

Dark Horizons

Issue 9 • summer 1974



Dark Horizons 9

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Produced and Edited for the BPS by STEPHEN JONES.

CONTENTS:

| | | |
|---|-------------------|----|
| EDITORIAL..... | Stephen Jones | 3 |
| THE SORCERER'S BOOK..... | Thomas Hooley | 4 |
| OF LARGER THINGS I DREAM..... | Peter Wilcockson | 7 |
| THE COSMIC IN MUSIC..... | David Sutton | 9 |
| HELL! IT'S LATE..... | John Martin | 13 |
| AT THE WORLD'S EDGE..... | Dave Weldrake | 15 |
| THE ARTIST IN FANDOM: JIM PITTS..... | David Riley | 16 |
| CATCH THE SUN AT ITS SETTING..... | Gordon Larkin | 23 |
| - SPLAT!..... | Julian A. Le Saux | 24 |
| THE FORGOTTEN RINK..... | Gordon Larkin | 25 |
| BERGMAN AND THE HORROR FILM: SOME OBSERVATIONS..... | Ramsey Campbell | 27 |
| LETTERS OF COMMENT..... | | 31 |

ARTWORK: Front Cover ("Three Heads"); Page 2: Page 3; Page 17 ("Self Portrait"); Page 19; Page 20; Page 22 ("The Doom That Came To Sarnath - HPL") by JIM PITTS/ Page 8 by DAVID LLOYD/ Page 12 by STEPHEN JONES/ Page 26 by STEPHEN SKWARER/ Page 30 by DAVID FLETCHER/ Centre Pages: A Selection of JIM PITTS.

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EDITORIAL

never named.

And this leads nicely into my reasons for this editorial: to briefly outline my policies for DH and take a look at the contents this issue.

There has been quite a lot of talk recently about getting professionals to contribute to DH, but this is something I'm not too keen on doing; I am certainly not against including work by professionals if they are kind enough to submit it (witness Ramsey Campbell's excellent piece in this issue), but my prime objective for DH is to reflect the very best in fandom. In these pages I hope to develop the already considerable talent fandom has to offer, as well as featuring outstanding work by newcomers to the genre.

Now for a look at this issue's contents: Artwork has probably been most noticeable by its absence in the last couple of numbers; in this issue I have attempted to redress this deficiency somewhat with some fine contributions from Jim Pitts (who has also very kindly allowed himself to be interviewed for the first in our new series spotlighting The Artist in Fandom), David Lloyd and David Fletcher (who are both featured with an excellent illo), and Stephen Skwarzek (a new name to me, but who makes his debut in DH with an impressive newspaper board illustration).

I had also hoped to feature the work of Brian Fret, but unfortunately Brian has been very ill recently; he is on the mend now and I am sure I speak for everyone when I wish him a speedy recovery.

On the fiction side, Thomas Hosty contributes a S&S story featuring his barbaric hero Krobar which is a sequel to an earlier tale of his, THE TOWER OF TRICRATIAN; John Martin takes an amusing look at the supernatural; and there is an off-beat fantasy by another newcomer, J. A. Le Soux.

Of the three articles included in this issue, I have already mentioned above the interview with Jim Pitts, Dave Riley and Nick Caffrey talk to Jim about his work in fandom; David Sutton contributes the second in his trilogy of essays about the cosmic theme in fantasy, this time he examines rock music - an aspect of the genre rarely explored; while Ramsey Campbell (whose LAYOUTS column has shifted to the bulletin) looks at the films of Swedish director Ingmar Bergman, as well as touching upon several other horror films during his retrospective.

Scattered throughout the magazine there is poetry by Peter Wilcockson (another new name to fandom), David Weldrake (a lovely mood-piece), and Gordon Larkin (who needs no introduction to DH's readers) has a couple of - as usual - excellent poems.

The letters column also returns to round off this issue with some diverse views about DARK HORIZONS 7 and 8, as well as a few comments of my own.

Finally, a few words about contributions: I always require worthy contributions for DARK HORIZONS; this issue's contents will, I think, give you some idea of the

Welcome, to what I hope will be the first of many issues of DARK HORIZONS which I will edit. I certainly intend to remain here a little longer than a few of my predecessors, and just as each of the previous editors brought their own image to the magazine, so DH9 reflects my ideas of what a fantasy fanzine should be.

Sure, it's not perfect - it's rather difficult to attain perfection in an amateur magazine such as this - still, I hope that you will agree that this issue's contents are fairly well balanced, featuring work from some of the finest writers and artists in fandom as well as contributions from

(Continued on page 29).

The Sorcerer's Book

by THOMAS HOSTY

Krobar of Migjel sat in the coolest corner of Zoshara's only tavern, and brooded. Staring into the luminous depths of his chilled wine, he could almost see it happening all over again...

He had come in from the Grey Desert that very morning, sunburnt and sand-encrusted. To eyes which had stared themselves dark on the scorched, sterile wastes of the empty Desert for four interminable weeks, even the small frontier town of Zoshara, squalid and treacherous as it undoubtedly was, seemed a glorious sight. And so he had let his guard down.

He sold the horses and gear which he had acquired under strange circumstances in the wastes, and resolved to spend a fraction of his resultant wealth on a hill-pony with which to cross the looming Teresco mountains to the north. With the rest of the money, he intended to have fun. But fun - a golden-skinned wench named Coranna - had ideas of her own. She also had an accomplice, who possessed a small but hefty cobb, which he wielded with a skill born of long practice.

By the time Krobar awoke, a sadder but wiser man, Coranna and her friend had melted into the maze backstreets of the town. They had left him with only ten of his original two hundred dinshars. Indeed, they would have taken every single coin, had they known of the hole in the lining of his purse. Sitting up and gingerly massaging his ringing head, the Migjellian added up his remaining assets. Then he worked out a few sums on his fingers, and frowned. He might possibly buy a hill-pony for twelve dinshars, so long as he was prepared to settle for a foul-tempered old brute with three legs.

He would have to walk. This was by no means an easy decision, for the Teresco range was steep and inhospitable, the home of Erish Largo's infamous brigands, and home too, if some of Zoshara's whispered tales were truth, of less easily-imagined dangers. Nevertheless, Krobar's road ran north, and he rarely changed his mind.

So it was that, two hours later, carrying a bag of provisions bought for one of his remaining dinshars, and squeezing the iron pommel of his sword out of pure ill-temper, he set out along the dusty road to the mountains. But Zoshara was not finished with him yet. As he approached the edge of the town, he noticed a small, wrinkled, beady-eyed individual in the saffron robes of a Zolan sectary sidling purposefully towards him.

The little man stopped and, peering up into the adventurer's simmering eyes, let fall a few quiet words:

"Would you like to buy a hill-pony? Only nine dinshars!"

Krobar's eyebrows rose.

"A beautiful beast!", continued the sectary, "see for yourself!"

As if on cue, a hill-pony trotted forward. Krobar inspected it in silence. The animal didn't look mad; there were no obvious signs of disease; it had all four legs intact.

"Why is it shod with brass instead of iron?" he asked.

"You have a sharp eye, sir", purred the Zolan unctuously. "The animal does not like the touch of iron, so its shoes, bit and harness buckles are all of brass. You would do well not to touch it with iron, sir."

Krobar peeled back its lips to look at its teeth. He peered into its eyes. He pondered. At last he decided that the pony would probably live long enough to cross the mountains. Indeed, he might even have time to sell it before it died.

"I'll take it."

The sectary bowed low, extending one greasy palm to receive his money.

"Long life, sir, and many women", he fawned, retreating towards the alley from which he had first emerged.

Krobar mounted up, and dug his spur-less heels into the pony. It stayed stock still. His earlier bad temper returning, he kicked again, in vain. Lounging onlookers sniggered, and grinned in lazy amusement. Two further hard kicks elicited no more than an insolent grin from the beast. With a snarl, he whipped out his sword, and brought the flat of the blade down on the animal's rump with stinging violence.

What happened next was not clear. He was momentarily aware of a sensation of falling. Then he hit the ground with a sickening crash. Dazed and angry, he struggled up and looked around for his pony. No trace of the beast was to be seen. The only animal in sight was a tiny lizard, scuttling away in search of its home. Thunderstruck, he remembered the words of an old friend of his from his days in the Dragon Legions of Calverius:

"Beware the town at the desert's edge, where things are not always as they seem."

He turned to glimpse a flash of yellow disappearing into the black throat of an alleyway.

"A spell!" he roared. "I've been tricked!"

And, to the great amazement of the passers-by, he set off in hot pursuit of the fleeing Zolan.

The chase through the backstreets was not easy. Every evil-smelling alley looked the same as all the others, and most were densely crowded with merchants and pack-beasts and the swaggering soldiery of Jerem, the city which ruled Zebara. Furthermore, the sectary knew his way, while Krobar did not. Yet somehow, thanks to his speed and strength, the enraged westerner never quite lost track of his yellow-clad quarry. Thus, after nearly an hour of twisting and turning, leaping and dodging, he was rewarded with the sight of the small Zolan slipping swiftly and rather surreptitiously into a small tower in the heart of the backstreets.

Resuming to draw his breath and his sword, he surveyed the building. He had seen many of the type during his stay in the Essari states to the south of the desert: a single door at ground level, opening onto a spiral staircase leading up to one, or perhaps two, circular rooms at the very top. He looked about him, and, sure that he was not observed, stole into the tower.

The interior, lit only by a small oil-lamp in a niche, was gloomy, especially after the fierce yellow light of the desert sun outside. Krobar could just distinguish the dark, dusty coil of the staircase which climbed the inner wall of the tower. Brushing ragged curtains of cobweb aside, he started up the steps. His footfalls rang hollowly in the dim stone chimney.

