo of 'The Day Before the Revolution'

and Zoe Breedlove of 'The Old Folks at Home'...." These are praises, but general ones. What I feel makes this short novel a successful one, as a fictional entity, is the balance between concept and character.

The original social concept of geriatrics experimentation and multiple elder marriage is well explored, yet it does not dominate. The character of Zoe is well developed and goes through interesting changes, yet it does not dominate. Both work together to tell a story that reaches out past words on paper and dominates the reader's attention and respect. There is one facet of tomorrow which is totally predictable: we will all age. "Old Folks At Home" is color; which when overlaid upon the black and white of the present makes us picture, soberly, our future. Bishop's is not a hopeless vision; and mine is certainly less so for having looked into his. Bishop makes you laugh, empathize sadly, and think in the space of paragraphs. Yes, he demanded my attention and praise, but most of all he has my respect. ☺

—Robert Frazier

THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT

Joan D. Vinge

The Outcasts of Heaven Belt, Joan D. Vinge, Signet, \$1.75.

In *The Outcasts of Heaven Belt* a starship, low on fuel, enters a hostile star system, the Heaven Belt, and is damaged by attack. With the aid of some desperate natives, the crafty, intelligent, competent captain uses all the tricks to deal with the inhabitants and secure fuel. The captain resorts to a daring, ruthless act of piracy.

Q. Does this sound like a familiar scenario?

A. You bet.

Q. Do writers still do this sort of story?

A. You bet.

Q. Is there something different about Vinge's?

A. You bet!

The starship is on a peaceful trade mission to that very system; the Heaven Belt civilization has degenerated into a dying paper tiger. The captain is a woman, who tries all reasonable choices first, and bluffs violence after confronting violence. The desperate natives are from one of the planets which is now water-poor with little bargaining resource; helping her is a government man from the most well-to-do planet in the system

who defects to the starship. He sees its plight, and its potential for good. It is the government/corporate powers in the Belt who are ruthless; all grabbing at the ship as a prize weapon. This all peaks in a high-voltage crisis.

The plots of "scientifiction" have evolved into realistic ones. The characters of "sci-fi" have matured into three-dimensional ones. In the hands of writers like Vinge, and they are still few, the societies of the future are becoming rational. Not just realistic, but rational. The irrationality of power politics and human emotion may be immutable; but racial war and sexual inequality are not. In *Outcasts* and its companion story "Media Man" (*Analog*, Oct, 1976), Vinge has begun a future history that takes these changes for granted. These stories are tight and evenly paced. The characters have a deep sheen to them; they are individuals interacting as human beings. Most important, though, is the future vision. *Outcasts* is one of sanity; when I look out my window tomorrow morning, I am not sure that ours will be. ☺

—Robert Frazier

ROCKY HORROR BEANIES

Greg Rihn



Brad



Janet



Columbia



Eddie



The Criminologist



Dr. Scott



Frank



Riff-Raff



Rocky



Magenta

Diane Martin and Richard S. Russell
SHOW & TELL



THE GOOD OLD DAYS

When we first looked at the eight movies we have up for review this time, they seemed so varied that finding a common theme, as we like to do in these columns, seemed impossible. There were two fantasy/animation films, two on comic-book heroes, two on popularized science, a remake of a 1956 film, and a thing by Robert Altman that defies categorization (and also attendance).

But then, out of nowhere, came *The Theme: Nostalgia*. Not so unusual or unlikely after all. Movies are, among other things, a way of escape. And even in postulating new worlds, as science fiction does, the main source of material is the past—the good old days when there were fairies, when animals talked, when superheroes first hit the comic strips, when the Earth was fertile and green and uncontaminated by evil technology. There's even the reverse nostalgia of the Hitler era (It may not have been pleasant, but it sure was thrilling.), and that sincerest form of flattery, the remake.

And so, we take you on a tour of the good old days.

T: Invasion of the Body Snatchers

P: Robert H. Solo

D: Philip Kaufman

W: W. D. Richter, based on the 1950 novel *The Body Snatchers* by Jack Finney

M: Denny Zeitlin

R: United Artists, 1978, PG, 1:57

S: Donald Sutherland as Dr. Matthew Bennell

Brooke Adams as Elizabeth Driscoll

Veronica Cartwright as Nancy Bellicec

Leonard Nimoy as David Kibner

Jeff Goldblum as Jack Bellicec

Art Hindle as Dr. Geoffrey Howell

The epitome of nostalgia in science fiction may be found in stories like "I Love Galesburg in the Springtime" and "The Third Level", in which yearning for the good old days propels characters back in time, or in which the past literally reaches out to claim their affections. Fittingly, these stories—and others like them—are by Jack Finney, whose 1950 novel formed the basis for one of the classic "creature" motion pictures of the mid-1950s, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Although we usually take the time to review the book and/or earlier movies on which current films are based, we will instead for this purpose refer you to Alex Eisenstein's excellent analysis in the June 1979 issue of *Fantastic Films*.¹ Also, we usually at this point go into polemics against remakes, but we will spare you those, too.²

Briefly, the body snatchers are interstellar spores which grow through a chrysalis stage (in which they resemble giant pea pods) until they hatch out as physical carbon copies of existing human beings. If, at this point, the corresponding real human being is asleep, her or his consciousness passes into the alien body, and the real person dies. The aliens assume the places of their avatars and live outwardly as before; however, they have no emotions and spend most of their free time distributing more spores and pods so as to spread the invasion. Needless to say, the real human beings who find out about this wish to prevent it from happening.

It is here that *Body Snatchers* departs from the standard '50s "creature"-movie plot. The standard plot can be divided into three roughly equal portions: (1) scientist discovers creature; (2) scientist tries to convince the world that the creature exists and is a menace; and (3) scientist leads humanity's retribution against the creature. *Body Snatchers* never gets to Step 3; instead, it lingers on Step 2, where Dr. Bennell of the San Francisco Health Dept. and his friends are stumped for a way to prove there's been an invasion. After all, there are no flying saucers zooming through the sky, no giant-ant tracks in the desert, no slimy trails leading back into the swamp, no destruction, and no apparent victims. All we have is a number of people expressing the seemingly irrational fear that there's something inexplicably wrong with those close to them. After a few days, though, the complainers have no more complaints. (Guess why.) How does one pin something like this down?

Well, one good way would be to find the bodies of the victims. But the pods must have been reading Page 1 from the public-employees' strike manual, which is headed "Start with the Sanitation Workers." Garbage collection is a vitally appreciated public service, yet garbage trucks are unobtrusive: they can go almost anywhere and haul away almost anything

¹FF is one of several SF-specialty movie magazines which we will review in the next *Janus* in lieu of our customary film reviews.

²See our reviews of *King Kong* in *Janus* 7; *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, in 10; and *Heaven Can Wait*, in 14.

without arousing attention. So the pods take over the SF Sanitation Dept. first, then haul away the shrunk, fluffy remains of their later victims.

We have seen other reviews which claim that it was possible to believe that the pods could subvert a small town (as in the original film) but that the takeover of San Francisco defied credulity. On the contrary, we thought that the film made the takeover quite believable.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers was a perfect film for the McCarthy Era, when the Red Manace was insidiously taking over everybody's neighbors, and you couldn't tell from looking who had been subverted and who hadn't. The simple xenophobia of the standard alien-invasion movie took on a new dimension. The remake pays homage to Don Siegel's original in a number of different ways, notably in having Kevin McCarthy (the star of the earlier picture³) do a cameo bit where he runs into Bennell's car screaming that the pods are coming. But it is set in the present and aimed at a present-day audience, so it just can't recapture the sense of paranoia that characterized the original.

The photography was competent, the scenes well staged. Donald Sutherland again played Donald Sutherland (which isn't all bad), but the rest of the cast wasn't especially effective. In particular, Leonard Nimoy—whose emotions were repressed in all those years as Mr. Spock—drastically overacts his role as a society-chic psychiatrist.

It's an OK movie if you harbor a lingering fondness for the commie threat.

* * *

T: **Superman the Movie**

P: Alexander Salkind, Ilya Salkind, and Pierre Spengler

D: Richard Donner

W: David Newman, Leslie Newman, Robert Benton, and Tom Mankiewicz, from a story by Mario Puzo, based on characters created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster

M: John Williams

R: Warner Bros., 1978, PG, 2:23

S: Christopher Reeve as Superman/Clark Kent/Kal-el
Margot Kidder as Lois Lane
Gene Hackman as Lex Luthor
Marlon Brando as Jor-el
Glenn Ford as Jonathan Kent
Phyllis Thaxter as Martha Kent
Jackie Cooper as Perry White
Ned Beatty as Otis
Valerie Perrine as Eve Teschmacher
Susannah York as Lara

Just as the 1950s were the decade when Reds and radioactive rats were super-menaces, so the Depression was the era when Superman became the first of the super-heros. This most publicized movie of 1978 pays frequent homage to that earlier time, including some black-and-white shots of "Metropolis" skyscrapers. And unquestionably the character of Superman is the sort of four-square straight shooter that evokes fond remembrances of a more innocent time, before skepticism and cynicism took their toll.

Yet, like *Body Snatchers*, *Superman the Movie* is unquestionably set in the present. In fact, though passing mention is made of Metropolis, it is apparent that Supe hangs out in the Big Apple. The screen writers do a good job of playing off the new milieu against the old preconceptions—as when Clark Kent searches for a phone booth in which to change clothes and finds one of the new, shell-like variety—and most of the time the audience both catches the gag and appreciates it.

³Not the McCarthy for whom the McCarthy Era was named.

But this same light-hearted touch makes it difficult to take the film seriously, and *Superman* does have some pretensions to seriousness. Superman obviously takes himself seriously in his role as righter of wrongs. And such matters as nuclear missiles running wild and earthquakes along the San Andreas Fault should be taken seriously. But that's hard to do right after seeing Lex Luthor conniving with his two moronic assistants to blow up New Jersey.

Marlon Brando also takes himself seriously in his role as Jor-el, Superman's Kryptonian father. He was properly pompous in rendering his lines about how his great genius and rich genetic material were being passed along to infant Kal-el. Even somebody with Brando's ego must have had to swallow hard to avoid gagging on the incredible arrogance written into his character. His lines are recited in front of his nearly voiceless wife, Lara, who presumably contributed half of Kal-el's genetic material herself. Ma Kent is a similar non-entity in the film. In some justice, it must be noted that even a film as long as this would have difficulty in giving meaty parts to every member of the huge cast, but what meat there is goes to the male characters. Even Lois Lane, one of the leading characters, gets almost no chance to display any competence; her editor is always correcting her spelling, she stammers during her interview with Superman, and she can't even open a car door in a pinch.

The film's chronology is hopelessly muddled. Did Kal-el take three years or three thousand to

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reach Earth? Did he re-travel the distance to Krypton during his stay in the Fortress of Solitude? And how long was that sojourn? When did he actually land on Earth—in the 1930's as the date superimposed over an earlier scene would lead one to believe, or around 1948 as Lex Luthor's research and Superman's apparent age would indicate?

There are other holes in the plot. One is the statement about the dozen known galaxies. Another is Lex Luthor's ability to look up (evidently in the *National Geographic*) the name of Krypton and the date of its explosion, despite the intergalactic distances involved. Another is the absence of an earthquake after Superman has traveled back in time to prevent its consequences.

These inconsistencies and inaccuracies are probably a by-product of having a number of different people work on the script. And, normally, this would be an irritant. But the fact of the matter is that *Superman* comic books have, over the years, not been particularly consistent, either. For example, even though we're now familiar with the character of Super-boy growing up in Smallville, the original Superman character did not reveal his superpowers until achieving adulthood, just as depicted in the film. So it is perhaps appropriate that the film should retain the inconsistencies of its comic-book origins. Besides, who but an old fuddy-duddy would insist on gumming up a fun film with expectations of realism?

