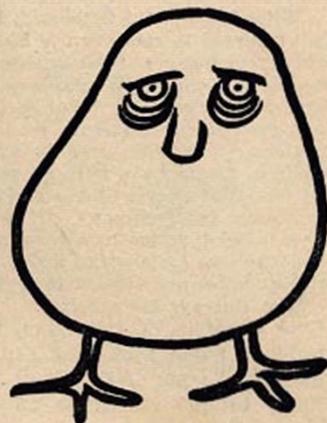


freethought criticism and satire

The Realist

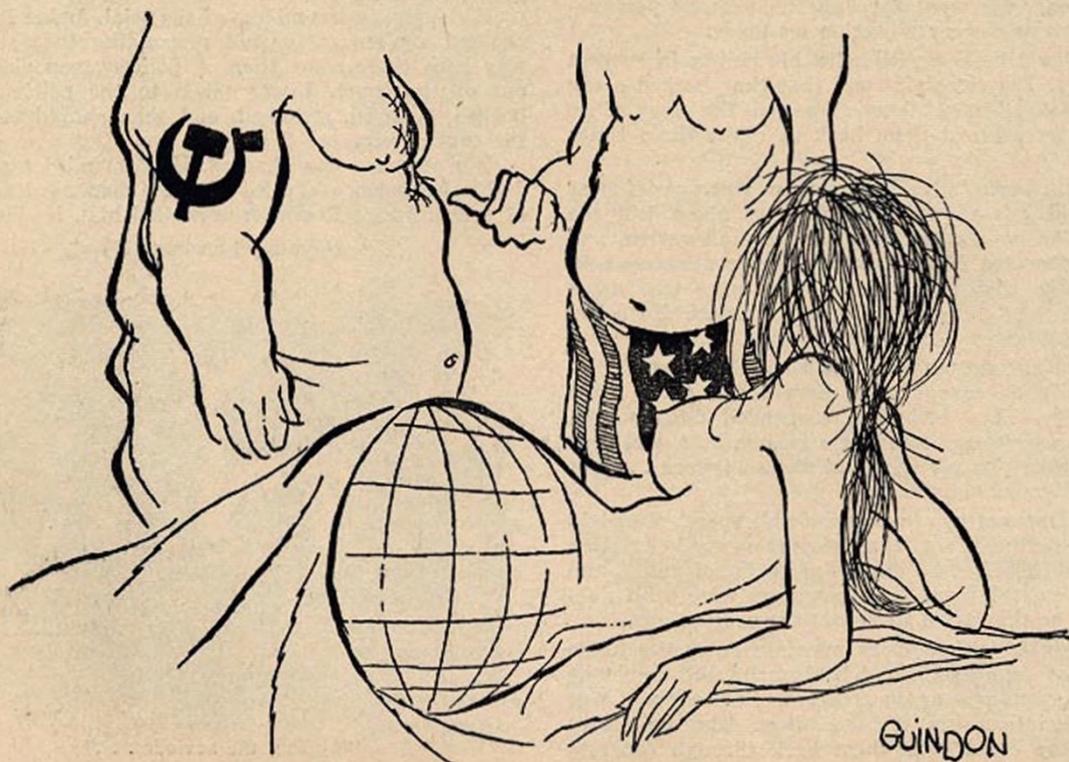


the fire hydrant
of the underdog

No. 39

35 Cents

An Impolite Interview With Joseph Heller



"It's his turn now and then me again..."

Malice In Maryland

by Madalyn E. Murray

Editor's note: On October 8, 1962 the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to consider the Murray case, which challenges compulsory Bible-reading and Lord's Prayer-recitation in all public schools on the grounds, contends Mrs. Murray's brief, "that the religious discrimination present in classroom reading of the Bible, and particularly that involved in excusing one or several children, would be wholly as severe in its social and psychological effects as the racial discrimination which was before the Supreme Court in the school segregation cases," and that her two sons' nonparticipation causes them "to lose caste with [their] fellows, to be regarded with aversion and subject to reproach and insult."

The Murrays are atheists.

The newspapers, television, radio, pin on us every opprobrious name that they can. We are anti-Christ, Bible-foes, Agents of the Devil . . . all of which brings me now to our incredible adventures of September, 1962 and early October.

I was brought into court about our dogs.