Halfway up, he shrunk back against the curved wall, paralyzed with horror. Not three sword-lengths away squatted something from the deepest, most forgotten dungeon in the Seven Hells. The mere sight of it paled his skin with ice-cold sweat. A huge, quivering sprawl of glistening, slimy flesh, crowned with a pulsating crimson sucker-mouth and fringed with staring yellow-black eyes and rippling masses of pallid tendrils, the filthy thing literally wallowed in an oily, putrid welter of foulness. This ooze, which seemed to dribble from a number of boil-like excrescences on the monster's sagging body, ran in thin trickles down the stairway, collecting in stinking puddles on the treads. The thing did not move. Indeed, it appeared incapable of movement, which was the only thing that stopped him dashing headlong down the steps and away, his humiliation forgotten. It only stared.

After a while his racing heart slowed. The horror was nauseating, certainly, but it had not attacked him. Slowly, his inborn optimism returned. Perhaps he could inch past it, hugging the wall. Or lever it out of the way with his sword. Or... A thought struck him, and his jaw dropped. He shook his head; no, he couldn't fall for the same trick twice. Or could he?

Tentatively, he reached out and prodded the thing with his iron sword. Instantly, it vanished. A small toadstool lay on the steps instead. Like the lizard earlier, it had returned to its true shape when touched with the metal. With a groan of savage ferocity carving his features, he continued up the steps.

At the top was a locked door. Krobar kicked it down. The room within was potently a sorcerer's den: the ceremonial knives and chalices, the crumbling grimoires and polished skulls, the alembics, retorts, aludels and steaming crucibles, the pentagrams and hexagrams, the incense-burners, tripods and furnaces, the jars of herbs, the idols and smoke-wreathed totems of rare metals, even the wide basins of blood and drug-fired columns of weirdly coloured flame, all screamed the fact aloud. But he was too angry to be frightened. He ignored them all: his attention was reserved for the yellow-robed individual seated before a great reading-stand, hastily scanning the brittle pages of a gigantic book.

With a little squeal of triumph, the sectary turned to Krobar, gabbling a stream of long, incomprehensible words, and gesticulating. The westerner felt a faint, transient nausea, but nothing more. The little man's leering face fell.

"By Khram!", he whispered, staring at Krobar's hand, "the sword has a hilt of iron! I did not know!"

The other laughed humourlessly.

"Aye," he said, "and an iron blade, trickster!"

And he advanced threateningly upon the Zolan, who retreated, hands raised in an imploring gesture. As he passed the book, Krobar glanced at it. The tiny writing meant nothing to him, but a woodcut illustration at the head of the page depicted a man dwindling into a rat. He shivered, and advanced more sternly upon the sectary. He had guessed that the volume was the fabled Book of Changes, long thought destroyed, but famous through traveller's tales, even in windy Miggel. How a minor wizard of Zola had come to possess the volume was a mystery, albeit one in which Krobar was not interested: he was concerned only with the use to which the man had put the book's metamorphic spells.

"Please", begged the small one, eyes wide with fear, "please spare me, sir! I will return your money! Please?"

"You have much money", said the other, surveying the piles of coins on a table in one part of the room.

"Yes, take some of it, as much as you want! But please, take your sword away too!"

But the little Zolan saw something implacable in the big man's eyes, and his incredibly aged face comforted with new terror.

"It was your fault!", he moaned, still backing away, "the lizard would have remained a pony for as long as you did not touch him with iron! He would have carried you over the mountains, and far beyond! It was a good spell! O, spare me, please! Sheath your blade and I will make you wealthy!"

Now the Zolan was trapped in a corner, twitching and whimpering. His face worked convulsively, and his pale eyes bulged. Krobar raised the sword, reversed it, and swung it, pomel foremost, down at the man's bald head. There was a faint impact, and the sword swept through empty air. At his feet, in the middle of a small, tangled heap of empty yellow robes, crouched the oldest, most shrivelled frog he had ever seen...

In the coolest corner of Zobara's only tavern, Krobar of Miggel swallowed the last of his chilled wine. Rising, he went out to his newly-purchased hill-pony. Darkness was falling, and the Teresco Mountains to the north were only a crazy silhouette, black against the luminescent purple of the warm evening sky. Although he disliked starting a journey at the end of a day, the prospect of a night in Zobara made him uncomfortably nervous.

He had taken four hundred dinshars from the sectary's tower, so that his purse was comfortably heavy, a rare feeling for him. He had also destroyed the Book of Changes, by soaking it in wine before firing it. This he had felt obliged to do after he noticed a wandering desert crow enter the tower and alight on the edge of the lectern. The bird had been scanning the close-set lines with evident interest and, far more frightening, apparent comprehension when he scared it away. As he closed the book, he had noticed on the dragon-skin cover a familiar symbol - the sigil of the mage Triorgathos. Having already some experience of the power of that wizard's sorcery and the viciousness of his sense of humour, the Migjellian could not allow the book to survive. Afterwards, he had put the tower to the torch as well.

Looking back, he could see the tower still burning, like a guttering candle and

the thickening darkness. Much less to his liking, he thought he detected a faint, ghostly radiance hanging over the valley where he knew Triongathon's now-deserted castle stood. Squaring his shoulders against the evening wind, he set off for the mountains.

Of Larger Things I Dream

Oh, lovely dark fine hills
so cold and distant.
The viewer was appaled at the thought
of not seeing the crystal blue lake
through air that stands static,
wrapped, a velvet cocoon, a blanket around the world
for lonesome eyes to see.
Cold flames of light glow faintly
and I'm thinking of the mountains, the years,
and the hollow, empty pit, emphasising water.
The light glistens, a rusty yellow,
rolling hills in the distance echo the screaming silence.

(1) Who has been here before?
Who stood beside these brown leaves
that slowly curl and wither to the bright
clear crystal snow of the coming winter?

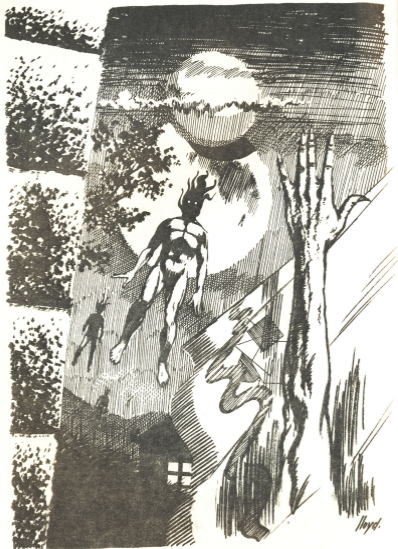
(2) I touch the sky, the air,
see the hilltops rugged ahead,
and feel the sky close in.
Nothing changes here, not even the trees
whose familiar faces hide the magic eyes
and the old folk of the mountains,
whose grey eternal fear lies brushed,
like a fan of immortal silk;
the weary crow stands, it's sharp, rugged eyes
watching the skyline, perched by the lake,
on its silver twig.

(3) I touch the sky, the air,
wings spread out against the night
as if uttering a warning
and gazing in its shiny, jewel-like eyes
I see the homes and fields of ancient mountain races.
Of larger things I dream.

Standing back I steal a look
across the flowing, living, liquid lake.
The hills dream, Solemnly alone, with nothing hurt,
nothing dying, except the futile winter leaves.

And they always come back.

peter wilcockson



THE COSMIC IN MUSIC

by *David Sutton*

Jupiter and Saturn; Hyperion, Miranda and Titania; Neptune, Triton --

Stars stand brighter... (The Pink Floyd).

Hertz Wlaaki Kobala... (Magma).

We were born to go, as far as we can fly... (Bachirind).

Look here brother, who you givin' with that Cosmic Debris... (Frank Zappa).

In a broad-based article such as this, it is virtually impossible to be definitive. I think I stressed this point somewhat in my Cosmic in Fiction (see DARK HORIZONS issue 8) and will no doubt do so in my forthcoming Cosmic in Film. But my additional problem here is that I cannot even begin to scratch the surface of the Cosmical music scene because my own preferences are so limited, mainly by economic necessity. I am more-or-less fixed with "rock" music on which to base my criteria, even though I can and do enjoy Sibelius to Stockhausen. My access and preference is to rock, so I hope non-rock fans will endure my ramblings. I hope so especially because "rock", "progressive" or what have you, are terms barely adequate to visualise some of the fine creations in the field.

My principle objective here is to define areas where music has entered the Cosmic, and for this I need not be in any way definitive, since it is an introductory survey. In searching for meaningful values in Fantasy, I would define the "Cosmic" as the essence of the artists search for something special in Mankind's existence. This something is a grasping for the Universe, the gulfs of time and space that seem a mighty power, a longing for the god-like region he wishes to attain or appreciate.

Music may do this by its sheer majesty alone, or its contextual use in films (Stravinsky's Also sprach Zarathustra in 2001 A SPACE ODYSSEY springs to mind immediately of course). Other pieces can do this quite readily on their own terms, Ligeti's Atmosphères for instance, although perhaps this is a poor example, it having been used in 2001 as well. However, in rock music, we are discussing the musician's response to the technology at his disposal, and the thematic use of that technology through his work. One of my interests in rock is that some of the bands I listen to are evolving Cosmic themes. They may stray from the straight and narrow and may even leave the idea completely if they feel it has nothing more to offer them musically.