The score contains reprises of the theme music from the old movie serials and TV show; it's competent, but not up to Williams' efforts for *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*.

The special effects consist of: zoptics (zoom optics), which are used on all of what must be the longest credits and titles in film history; an extended space-flight scene which was kind of a cross between *Star Wars* and the psychedelic lights of *2001*; a nifty scene in which the Earth's rotation slows, stops, and reverses; and, of course, the highly touted flying sequences. Some of the flying scenes were disappointingly obvious fakes, like Superman flying up the exhaust trail of a rocket. But others were beautiful, especially the way he nonchalantly steps off a multi-story ledge and glides away. On the whole, the effects were probably worth the corner of Fort Knox that Warner Bros. had to chip off for them.

That brings us to the acting. Up front: Chris Reeve is absolutely superb. If you've read the comic book for any length of time, you have to wonder why no one else sees the resemblance between Clark Kent and Superman; after watching Reeve do his klutz bit as Kent, then switch to the calm self-assurance of the Man of Steel, there's no longer any reason to think that there's any connection at all between them. A marvelous job. Margot Kidder is too earnest; Brando is too obviously Brando to be believable in any other role; Gene Hackman is so surrounded by boobies that he doesn't get a chance to display any acting ability at all; and the rest of the cast is on screen too briefly to matter.

There's a sequel in the works, but it's going to have problems. *Superman* 1 showed the hero as virtually invincible, single-handedly and almost instantly patching up an earthquake (the whole fault line), damming up Lake Mead, and substituting his body for a missing section of railroad bridge. What credible threats can be brought against a hero of such proportions?

This is similar to something discovered by players of *Dungeons and Dragons*: in a world where magic exists, the characters have almost no curiosity. Anything unusual is explicable by magic. And so it may be with Superman. He may become so super that the rest of us become blasé about it. Perhaps the filmmakers would have been better off sticking a little closer to the original version, who was literally faster than a speeding bullet (but not by

much), more powerful than a rushing locomotive (but not an A-bomb), and able to leap tall buildings at a single bound (but not fly).

One last comment. The Warner Communications Corporation, not wanting to miss an opportunity to make a fast buck, has authorized a novel, *Superman, Last Son of Krypton*, by Elliot S. Maggin (Warner, 1978, \$2.25), to be released with the film. It is a piece of exploitative hack writing which has nothing in common with the film except the picture on the cover. And Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster won't see a nickel of the undoubtedly massive royalties it will pull in.

* * *

T: Buck Rogers

P: Richard Caffey and Leslie Stevens

D: Daniel Haller

W: Glen A. Larson and Leslie Stevens

M: Stan Phillips

R: Universal, 1979, PG, 1:28

SE: David M. Garber, Wayne Smith, Bud Ewing, and Jack Faggard

S: Gil Garard as Buck Rogers

Erin Grey as Col. Wilma Deering

Pamela Hensley as Princess Ardala

Henry Silva as Kane

Tim O'Connor as Dr. Huer

Felix Silla (body) and Mel Blanc (voice) as Twiki

Talk about nostalgia! Here's "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff" brought to the silver screen. 1979 is the 50th anniversary of the Richard Calkins comic strip based on Philip Francis Nowlan's 1928 story, "Armageddon 2429 AD". Buck has been around since then in comics, radio, movie serials (played by Buster Crabbe, who also popularized Flash Gordon), and TV. Here he is back in an almost full-length feature film, brought to you by the producer of *Battlestar Galactica* with leftover parts and SFX footage from the ABC-TV series.

As we have often lamented, the average SF movie has about the same amount of money to spend as any other average movie, but SF usually demands much more from special effects. Since the producers have to cut corners, it's either the effects or the acting/writing that usually gets shorted. In this case, it was the acting/writing. (Publicity, too. One poster spelled "Kane" as "Cain" and O'Connor" as "O'Conner", the marks of a rush job.)

Buck is played by an actor who looks, walks, talks, and (unfortunately) acts like a fat-fanned Lee Majors. His lines are designed to show his scintillating wit, but he comes off as a rather insipid smart-ass. The other players were evidently obtained at budget prices, as well.

The plot is quite simple, as befits a short movie. Buck, a 1987 astronaut cryogenically preserved in his spacecraft by a cloud of space gas, is discovered in 2491, by a Drakonian spaceship on an ostensible peace mission to Earth. They think he's a spy and since they have plenty to hide, ship him off to Earth. It's the same story there. (Nobody trusts anybody in this film.) Since Buck's loyalties do lie with Earth, he eventually aids in overcoming the nasty Drakonians.

Star Wars' influence is seen in the cutesy robot and in Buck's eye-hand coordination in a dogfight being superior to that of his on-board computer.

Plot holes abound. Earth has evidently stayed off the entire Drakonian space empire, even after ecological blight has reduced it to such a wasteland that only Chicago survives. (Gawd! How grim!) The head of Earth's entire defense force (18 spacecrafts) is only a colonel.⁴ Buck casually strolls through

⁴It was mildly refreshing to see a woman cast in this role, but the effect was offset by the presence of the writhing ladies in the clinging suits which "adorned" the opening titles.

the rubble of old Chicago looking for his parents' grave and finds it in about half an hour.

Like *Superman*, *Buck Rogers* seeks to have its flaws overlooked in the spirit of good clean fun. But, like the scene in which Buck co-opts a formal ball by telling the instrumentalists to "get down and boogie", the effort falls flat.

* * *

T: Watership Down

P: Martin Rosen

D: Martin Rosen

W: Martin Rosen

M: Martin Rosen from the novel by Richard Adams (MacMillan, 1972)

R: Avco Embassy, 1978, PG, 1:32

Richard Adams's book *Watership Down* attracted a flock of admirers who swear that, after reading it, one will either believe that rabbits are humans or wonder if humans aren't rabbits. We found the praise for the book to be exaggerated.

Nonetheless, the animated feature film version is very pleasing. The rabbits are engaging, they are not anthropomorphized like cartoon characters, and the problems they face are realistic and worrisome ones. Fiver, a timid and frail psychic, foresees the destruction of the old Sandleford Warren, and his inventive friend, Hazel, leads a group of refugees to a new home on Watership Down. Along the way, they are pursued by hounds and humans; try to free a group of domesticated rabbits; are befriended by a grounded gull, Kehaar (who provides some of the best comic relief of any movie we've seen all year); and engage in a power struggle with General Woundwort, the massive tyrant rabbit who currently rules the down.

This film was premiered at IguanaCon and released later in the year. It evidently didn't do well, which is unfortunate, for it is beautifully done. About the only quibble we have with it is that it was a bit hard to sort out the individuals in the early going—all the rabbits looked alike to us—but by the end of the film we thought of them as friends. For sentimentality, *Watership Down* approaches *Bambi* without getting quite so mushy. (The song "Bright Eyes" was a bit too saccharine, though.)

Like *Superman*, this film also has a post-production book associated with it: *The Watership Down Film Picture Book* (MacMillan, 1978, \$8.95). This one, however, is well worth getting in its own right; it features about a hundred pages of color plates taken from frames of the film, and Adams himself supplied the accompanying narrative. It would make a fine gift.

* * *

T: The Lord of the Rings

P: Saul Zaentz

D: Ralph Bakshi

W: Chris Conkling and Peter S. Beagle from the 1954-55 trilogy by J. R. R. Tolkien

M: Leonard Rosenman

R: United Artists, 1978, PG, 2:10

V: Christopher Guard as Frodo Baggins

William Squire as Gandalf

John Hurt as Strider/Aragorn

Michael Scholes as Samwise Gamgee

If *Watership Down* has a cult following, it's nothing compared to the devotees and admirers of J. R. R. Tolkien's immortal trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*. Here we have the good old days with heavy emphasis on the "old".

To begin with, we should say that we admire the ambition of the undertaking, and we recognize in advance that almost anything humanly producible would fall short of the expectations of the books.

The question in almost all minds was "How close can Bakshi come to doing it right?" The consensus seems to be that he did fairly well, considering.

The chief flaw of the film is that it tried to cover too much of the trilogy. It was planned as the first of two films and so covers about a book and a half, ending with the battle of Helm's Deep. Yet a more natural division would have been into three parts, so the first film would have ended, as the first novel does, with Frodo and Sam parting from the rest of the fellowship to strike out for Mordor. This would have allowed more time for some badly needed exposition. As it was, there was little time to get acquainted with the members of the fellowship, and camaraderie is one of the allures of the trilogy.

Just as *Superman* publicity proclaimed that its credibility hinged on the flying scenes, so *The Lord of the Rings* rises or falls on its depiction of the various races involved—hobbits, elves, and dwarves. The hobbits were rendered well; unlike many animated figures, their faces had character, rather than style. The elves were less successful. Here Tolkien describes the meeting in Lothlórien:

On two chairs beneath the bole of the tree and canopied by a living bough there sat, side by side, Celeborn and Galadriel. They stood up to greet their guests, after the manner of Elves, even those who were accounted mighty kings. Very tall they were, and the Lady no less tall than the Lord; and they were grave and beautiful. They were clad wholly in white; and the hair of the Lord Celeborn was of silver long and bright; but no sign of age was upon them, unless it were in the depths of their eyes; for those were keen as lances in the starlight, and yet profound, the wells of memory.

The film's Galadriel, unfortunately, looks like a refugee from a commercial for cheap cosmetics. The dwarf, Gimli, is done even more poorly. He's burly enough for a dwarf, and has a bushy beard, but he's as tall as the humans and elves. Gollum, on the other hand, was very well realized, including his incessant whining and squirming. Much of the credit of blame for the appearance of the characters must go to Bakshi's decision to rotoscope the animation over film of live actors. This produced a curious side effect, as well: less animation was done on the minor characters, so they look more realistic than the main ones. In fact, since there's so little chance to get to know the main characters, this was often a clue as to who was important. But it was disconcerting that the familiar, human-looking characters were not the ones with whom we were expected to identify.

We had been hoping ever since *Wizards* that Bakshi would get his chance to do justice to the epic. Too bad he couldn't have held out for just a little bit longer.

* * *

T: The China Syndrome

P: Michael Douglas

D: James Bridges

W: Mike Gray, T. S. Cook, and James Bridges; novelization by Burton Wohl (Bantam, 1979)

R: Columbia, 1979, PG, 2:01

S: Jane Fonda as Kimberly Wells

Jack Lemmon as Jack Godell

Michael Douglas as Richard Adams

Wilford Brimley as Ted Spindler

James Hampton as William Gibson

Scott Brady as Herman DeYoung

Peter Donat as Don Jacovich

It's easy to find the nostalgia in the animated fantasy of the two previous films, but where is it in a slick, well acted, cleverly produced suspense movie about that most modern of all phenomena, the

nuclear power generator? Well, if the Land of Mordor can be construed as the wickedness of old, then the Ventana nuclear power plant, operated by California Gas and Electric Company, represents the wickedness of today. And if little powerless rabbits can be viewed as heroes for taking on a big, impersonal world, then so can newswoman Kimberly Wells of KXLA-TV, Channel 3 in Los Angeles. But most of all, we are confronted not with the xenophobia of *Buck Rogers* or *Body Snatchers* but with the technophobia whose topicality was (fortunately for Columbia stockholders) dramatized by the crisis at Three Mile Island, which occurred within days of the release of this film.⁵

Wells and free-lance cameraman Adams happen to be at Ventana doing a feature (the only kind of work KXLA station manager Jacovich will let her do), when a shudder shakes the building and the staff gets very excited. Adams surreptitiously films the activity in the control room, but Jacovich refuses to air it. Adams is pissed; he steals the film and contacts nuclear-power opponents to try to get it introduced at governmental hearings on a CG&E proposal for another nuclear plant. Wells meanwhile independently seeks out workers at Ventana. One of these is Jack Godell, an ex-Navy man whose devotion to nuclear power in general and Ventana in particular is worn like a badge of pride. But Wells' questions, as well as his own misgivings about the accident, prompt him to check further. He finds that X-rays of welds on a steam pump have been falsified. He tries to donate this evidence to Adams and Wells, but the proverbial big black limosine runs the messenger off the road, and another starts chasing him when he tries to testify in person. Desperate, he returns to Ventana, seizes command of the master control room, and demands to be put on TV to tell his story. Wells is there to accommodate this demand, but Godell is nervous and not very articulate. In the midst of

⁵We get a lot of input for these reviews from our friends, but this particularly good comment we will credit directly to its source, Perri Corrick-West: "Six months from now everyone who saw *The China Syndrome* will think that's what happened at Three Mile Island." Probably right.

the telecast, a SWAT team bursts in and guns him down. Afterwards, Wells tries to make it apparent that Godell had some reason for concern, but she too stumbles and stammers. (Ironically, it is after this least professional of her performances that Jakovich concludes that she really does have what it takes to do hard news.) The film ends with no real resolution, as far as the plot goes.