It was a most curious trial. Judge Hammerman said he had talked to the complainants a number of times before the trial had ever come up and that they had agreed, he and the complainants—before the trial had ever started—what the nature of my punishment should be. He directed me to take the dogs into the house at 8:00 P.M. every evening and keep them there until 8:00 A.M. each morning. He did not bother to ask me if I agreed, or when and how the dogs could urinate and defecate if they were penned in the house 12 hours of every day. He went through the hearing perfunctorily overruling every objection we made.

I substantially complied with his ruling in respect to the dogs. The complaint was that they barked every five minutes all night long. We had the dogs since Easter. I have heard them bark at night three times since then.

Within a week Judge Hammerman was presiding at the trial of the young men who had given Bill the beating. The boys/men admitted every allegation, and in fact elaborated on Bill's story. Their attorney said to the judge that the evidence they gave was much more damning than what Bill had charged. He asked only for the mercy of the court.

Judge Hammerman told the boys they were absolutely guilty as charged. He then asked about their backgrounds. They had been suspended from school, disciplinary problems, some were failing, some had been forced to take summer school to make up work . . . but they all attended church.

Judge Hammerman in a remarkable speech then told them, substantively, that they were from good Christian homes, and therefore he would find them not guilty, and dismiss the case! Even the newspapers were a bit flabbergasted as they tried to report the proceedings.

That night, with a clear mandate from the judge that anyone found guilty of beating up Bill would be freed, our home was again attacked. And, again, I was summoned into court on our dogs. The neighbors claimed they could hear them bark through concrete

block walls covered with brick and encased in earth up to a six-foot level!

I refused to go back into Hammerman's court. And, so, Hammerman had me arrested.

Now, under the Baltimore City Ordinance the fine for having dogs which bark is from \$5.00 to \$50.00. Judge Hammerman gave a statement to the press that he would find me guilty and charge me \$50.00 and have the dogs ordered to be disposed of (i.e., killed).

When he arrested me, he placed a \$500.00 bail on me—on a case where the maximum fine is \$50.00. Naturally, not expecting this, I didn't have \$500 in my purse. My attorney went to the bank to get it for me, and during the half hour which he needed for this, they insisted on placing me in a jail cell.

The newspapermen, and TV cameramen and radio-men couldn't believe it. They thought I would be permitted to sit in an ante-room and wait for my attorney. That cell was filthy, ill-lighted, stinking, without any privacy. I was searched for dangerous weapons, escorted by a policewoman and two policemen.

And, then, Judge Hammerman came in to hear the case. My attorney filed a motion saying that I felt I could not get a fair trial because of Judge Hammerman's bias to me in respect to my religion. We never dreamed that he would admit it—but he disqualified himself on those terms. Another judge was brought in, and the trial reset for two days hence, while I was permitted out of jail on the \$500 cash bail (not collateral, but the cash—in \$20 bills).

We went to the next hearing and Judge Robinson was sitting. We got up in front of the bench and the case began. Judge Robinson was florid in his face with anger as he began. A newspaper reporter had told me as we went into court that he was going to find me guilty of contempt of court, levy an enormous fine, and perhaps order a jail sentence.

Suddenly, in the middle of the trial, Judge Robinson ordered my arrest for not responding to a summons way back there some time. A policewoman shoved me out of the court. I was taken to the police station, booked, charged, searched, and then shoved back into the court room.

My attorney was shocked. He demanded a mistrial. Judge Robinson overruled him. He demanded a change of venue. Judge Robinson overruled him. He demanded

(Continued on Page 17)



"My son, the saviour . . ."

editorial type stuff

A Matter of Taste (Continued)

"Good taste is the worst vice ever invented."

—Dame Edith Sitwell,
quoted out of context

Letter From a Reader

Dear Mr. Krassner,

... Your comments on the things you find in bad taste are quite right and quite welcome. But I do think it would be wise to examine your own house first. . . .

It's one thing to print a factual report about the use of contraceptives by nuns in danger of being raped. But not everything is fair in your war against the church. A "rumor" about diaphragms being dropped by nuns on their way to heaven may be intended as a joke, but it's not funny.

As you correctly point out, your reaction is conditioned by your knowledge of the attitude of the source of the remark. Coming from you, such an item is in the same class as polemics against the international Jewish conspiracy, or the stories purveyed by hate sheets about Negro men seizing 13-year-old white girls to mongrelize the races. It is dishonest, unfair, and irresponsible.