In my Cosmic in Fiction article, we began with the precept of Fantasy existing in literature, and of that we all agree, and from there I went on to make various references about what the Cosmic is and cited several examples. In The Cosmic in Music though, even the basic assumption that Fantasy exists in music will come under debate. In my introduction to the fiction essay, I briefly outlined the broadness of the Fantasy genre and my own belief in its hugeness. Accepting that it exists in music (though not all music) is part of that belief and I do not intend discussing at great length this problem. My job here is to suggest areas of rock music where the Cosmic is prevalent both lyrically and instrumentally (with the pre-conclusion that such music is a part of the Fantasy genre per se). One thing is certain, in rock music the acceptance of Fantasy is a lot easier in many respects because groups often openly utilize examples of a Science Fictional nature. Whether these are evolved into something other than a mere pot pourri of vague "in" ideas is obviously an important aspect of the Cosmic definition. Most of the references here will be of music that I feel has stepped beyond the bandwagon stage, without even taking a ride on it. Others may feel differently, and at least at minimum this article might stimulate some sort of response and perhaps contract a more involved discussion on the whole subject of music and its applications in Fantasy.

I suppose I had better begin with something reasonably recent, The Pink Floyd's album, DARK SIDE OF THE MOON and work back and spread out from that. The Floyd's album is a good one to pick, because it is the latest in an evolutionary progression consisting of at least six long playing records, spanning their whole career. This group are useful too from the standpoint of stability: they have remained almost intact during the whole of this time. (It not being uncommon in rock music that bands change their line-up with alarming regularity). DARK SIDE OF THE MOON has been the Floyd's most popular album and has been selling very well since its release. However, it is not their most Cosmic LP and this comes across in my review of the record (see DARK HORIZONS issue 7).

In a sense, the Floyd have sidestepped the issue in that their latest music only slightly impinges on the Cosmic. It is an album breathless with expectancy, but never entirely fulfils what some of their earlier material did, even though technically they are much better now. Going back to things like Interstellar Overdrive (on PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN and RELICS), we see a title inference which is matched to a strong attempt at creating a feeling of space. Astronomy Domine (UMMAGUMMA) is a kind of evocation to space, a pleasurable little trip around the Solar System, the theme sublimated by the driving guitars and organ, something Hawkwind were later to exploit prodigiously and I will talk about their contribution later. Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun similarly, if less flagrantly and more moodily, has all the suggestion and intensity of a Floyd Cosmic trip. The sense of headlong motion is interrupted by a quiet, introspective passage, intimating Nebulae and dreamy, floating connotations. The title Banquet of Secrets (UMMAGUMMA and A SAUCEFUL OF SECRETS) has always had a profound suggestiveness to me, and undoubtedly it sparks off an outrageously chaotic and bizarre vision in its build up, later assuming a more ordered, distant, immeasurable and somehow fulfilling vision.

On a later album, WHEELS, the track Echoes also hits the vision on the head with a sustained piece of music complemented by lyrics that gave a tremendous, faraway and eerie quality. It is a pity that most of the rest of the album is superfluous, but for Echoes alone it boded well for the Floyd's consistent use of the Cosmic medium. That DARK SIDE OF THE MOON failed overall was due entirely to their lyrical statement: menacing social inference coupled with nostalgic harkbacks, interspersed with synthesised movements that seemed almost like short musical breaks between the songs.

If the Floyd have temporarily (I hope) left the Cosmic music scene, there are several others who have emerged recently to fill the gap adequately. Of these, Magma are blatantly Science Fictional in their approach. Faust seem to dodge between the Cosmic and various forms of rock, and Tangerine Dream are inherently Cosmic in total. It may be significant that all three bands are from Europe, Magma from France, the other two from Germany. Perhaps being out of the mainstay of rock music here and in America, they have tried concepts which the British bands neglect through either laziness or incapability. Either way, all three approach the music from entirely different directions, yet all three seem to attain a measure of the Cosmic vibes.

Quite successful are Magma, whose latest album, MEKANIK DESTRUKTIV KOMMANTICH consists of a choral work backed up in a well presented rock music base. Magma present here the latest saga in an interstellar meeting which has been evolving from album to album (see Gordon Larkin's review of this LP in DARK HORIZONS issue 9), and the whole of the lyrics are sung in this fictional, alien language. Even though incomprehensible to Earthmen, the Kobaian language is used with an eloquence that attains a profound authenticity in the seriousness of its use. It would appear that Magma conjure up the same sense of cosmic conflict as Holst did on the Mars segment of THE PLANETS suite.

Faust, if less successfully, seem to have a ready capacity for Cosmic connotations, but like Frank Zappa tend, if less capably, to do ninety-degree musical turnabouts. Mind you, this is itself shown considerable ability, although Faust are more than immersed in a kind of hypnotic fuzz rhythm, about which they weave some puzzling lyrics. Their parade for inventiveness is not as good as that of Henry Cow or Soft Machine even though THE FAUST TAPES must rate high as a collection of very listenable vignettes: neither is their management of themes as varied or as clever as Zappa. However, since it is the Cosmic we are discussing, these two ideas are barely relevant and we find

Faust churning out the space-waves on the odd occasion with little cumulative effect. Their lyrics are, if anything, nonsensical and do not compliment the Cosmic viewpoint. Parts of Just a Second and other bits of FAUST IV and SO FAR are distinguishable, yet it is felt that the Cosmic is one aspect they could do well to nurture.

Tangerine Dream are about as far away from rock as you can get without entering the hinterlands of the pure experimental in modern music. Their instruments include synthesizers, electric piano, organ, bass guitar. This abundance of keyboards should give some indication of their sound qualities. That, and the synthesiser which inevitably adds an eerie and often detached flavour in its overt use. On the track Phaedra (album PHAEDRA) especially, the sounds drift, pulsing in a Cosmic wash as blue and misty as the album sleeve itself, underpinned with a more concrete and recognisable rhythm. That Ligeti managed to create a similar effect in ATMOSPHERES with a conventional orchestra may dissipate Tangerine Dream's importance, but since rock music is inevitably geared to electronic sound I think their contribution as viable as ever.

The Third Ear Band have been acoustically orientated in the past (going 'electric' with their music for Polanski's MACHETH) and yet this in itself has not detracted from their propensity to formulate Cosmic vibrations. The band were not even guitar-based, and played violin, viola, oboe and drums, yet could produce the violent cataclysm of Fire, one of the tracks on their second album about EARTH, AIR, FIRE, WATER. Egyptian Book of the Dead (on ALCHEMY) exerts not only a dream, haunting mood (later taken to heights of excellence for their MACHETH music), but also a timeless sense of a slow-motion trip through some dark Universe. The drum beat suggests something impending to which you are involuntarily carried. On their MUSIC FROM MACHETH album, though strictly related to scenes in the film, moments of intense chaos and flight through time are intimated on Prophecies and a desolate finality hints of a Cosmic death on both Overture and Wicca Way.

Hawkwind have aptly labelled their product the "Space Ritual" and their LP, A SPACE RITUAL exemplifies the total depth into a Science Fictional milieu a rock band can go. Hawkwind really rock too and the whole of their album is keyed to the firmament with statements of Cosmic intent: Born to Go, Space is Deep, 10 Seconds of Forever and Sonic Attack, then roll on persuasively with accumulating power. The band are highly visual in live concert with light shows and strobes accompanying the ascent into a violent, exciting, tumultuous Cosmic vibration. Their references extend to such esoteric, but indelibly linked subjects as the Orgone Accumulator and obviously seen readily able to relate the Universe to Earthly mysteries. The Ritual is a linked narrative and quite apart from anything else is a sustained Cosmic appraisal in rock terms, oversimplified in some areas, given depth and meaning in others.

The imagery is not merely Science Fictional either, it is deeper, more unconscious, in accord with a philosophical contemplation of the Universe and unlike most SF, impinges on levels beyond the mere technological conquest of space.

This article has only given a sampling of the possible extent of the Cosmic in music, and of that only rock music which may have been a little limiting. However, it serves my purpose of outlining an aspect of Fantasy that I feel quite important, even if it is on an unconscious level. Writers, musicians and film-makers all have reached out a hand, perhaps tremblingly, towards the nighted and complex concept of the Universe. My forthcoming essay on film will complete the trilogy of articles on the Cosmic in Fantasy, but I hope meanwhile that this concept will be discussed via letters of comment - I don't think the subject a borderline one and personally feel it rather important.

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Hell! It's Late

By JOHN MARTIN

Barney lifted the receiver from its cradle and dialed Joe's number. He heard the first intermittent strains of the ringing tone, then almost immediately the click that indicated that the receiver at the other end had been lifted. There was silence.

"Hello: that you, Joe?" Barney inquired.

"No, this is Hades Incorporated, Collecting Division."

"Ha? Oh! Sorry, wrong number," he muttered, mystified. Hades Incorporated? What kind of name was that for a company, he wondered. He made to return the receiver to its cradle when the voice at the other end said:

"No, please don't hang up Mr. Gibbons, you have the right number. We have been expecting your call."

Barney grinned. "It is you Joe, you old son of a gun; what's the big idea then?"

"No, Mr. Gibbons, this is Hell Incorporated and you have the right number. We were thinking it's about time we had a word with you. You see a mistake has occurred. You were meant to join us last week, but well, something went wrong: you know how it is."

Barney looked at the phone in bewilderment. "Now listen here, what in hell's going on, I don't believe I know what you're talking about. How'd you know my name? You some kinda nut? If you're not Joe, then who the devil are you?"

"That's right Mr. Gibbons, or at least, I am in the employ of the Devil, and as I was saying, you were on the list for last week only we miscalculated: the bricklayer dropped his hod of bricks too soon. I expect you saw the mess: nasty!"

Barney remembered that early last week some poor guy had met a sticky end under a pile of bricks just a few seconds before he arrived on the scene, while on the way to the office. He remembered thinking what a lousy way to go.

"Yes," continued the voice, "so now we have one soul who was not due for another fifteen years and you still walking around. Mistakes happen in the best run outfits, you know."

"Now come on, if this is some kind of joke, I think you're going to far."

"I can assure you Mr. Gibbons, that this is no joke, especially for us. It has caused us much concern and the sooner the mistake is rectified the better."