Yet there is a resolution as far as the audience is concerned. It sees that something is wrong, even if it isn't quite sure what. And it also sees that the problem is—if not completely covered up—at least minimized as it is presented to the KXLA audience. Thus *The China Syndrome* plants a healthy seed of doubt in the minds of its audience. Never again will the viewers be able to hear assurances of safety about nuclear power without wondering, "What aren't they telling us? Just how bad is it?" It would have been fairly easy to go overboard with this message, to toss around the word "nuke" (which up until a year or so ago meant "bomb" and still conveys that emotional weight to most people), to picture shrill anti-atomic sentiment, or—most dramatically—to show the power plant as experiencing some fatal I-told-you-so catastrophe. That the film is tasteful and restrained in this regard just makes it all the more effective as propaganda, since it doesn't look or sound like propaganda.

This film does the same thing for nuclear power that *Capricorn One*⁶ did for the space program: makes it look as if the people in charge of it are at best misguided, but probably unethical, and certainly dangerous. While this goes most strongly for top management, the lower-downs are at least fellow travelers and "company men".

This brings us to the distinction between danger and risk. Roughly stated, "danger" is the magnitude of an unfavorable event, while "risk" is the probability of its occurring. To pick some extreme examples, the danger of the Sun going nova is fantastically high, but the risk is almost non-existent. On the other end of the spectrum, the danger from being bitten by a mosquito is quite low, but the risk of it happening approaches 100%. As we see it, the controversy over nuclear power is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of these two con-

I'M A BIT WORRIED Philip Kaveny

Pascal, who discovered the laws of probability in the late 17th Century, after he rolled one too many in the royal crap games at Versailles, made an interesting wager. He told his Cartesian-atheistic buddies that he had come to believe in God. They asked him how he could accept that theistic drivel, to which he replied that it was a question of simple probability for him: "If I believe in God, which costs me little, and there is none, I am simply dead forever and have really lost nothing. If there is even the smallest probability that there is a God and I have believed in him, then I win eternity. It is a bet that I cannot lose."

I think that this philosophical orientation is significant to an understanding of the importance of the film *China Syndrome* and its relationship to the events that transpired at the nuclear-power plant at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania.

For a long time, we have been told by the proponents of nuclear power that its use was a bet we had to take because of the depletion of supplies of clean fossil fuels, but also a bet that we would not lose because of the infinitesimal probability of the total breakdown of a nuclear-energy system, which would be needed to produce catastrophic results. I would go so far as to say that these beliefs have become an ideology for those

interests which favor nuclear-fission energy technology. The film *China Syndrome* embarrassed many critics who, before Three Mile Island, called it alarmist Hollywood sensationalism. It asks us to rebalance the wager that a heavy investment in nuclear-fission technology implies.

For me, the most significant part of the whole film takes place in the single three-minute scene in the control room of a nuclear plant, early in the film. It seems that the power system almost fails in that few minutes on two levels. First, because a water-pressure gauge sticks and reads incorrectly, action is taken in accordance with wrong information. Second, a structural flaw left in the containment by a contractor manifests itself at the same critical time. It appears to me that these two types of flaws have been inherent in human-created systems from the time that the first Viking misread a chart to the time that a cost-conscious blacksmith substituted a brass nail for an iron one and contributed to the loss of shoe, horse, man, and kingdom. In the past, we have always played our gambles and lost our *Titanics* and *Hindenbergs* and written it all off to experience.

However, Three Mile Island describes a whole different magnitude of gamble. I do not know for sure what happened at Three Mile Island, nor do I intend to reiterate what we have all read in *Newsweek*; I do not claim that the film *China Syndrome* is fact, or that it is a prophetic, almost docu-

cepts. The anti-nuclear forces are saying, "Look at the tremendous danger.", while the pro-nuclear forces are saying, "Look at how we've minimized the risk." While neither side has a monopoly on accuracy, we find that nuclear opponents seem to have taken the attitude that this big atomic hammer might (figuratively) smash the hell out of our thumbs, so instead of simply being careful, we'd better get rid of the hammer. This ignores the advantages of nuclear power as well as the dangers and risks of the alternatives. For example, the danger from coal-fired plants is not nearly so dramatic, but the risk is substantially greater. It is almost a certainty that there are people who have died and are dying of lung cancer induced by smoke from coal-burning electric plants. While the risk of this occurring to any given person is low, it is happening to some. At this point, it is doubtful whether anyone can say the same about nuclear power.

So what does this have to do with the movie? Nothing directly, but it points out that a good film can provide a solid basis for meaningful exchange of ideas. *The China Syndrome* presents one side of this issue very effectively, and we don't pretend that there isn't a substantial issue involved, whether we agree with the attitude of the film or not.

To be more specific about the film, then, it is absolutely convincing in its choice of locale, its pacing, and its characterization. Lemmon is brilliant at portraying Godell's agony over having to turn in and turn off the Ventana plant he considers a second home. Fonda is excellent as a woman trying to appear as more than "a piece of talking furniture", as Adams characterizes her early on. Douglas, portraying the most excitable character in the film, comes off much better than he did in *Coma*,⁷ probably because he feels more at home in this role. (He and Fonda are both opponents of nuclear power in their private lives.)

So far—and for a long time to come, we believe—this film can still be called science fiction. But it's a top-notch job.

* * *

⁷Reviewed in *Janus* 12/13.

mentary piece which anticipates, to the event, the occurrences there. I do know this: something happened. As my friend and I sat in a sleazy bar on West Washington Avenue in Madison, on 5:00 P.M. on March 31, 1979, he showed me the front-page photo of the containment at Three Mile Island being cooled down by jets of water. The photo reminded me of wartime London after an air raid. He smiled sardonically and said: "The authorities tell us there is nothing to worry about. So what is all this, another backup system?"

The importance of *The China Syndrome* is that it is able to suggest to us that we have tricked ourselves into believing we can win a sucker bet. When we were balancing mustard seeds on the risk sides of the nuclear wager, we should have been using cinder blocks.

We learned in introductory philosophy that the strength with which we believe in the truth of a proposition has nothing to do with its correctness. I point this out to those who now want us to believe that there really never was anything to worry about in that out-of-control system because everything was really designed to work that way. After all, those fire hoses were just part of a complex backup system, and 500,000 potential evacuees never really had to leave, and besides we have anti-radiation drugs, and last of all, who really needs eastern Pennsylvania anyway—it's an economically depressed area.

T: *The Boys From Brazil*

P: Martin Richards and Stanley O'Toole

D: Franklin J. Schaffner

W: Heywood Gould from the novel by Ira Levin (Random House, 1976)

M: Jerry Goldsmith

R: 20th Century Fox, 1978, R, 2:03

S: Gregory Peck as Dr. Josef Mengele

Laurence Olivier as Ezra Lieberman

James Mason as Edward Seibert

Uta Hagen as Freda Maloney

John Rubinstein as David Bennett

Lilli Palmer as Esther Lieberman

Jeremy Black as the clones of Adolf Hitler

Remember the good old days when the bad guys were really, truly, irredeemable bad? Rotten, corrupt, evil, and cruel? Nazis, in fact? *The Boys from Brazil* brings back those times of black and white, when we didn't have to concern ourselves with all those nuisancesome shades of gray in between.

Dr. Josef Mengele, a real-life Nazi who supervised anesthesialess operations, genetic experiments, and similar atrocities at Auschwitz, has never been found since World War 2. It is widely assumed that he took refuge in South America, as did many other Nazis. This film assumes that he continued his experiments there. It's supposed to be a suspense film, as the audience tries to figure out what he's up to.

Let us spare you the trouble. He's created 94 clones of his idol, Adolf Hitler, and has stationed them in the families of 94 minor civil servants all over the world, hoping that—since he has duplicated the genetic background of Hitler—the environmental similarities will produce another führer. To complete the plan, 94 65-year-old foster fathers must die as Hitler's father did when Adolf was 13, leaving him in the care of a doting mother. Thus the film follows neo-Nazi assassins to Gladbeck, Germany; London; a damtop in Sweden; and Wheelock, Massachusetts, where they do their dirty work. On the basis of a tipoff, Nazi hunter Ezra Lieberman (modeled on Simon Wiesenthal) tracks down the families of the victims and notices the same snotty teenage kid in each place. After an interminable period, he figures out what the audience has already guessed an hour earlier, and ends up in a final showdown with Mengele at the home of another clone outside New Providence, Pennsylvania. There the Nazi and the Nazi hunter savage each other so that, as they roll over and over on the floor, it's impossible to tell which is which. (Though unintentional, this was probably the most telling point of the film.) The final resolution is provided by one of the clones, who sics his dead dad's dogs on Mengele.

Since the element of suspense disappears fairly early, what's left to see? Some grisley executions. Some heel-clicking neo-Nazis. Some blue-eyed Indians. A nice high-angle shot of the Swedish dam. And an excellent performance by Olivier, who does a complete turn-about from his role in *Marathon Man*, where he was the sadistic Nazi doctor, and pulls it off with complete credibility. Jeremy Black as the young pseudo-Hitlers is also quite good. Here's how the real Hitler was described at the same age. "As far as I was concerned, Hitler left neither a favorable nor an unfavorable impression in Linz. He was by no means a leader of the class. He was slender and erect, his face pallid and very thin, almost like that of a consumptive, his gaze unusually open, his eyes brilliant."⁸ Black fits that to a T.

⁸Theodore Gissinger, Hitler's science teacher, quoted by August Kubizek, *The Young Hitler I Knew*, requoted by William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, Simon and Schuster, 1960.

But these elements hardly justify the price admission. Don't waste your time.

* * *

T: **Quintet**

P: Robert Altman

D: Robert Altman

W: Robert Altman, Frank Barhydt, Patricia Resnick, and Lionel Chetwynd

R: 20th Century Fox, 1979, R, 1:57

S: Paul Newman as Essex

Bibi Andersson as Ambrosia

Vittorio Gassman as St. Christopher

Nina Van Pallandt as Deuca

Fernando Rey as Grigor

Brigitte Fossey as Vivia

We open this review with fair warning: this is a full-fledged Turkey Alert.



Robert Altman, with films like *M*A*S*H*, *Nashville*, and *A Wedding* to his credit, has earned the right to make damn near any film he wants to, and we were fairly excited to hear that he wanted to do SF. Better he should have stuck to real life. This is a horrible movie.