If you are so eager to protect Jews, Negroes, Puerto Ricans and so on from malicious slurs against them as a group, you ought not to use the same tactics yourself against the Catholics. That is bemeaning to you personally and detrimental to the work of your magazine.

You can demonstrate your liberalism all you want by using "shit" and "crap" whenever possible, but you take a big step backward into narrow-mindedness when you attack the nuns, who do no one any harm and who, with perhaps more courage than most of us will ever show, wear the badge of their aberration openly for all to see.

Thomas W. Lippman
Jamaica, N.Y.

Reply From an Editor

In his book, *Rocking the Boat*, Gore Vidal contends: "As long as any group within the society deliberately maintains its identity, it is, or should be, a fair target for satire, both for its own good and for society's."

That would seem to include nuns, wouldn't it? But nuns weren't the target of our explanation of flying saucers: diaphragms being dropped by nuns on their way to heaven.

(Incidentally, reader David Pistole of Corpus Christie, Texas wrote to the Correspondence Organization for the Research of Aerial Phenomena in Lancaster, Pa., and their reply stated in part: "The explanation presented in the *Realist* is just what it was published as: a rumor. It is a rumor, not a theory. A theory would have substantial logic and data supporting it to cause the theorist to believe or support it. Do you have any idea what logic or evidence the *Realist* possesses to support their unbased rumor? Where did they get their information?")

November 1962

<http://www.ep.tc/realist>
THE REALIST ARCHIVE PROJECT



"The Ecumenical Council has approved a birth control pill for married women; it is held firmly between the knees . . ."

Nor was the church our target.

Our target was simply what it always is: anti-human authoritarianism, of which the church in this case was the vehicle, and nuns the collective victim.

Ironically, the *Realist's* criterion for what we consider to be deserving targets would please any Catholic theologian: free will. An aberration itself isn't a valid target, but when that aberration is not only voluntarily sought, but also encouraged, then it is the function of this magazine, not to wage "war" against the guilty institution, but merely to say, for whatever it's worth, that the emperor ain't got no clothes on, hey.

But I would no more attempt to convince you of my lack of malice than I would attempt to convince you of the presence of humor. You either feel it or you don't.

All right now, class, we're going to have a little test. Following are three little factual reports. Dig below the surrealism in each to see if you can come up with the element of free will regarding morality or taste which transcends any taboo on irreverence.

- Civil marriage does not exist in Israel. Rabbinical authorities, who oppose marriages between Jews and gentiles, require the dark-skinned Bnai Israelites, unlike other Jews, to undergo a special inquiry into their ancestral lineage before granting them permission to marry outside their sect. These inquiries are described as a safeguard against impairing the ethnic purity of Israel's Jews.

- A certain organization holds dances to which white persons are not allowed to invite Negroes, or

The *Realist* is published monthly, except for January and July, by the Realist Association, a non-profit corporation founded by William and Helen McCarthy, to whom this magazine is dedicated.

PAUL KRASSNER, Editor
SALLY BALDWIN, Scapegoat

Publication office is at 225 Lafayette St., N. Y. 12, N. Y.

Subscription rates:

\$3 for 10 issues; \$5 for 20 issues

12 copies of one issue: \$1

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Second-class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

vice versa. It is the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind.

• The Epilepsy Foundation, in its campaign to educate the public about the disease, has been distributing a variety of gummed labels for mailing purposes, one of which reads:

FRAGILE
Handle With Care

Epilepsy Laws are Outmoded

Contrary to the contention in Mr. Lippman's letter, the *Realist's* use of certain words "whenever possible" has nothing to do with liberalism; rather, it has to do with accuracy.

Newspapers and magazines, for example, in reporting the censorship problems of the film, *The Connection*, kept writing around the word that caused the controversy by referring to it as "a synonym for heroin" or "slang for excrement." The *Village Voice* and *Esquire* may well have been the only two publications to go through the obvious motions of informing their readers that the word was "shit."

The critic for the *New York Post*, however, said that the movie "strikes to the bowels of the subject." It was a blow struck for freedom of the press that will go down in the annals of journalism.