Barney was beginning to sweat a little. What if this was true? Ha! Well it couldn't be, could it? Gotta be one of those crazy TV shows. But the first qualms of fear began creeping around his capacious stomach. Barney was forty-five and had not led a bad life, or at least, he didn't think so. He was, he admitted, slightly overweight from excess wine and dining and the lines under his eyes had been put there through too many late nights of gniety with the boys, but still, if one couldn't enjoy oneself without incurring the wrath of the Almighty what could one do. He could see no reason why he, Barnabas H. Gibbons, should go to Hell.

"Why should I go to Hell?" he blurted out, "What have I done that's so wrong?" He tried to imagine an audience crossed with laughter - he failed miserably.

"Do you really want to know?" the voice sounded amused. "It's most unusual to inform newcomers before they have arrived, but seeing as you should have been here eight days ago, I'll make this an exception. Well, at least, I'll give you an idea of a few things, it would take about three weeks to review everything. There'll be plenty of time for that when you get here."

Barney stared at the phone. He was staggered. Three weeks to read out his evil deeds, but he hadn't done anything.

"No, no, forget it will you," Hopefully he said, "look, couldn't there be some mistake, I might be the wrong Mr. Gibbons, or you might have your dates mixed or something?" He was getting a little more than just worried. Forty-five years of age.

He hadn't done anything yet and already he should have been dead eight days ago.

"You are Mr. Barnabas Horatio Gibbons the Second, born tenth of July 1929, now residing at 2031 52nd Street, employee of Stereoplate Manu..."

"Ok, ok," cut in Barney, "that's enough. So you got the right guy. Now listen, couldn't you just forget me for a while? I mean, forty-five: it's no life at all. Just gimme another chance, won't you?" pleaded a frustrated and quivering Barney.

"I'm terribly sorry, Mr. Gibbons, but that just isn't possible; we're in enough mess already. Nothing personal, you understand, I only work here and orders are orders." The voice did sound genuinely sorry.

"How look," Barney said, "this isn't my fault this has happened and it is a bit unfair to expect me to come quietly."

"You'll come whether you're quiet or otherwise," the voice cut in ominously.

"Yeah, well look, I mean, couldn't you just extend my time a little as compensation for the worry you've caused me."

"As I've said before, Mr. Gibbons, I'm sorry, but I'm not running this show and I don't think the Boss would be in agreement."

Eagerly Barney jumped at the last straw. "Well couldn't you just check up and find out? Ring back later and let me know. Do me one last favour...please?"

"Well..." muttered the receiver.

Barney watched the Sword of Damocles hovering precariously over his head. "Please, Mr. Who-ever-you-are, just try...for me...I'll be your friend for ever...for life."

"Well..." repeated the receiver. "Ok then, but I can't guarantee anything, understand. He's a hard man, our Boss, but I'll see what can be done."

Click! The monotone buzz of the dialing tone was all that was left.

Barney lowered the receiver back onto the cradle. He was visibly shaking. His first reaction was to make a dash for his built-in cocktail bar, where he put back half a bottle of whisky in ten seconds in the hope of drowning himself in an alcoholic stupor. It accomplished nothing but to increase the Stygian gloom that permeated the centrally heated apartment. It certainly had no effect whatever on Barney and he remained absolutely cold sober.

He began reeking his brains for a way out, just in case the Boss had no intention of letting him exist in this world anymore than the time designated to him. It was no good trying to leave the apartment and hide because they obviously had a very up-to-date and efficient team working down there, who would be keeping track of all his movements. He raised his eyes to heaven; maybe he could find sanctuary in a church. No, he was due down below, it was hardly likely that they would have any time for him up there. He lowered his eyes from the ceiling.

"Oh damn!" he swore. His mind just would not function properly. Yanking his overweight torso out of the easy chair, he paced back and forth across the room. "Why the hell should this have to happen to me?" he thought. "If they hadn't bungled the first time I wouldn't have to go through all this."

He began to wonder how the voice was getting on down there. He had visions of a black suited Demon with horns sprouting from either side of his head, knocking timidly on the door of the Boss. He could almost hear him asking apologetically if it were at all possible for a certain Barnabas H. Gibbons to be given extra time. He stopped thinking then. He had no wish to imagine the answer.

"Well, at least," he thought, "there is an afterlife." But the thought of what and where failed to give any comfort. He began thinking of all he had been told and had read about Hell. He changed the subject quickly. Maybe the voice had got him a reprieve. Then, perhaps, he could make up for his evil life; if only he could remember what his evil life had been.

As he passed the radio, he turned the "ON" switch. It failed to light up. Barney stopped pacing, and stared at the set.

"Aw cmon! As if I hadn't enough trouble without things pecking up on me," he muttered angrily. His eyes followed the lead down to the power point. He bent down and pulled at the plug. It was acting stubborn, he couldn't budge it. Grasping it in both hands he yanked viciously.

There was a loud "crump!" accompanied by a blue flash and a lot of smoke.

When Barney came to, he was sitting in a small office, seated before a desk at which sat a black suited demon with horns sprouting from either side of his head. He looked up at Barney.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Gibbons," he said apologetically, "but I did try."

.....

At The World's Edge

At the edge of the world where the seas fall into darkness dwelt an old man in a castle of bronze which glowed in the eternal sunset like the dull red embers of a dying fire.

And his hair was grown long and white and curled about his chamber in such a way that there was hardly room for the spiders to spin their webs in the corners of the roof.

And he sat and waited for the fulfilment of the prophecy: the prophecy which said that One would come to bring his death and doom to the myriad worlds. Once he had rushed vainly back and forth over hills and mountains, seas and oceans, venting his rage on all that stood in his way. By his hand cities fell, mountains became plains and plains were filled with the endless sea.

But that was in his youth when he still could run and fight but, in ages past, his arms had weakened and strength had left his legs. So, resigned to his fate, he sat in his castle of bronze at the edge of the world waiting for the fulfilment of the prophecy and his death and the doom of the myriad worlds.

At the edge of the world where the seas fall into darkness dwelt an old man and his name was Time...

dave weldrake

.....

the ARTIST in fandom: JIM PITTA

interviewed By DAVID RILEY
with NICK CAFFEY

Key - JP: Jim Pitta; DR: David Riley; NC: Nick Caffrey.

DR: How and when did you first start doing illustrations?

JP: It began when I first started collecting fantasy books. I wrote down to Bran Stoke's shop, Dark They Were and Golden Eyed, and he informed me about a magazine called SHADOW. We got talking about illustrations and then he sold me a copy of SHADOW (No. 11 I think it was) with a Brian Frost cover. I had a look at the illustrations inside; they were alright but not what I had expected them to be.

DR: Of course that was duplicated then, wasn't it? Not litho.

JP: Yes; the reproduction wasn't all that good. The cover was litho, though. Anyway we'd been talking, a friend and I, Nick here, about illustrating some of his poems, and I thought that I'd like to have a go at illustrating a magazine. There was an ad' asking for illustrations for the HPL Bibliothèque that Dave Sutton was bringing out. So I did two illustrations for it and sent them to you (DR) and you accepted them. In fact I did another one, of Cinnabar.

DR: Yes; that was of him coming out of R'lyeh.

JP: That's right. I wasn't keen on it, though, and I asked for it back. Then, later on, I managed to get down to Bran's shop in London. I took an illustration with me, The Gargoyle. I happened to meet Pete Parkin, co-editor then of BALDRIC, and he took it off me and used it for BALDRIC 2.

DR: And this was the one which won the Ken McIntyre award?

JP: Yes, that was the one.

DR: Who influenced your drawing when you first started?

JP: Now I think of it, it was probably the comic artists who first interested me in drawing. People like Steve Ditko and Frazetta. And then, when I did start illustrating, I saw some of Bok's work: The Fox Woman and The Blue Pagoda, and I thought I'd try stippling. I thought then that it was all stippling that he did to produce his effects, but in fact it was embossed paper that he used, using a heavy black pencil and black ink to get shading, whereas mine is straightforward stippling from beginning to end.

DR: Bok mainly influenced you then; but what artists do you like now?

JP: Well, Bok's still my favourite and I collect his work. Anybody got a Bok original? Now, though, to a certain extent I like Maxfield Parrish, (I found out about him from Bok; Bok was dead keen on him), I like Sydney Sise, Harry Clarke, Ed Cartier (I like his creatures and things and monsters and such like).

DR: Besides artists have any writers influenced you at all in the subject matter of your drawings?

JP: Mainly sword and sorcery writers. The first one I really read was Conan, CONAN THE CONQUEROR. I'd been reading horror stories, of course, for years and years, and comics for years and years.

NC: Then we started reading THE LORD OF THE RINGS and were influenced by this along with everybody else.

JP: But it wasn't Conan that did it for me. It was THE SPELL OF SEVEN that you (NC) lent me.

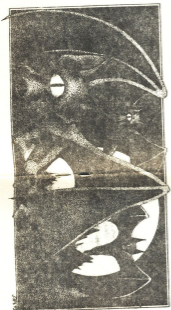




ABOVE: COVER OF SALTIRE 2 (1971). ILLUSTRATING CLARK KESSEL SMITH'S "THE WASH UP CLOSETTES", WINNER OF THE SEN RUTHIE KESSEL AWARDS OF 1971, WAS THE BEST ILLUSTRATION OF THE YEAR FOR THE BEST PUBLISHED IN AN SALTIRE PUBLICATION THAT YEAR.



Jim Pitts



RIGHT: ILLUSTRATION FROM THE KOTIKOVAL PAGE OF SALTIRE 3 (1972).



LEFT: COVER ILLUSTRATION FROM SALTIRE 20 (OCTOBER 1973).
BELOW: "THE HOLLER", COVER ILLUSTRATION FOR SALTIRE 17 (JUNE 1972).