The world is iced over by climatic change, and the last vestige of civilization is the (unnamed) City, where the last of its once five million inhabitants spend all their time at a six-player board game called *Quintet*. The top players get to play in the periodic tournaments, where the concept of "killing" one's opponent is meant literally. Essex, fresh from

hunting the world's last seals, stumbles into this and assumes the role of Redstone (the second player killed in the current tournament, Essex's brother being the first) in order to figure it all out. By the time it's over, he is the last survivor, but it's made clear that his survival is only temporary, and there is no other reason for him or us to care any longer.

Though there's some source of electricity for the ubiquitous light bulbs, there's evidently no heat, and everyone wears several layers of clothes. (They must smell as bad as the movie.) To heighten the effect of the cold, the whole film is shot through filters which make it look as if the camera lens is starting to ice over from the outer rim inwards, a conceit which is annoying at best.

Altman usually picks out the little meannesses within people and holds them up for examination, but heretofore he has always tempered this approach with humor—sometimes at the expense of those very foibles, true, but humor nonetheless. In *Quintet*, there are no admirable qualities in anyone; the film is single-mindedly, depressingly nihilistic.

It bombed in Madison, and richly deserves the same fate everywhere else.

* * *

In summary, then, we've gotten a healthy dose of nostalgia. But it's a more sophisticated nostalgia—updated and streamlined. And it includes nostalgia not only for the good old days, but for some aspects of the bad old days, too. After all, the good seems even better by contrast with the bad.

Speaking of which, we are almost as pleased at what we haven't seen lately. With the exception of *Buck Rogers*, we haven't had any films capitalizing on the popularity of *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*, and we hope we will similarly be spared film versions of *Captain Marvel*, *Green Lantern*, the *Human Torch*, *et alii* in the wake of *Superman*. A TV pilot for Dr. Strange sank ignominiously, though *Hulk*, *Wonder Woman*, and *Spiderman* remain. But they get by without flying sequences, so the ripoff imitations of *Superman* may have to await a cheaper technology. That should give us a few years at least.

Lastly, we'd like to solicit your opinions. We generally do a plot synopsis of each film we review, even though it's usually months after we (or you) have seen the film. Do you, our readers, find this helpful, or would you rather have us assume you've seen the film and just deal in reaction to it?

Please let us know.

Diane Martin *Richard S. Ross*

THE TECHNOLOGY OF DREAMS

the technology of dreams
how they are structured
the framework they are built within

skillful hands that fashion a dream
start with the simplest blocks
construct edifices to rival St. Peter's

if we believe in only one structure to dreams
that limits us as surely
as any lack of materials

if we only believe in one technology
new materials may not even be discovered
though if we turned around we might see them

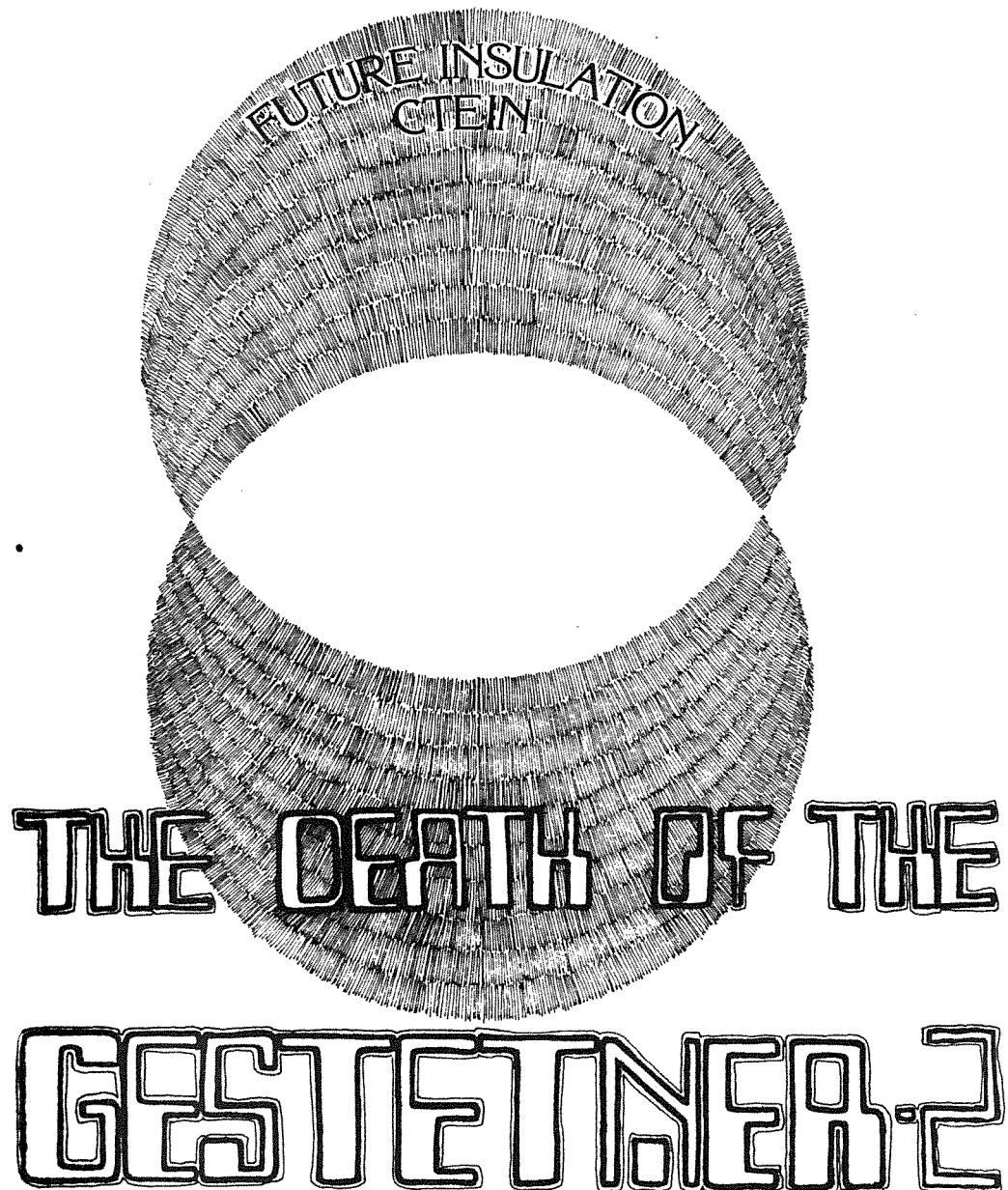
Dreaming in only one structure
is like living in a two dimensional world
where height is not possible

In a dream where there are only the hunter and the hunted
the rapist and his victim
the torturer and the one interrogated
each depends upon the other
to provide the reason for existence

The only movement possible
is pursuit and flight
the only action possible
is rape and victimization
and the only relation possible
is authority and surrender

Into this technology no new figures are admissible
Love and trust are not even thought of
How can equality enter
where only hierarchy is allowed to be?

Rebecca Lesse



FUTURE INSULATION
STEIN

THE DEATH OF THE
GESTETNER-2

Last column generated more mail than any that has been written to date, so I've decided to continue talking about computerized fanzines.

Many of the correspondents missed the point of that article. Most of the computer features I described are not new. What makes them novel is that they are getting cheap enough for an individual to take advantage of. In a few years, these features, and the computers to support them, will be cheap, period. Computer power is dropping in cost by a factor of two every year—that means a factor of over 30 in five years and 1000 in ten. That incredible deflation is not going to level off for at least ten years. Such cost curves please me no end; they are very forgiving of sloppy prognostication!

Victoria Vayne has rightly pointed out that my price for a mimeo was far too high—it was more appropriate to a mimeo plus an electrostencil. She's right...but it doesn't matter very much. Even if I made the cost of the mimography free, the cost of producing a page of a fanzine would drop by less than 50%. And each and every year, the cost of the computerzine drops by over 50%; sooner or later any means of cost-cutting (used machines, cheaper paper, slave labor, etc.) will be overtaken by that deflationary landslide.

Along with these changes in price will come changes in form. A smaller machine or one with fewer components will cost less (up to a point) simply because of reduced assembly and materials costs. Accordingly, this drive for lower prices produces compact and reliable gadgets as a byproduct. Computers stop being fussy laboratory instruments and become durable consumer goods.

By way of example, I'll talk a bit about computers that speak and hear. "Voders" were demonstrated decades ago. Over ten years ago, they were being built into some special-purpose computers to allow them to talk. They weren't cheap, and their diction was nothing to speak of (*groan*), but they did work. In the past year or so, special circuit boards for home computers have allowed the machines to speak in intelligible English, at modest cost.

I knew about all of that. Still, I was surprised when Texas Instruments announced a talking computer for children called Speak and Spell. S&S is a battery-powered box about the size of a portable cassette player. S&S will speak a word that is typed into it and display it on a light-emitting diode (LED) display at the same time. The machine can also "How do you spell XXX?" and will repeat the letters as the child types them in. If the

child makes an error the computer tells them so. S&S also includes a number of word games. In its basic form, it has a 200+ word vocabulary. TI will be selling small read-only-memory (ROM) cartridges that can be plugged into the machine to extend its vocabulary. S&S has to be rugged and portable enough for a child. It has to be simple enough for a child to use. And it has to speak English well enough that parents won't go through the roof at the idea of their child talking "like a machine". S&S is all of these...for \$50.

It doesn't take too much imagination to see a machine which is nothing more than a talking book. Insert a ROM cartridge into the side and the machine reads to you from the cartridge. "Big deal!" you say. "A cassette machine will do that!" True, but this talking book uses the same "edition" of a fanzine that might be read on a screen or printed out by a printer. No longer would anyone need special (translated: expensive and not usually available) "blind" editions of publications; the handicapped would be able to "read" anything the sighted could.

Computers that hear are making steady, if not terribly exciting, progress. The two big stumbling blocks are extending the vocabulary (i.e.: better discrimination between words) to a size big enough for an author and getting away from the need to "train" a machine for a user's voice. Still, the cost of what is available drops by a factor of two each year, and what is available gets better and better. Right now, machines are sold which will handle 1000 words. That is quite an improvement over the vocabularies available a few years ago.

The desirability of this feature goes well beyond convenience; arthritis, partial paralysis, and the like aren't all that uncommon. You try typing with less than two good hands and wrists if you think this is trivial! We're not there yet, but not too long after computerzines get cheaper than paper zines, you will be able to dictate your zine at a reasonable price.

Nothing is perfect, I must admit. Ron's delightful letter [Ron Legro, *Janus* 12/13] pointed that out. I failed to make clear my own reservations last column: 10 years ago I gave up computer programming with a vow that I would never again use a computer too big to throw out a window. All of the problems I experienced, and most of the ones Ron has had, are not likely to occur with the private owner-user. I won't elaborate too much on that; just look over his letter and note how many of the problems were due to someone else doing something stupid, either in using or designing the system. Such stupidities are all too common. I've committed them, and I'm sure that any of you who get a computer will create new dumbnesses all your own. But you will not be subject to someone else's mistakes, which is about all you can ask of any system.

There is one big category of problems you will have to deal with, called "protocols". A protocol is an agreement between computer users to handle equipment and information in a particular fashion, so that they can communicate with each other. Air traffic controllers use English to communicate with pilots all over the world. The agreement that English shall be the working language is an example of a protocol. (You can imagine the chaos such a protocol avoids!)

With computers, you have to decide what form the information will be communicated in, how fast, and when. How do you tell if someone is sending you a program or a fanzine? These are protocol questions. Most protocols will be settled long before the fans get into the game, but somewhere, sometime someone will go through hell working out the details. Some of those details will produce very important changes

in the nature and kinds of fanzines around. More on that later.

A lot of you are hung up on hardware. Fair enough. Like Ron I certainly would not prefer to read a fanzine off a TV monitor. I like easy chairs and cozy fires and cuddly books. We had better have something a lot more convenient than CRT terminals before compzines catch on (unless masochism becomes a fannish way of life).