The Kennedy Caper (Concluded)

The March, 1962 issue of the *Realist* contained the text of an entry in *The Blauvelt Family Genealogy* which indicated that President Kennedy had been previously married, and also contained a White House denial of the genealogy's accuracy.

Parade, a Sunday supplement to 70 newspapers across the country, went and did likewise on September 2nd.

On September 14th, Walter Winchell asked what proof *Parade* had that JFK was never married to Durie Malcolm. For that matter, what proof does Winchell have that he was never married to his daughter, Walda?

Meanwhile, *Parade* sent out a press release which was ignored in this country but the overseas wire service, Reuters, picked it up and the story made the front pages of the *London Observer*, the *Sunday Telegraph* and *Reynolds News*, among others.

The genealogical entry—sans denial—had been carried by a whole slew of right-wing periodicals, ranging from the comparatively conservative hate-sheet, *The Thunderbolt* (official organ of the National States Rights Party) to *Kill* magazine ("Dedicated to the Annihilation of the Enemies of the White People").

Kill is published by the American National Party, a splinter of the American Nazi Party. Its national chairman, John Patler, wrote to us: "Your insane, degenerate paper is worse than the Communist *Worker*, to say the least. Someday your ugly paper will contribute to a nice big bonfire—and we may dump you in for good measure."

On September 24th, *Newsweek* broke the genealogy-and-denial story in its Press section, with a reprint-in-advance by the *Washington Post* and much fanfare. It was one of the biggest sellers in *Newsweek's* history. *Newsweek* is owned by the *Post*, and its publisher, Philip Graham, is a close friend of President Kennedy. In all likelihood, the publication of the report was with the latter's permission and approval.

Newsweek wrote: "The story first appeared in a beatnik Greenwich Village magazine of slight circula-

tion, *The Realist*. . . ." A *Newsweek* editor had interviewed me for 2½ hours, and much of the interview revolved around why the *Realist* is not a beatnik magazine.

I wrote to *Newsweek*: "Aside from the inaccuracy of your compulsive adjective-dropping—the *Realist* considers beatniks as unsacred a cow as mass magazines—it should be noted for the record that the story which first appeared in the *Realist* contained not only the Blauvelt genealogical entry, but also the White House denial of its accuracy."

Responded *Newsweek*: "We read your comments on *The Realist* with interest and wish to assure you that we merely intended to indicate where the story broke; to give credit where credit was due, with no offense intended to *The Realist*. It was good of you to get in touch with us."

But, under orders of the publisher, *Newsweek* published not a single letter about their article.

The September 28th issue of *Time* carried a two-page story, which included this: "In the absence of forthright denials, the story—and the rumors—grew. Last March, *The Realist*, a shabby Greenwich Village periodical, published the fact of the Blauvelt genealogical entry as an 'exposé' . . ."

I wrote to *Time*: "You were condescendingly correct in describing the *Realist* as shabby; but it was indeed a subtle touch of slick genius on your part to extend the *Realist's* shabbiness to *Time's* ethics by omitting the fact that in addition to publishing the Blauvelt genealogical entry, we simultaneously published the White House denial of its accuracy."

Responded *Time*: "We were, of course, aware that *The Realist's* 'exposé' of the rumored marriage of President John F. Kennedy to Durie Malcolm contained a denial. However, in view of the frame of reference of our story—the recapitulating of the kernel [sic] of this tale and how it grew—we had no occasion, at the point at which we mentioned *The Realist*, to note this aspect of your report. Nor, in view of the evidence repudiating the validity of the marriage, which we recounted in developing our story, do we believe that this was particularly pertinent. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this point apropos of *TIME's* September 28 story 'An American Genealogy.'"

Time published one letter on the story, from a reader who was "glad to see that my favorite source of information was able to clear the air." And, said a *Time* spokesman, "As far as we're concerned, that closed the book."

In the October 6th *Saturday Review*, Cleveland Amory touched upon the story. "This fiction," he wrote, "first appeared in *The Realist* magazine and was apparently documented by an obscure genealogy." Once again, shoddy reporting implied that the *Realist* was spreading a false rumor.

Between the *Newsweek* and the *Time* articles, the Associated Press sent the story out on its wires, and it was now officially news, front-page news for many papers. The *New York Post* managed to get the AP story into its final Monday afternoon edition with the headline: "JFK Wed Before? White House Says No."