NC: Well, yes, but there was a Conan story in that, wasn't there?

JP: Yes, but there was a Clark Ashton Smith, a de Camp, a Leiber; you got the best of them. Anyhow, we heard about Bram's shop and sent down for some stuff: WELL OF THE UNICORN and things like that. From then on Nick and I kept Bram in business.

NC: Just for about a year or so anyway.

DR: Now you've started to collect hardbacks quite seriously.

JP: Yes.

NC: That's a general progression.

JP: Yes, you start off buying paperbacks and you find out about first editions and gradually you go on from there.

DR: How many do you reckon that you have now?

JP: Few!

DR: Out of print hardbacks, to narrow it.

JP: I don't know. I wouldn't like to say.

DR: You've got most of the Arkham House CAS, for instance.

JP: Yes; but let me put it this way, I've seen bigger collections. People like Dave Fletcher; he's been collecting for a good while and he has a large collection. In hardbacks I suppose I would reckon on having a couple of hundred. Plus magazines and a few hundred paperbacks. Not a really big collection but a fairly selective one I like to think.

DR: What do you try to collect mainly?

JP: I'm building a collection of Dunaway books illustrated by Sime; I've just one more to get: TIME AND THE GODS. And I've been collecting Merritt's work - I've got most of his books now. I collect anything by Bok, either paperback or magazine; anything at all by him. Stories by Bok, anything. I collect Robert E. Howard. I collect WEIRD TALES magazines. More or less anything in this area.

DR: More or less the 1930's stuff?

JP: Yes; the Golden Era.

DR: I also collect books illustrated by Maxfield Parrish and people like that.

DR: What kind of illustrations do you like doing the most and which authors do you prefer to illustrate?

JP: Well, I'm not a SF illustrator. Gothic horror I like best and fantasy, straight fantasy, such as Merritt-type stuff; Lovecraft - I'd like to have a go at Dream Quest of Unknown Eldath sometime.

DR: Which authors do you like illustrating?

JP: Clark Ashton Smith, definitely. I did a portfolio a while back, about eighteen months ago, on CAS stories. And Lovecraft, like I say. I'd like to have a go at some Merritt. I've done one so far, Burn Witch Burn! But I don't think that it was too successful. Howard, I'd like to do, perhaps some of his Conan-type tales, although I'm not sure about big, brawny, muscular men. They're not my forte.

NC: Well, you can't do better than what you did with Tolkien: just draw the creature. Originally you intended to do a bridge and Gandalf but it didn't come really off.

JP: Yes, I did the creature and the trolls behind.

NC: It was more effective than the other two.

DR: Any others you'd like to illustrate?

JP: I'd like to have a go at Machen some time. NOVEL OF THE WHITE POWDER and things like that. Though it's just when I get the time.

DR: When you're illustrating a writer do you try and do it exactly as he wrote it?

JP: More or less; as I visualise it of course. But all the little details I try to get in, such as one I did for Gordon Larkin. He mentioned a magician with an ink-stained beard. So I put in an ink-stained beard. Things like that.

NC: That was SANG THE STONE, wasn't it?

JP: Yes, SANG THE STONE, by Gordon Larkin. It was in BALDRIC 4.

DR: So I do try to stick to details as much as possible.

DR: As well as doing amateur stuff, of course, you have also been involved in some professional work as well. There's a paperback collection to be published by Panther, isn't there, which you have been involved with?

JP: Yes, though I'm still working on it yet. I haven't quite finished all of the

illustrations for it. It's for Mike Parry. Stories based on fantastic drugs, with such authors as Carl Jacobin, Mike Moorcock, Fletcher Pratt, Harry Sleiser and several others. It seems to be working out ok. I've also done an illustration for George Locke which is professional since I got paid for it. This was for his magazine *SEARCH & RESEARCH*, illustrating a Sydney Sine storyette. Not much professional work so far. Mainly amateur. But then again, I enjoy just drawing anyway.

DR: If you got the chance to go professional, though, would you?

JP: Probably, but I'm not too bothered since I've got another source of income. I do work for a living. So I've got that source of income to keep us going. It's very much a hobby. I'd like to keep it as a hobby. As a paying hobby, perhaps, which would be ok. It would pay for my collection of books and things like that. If it crept up gradually and I got into colour work (because that's where the money is - black and white illustrations don't pay enough to live off really) I would do it eventually ... Probably.

DR: Have you ever done any illustrations besides weird illustrations?

JP: No. No, I haven't done anything like that at all. I'm not interested. I'm only interested in fantasy and horror.

NC: You did those illustrations for Mike Hardin, though nothing came of them.

JP: Yes; illustrations for children's poems.

DR: They were weird though, weren't they?

JP: Yes, they were.

NC: They were more funny weird.

JP: Various little creatures and things. They were for folk singer Mike Hardin. But nothing came of it. They went round to various publishers.

NC: Well, they said that they liked your drawings but they didn't like his poems. So Mike says, anyway.

JP: It looks like we're giving up with professional publication there and it could possibly be published in a fanzine in the future some time. Jon Harvey seems like he's interested in bringing it out. So we'll see what comes up there.

DR: You mentioned colour work a moment or two ago. Have you done much colour work so far?

JP: I've experimented with little bits and bobs. Nick's a couple of little examples of it.

NC: Yes; they're not bad either. Your tones are very nice.

JP: I've only ever spent at the outside three or four hours with colour. I've used pencil, crayon and water paints, but I've never really got very far. I've never had the time. Someone is always after an illustration for a magazine. So I'm



FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATING HODGSON'S "THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND" FROM *SHADOW* 19, APRIL 1973.

usually working on a black and white illustration. There's always one on my drawing board, anyway.

DR: Do you find that you get a great many people asking you for illustrations?

JP: Not many. The same people write. There's Dave Sutton, Jon Harvey. Though lately I've got something coming up in WHISPERS in the States and in ETCHINGS & ODYSSEYS. I think that's worked out where I've got the front cover and you (DR) have the back.

DR: Supposedly.

JP: ...When that comes out. We've been waiting for about twelve months now.

DR: What are you working on at the moment?

JP: I'm working on a picture for Dave Sutton - for the final SHADOW - based on a Jules de Grandin story called THE SILVER SORCERESS. I'm also working on a cover for DARK HORIZONS. I'm illustrating a collection of Gordon Larkin's stories and poems to be brought out by Jon Harvey. I'm illustrating all that and then Jon proposes to do a collection of stories on wizardry. I plan to do this with Dave Fletcher if it comes off.

DR: Of your illustrations which are your own personal favourites?

JP: Well I'm never satisfied with any illustration. I always think afterwards that I could have done it that little bit better. You probably have the same feeling with your stories. You're never 100%, I'm sure, satisfied. You think: "Well, I wish that I'd done this and that and such like." From what I can gather all artists get this feeling...and writers.

DR: Yes, I suppose so. When it's too late to change it you always find something that could do with altering.

JP: Yes, especially when it's in print. That's when you think: "I wish I'd done that." Like, you'll have a story and you pick a scene and wish that you'd done it a different way. But, of my own personal favourites I would say they were The House on the Borderland for SHADOW, The Reader on SHADOW 17, the vampire one, again a SHADOW cover, The Gargoyle on BALTHUS 2 and the one I did for BALTHUS, illustrating Nick's poem.

DR: OLD CROMPTON?

JP: That's it.

JP: That was in BALTHUS 3. That I quite like. And then there are those which I'm doing for the paperback, which I think are turning out ok. There are also a couple of illustrations in the States which I'm reasonably happy with, coming up in WHISPERS and E & O. And there's the one I'm doing for SHADOW now, which is turning out as I planned it more or less. Then again, I haven't finished it yet so I don't know.

DR: You've gone a lot in for designing more now rather than straight illustrations.



ILLUSTRATION FOR NICK CAFFEY'S POEM "OLD CROMPTON" FROM BALTHUS 3, 1972.

Your stuff's becoming designed.

JP: I like to do very much as Bok did. I don't have anything going off the page. I always have my design or illustration contained within the edges of the page. As a rule, anyway.

DR: The detailing on your drawings now is a lot more delicate than it used to be, especially, say, the way you do the wings of your demons. Where once you would have made them very large, very cumbersome parts, and not greatly detailed, now they are very detailed and frailer - more delicate.

JP: You practice as you go along and learn. In comparison with what you've done earlier, you think: "Well I could have done this." You learn by your mistakes. What looks good and what doesn't.

DR: You don't attempt realism at all.

JP: How could you make a pig-faced, bat-winged monster real?

DR: Well, not a photographic effect, lets put it that way.

JP: No. I don't like that kind of thing. Finlay did his like that. Then again, you know, you want to believe in these creatures. I suppose that I am aiming for a kind of realism. You want to look at a creature and think that it's real.

DR: Coming back to other artists which living artists do you particularly like at the moment?

JP: Professional ones: Frank Frazetta, Jeff Jones (in his better moods), Steve Fabian, or most of it, Tim Kirk; I like Dennis Tiernay's work. Those are the Americans. In Britain I like Dave Fletcher's work. Alan Hunter's a competent artist - probably more than so because he can do everything, every aspect of fantasy. From A to Z, SF, horror and I think Alan could do mainstream, whereas I couldn't do mainstream, I don't think. Steve Jones, of course.

DR: Brian Frost?

JP: He's a technician is Brian. Very effective his illustrations. That's about it. I can't think of anyone else off hand, though I'll probably think of about half a dozen when you've gone.

DR: These are all fantasy. No SF?

JP: I don't read any SF at all, anyway, I haven't an SF mind.

DR: What do you think of Eddie Jones?