What would be a nice fanzine reader? Me, I'd like something about the size of a looseleaf notebook (unopened). That would give me a big enough screen to be comfortable with. The screen had better be very good, with nice sharp type and full line graphics, at least. No blocky computer-type lettering for my precious eyeballs! Below the screen should be a small typewriter keyboard, so I can talk to my reader, and type up new zines as the mood hits. Obviously, the reader had better have storage for 100+ pages of text, be as portable as the aforementioned notebook, and run off batteries. Such a gadget would really be a full-fledged computer in disguise, but for the moment I'll ignore the fringe benefits as being gravy.

It seems that, at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center, some divinely mad scientists are trying to create such a machine. The goal of the X-PARC group is a general-purpose super scratch pad they call the "Dynabook". This all-around mental tool will let users handle facts, symbols, and information of any type in whatever form is most convenient to them, including sound and pictures. You, as a user, will decide just what kind of a mental tool the Dynabook should be for you; it is intended to be totally chameleonlike, adapting its features and capabilities to your needs.

This magic occurs through Smalltalk, a super-language which is designed to be used by someone totally unfamiliar with computers or programming. Smalltalk lets the user create the intellectual tools and symbology to fit the task at hand. Children are regularly using the Dynabook to create animated screens, story boards, games, personal card files, and whatever else their fertile minds can come up with. Adults have used the Dynabook to write and score music complete with staves, bars, and a computer rendition of the final composition. (Dynabook includes a built-in speaker.)

With Smalltalk, you can draw an object, give it a name, and thereafter reproduce it in any size, orientation, or position. Type faces for printers have been created this way. All one needs to do is render a given letter on the full screen, complete with serifs and flourishes, and tell the book what letter it is. Thereafter, you can print it at will, any size, any time, just by calling (typing) that letter. I have seen a Sanskrit typeface and one representing ASL (American Sign Language) with little drawings of hands.

That gives a taste for Smalltalk. The Dynabook does not yet exist in final form; the so-called "interim Dynabook" is really a Dynadesk. But only a few years ago, it was a Dynaroom! The hardware to build Dynabooks is under development. No one doubts that the physical device I have described could exist within five years. Sometime this year, a Japanese company will be marketing the first flat-screen TV, an important step towards the Dynascreen. Printed copy is not an important feature of the Dynabook, but cheap printers will be available. Unfortunately, cheap paper will not exist. There are some things even computers can't do. (To clear up a misconception, the 5¢/copy I referred to in my first column was for rotogravure-quality full-color copying, not mimeo-quality B&W.) Unfortunately for Ron, no matter how he gets his copy of *Janus*, it's gonna cost him \$3.00 just for paper in that

over-inflated future.

So why talk about paper? For that matter, why ever discuss memory chips? They are reusable—a negligible expense over a period of years. And quite unnecessary in some cases. One need not deliver a compzine on a chip. A telephone will work just as well (though chips are nice 'cause you can give them out at cons and meet people that way, etc.). Advanced (but not expensive) techniques allow a computer to send half a page of text (or one high-quality illo) over a phone line in one second. Most fanzines could be distributed in the phone company's famous "first three minutes". About 50¢ at late-night highest rates. That is not just mailing cost, that is the total cost for a 50-100-page zine; there is no longer any repro cost.

It is not hard to add an adaptor that lets a computer talk over the phone lines; it is even legal and cheap. The Dynabook will probably incorporate one of these "modems". Note that current gadgets most like my hypothetical reader are, in fact, remote terminals designed specifically for phone use. You don't need special phone lines; all you need are enough fans with computers and phones to make it worth



10,000 POINT RANDOM WALK; 10 minutes operating time

KB '78

the while to pub.

The economics of phonezines (fonezines?) are peculiar and tempting. Suppose you have just completed a fonezine. You could call up all your subscribers and "deliver" your zine in a fashion analogous to current fan pubbing. You control distribution directly and absorb the costs, which are offset by your subscribers. The advantages are important—cheaper, more versatile, and more convenient pubbing—but the nature of the pubbing stays pretty much the same. It is an evolutionary change.

Suppose, instead, that you make it widely known that you have finished the zine, and that anyone after a copy should call at certain times on certain days when your computer is on the line. Your publishing cost is the amortization cost of the computer and nothing else. So what if 10 or 10,000 people "read" your zine? Each one pays for their own copy when the phone bill comes.

Some wag once dubbed home computers as the Second Great Equalizer. In a sense this is true; the home computer can compensate for physically handicapped fans. It can also compensate for financially

handicapped ones as well! Once you have invested in a computer, you can publish as good or as ornate a fanzine and distribute it as widely as fans want, regardless of the state of your wallet.

Used mechanical repro equipment will always be cheaper (because only repro artists and craftspeople will want them), but the ongoing cost of repro will quickly eat into a small bank balance. So the dedicated but poor printer puts out beautiful zines in miniscule editions. The dedicated but poor computer-pubber can turn out print runs as huge as the wealthiest. That is a little revolutionary.

New forms of fanzines appear. Personalzines still work, except that how do you find out if Jan Fan has published one? Someone will ultimately set up a current index to fanzines in print, I am certain. The pubbers will phone in the updates and maybe even a short summary. Thereafter, you just call this central number to find out what is available from whom. This is the kind of data shuffling that computers are perfect for. The index fanzine, with keyword sorts and subject/author sorts will no doubt catch on in the more serious circles.

Another solution to the personalzine-scheduling problem will be the diaryzine. The author just updates it as she feels like it, and when you call, you get the update-to-date. (It is easy enough for your machine or the author's to keep track of what you received before, so time-wasting duplication doesn't occur.) Fanzines with lettercols could get interesting, especially if the editors provided an open file for locs on the current issue, which later readers would get when they called up for that same issue. Apas could become very odd. Think a bit about an apa which truly does become an N-dimensional conversation without collation dates or horrendous time-lags...and with everyone's file open to everyone else. Hmmm.

Once you have agreed upon a set of protocols to make communication possible, almost any sort of fanzine is possible. The current limits of time, space, and bucks just don't apply; if you can agree upon a set of ground rules, you have a zine.

I'm almost out of room, so I'll just mention some areas for speculation. How do you maintain a "limited" circulation list with, for example, a computerized personalzine or apa? Should a protocol be that the subscriber always has to provide a personal password to the sending computer to get a copy of any zine? Should cons make terminals available the same way they now make available mimeos? Think about it.

Next time, you'll be getting something a bit different. "Future Insulation" will be jointly written by myself and Judie Erb. Judie is a biochemist in Michigan whose specialty has been the chemistry of the brain and behavior. The column will be entitled, appropriately enough, "The Biochemistry of Behavior", and it should raise more than a few eyebrows, because it will not be about the future. Instead, I'm going to devote my column to Judie's research into the mechanisms which control behavior. This is new research, and, with the lead times on journals, I am almost positive you will see it here first. It is also startling research. Individual behavior can be understood and predicted from biochemistry, it would seem, if one has the right tools. (I mean mental tools, not physical ones.) The models Judie is using are different from almost all other researchers...and so are her results.

Just incidentally, we'll touch upon the questions of innateness of aggression in men and women, the chemistry of sexuality, pigheadedness in the scientific community, and how to cure schizophrenia. Nothing very controversial. ☺

BLUE SKY & RED TAPE

RICHARD S. RUSSELL

PART 1: GETTING ORGANIZED

1.1: Introduction

Most science-fiction fans read SF for fun, which is the same reason why they read and write fanzines and sponsor and attend conventions. It's fun to read, write, and talk about spaceships and time machines, psychic abilities and magic, strange worlds and strange creatures, and the personal and societal interplay which result from all these. This kind of speculation is typical blue-sky activity for most fans.

But there's a down-to-Earth side to fan activity as well. It's occasionally necessary—and sometimes desirable—to deal with real-world governmental agencies and their red tape.

This series of articles is based on the experiences of the Madison Science Fiction Group, known officially as the Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Incorporated, or SF³ for short. The articles detail some of the advantages of going through some of that red tape which facilitates the blue skying. They do this in a step-by-step, nuts-and-bolts kind of way, so that you can do the same for your group.

Why bother? Let's take a quick look at what SF³ can do as a result of its efforts. *Taxes:* Individuals who donate money to SF³ can claim the donation as a tax deduction. SF³'s own income is exempt from state and federal income taxation, and its expenditures are exempt from state sales tax. *Mailing:* SF³ can ship out 200 or more copies of an 8-ounce fanzine for 16¢ apiece, 90¢ less than the first-class rate. And we're authorized to use a rubber stamp instead of the kind you have to lick. *Freebies and cheapies:* The group can apply for grants from federal agencies and private foundations which are only available to non-profit organizations. If we want to advertise our convention (or anything else, for that matter) we can usually qualify for lower rates in the local newspapers.¹ Finally, the group can qualify as a recipient for cheap federal surplus property. *Legal protection:* As a member of a corporation—rather than a club or other type of informal group—an individual cannot be held personally liable for the legal consequences of negligence or libel or other improper actions of the group. The limit of liability is the total worth of the organization; personal property can't be touched. *Prestige:* Much as fans may scoff at the mundane concept of prestige associated with a society or corporation, it does have its advantages, both for the organization and for its officers, who have a snazzy listing to put on their resumé when job-hunting. Another intangible is the knowledge of who you are and what you're about, and a mechanism for changing the whole works if you've a mind to. Lastly, there's the practice acquired by having jumped through the government's hoops now, so you can do it more smoothly again if the need arises.

1.2: What To Read

This article is divided into five installments: "1: Getting Organized" (which you're now reading); "2: Corpus Delicatus"; "3: Death without Taxes"; "4: Mailing Permits and Their Friends"; and "5: Copyrights and Copy Wrongs". Roughly speaking, the earlier installments give steps which are necessary prerequisites for the procedures in the later install-

¹However, you can issue a press release which will get played as news (if the local media consider it newsworthy), and the rate is even better: free!

ments. That is, you have to get organized before you become incorporated, and incorporation must precede tax exemption, and tax-exempt status is needed for cheap postage rates. This cause-and-effect sequence means that you only need to read as far as your current requirements dictate. If you are an isolated individual, many kilometres from your nearest fellow fan, you can probably quit right now, because this article is aimed at groups of fans.²

This first installment contains a review of structure, purpose, and minimum operating procedures to which any group—no matter how informal—should pay some attention.

The second installment will be of value to larger groups, which need some kind of formal structure, and to any kind of group which wants legal status. Incorporation is advisable if you intend to put on a convention, since it is a legal shield for your group's members.

The third installment will be of value primarily if your group deals with relatively substantial amounts of money—say a thousand dollars a year or so. For amounts below this, it's probably more trouble than it's worth, and beneath the government's notice anyway. But don't be too hasty in assuming this doesn't apply to you. If you put on a convention or publish a fanzine, it isn't hard to have a thousand dollars pass through your hands in a year.

The fourth installment will definitely be of interest to groups which publish a group fanzine, such as SF³'s *Janus* or the Minnesota SF Society's *Rune*, but it can also provide a useful tool for those members of a group who publish their own fanzines, such as Hank Luttrell's *Starling*, since the individual can simply reimburse the group for the cost of mailing her or his fanzine at the lower group rates. A bulk-mailing permit can also be useful in sending out publicity for a convention. Finally, the fourth installment will get into the intricacies of grant applications and purchase of federal surplus property.

The fifth installment will distinguish between copyrights, trademarks, and patents and tell you which ones you can qualify for and what sorts of works of other people you can't reproduce without permission. This is of interest if you've got a convention name you want to protect, if you're interested in art shows, or if you want to print a letter in your fanzine.

Since some of the steps mentioned in the early parts of this article must be accomplished in a certain way in order to facilitate later steps, it is simply assumed that you are interested in the whole works. It usually will pay you to operate as if you were. Even though you might not be thinking of incorporation or tax exemption right now, you may want to take those steps some day, so it won't hurt—and might eventually help—to follow all the early steps in detail, even the ones that may seem unnecessary. The article will also assume that you are starting from scratch, with no more than a bunch of people who have a mutual interest in SF. If you've already progressed beyond that point, simply pick up the reading wherever it's appropriate.

1.3: Naming Your Group

Choosing not just a name but the right name for your group is fairly important. For example,

²Of course, as is always true, you can keep reading to satisfy your curiosity, even if you can't put this information to immediate use.

you could probably get a few chuckles out of a name like the (hypothetical) Outer Hixville Hog-Calling, Swill-Guzzling, and Moral Turpitude Association, but what do you do after the joke wears thin?

More importantly, what do you do to identify your group to those who cannot figure it out from surface appearances? To wax personal for a moment, I confess to having been almost completely unaware of fandom throughout more than a decade of reading SF. About the only glimmering I had of it was through the convention listings in *Analog*, and I didn't really have any idea who put those cons on. If I had heard of an organization like the aforementioned Outer Hixville etc., I still wouldn't have connected it with SF. Ever since discovering Madison fandom, I have harbored this nagging feeling that there are probably lots of other people just like me out there, who would be interested in fandom if they only knew it existed. It seems to me that the very least a fan group can do for folks like this is not to disguise itself.

Thus, at a minimum, the group's name should contain the words "science fiction".³ Another common element is a geographic locator—the name of a city or university, for instance. Tack on a collective noun like "group" or "society" or "association" and you're in business. One word of warning, though: avoid the word "club"; the Internal Revenue Service specifically refuses to give tax exemptions to hobby clubs, and you should avoid looking like one.

If you incorporate, you will have to include the word "corporation" in your name or append the word "incorporated" or "limited" to an existing name. The latter procedure is probably easier if you want to start informally and work your way up to incorporating. You can't legally use these terms if you're not incorporated, though, so don't jump the gun.

Does this mean that you can't have some cute fannish name? Of course not! Just as I am known as Richard Steven Russell in legal documents, Richard S. Russell in other writing, and Dick in conversation, so too can a group be known by several names, depending on the audience. Just be sure you aim the names properly. For example, SF³ is incarnated at the University of Wisconsin as the Madison Science Fiction Group, a perfectly serviceable name which is used on all our publicity for theme meetings to which we specifically invite the public. Yet, at one such meeting, the room schedule listed us as MadSTF, which was not only uninformative but inconsistent with the publicity, so anyone trying to find the Madison SF Group meeting that evening probably missed it. Names like "MadSTF" may have their uses⁴ in fannish circles or informal conversation, but they should not be aimed at other audiences.

1.4: Types of Official Documents

There are six types of official documents which any organization may encounter: (1) a right-to-exist document, which we will call a "charter"; (2) an incorporation document, called "articles of incorporation"; (3) a basic structure and purpose document, the "bylaws"; (4) a guide to parliamentary procedure,

³Of course, if it's more oriented toward fantasy, or specifically to the works of Tolkien (for example), or to *Star Trek*, then you should get that emphasis into the name instead.

⁴Actually, I would just as soon the name "Mad-STF" perished from the face of the planet, because it really doesn't mean anything. Ostensibly, it's an abbreviation of "Madison scientifiction", which may be the name of a body of literature but which definitely doesn't denote a group of people. Besides, the term "scientifiction" died (or should have) with Hugo Gernsback. However, I have been assured by numerous individuals that this is just my problem. *Sigh*

which we will call the "meeting rules"; (5) a summary of the actions of any meeting, the "minutes"; and (6) a compendium of organizational policies, the "standing rules".

A *charter* is typically issued by a parent body to an affiliate, by a university to a recognized student group, and/or by a state to a corporation. In the latter case, the charter will be issued only after the *articles of incorporation* are properly filed. This process will be discussed at length in the second installment.

The term *bylaws* is used because that's the word that most states apply to the document controlling a corporation. You are probably more familiar with the term "constitution"; it means the same thing. It is here that the basic nature of the organization is described. Every group should have bylaws, so they will be discussed in detail in the next section.

The most famous set of *meeting rules* is the alliterative *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*, which is one of the worst possible things you can use. It's based on the rules of Congress. Congressional representatives are professional meeting attenders and are in top practice to handle a complicated set of rules; almost nobody else is. There are lots of better, simpler meeting guides on the market.⁵ The best place to start looking for one is your local public library. Or you can go one better and write your meeting rules into your bylaws in a very simple form, thereby eliminating the need for a separate document altogether. This is what SF³ has done. Article 7 Section 4 of the bylaws reads:

Insofar as possible, the presiding officer shall endeavor to allow full discussion of all issues. Where possible, decisions should be reached by consensus. Where necessary, a majority vote will be determinative. Debate may be terminated by a 4/5 vote.

Does it work? Yup. It's an effective approach in a small body of relatively like-minded people with a common purpose. It might not work as well in a larger or more diverse group. It's designed to foster the habit of listening to other people and trying to work everything out as much as possible to the satisfaction of all concerned. It's very difficult to shut anyone up, so there's free-ranging discussion, yet it is possible to come to a vote if necessary to obtain resolution of disagreements.

The *minutes* of a meeting use the same major headings which are used in the meeting agenda: (1) call to order; (2) quorum count; (3) officer's reports; (4) committee reports; (5) nominations, elections, and appointments; (6) unfinished business; (7) original business; (8) announcements; and (9) declaration of adjournment. Individual items under each major heading should be numbered, and different actions on each item should be lettered. Reports which are submitted in writing should be appended to the minutes, otherwise a brief synopsis of the report should be included in the minutes. Minutes are supposed to be terse. For any given motion, they include (1) the name of the maker (but not the name of the seconder; if there is no second, that will be noted, but otherwise it is understood that a second occurred); (2) a brief statement of the motion, though exact wording should be used in the case of amendments to official documents; and (3) the disposition of the motion ("vv" can be used to designate voice vote; hand votes are indicated by the number for or against). Minutes can be handwritten, but it's better if they're typed up afterward. Looseleaf notebooks are ideal for filing minutes. You can get by without minutes, but you're inviting trouble. ("We agreed to set aside \$20 for

⁵Copies of the much simpler, 14-page *Amateur's Meeting Guide* are available from SF³ for \$1 apiece.

the next mailing." "No, we didn't." "I thought that was for the mailing permit." "Well, it doesn't matter now; it's spent." "Who told you it was OK to spend it?" Etc.) Better to write things down and know than trust to memory and guess.

Sometimes the organization will want a record of precedents and official policies. While the minutes contain such a record, they're not easy to use, since they're organized chronologically, rather than by subject. So the group can set up a secondary source document, the *standing rules*, where such matters may be formally entered. Standing rules control the everyday workings of the group, and thus should be easier to change (typically by majority vote at any meeting) than the bylaws or articles of incorporation, which determine the very nature of the organization. Examples of the sorts of things which get into the standing rules are the types of expenditures which can be paid without specific authorization of a meeting, procedures to be followed for mailings, lists of people to be consulted for certain decisions, etc. If standing rules are set up, they should contain only those things which are specifically identified by the group as being standing rules; otherwise they will become too cluttered with miscellany, thereby defeating the whole purpose for having them. Many groups get by just fine without standing rules.

1.5: The Bylaws

The bylaws should consist of at least the following articles: (1) name, (2) purposes, (3) membership, (4) officers, (5) executive board, (6) committees, (7) meetings, (8) finance, and (9) amendments. As it happens, these are just the articles in the SF³ bylaws.⁶ You can include additional items if you think they're important, but, if you do so, list them under an appropriate heading. Don't start something called "Miscellaneous" or it will grow to be larger than the rest of the bylaws combined; a little thought will enable you to categorize almost anything under a meaningful heading. Or, if you have standing rules, you may wish to list some of the things there that would otherwise go into the bylaws. In any event, the articles can be subdivided into sections, which can be further subdivided into paragraphs; all of these should be numbered for easy reference.

Names have already been discussed in Section 1.3.

The *purposes* are very important, since they have a strong bearing on whether you can get a tax exemption. Since the purposes should be the same in the bylaws as in the articles of incorporation, they will be discussed at greater length in the second installment.

Under *membership* you can list who is or isn't eligible to join your organization and what their rights and privileges are. These can be as sketchy or as thorough as you want, but should at a minimum include some mention of who is entitled to vote. It's possible to set up different classes of membership (e.g., student members, non-voting members, etc.). There are about as many ways of doing this as there are Asimov novels, so you are pretty free to do what you want. Just two words of caution: make sure you can identify exactly who is a member (and of what class) at any given time, and make sure there is some provision for memberships to expire if not renewed. The simplest way to do this is to sell minimum memberships for \$1 a year.

⁶Copies of the SF³ bylaws can be obtained for 25¢ each as examples of both form and substance.

⁷Eschew that abomination of the communicative process, the Roman numeral; Arabic numerals work marvelously well in all cases.

SF³ has found that it can manage just dandy with five *officers*, a president, vice-president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer. The bylaws list their duties, which are pretty much what you'd expect. This article should also include any qualifications necessary for election to office and provisions for time of election, term of office, vacancies, and removals.

The *executive board* may seem superfluous to a small organization, but corporations are required by law to have boards of directors, and they provide a useful way to make decisions in a hurry, if that should ever be needed. If the membership is geographically dispersed, an executive board is imperative. Here is the entirety of Article 5 from the SF³ bylaws:

The officers shall constitute the executive board. The executive board has complete authority to manage the affairs of SF³ between meetings of the general membership, subject, however, to the direction of meetings of the general membership.

Committees can have their names and duties listed in the bylaws, or there can be a mention that such names and duties will be specified in the standing rules. SF³ has found that allowing the president to appoint all committee members works well, but they can be elected if desired.

Meetings of the general membership can be held as often as weekly or as infrequently as yearly. State law requires each corporation to hold an annual meeting with advance notification to all members; this makes the procedure complicated enough that SF³ only wanted to go through it once a year, the legal minimum. In the interim, everything is handled either by committee or by the executive board. Executive board meetings can be specified in the bylaws but a more practical approach is to allow it to meet at the call of any two executive-board members. Committees can meet at the call of the chair. This article should specify the quorum requirement; this can be either a percent of members or a fixed number of members. You should also decide whether you wish to allow proxy votes; some state laws require you to do so, and it usually doesn't hurt to build this provision into the bylaws.

Finance, an essential matter to any group, deserves an article of its own to specify the fiscal year (which the IRS will ask about if you want to be tax-exempt), the amount of annual dues for each class of membership, and the way in which expenditures may be authorized. (Usually it takes a specific vote or authorization by standing rule, and checks should be signed by two officers.) Finally, this article should contain a provision dealing with dissolution of the organization. Since the articles of incorporation should contain identical wording, this provision will be discussed in the next installment.

Lastly, an article on *amendments* will indicate how to change the bylaws. They shouldn't be too easy to change, since they're quite fundamental. Usually a vote of at least two thirds of the people attending an annual meeting is required, as well as advance notice.

1.6: Finding an Address

The things to look for in an address are, in order of importance, (1) permanence, (2) accessibility, and (3) officiality. Taking these factors into account, the order of preference for addresses is: (1) an office, (2) a post-office box, (3) a private home, and (4) a private apartment or dorm room.

An office is best, since it represents an official, permanent address that is accessible to all group members and also to others like delivery people and out-of-town fans. Offices are expensive, though, unless you have an "angel" or are affiliated with a larger organization such as a university. So

this option will probably remain a dream for most groups.