JP: (Pause). I don't know. It's not really for me all these 2001 big hulking space ships floating about magazine and book covers. They're not really my cup of tea, that kind of thing. Eddie Jones' fantasy creatures aren't too bad, but I'm not too sure if he hasn't got into the dangerous position of going into it enthusiastically and then letting the cash side of it get the better of him. He's probably getting dangerously close to becoming a hack artist, in my opinion. Mind you, it's not bad if you can get up when you please, not at 6 am and go to work.

One thing though, I don't like to see photos on book covers. I'd rather, much rather, see a painting.

DR: On fantasy anyway.

JP: Yes.

DR: Of course with SF they try for a photographic effect, don't they?

DR: Well they're trying to convince in a futuristic realism whereas fantasy is trying to achieve a kind of realism but in a quite different world as opposed to outer space.

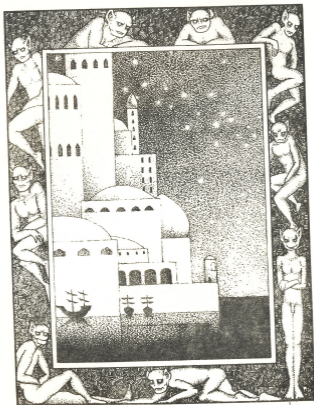
JP: Something with SF artists, I think, is that they've all seen 2001 about ten times and every space ship that they do - they're all different - but they're all the same. Just one big hulk, whereas once space ships were nice and streamlined - which is still how I like to see them - nicely designed. Not some big hulking can floating about.

DR: With all the rusting rivets and dirty bits of metal...

JP: Yes. They're taking realism a little too far nowadays.

DR: One other black and white artist who stands out a lot is Beardsley.

JP: Yes, well I like his work. Very impressive. I like his eroticism. The thing with Beardsley is that at the time there was really only him doing anything remotely like that.



SARNATH - H.P. Lovecraft.

PLS 74

NC: Well, Sime was around at that time.

JP: I don't know. Beardsley's still on his own. Like Sime, you could compare him with artists such as Harry Clarke. With Heath Roberts. Beardsley was the only erotic artist.

DR: You've never thought of doing anything in that kind of style, which is mainly line drawing with the black parts filled in completely, with barely any shading, if any?

JP: I'm afraid that if I did anything like that it would be too obviously Beardsley.

DR: Such as with Dave Britton's?

JP: Yes. Dave Britton in his early days. Probably still is.

NC: He admits it, doesn't he?

DR: Of course you can do a stippling effect like Bok and yet not be Bok...?

JP: Yes, you could get a nice effect, I suppose. It's an idea worth working on some time.

catch the sun at its setting

The slow glooms of an unending despair flase fitfully over occult tomorrows, awaiting their chosen pursued, and the cold hells you watch are rolling to a thunderous tread. Below them down, the sombre skylinen heaped, day and night, on the near horizons of a phantom grin and hurl symphonies of laughter to the murkiest depths. Worlds that heave deep felt sighs no longer may curse their rim for, silent as starshine, the wardens of night approach - the van of a funeral press-gang.

Run!

The chase is resolute; you must flee their cavernous chasms and catch the sun at its setting.

This clamouring heat, a furnace burning days, like leaves off a tree so foolishly waiting the axeman's whim; soils will not still, shuddering to the eternal drumbeats of the lost and the fluting pipes shrilly mocking history.

Run!

Their creepings converge in the valleys of your reason and they wistfully chant the colours of your gain. Will you hear them and be content as one of the swelling herds?

Shadows, your haven, a brief if unsatisfactory respite and a false bravado to the inevitable. You are chosen and will not escape.

Meet them proudly on the edge, for the chase is short this time...and always.

GORDON LARKIN

~ SPLAT! *by julian a. le saux*

ONE: This is the first time. This is Ware, look, there I am. That house there, number sixteen, just coming out of the front door. You're gonna like this, this is really funny. That thing in the front drive's my car. I'm on my way to Broxbourne.

TWO: I was on my way to Broxbourne to do some shopping there. I opened the front door and walked to the drive, where my car was parked. It was a warm day, I remember. I took out my keys and opened the door, and then I heard a footstep on the gravel, coming towards me. I looked around, and there was a grey-haired man dressed in some strange garb looking at me. He spoke:

"Look, son, I've been watching you. You've got to learn to be more careful when you're driving. Particularly today. Do you understand me? Be careful, that's all."
What could I say? I said, "What do you mean?" but he turned 'round and walked away. I thought he must have been a nut, so I just took no notice and got in my car. I started it up and began the drive to Broxbourne.

ONE: Now, this is the second time. This is Hoddessdon Hightstreet, and you'll have to excuse the way this one thinks, because I'm sort of poetic here.

THREE: What do I see?

I see a crowd of faces, surging, babbling, talking; all attached to people, pushing, sidling, walking. So many that sight is dulled and the tide passes by unnoticed.

What do I hear?

I hear the babble and roar of the crowd, and somewhere in the midst of it a child, lost in the rush, squalling for his mother.

I sit hunched on a bench before some shops. The Hightstreet is crowded with shops. My gaze is vacant, my head filled with thoughts that mean nothing, my mind wandering aimlessly. The crowd parts and flows past the bench where I sit, hunched.

ONE: Look - that's me, on that bench, like he - I, I mean, say.

THREE: I rose to my feet, aware that I should be on my way. And as I did so, there was a sudden swirl and eddy in the crowd, and a hand grabbed roughly at my arm. I looked at the man with vague eyes, not coming out of my dream at once. His face was hardened and cynical, with a savage glint of evil humour in the eyes. But there was something oddly familiar about the features.

He said,

"Pay more attention to the road, son! Heed my warning! You've only got fifteen seconds from now."

His voice was harsh and discordant.

TWO: On the road between Ware and Broxbourne, you pass through Hoddessdon Hightstreet. It was just before I reached this stretch that I felt odd all of a sudden, as if the world had blurred and then come back into focus. And when I looked about me everything I saw seemed different somehow.

ONE: That was where I moved him between the parallel worlds. They're so close together, he hardly felt a thing!

THREE: I wrenched my arm from the grasp of the man, angry at his rough handling, and backed off a step. He said,

"I tried to warn you, don't say I didn't."

Then he turned 'round and disappeared. The strange thing is, I don't think he disappeared into the crowd - he just faded, as if he'd walked through a door in the air. I stared at where he had been. Then I turned 'round and automatically walked to the crossing, and began to go across, thinking deeply. As I did, the phrase "Fifteen seconds" came back to me, and I found I was counting.

ONE: Look at that! Straight out onto the road. They never take any notice.

THREE: I was too preoccupied with what had just happened to pay any attention to the road as I stepped out. The count was:

Wine, ten -

It was at ten that I realised the face of the man who had grabbed my arm had been my own, thirty years older and much hardened, and somehow twisted; but my own nonetheless. At the thought my heart somehow went cold within me, and I stopped dead, heedless of where I was.

TWO: I didn't have a chance, honest I didn't. He just stepped out -

THREE: Eleven, twelve -

At twelve I heard the blare of a horn. I spun about in my tracks.

A car was bearing down like an avalanche of metal. Inside, a frightened face, the face of the driver, was trapped. I saw that he was dragging at the wheel in a desperate attempt to avoid me, but the task was obviously a hopeless one. The image of the face of the older me seemed to flash before my eyes, and it horrified me so that I could not move. The numbers still marched through my mind.

Thirteen, fourteen -

ONE: (In a frenzy of anticipation). Will you look at that! He doesn't even move!

THREE: All was unreal, and I hardly noticed that the face trapped within the car was my own also, perhaps a couple of years younger. My last thought was that this must be some kind of a joke. And finally -

Fifteen -

- SPLAT!

ONE: (Recovering from an orgasm of semi-hysterical laughter). Harhar! Isn't that the greatest? Neat! I knew they wouldn't take any notice! That's the best I ever did... (Still laughing, he clicks off the picture-thought link-up and takes a swig of whisky. But as he does so another giggle explodes from within him, and he chokes, eyes bulging. In a sudden paroxysm of fear he has a heart attack, and slumps sideways from his chair, whisky gurgling from the corner of his mouth. He is dead before he hits the ground.

His guests, of course, think that this rounds the evening off superbly, and laugh until their sides ache. After helping themselves to a few more drinks they go home well content).

the forgotten rune

One night, whilst casting in his cell,
a novice mage of craggy Yel,
chanced upon a rune long since forgotten

by all the Masters gone before
who'd opened every spell-hung door
and plumbed the Dark's enshrouded, mawish bottom.

A fiend appeared and, screeching, said,
"This rune's a key to speak with the dead.
Would'st learn weird wisdoms from necrotic meetings?"

Greedily the novice ayed,
entrusting to this daemon guide...
which flexed its jaws and commenced to eat him.

GORDON LARKIN



BERGMAN AND THE HORROR FILM: SOME OBSERVATIONS

by
Pamsey campbell

About 1960 the darkness began to gather.

In the preceding decade and indeed throughout the rest of the history of the cinema, the darkness surrounding the horror film was essentially comfortable. You knew that before it was rudely ousted by the Queen and the lights, the evils and monsters which it allowed to display themselves on the screen would have been vanquished. You might even allow yourself to sympathize comfortably with the monster. As for the cinema, if it were anything like many of those in which I spent my adolescence, it mightn't bother to turn the lights up at the end. You wouldn't mind.

These days you might. I can imagine many people disliking to grope their way through a darkness succeeding *PSYCHO*. It isn't only that *PSYCHO* is brutally terrifying, although it is. No, it's that the ending neglects to help the audience out of the nightmare. The most it offers is a final symbol of escape, but we know too well that it hasn't been offered to the characters. From the moral, indeed implicitly religious, universe of the traditional horror film (in which the efficiency of holy water, silver bullets and the like were never questioned) and the sf-horror film (in which the same may be said of technology, Terrestrial germs and so on) we're plunged into a chaos whose possibility most of us would prefer not to admit.