Therefore, the next best bet (the one SF³ is using) is a post-office box. It's official, permanent, and accessible to all members of the group during post-office hours; however, it is not very accessible to others, and you can't put a telephone in one.⁸ As of this writing (1979 June), here are the available sizes of PO boxes, at least in MadCity:

| Size | Height | Width | Depth | Rental |
|------|--------|-------|-------|---------|
| #1 | 12 cm | 8 cm | 36 cm | \$28/yr |
| #2 | 15 cm | 13 cm | 36 cm | \$40/yr |
| #3 | 15 cm | 27 cm | 36 cm | \$56/yr |
| #4 | 31 cm | 27 cm | 36 cm | \$80/yr |

In order to apply for a PO box, you must give the name and address of some real person who can be contacted in case there are any problems, like oversized mail or deliveries from commercial carriers like UPS. Although the US Postal Service will not bug you to keep this up to date, it will be to your own advantage to do so. You can ask for a mnemonic box number like 1984 or 2001, but don't count on getting it; indeed, depending on availability, you may not get anything at all. You should consider in advance if you're more interested in key or combination locks; the latter make the box accessible to more people in your group, for good or ill.

The last two categories are private residences and share the disadvantages of unofficiality and limited accessibility. But they're cheap, and, although you may not be able to hold meetings there, you can take phone messages or put up out-of-towners if the residents aren't too unwilling to have their privacy invaded. These two differ mainly in their degree of permanence, Category 4 traditionally involving greater transience than Category 3.

Whatever you choose, remember that the first criterion is permanence. Unless you are kicked out of your house or apartment or can get a really good deal on an office, stick with the address you start with.

1.7: Getting a Telephone

A telephone is a great convenience, but don't expect to get one in the name of your organization. The charge to an organization is the same as the business rate, and it's more money than the phone is worth. Probably you'll end up listing the home phone of one of the officers if a phone number is required for anything.

1.8: Getting a Checking Account

You are now at the stage where you can start filing legal documents. Since these usually require a filing fee, you will need a checking account.⁹

There are two main considerations in choosing a financial institution: (1) convenience and (2) cheapness.

For convenience, we find that a bank close to our post-office box is handy, but picking one on your treasurer's way home from work or near her or his home might do as well.

Relative to economy, most banks have a minimum monthly charge and/or a per-check charge, but these can be canceled if you maintain a specified minimum balance; look for the lowest minimum-balance requirement. Be sure to ask if the bank offers any special low rates to non-profit organizations. Some do, and you will want to avail yourselves of the benefits. You might also want to look into credit unions, which may allow you to withdraw money from interest-bearing accounts, something which banks are (at present) pro-

⁸Notwithstanding the cover of *Janus* 8.

⁹You may eventually have enough money built up to think about opening a savings account, but initially a checking account will suffice.

hibited from doing.

Once you've chosen your bank, ask the customer-service rep for a copy of a resolution designating the bank as an official depository. Your organization will have to pass the resolution and file it with the bank. (If you eventually incorporate, you'll have to do this again, because the form of the corporate resolution differs, but you can cross that bridge when you come to it.)

You should already have decided on a treasurer and a procedure for cosigning checks. You have just passed the depository resolution. All you need now is your initial deposit, which can be as little as \$5. If you've got a provision for dues, this is the time to start charging them. Otherwise, someone will have to advance the money for the initial deposit.

When you order your checks from the bank, be sure to list your address but avoid listing specific officers' names, which are subject to change. If you plan on having a cosignature procedure (highly recommended), you should specify two signature lines on the checks as well.

When your checks arrive in the mail, you're ready for the next step: incorporation.

CIRCUS

By Philip E. Kaveny

It is nearly 70 feet from her perch
to the sawdust center ring,
still fragrant from the bears preceding.

The spotlight breaks to a million rainbows
as it strikes
the thousand prisms of her sequined costume.

The crowd falls silent
with a rush
as she signals the net to be cut.

His strong ethical hands wait inverted,
as always,
to catch and save.

White cloth defines the shape of his taut pectorals.
After all, it is
the catcher upon whom it all depends.

She swings twice, turns,
spins twice, thrice,
and is free.

With palms open to the sky
she disdains the patient ethical hands
that would/could/have always caught and saved.

She is dead,
you wish/you hope/you breathe.
Dead, you say,
Smashed against the sawdust.

You are wrong, fools.
She has always kept a single perfect secret
from you and herself:

She can fly.

Amateur and small-press publications are often born of a relatively small and geographically dispersed group of people with a need to communicate a special interest. It is not surprising, then, to discover the feminist community as active in the little-magazine field as are SF fans with their fanzines. Like SF fan journals, the content of these does not necessarily adhere to the original special interest, but encompasses every conceivable topic. SF fanzines often discuss everything but SF, though they maintain the common assumption that everyone probably likes SF. Similarly, feminist little magazines cover the same vast ground, with the common assumption that everyone probably has some kind of feminist understanding. Publications like *Janus*, *Hindhaven*, and *The Witch and the Chameleon* have to one degree or another provided a bridge between these divergent small-press and amateur publishing areas. It seems only fitting to introduce the readers of *Janus* to some of the magazines on the other side of the bridge.

Feminism is speculative in many senses, since our hope of a better world lies in looking for future trends and directions, extrapolating alternatives. It is not surprising, then, to note an avid interest in SF among the feminist little magazines. *Chomo-Uri's* special "science fiction and other fantasies" issue (Vol 4 No. 2) includes poetry and photographs with fantastic imagery. The fiction is unexpectedly good—unexpected because the authors apparently are not aware of conventional SF themes and yet have done outstanding stories. Unlike fans, feminist writers aren't necessarily steeped in the genre's "traditions" (which might translate as "sexist clichés"). This lack of familiarity seems more an asset than a liability.

Ellen Berger Olson's "A Place of Cautious Dispensing" is written in an experimental style and reveals a totalitarian environment where even things like walking in the park or one breath of fresh air are rare, expensive commodities. Meaningful relationships must be applied for far in advance and are in such short supply that almost no one gets one even if they can afford the cost. Only things like sorrow and its attendant pain are freely allowable.

"The New Ice Age" by Kathryn Kramer is an odd tale of some very domestic sorts of ladies carrying on their ordinary lives as though the world outside weren't coming to an end.

If I've a criticism of any of the fine material in this issue, it is that feminist authors, like traditional SF authors, have been unable or unwilling to extrapolate anything but horrible futures. There's no suggestion that these authors believe the "better tomorrow" we're all hoping for will ever happen.

I've five other issues of *Chomo-Uri* at hand, the latest being Vol. 5, No. 1. All have excellent reproduction of artwork and photography, with pristine typography, on slick enameled paper. It's a quality little magazine on every level and recommended to all with any interest whatsoever in women's arts.

The magazine's name, by the way, is Tibetan for "Mother of the Turquoise Peak", the name of the world's highest mountain, which the English renamed after a man.

\$1.50 per copy or \$4.00 for a four-issue subscription from *Chomo-Uri*, Box 1057, Amherst, MA 01002.

Quest: *A Feminist Quarterly* is another superior small-press magazine. The 1975 "Future Visions" issue can still be ordered; it includes a fantasy story by Sally Gearhart and an interview with Joanna Russ. The current issue (Vol. 4, No. 3) on "The Body Politic" includes articles about death as a feminist issue, the

VIEW

FROM THE

OTHER

SIDE

REVIEWS OF THE

FEMINIST

SMALL PRESS

Jessica Amanda
Salmonson



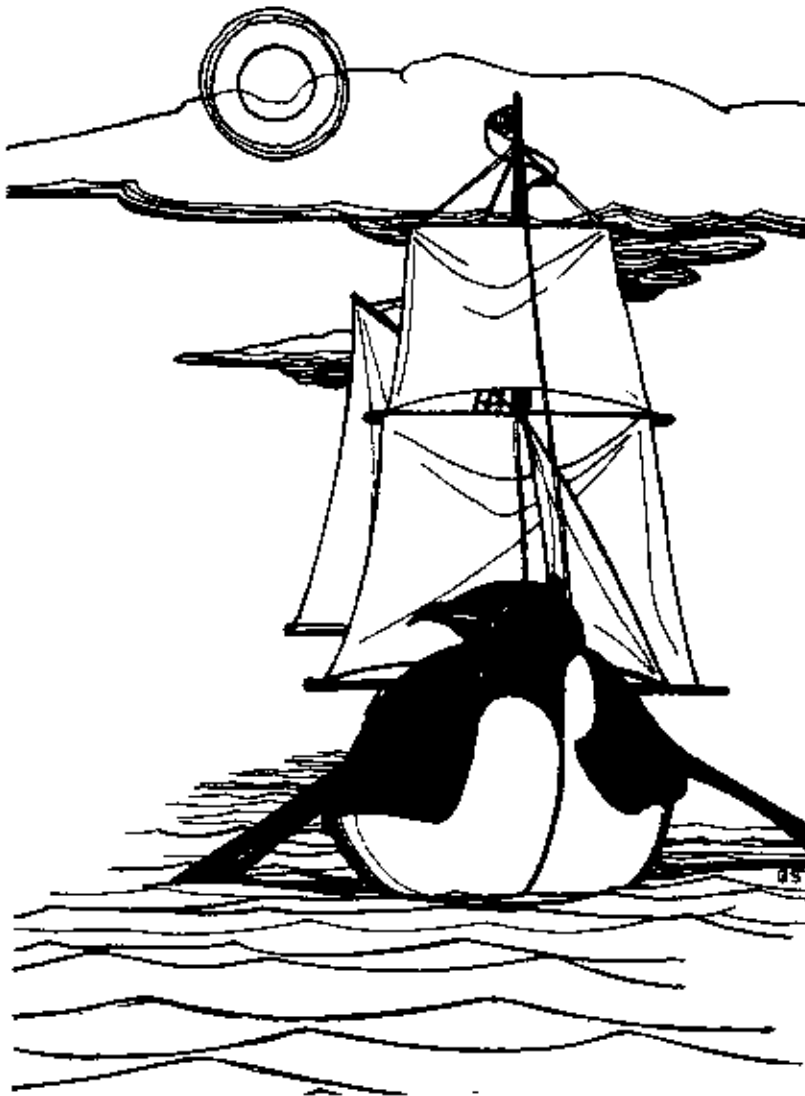
politics of sickness, the horrific bottle-feeding campaigns by big business in underdeveloped countries*, menstrual-extraction procedures, etc. This is a serious magazine, but without academic stuffiness. The article by Paula Webster on rape research was fascinating to me for its anthropological insights and its poking fun at Marxist anthropologists a la Father Engles and Mother Reed, the god and goddess of many feminist pre-historians.

This professional-looking magazine is recommended to all who wish more than a superficial insight to feminism as a philosophy.

\$2.75 per copy or \$8.00 for a four-issue subscription from *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly*, Box 8843, Washington, DC 20003.

Two copies of the Canadian women's little magazine *Room of One's Own* sit before me (Vol. 3 Nos. 3 and 4). The first is largely poetry of high quality, and a super article on Gertrude Stein and the 19th Century women's movement by Kate Armatage. There's one other essay, a short story, and outstanding reviews. The later issue is my favorite of the two. This one isn't top-heavy with poetry, having a nice balance of poetry and fiction in the first

*Remember to boycott the products of Nestlé's, the most arrogant offender!



half and a very large, very good section of reviews and criticism in the latter half (with smaller type too). There is also a wonderful double-page display of Tee Corinne's artwork.

Room has a professional appearance and features top-grade writings by Canadian and other North American women. It's not as graphic-arts oriented as some of the feminist little mags, but what it uses gets excellent reproduction.

An earlier issue which I do not have (Vol.1 No.2) is still available for \$3.50, featuring among other material an interview with Margaret Atwood and an article on women in science fiction.

\$2.00 per copy or \$6.00 (\$7.00 US) for a four-issue subscription from The Growing Room Collective, Box 46160, Station G, Vancouver, BC V6R 4G5 Canada.

Calyx, a journal of art and literature by women, was recently awarded a grant which will pay for the next three issues. It's deserved.

The current issue (Vol.2 No.3) is the "special matriarchical issue" and as such a little disappointing. The poetry, art, and single short story have nothing special to Jo with matriarchies; thus I wonder what their definition is. Aside from this seemingly non-applicable label, however, this is another outstanding issue. The graphic-arts sections are awe-inspiring. Fedra Kosh's acrylics are reproduced

in sharp, clear black and white on top-grade paper. Kosh's well-presented work is phallic (and I mean vaginally so; check your dictionary if you thought phallic meant something else), bold, and feminine. Sandra's self-portraits of herself as Peter Pan, Simone Simon, Anna Pavlova, and Martha Graham are lovely, whimsical, egocentric, and very, very fine. Among the poetry is "Ballonne" by Elizabeth Ann Shibley. It's about ballerina Emma Livry, who died in the 1800s of burns sustained on stage at the Paris Opera. It is a grim and beautiful poem, without exception.

Truly an artists' little magazine, this one comes with my triple-star recommendation. The production is clearly as much an art as are the graphics, verse, and prose it features.

\$2.00 per copy or \$5.00 for a four-issue subscription from *Calyx*, Route 2, Box 118, Corvallis, OR 97330.

I'm looking at three issues of *Black Maria*, named after the little paddy wagons which used to haul off nasty suffragists who were busy upsetting The Men long before this "new" women's movement got started. The most current issue in my possession (Vol.3 No.3) is a marvel. It contains two surreal vignettes about Joan of Arc ('Take off my armour,' she says. 'Do you have a bear?') visiting the author, Jacqueline De Angelis, in Scubenville, Ohio. Barbara Sheen's "Fairy Tale" also has surreal undertones. On the non-fiction side is Barbara Sarkesian's report on a little-known heroine, Ida Lewis, a lighthouse keeper in the 1800s who made many heroic ventures to save shipwrecked crews.

In one of the previous issues (Vol.3 No.2) Barbara Barg's "Sweet chariot" stands out in my mind even now. A clever, righteous horror story, this tale would be at home in any collection of horror fiction.

Unlike the above mentioned journals, *Black Maria* isn't typeset and professional in appearance. It's typed on a Selectric and printed with economic care. But it remains a superior magazine, with some of the best written material of anything mentioned here. As highly recommended as the rest.

\$1.50 per copy from *Black Maria*, 815 W. Wrightwood, Chicago, IL 60614. Ask about subscriptions.

The interest in anthropology ("one part possible fact and nine parts imagination" according to a University of Washington anthropology professor), mysticism, theories of matriarchical origin, and goddess faith often gives the feminist press an air of high fantasy. There's nothing escapist or unrealistic about it, however. As "history" or "prehistory" these feminist looks backward are no more or less biased than any other theoretically "objective" (hat) historian's perspective. As "fancy" these feminist interpretations are at least compelling, exciting, enticing, and above all visionary. It is this "visionary" aspect that causes anthropology and social archeology to have as much to do with the future as with the past. For example, if it can be shown that women were not subjugated in every past epoch, then *ipso facto* we needn't assume subjection in every future epoch. Or, if we study !Kung, Tlwi, or Philippine rain-forest peoples and discover them to be nearly non-sexist, totally peaceful cultures, then we can stop thinking we are descended of killer apes and that there is something "natural" or primal about war, rape, or women's subservience. Such observations offer hope for that better tomorrow. With world turmoil, sex power, and racism shown to be modern phenomena rather than relics of some imagined "barbaric" era, we begin to take responsibility for our lapses and we begin to work for change within ourselves.

And, incidentally, we can begin to write, read,

and enjoy better SF and fantasy. As past blends into future, fantasy blends into SF; so it's no wonder clear distinctions are never possible: every dichotomy is an invented one. Objectivity, too, is a myth, and the mystic concept that all truth is fictitious applies even to the queen of sciences, math—for even math becomes more and more theoretical, malleable, and subjective in its most advanced states.

The point is that everything is myth. We are the product of our myths, and if we can create better myths, we can begin to be better people. The humane interpretation of our supposed knowledge of past and current events, and of possible future events, is as important to feminists as it is to authors of the fantastic.

"The Great Goddess" issue of the magazine *Heresies* is, then, a major achievement for the small press. This is the only title reviewed here which is not a little magazine. It's huge: 140 pages mea-



asuring 8.5 by 11 inches. It explores the past by looking at classical and pre-classical goddesses and goddess faith; the present, with its look at the re-emergence of goddess imagery in contemporary women's rites and mysticism; and the future, with such articles as Grace Shinell's "Woman's Primacy in the Coming Reformation".

Ti-Grace Atkinson, in her recent farewell address when moving from Seattle, condemned this preoccupation with spirituality and plead for more

objective, political, and empirically demonstrable hypotheses and debate. I agree that there are dangers inherent to a preoccupation with the emotional to the exclusion of a logical view of the world. And yet the dichotomies in the world really are artificial, including the one that separates "logic" from "emotion", or "mystic" from "political", or even fantasy from SF. Where the objective leaves off and the subjective begins is a random drawing of lines. The mere act of line-drawing removes logic from emotion, creates the artificial dichotomy, and presents the dangers inherent to anything resembling religion or mummery. Still, religious zealots have not been more vicious than political maniacs, so the danger seems to remain "one without the other" rather than one over the other, or in prejudices irrespective of perspective.

I at least am excited by the advent of a new goddess movement. It captures the imagination, it gives strength. I don't see it leading to some kind of organized religious jihad with Amazon soldiers putting male-chavínist pigs to the guillotine. Such zealots (or bigots) exist in mystic and political circles alike—and so do brilliant, gentle, physically and emotionally strong philosophers, experiencing the best of both spheres with self-love and love for others.

Excuse me if I gotten more into my own interior with this "review" than into *Heresies*. But a proper review of more than 25 articles, almost as many visual features, and 14 poets would take even more space than my present reflections. The issue of *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly* reviewed above featured an article about the needless barriers between "mystic" (inner) feminism and "political" (outer) feminism. Both are necessary for our wholeness, and "The Great Goddess" issue of *Heresies* helps women find that interior strength with which to confront the exterior world.

\$3.00 plus 50¢ postage from *Heresies*, Box 766, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013.

"View from the Other Side" was conceived as a series of columns looking at the feminist presses. Whether a second column appears depends on my time and *Janus's* interest. The illusion given from the above selection is that the feminist press consists entirely of high-quality journals, but I've been selective. In fact, the range of quality covers the same range seen among fanzines: *Boowatt* crud to *Algol* professionalism. The above selection of magazines was chosen on the basis of (a) not being the sort of "radical" journal that would alienate non-feminists of men among *Janus's* readership, (b) good physical appearance, and (c) high-quality writing.

I would like to look at other kinds of publications in later installments—publications and journals with less universal appeal but potentially of equal or greater importance on other levels.

In the present selection, I think any *Janus* reader could safely obtain everything reviewed and not be disappointed, threatened, bored, annoyed, or robbed by a single item. In simpler language: buy them all. ☺



VULGAR ADVERTISEMENT



FANZINES

- §*Corn* (Perri Corrick-West) Multi-colored eclecticism.
- §*Digressions* (John Bartelt) Long-lost Madison fan holds torch from darkest Minneapolis.
- §*Janus* (Janice Bogstad and Jeanne Gomoll) Hugo-nominated, feminist-oriented genzine.
- §*Orcrist* (Richard C. West) Scholarly journal covering J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, *et alii*.
- §*Starling* (Hank Luttrell) Hugo-nominated personal journal of popular culture: music, STF, comix, movies, comics, etc. Now offset. Sample copy: \$1.00.
- §*HWA!* (Vicki Carson and Kathy Bobel) *RHPS*, "Shrieks from the Void", and other irreverencies. Sample copy: \$1.00.

CONVENTION

The Wisconsin Convention of Science Fiction (WisCon) is co-sponsored with the University of Wisconsin Extension. WisCon 4 will be held 1980 March 7-9 with Guests of Honor Octavia E. Butler, Beverly DeWeese, David Hartwell, and Joan D. Vinge. Memberships: \$8.00 until Feb. 29, \$50.00 March 1-6, \$10.00 March 7-9.

UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIALS

- §"Never heard of it." —H. G. Wells
- §"Full of that crazy Buck Rogers stuff." —Hugo Gernsback
- §"I think that I shall never see/a fanzine lovely as a tree/but maybe this one can fake it." —Joyce Kilmer
- §"I thought I detected your foul stench." —Princess Leia Organa
- §"Rufffff!" —Bob Tucker
- §"No sense of humor." —John W. Campbell

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- §Madison Science Fiction Group. Meets Wednesdays at Nick's Bar and Grill, 226 State St. in Madison, except last Wednesday of each month is the "event", usually discussion of an SF author or theme and held at Union South on the UW campus. New faces eagerly welcomed. Group members also contribute to the Madison Review of Books, heard over WORT-FM (89.7 MHz) and seen on Cable Channel 4.
- §"The Science Fiction and Fantasy Hour", hosted by James Andrew Cox on WORT-FM.
- §SF Book of the Month Circle. Discusses a different novel each month. Meets informally in people's homes and apartments. Pretzels featured.
- §Dungeons and Dragons. A corps of dungeon masters holds at least one adventure a week.
- §Speakers' bureau. Presentations (some with slides) on any SF-related topic, including cats and the metric system.
- §Library. Group collection of fanzines, paperbacks, magazines, etc. Contributions welcome.

UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION

All of the foregoing activities are coordinated by the Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction (SF³), a non-profit, non-stock Wisconsin corporation. For information on how you can become an active or supporting member of SF³ (contributions being tax exempt), write to:

SF³, Box 1624, Madison, WI, 53701

ARTISTS' SELF-PORTRAIT GALLERY

Those who are interested in obtaining artwork from the following contributors to this issue should contact the artists directly. Artists submitting work to *Janus* should include a self-portrait for our gallery.

Kurt Baty
c/o Michelle Doty
1006 Grove Blvd. #104
Austin, TX, 78741

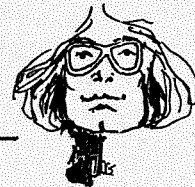


Richard Bruning
409 S. Livingston St.
Madison, WI, 53703

Alexis Gilliland
4030 8th St. S.
Arlington, VA, 22204



Jeanne Gomoll
2018 Jenifer St.
Madison, WI, 53704



Joan Hanke-Woods
4243 1/2 N. Hermitage St. #3-D
Chicago, IL, 60613



Teddy Harvia
Box 5402
Fort Worth, TX, 76108



C. Lee Healy
1862 Spruce St.
Livermore, CA, 94550

Tim C. Marion
c/o Hope Leibowitz
2032 Cross Bronx Xwy.
Bronx, NY, 10472

James McLeod
4188 Birdwell Way
North Highlands, CA, 95660



Joe Pearson
17830 Kinzie St.
Northridge, CA, 91325

Gene Perkins
1519 E. Howell St.
Seattle, WA, 98122

Sarah Prince
2369 Williams St. #A
Columbus, OH, 43202

Gregory G. H. Rihn
1032 Church St.
Wisconsin Dells, WI, 53965



Georgie Schnobrich
1019 Vilas Av.
Madison, WI, 53715

Stu Shiffman
880 W. 181st St. #4-D
New York, NY, 10033

David M. Vereschagin
10650 103rd St. #201
Edmonton, Alb., T5H 2V5