The producers managed to save us from it in *INVASION OF THE BODY-SNATCHERS*, with their synthetic up-beat ending in which the army rides out to save the world. But you couldn't hope to graft a synthetic uplift onto *PSYCHO*, where even a psychiatrist's attempt at reassurance through explanation comes across as unconvincing. This was a truly contemporary horror film, the first of many. *THE BIRDS* continued the threat by ending without even a symbol of escape, only its possibility; and it's interesting to note in retrospect that *VERTIGO*, Hitchcock's almost-ghost story, ends with a kind of freedom wedded to abrupt and final horror.

You could argue that film is habitually a few decades behind prose (as has been said of sf) and is now catching up with the familiar pessimism of the horror tale. After all, you don't expect *Our Hero* to charge to the successful rescue of a Bloch heroine, nor to save the day at the end of a *Pan Book of Horror* story. But this avoids two issues: that the film can relate to prose originals, but also originates; and that the horror of many 'sixties and more recent horror films is far bleaker than the cliché fatalism of these stories. Some directors have simply, if that isn't underrating, taken longer and harder looks at horror, restraining their revulsion.

I don't mean the contrived point-making pessimism of the last scene of *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, nor the studied shrug with which evil is presented in *ROSEMARY'S BABY*. I mean, for example, the films of Michael Reeves. Not so much the hint of dormant horror at the end of *REVENGE OF THE BLOODBEAST*, where the heroine is clearly possessed; this comes over more as a final gag flung in the face of the audience, perhaps because it's been preceded by a sort of Transylvanian Keystone Kope chase, a second-unit director's idea of comic relief. But in *THE SCORCHERS* the police, no longer comic, always arrive after the event and have nothing to do with the final violence, which may be redemptive but is also appalling and all-consuming. And in *WITCHFINDER GENERAL* the authority figure is the source of almost all the worst violence in the film, yet the final redemptive revenge becomes purely insupportable. If these films were not the work of a director with the courage to gaze at chaos, how does one explain their continuing influence? Most recently, passages in Gary Sherman's

DEATHLINE could well have been directed by Reeves (which is not to deny the film's considerable originality), and only DEATHLINE's compassion makes it possible to watch its violence: while the final shot, an interminable vision of dim lights plodding through subterranean darkness, carries no sense of release at all, and it's left to the soundtrack to jar us free. While pessimism and appalled despair may become a convention of the horror film, in these films it isn't: it's far too deeply felt.

Another development worth more than a passing mention is the use of horror film in a wider context. We've seen the use of sf in a similar fashion: Vorsegut and Godard come to mind. Now we have STRAW DOGS, which in the course of exploring the validity of the American Western myth in a new context involves several horror-film conventions: the hostile villagers (representing an imperfectly rejected and controlled past, a favourite horror theme) whose hostility finds expression in an ominous strangled cat; the ineffectual clergy; the "monster" (poor David Warner, unable to control his strength) pursued by the villagers through the mist; the siege and bloodbath, the handling of which is pure horror film. That an empty film like THE GETAWAY makes one suspect Peckinpah's motives in retrospect doesn't invalidate STRAW DOGS: nor does the literal absurdity of the latter film, once one appreciates that it's a horror film about violence (in some ways reminiscent of Reeves) from which the supernatural element has been omitted. Exactly the same may be said of Boorman's DELIVERANCE, in which the presence of corpses becomes more and more threatening, until a shot of coffins being disinterred is followed by a vision of a dead hand rising from a lake. And Lindsay Anderson's O LUCKY MAN includes a possible reference to the Quatermass films and an overt episode with a mad doctor. The horror film is joining the mainstream, for better or worse. Which is why a look at Bergman is timely.

Of all the directors I can think of Bergman has consistently come the closest to horror film without (until HOUR OF THE WOLF) actually making one. It's a pleasingly suggestive coincidence that Bergman should have been involved with a PRENNY more than two decades before Hitchcock; it's more significant that this Germanic expressionist thriller also concerns a psychopath who is both terrifying and one of the film's few sympathetic characters. From this point on, however, Bergman's vision becomes blacker and more personal (which is, unfortunately, to say more masochistically introverted). Nightmares recur in the early films, as does a similar item, a memory bloated by bitterness (in SAWDUST AND TINKLE). In other words, these films tend to be the work of a technically brilliant but emotionally undisciplined artist, a sort of arrested adolescent. (For the reasons, see Robin Wood's monograph INGMAR BERGMAN, whose influence I freely acknowledge).

Let's consider some of the more relevant imagery in his work. I remain convinced that THE SEVENTH SEAL has much in common with the horror film, especially the first reel. Not only the hooded figure whose head falls back to reveal empty eye-sockets (premonitions of PSYCHO!) but the whole concept of an incarnated Death, who to carry some chill throughout the uses the film makes of him (mostly to reflect in his nearing the sort of death appropriate to each character) is made up and dressed to look as alien as anything axiomatically human since NOSFERATU. Or the dream which opens WILD STRAWBERRIES, with its breathless baking empty streets, its figure which turns to reveal an eyeless face and collapses exuding a thin liquid, its coffin which falls from a hearse and into which the corpse of the protagonist drags his living counterpart; although this is an enormously complex and moving film in its own right, I found on a first viewing that the entire film was threatened by a recurrence of this nightmare, and for years I considered it to be the most terrifying thing I'd seen in the cinema. Or, less successfully, the attic scene of THE FACE - less successfully because it looks more disturbing in the script than on the screen. Nonetheless, the Gothic horrors are well in evidence: the severed hand, the eye peering from the inkwell, the erratic clock, the face behind the victim in the mirror.

Any doubts as to Bergman's Gothic allegiance should surely be dispelled by his latest film, CRIES AND WHISPERS. The setting, a mansion dominated by suffocating red plush; the whispers that surround the characters when alone and lure them into fantasy; the most excruciating act of self-mutilation the screen has seen; the episode in which Harriet Anderson's corpse cries and moves - these are only the most obvious of the

Gothic elements. Yet the horrors lead to a new reignation and the tentative proposal of a perspective that may redeem life from unsatisfactoriness. The horrors themselves are presented with no less feeling than before, but greater detachment. It seems to me that Bergman has managed to gain this balance by making his one overt horror film, *HOUS OF THE WOLF*.

Most horror fiction and film is to some extent therapeutic. Of those who realize this, some (such as *Andis in NEW MAPS OF HELL*) would bundle the artists off to a psychiatrist. But this is to overlook the possibility that the therapy may extend to the audience. *HOUS OF THE WOLF* is one of the blackest horror films of the 'sixties, and it seems entirely appropriate that its tendencies should parallel those of most horror films of that period. Yet the film is much to be preferred to the early neurotic work, and to the fashionable pessimism of Polanski and others. While it offers no final release, it at least offers hope.

Robin Wood makes the point that it is the heroine (the incomparable Liv Ullmann) and what she represents that enables Bergman to master the horrors that are clearly personal to him, and to give them definitive expression on the screen. But there is another important factor which allows him to discipline the horrors: their relationship to a tradition, in this case that of the horror film. Menacing birds and bird-men, saturnine Barons, faces that prove to be literal masks, corpses bobbing up from beneath water: all these elements and more will be familiar to those who know the horror film. This is not to say that their power is muted: in particular the mask-face and the buoyant corpse carry a greater weight of horror than in any other appearance. A great artist may use traditional elements and purge them of cliché.

One can, however, go further and say that in terms of the narrative the horrors conquer the protagonist in direct proportion to their familiarity. It is, after all, his brain which structures them, and by giving them a form drawn from popular myth he repudiates a facile image of them, leaving their essence untouched. Perhaps not, but it's a disturbing thought for anyone who works in horror. It's certainly significant that the most disturbing scene in the film, that of the boy who becomes the recurrent bobbing corpse, is a nightmare that may be a memory; we aren't sure and don't know whether the protagonist is sure. The film acknowledges the rigour of vision which is essential to therapy, and its absence here.

How does it offer hope? Simply by having Liv Ullmann pregnant in the final scene. She's disorientated and surrounded by darkness, of course; yet one can see the child as her husband's most creative achievement. Not to surround her with doubts and threats would be dishonest in the context of the film. That Bergman can nonetheless suggest a faint hope, itself disturbing in the context, is a measure of his achievement, and of the possibilities still inherent in the form of the horror film.

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#### EDITORIAL (Continued from page 3)

kind of work I require. When I recieved the DE file from the previous editors it was, to put it bluntly, a mess; if you have sent any work to DARK EDWARDS and have not yet heard from me please send me a s.a.e. and a description of your work. I promise I will reply promptly.

Well, that's it for now. I'll admit that for a time I was a bit nervous about taking over the editorship of DE, and I can only hope that you have as much fun reading it as I had producing it.

'til next time, keep happy,

STEVE.

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Letters of Comment-

From, MIKE CHINN, March:

DH is litho at last! Loud cheers from all quarters. It's been a long wait, but it's finally happened, and all the better for it, too. Of course, apart from the new look the other thing that struck me about DH7 was the professional layout by David Sutton (need I say as usual?). A very pleasing issue, Dave, well done.

Well, so much for the nice comments, now for the constructive ones. I know you could not help the absence of art inside the issue, but I trust that will soon be rectified. Incidentally, now that DH has gone all-litho, have you considered publishing a fantasy strip? (Groans of anguish from non-art fans: but it's only a suggestion, you can have your say later). If you do think about it, I've started on a strip using some of Mike Moorcock's characters that was originally destined for my own fanzine before the inevitable happened. (Hint, hint...). But apart from my selfish self there are a good many other artists in the BPS who can turn a neat trick with a pen and ink, so how 'bout it? ((Well, how about it? Do you, the readers, want to see a fantasy comic-strip in DH? Write and let me know. SJ.))

Glen Symond's story: The Spell of Louka was fair, but, in my view, slightly predictable; the only originality shown was in the last line, if only...there weren't those...DOTS! I'm afraid as far as I'm concerned the use of dots between words is one of the oldest clichés in story-writing. Sorry, Glen.

ROMAN, a review of THEATERS OF BLOOD, and the film's only been out six months. Maybe DH7 was late, but six months??? Sorry to be so aside, but since DH6 had little up-to-date snippets of film news I would have expected better than this.

The new method of letter column was interesting, but being a traditionalist by nature I still prefer the old way. ((So do I, hence the format this issue. SJ.)) However, the continuous method does help the editor to collate all the relevant material from several letters together, I must admit.

The reviews were adequate once more; and, being a comic fan, I must thank Ramsey Campbell for his comic listing and reviews. However, might I point out that Marvel also do a comic of Lin Carter's THORNER, which is slowly improving.

David Lloyd's Do Not Disturb was a nice finishing touch to the issue. It's nice to see more unconventional stories once in a while; although I have my doubts as to whether it was actually fantasy, or just a story with a different style of narrative. But considering what goes into NEW WORLDS under the title of SF I suppose that fantasy can cover an equally wide field.

That seems to be about it, so I'll leave you with this thought: did you notice the resemblance between Steve Jones' barbarian and Don Powell of 'Slade'? ((Personally, I don't see any resemblance, but then again I'm slightly biased; for another interpretation of my illo in issue 7 see Dick Ellingsworth's comments elsewhere. SJ.))

From, GORDON LARKIN, Whistable:

Undoubtedly it was visually a lot more presentable than previous issues although I think that there are two important points against its actual appearance. Firstly, it was too small! The society journal should be fairly large and impressive (along the lines of, say, ANDRIL 3) in both appearance and content. Secondly it was too like SHADOW. I know that Dave deliberately used the SHADOW mould, but I do hope that future issues will have greater individuality.

I'd also like to see something Jon Harvey suggested way back in DH5. Namely, colourful titles for the mag's various departments.

Retrospectators (apart from being an abysmal title for this dept.) was most enjoyable. Its informal structure gave me the impression that all the commentators were actually gathered in a circle discussing the issue with the editor. I'd like to see

this approach used again.

If fantasy in music is to be discussed then I suggest a different approach to that already cited. It is impossible to objectively review elements of fantasy in music when music itself is such a subjective artform. Personally I don't reckon DARE SIDE OF THE MOON as having enough fantasy in it to warrant reviewing in DH...excellent though it is. It would surely be more exciting and necessary (for the BPS) to discuss music that actually uses fantasy themes e.g.: such classics as (obviously) Wagner's Ring Cycle etc. and such contemporaries as Hawkwind, Bo Diddley, Rick Wakeman (with his JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH), Horslips (their LP THE TRAIN - a musical reworking of the legends of Cu Chulainn.) etc. etc.

From, DICK ELLINGSWORTH, Surrey:

DARE HORIZONS 7... Well, let's get my one gripe out of the way first. The arrangement of the lettercol I found intensely irritating. One of the functions of a letter column in a fanzine is to give the reader a complete as possible picture of the writer of each letter. With this sort of arrangement that function damn near disappears. It's good to experiment with things occasionally, I agree, but I hope this is one experiment that will not be kept up.

The reviews I found interesting except the music review. I never read music reviews, even those in the RI PI magazines (and I buy most of them). Mainly, I suppose, because music is a more personal thing, to me at least, than films or literature. I could never tell, just reading a review, whether or not I am going to like a particular piece of music. I have to hear it for myself and then I'm not interested in the opinions of others. I either like it or hate it. However, I suppose music reviews must serve a useful purpose for some, or none would ever get written, and I would (I hope) be the last person to clamour for something to be got rid of just because I derived no benefit from it.

Ramsey Campbell's comic column, Layouts, is a good idea as far as it goes. Personally, I'd like to see the whole thing extended. Not necessarily to include more comics, but primarily to explore deeper the ones that are reviewed. I'm sure Ramsey is capable of going much further into the subject, for all he says he's not a completist.

I'm not quite so keen on Derleth as I Knew Him, though I still enjoyed it. I hope our esteemed author does not take me too seriously if I suggest that a more apt title would be Ramsey Campbell as Derleth Knew Him. Of course, I know Ramsey Campbell can only use the material he's got on hand and that this is, necessarily, mostly a personal view. I would, though, like to have seen more quotes from Derleth's newspaper column, for instance, since this is a side to the man that most of us have no experience of.

Which just leaves the fiction. The Spell of Lenkya I enjoyed, if only because it bears a remarkable resemblance to the little vignettes I compose to amuse myself. Do Not Disturb well, the style is good, in its fashion - I've read much more carelessly composed pieces in professional magazines - but the story left me cold. Just what it has to do with fantasy in any form, I'm not sure. However, I'm convinced that David Lloyd could have had the story published professionally if he did but know the right market.

Looking back, I see I haven't mentioned the covers. Ok then. The front cover was well done, but I didn't like it. I'm still not sure why. The back cover was even better in execution but, since it seems to be a straightforward copy of John Buscema's Conan, I'm not sure it was really worth doing, let alone printing.

From, JIM PIPES, Blackburn:

I was very disappointed on seeing a copy of the latest issue of DARE HORIZONS (DH8) I mean to say, an expensive litho production without any artwork at all. It might well have been duplicated and saved at least £15, money that the Society can ill afford to throw away as obviously has been the case this time.

To give credit where credit is due the contents alone justified the magazine actually being printed. I'm always happy to see a Gordon Larkin piece in print and the Campbell pieces were more than interesting but as I've said all this was spoilt by

non existence of pictures.

I realise I may sound a little harsh in regard to this point I make but the fact is that if asked I myself wouldn't have seen the mag go bare of illo's and would have done at least a cover and an interior, I should imagine that I'm not the only RPS artist with this view and I can think of at least four other members who have had illustrations in print, two of them regularly.

From, **RAMSEY CAMPBELL, Liverpool:**

Nice job, DGB. I miss illustrations, though the cover's charming, and I miss a lettercolumn, but hopefully there'll be one next time (hence this letter).

Dave's article: yes, agreed, though I feel he's said it before. I'm glad to see him quoting *AN AGE* in this context, but search as I may I can find no amorphous blob in *THE BLACK GODEDOLIER*, one of Leiber's more successful contemporary horror tales. Gordon Larkin's tale I found winning as the kind of shaggy-dog dream-fantasy Dunsany sometimes wrote. Dave is also largely right on *GOLDEN VOYAGE*, but of course we've seen Harryhausen's work more recently than *ONE MILLION YEARS BC* - in *VALLEY OF GIANTS* (1969). Check your references, Dave!

And now to Philip Payne. His review of *YEAR'S BEST HORROR 3* will no doubt cause more controversy than it deserves, and I can't help feeling Berleth's comment of 20.6.64 has a degree of aptness; nevertheless, I'd like to trap a few of his points before they get lost in embellishment...He says he's not a horror stories fan. The obvious retort is why then does he review them? If, on the other hand, he means that he doesn't read them in any quantity, then his qualifications become suspect. And given his errors of fact I think that may be the case.

By no means all horror fiction stands or falls by the unpredictability of its payoff. Aickman's don't, Case's don't in the main, Leiber's and Wellman's and Bradbury's don't, nor do my own. Thus it's nonsense to condemn them because you can see their endings coming; in many cases, particularly some of Bradbury's, the story works because the ending can be seen threatening. (It's also the method of classical tragedy). Nor do I see more predictable endings today than were being written fifty years ago. Don't anyone kid me that they couldn't anticipate the final shock in *THE OUTSIDER* or *THE WEINPHER IN DARKNESS* - or *THE BLACK CAT* or *DRIVENICE*, for that matter.

Payne's ignorance is more apparent when he considers individual stories. So Bortin's tale is "a very poor rewrite of *BREAST WITH FIVE FINGERS*"? It is nothing of the kind; it is in the tradition of *HANDS OF ORLAC*, but since that tradition has spread as far as *STRANGELOVE* it seems entirely available to horror writers to use it with skill, as Eddy does, without being accused of plagiarism. *HAGGADIAN* isn't a standard Cthulu Mythos tale: as with most of Ramsey's best, you can take away the Mythos references and leave a good story pretty near intact.

He finds the diary form difficult to read, apparently as a matter of course, though I'd have said Aickman's carried me on the grace of its style, and Klein's by its sense of mounting but unlocated menace. But now we come to the crunch. He finds the form "easy to write". How the hell does he know? And easy for whom? I've already disagreed over the Klein, but equally Aickman's story doesn't stake all on its "tense atmosphere" (though, with *THE ISACULA ARCHIVES*, it's the only modern vampire tale I know that recaptures the sense of mystery one finds in the classics); nor does any worthwhile (horror or otherwise) story.

I wonder why the stories of Copper, Bates and myself were spared criticism?

I don't see many gothic castles or night-creatures in this book, so I don't see Payne's point. If there are relatively unexplored horrors in contemporary society, why doesn't he put a name to them? I *HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM* is a good story, but out of date for even the first of Richard Davis' series. It is also SF, and readily available in several anthologies of the genre, while there is little market for pure horror fiction - one good reason why *YEAR'S BEST HORROR* begins. Finally, alas, Payne's ignorance seems extended to the business of publishing: does he really think, as he rather implies, that Sphere would publish three volumes of a kind of book that nobody still wanted?



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