Several months ago, the night city editor of the *New York Times* sent a copy boy over to East 42nd St. to pick up a copy of the early edition of the *Daily News* as soon as it hit the streets. There were rumors

that the *News* was going to break the story, and if it did, why, then, the *Times* would too. The *News* didn't. So the *Times* didn't.

Now the *Times* carried a long article, not the AP dispatch, but a "Special to The New York Times" piece. It said about the *Realist* only that we had "published the text of the entry." The following paragraph appeared in the Monday night "early bird" edition of the *Times* but was cut out of all succeeding editions:

"Some members of the far-flung family do not believe Mr. Blauvelt [deceased compiler of the genealogy] was in error. James Blauvelt told a member of The New York Times Washington Bureau that some of the family believed Howard Ira Durie [who assisted in the compilation] had been 'paid off' by the Kennedys."

The *News-Bulletin*, published by the Cinema Educational Guild in Hollywood, claims to have "received a number of letters from old friends of the Kennedy family in Massachusetts and Cape Cod [sic]. Several of the letters distinctly verified the marriage, all of them stating that it made Rose (Jack's mother) very unhappy. However, she looked upon the marriage as just 'one of Jack's youthful escapades,' which she was sure 'wouldn't last long'—and it didn't."

The *News-Bulletin* also asserts that, "in conversation with a close friend, John Bersbach, Durie's first husband, now living in Winnetka, Illinois, expressed full knowledge of her marriage with Kennedy. . . ."

When the genealogy-and-denial story hit the newspapers, it also broke on radio and TV newscasts. A Washington commentator on the *Huntley-Brinkley Report*, for instance, delivered his bit, then smiled smugly and explained how NBC had the story for a long time but had the good sense not to use it.

(Actually, there was a memo on the bulletin board in the NBC newsroom in Washington which told about the genealogy-and-denial, and ordered NBCers not to carry the story in any form until it broke in some other medium or on some other network. The memo disappeared the day the *Washington Post* printed *Newsweek's* scoop.)

In similar fashion, the *New York Post* interrupted the AP dispatch it printed with a proud parenthetical note, stating: "Last spring, the *New York Post* checked the marriage report with the White House and all other possible sources, and because it could not be verified elected not to print the story."

But, what the *Post's* publisher had admitted in private was the fear of a lawsuit by the Kennedys, into the millions of dollars.

That's the way it was right down the line. I was interviewed by literally dozens of newsmen, and without exception, the periodicals they represented were all concerned about threatened Presidential libel action.

The reporter who first tipped off *Newsweek* that the *Realist* was going to break the story, had told me: "I advise you to see your attorney right away." And a *Newsweek* editor himself confirmed for me last April how cautious their lawyers were.

"For the last sixteen months," *Newsweek* began its article, "virtually every major newspaper, magazine, and wire service in the U.S. has refused to publish a sensational report—familiar to hundreds of thousands of Americans and millions of Britons—about the President of the United States."

And *Newsweek* proceeded to transform a scared press into a "responsible press."

I wrote in issue #35 that "I have never given a good sweet damn whether or not President Kennedy was ever married before. I simply felt, especially in view of the snowballing rumor [in a year's time, *Parade* had received 12,000 inquiries about it], that the story behind the rumor—the genealogy and the denial—constituted a valid news story, and nobody else was printing it."

The real significance of this whole Kennedy caper, then, has been the frightened state of the press, and now its retroactive self-righteousness.

The hypocrisy of it all is epitomized by the question that someone from Associated Press asked a friend of mine: "How much did *Newsweek* pay Paul Krassner to break the Kennedy story?"

Department of Satirical Prophecy

From "A Child's Primer on the Cold War" in the October, 1960 issue of the *Realist*:

These are philosophers. They say that nobody can win the cold war. They suggest a large-scale program of cultural exchange. They call it massive prevention. You can tell they're philosophers. They smoke Kents.

This is the cultural exchange. Doctors. Lawyers. Indian chiefs. Buttonhole manufacturers. Ballet dancers. Comedians. Teachers. Students. Juvenile delinquents. Adult delinquents. Juvenile adults. Politicians. Policemen. Housewives. Scientists. TV repairmen. All immigration quotas are lifted. Except that for every million Russians who come to America, a million Americans must be permitted to enter Russia. This is called Operation Tit-for-Tat. Then the Legion of Decency protests.

Here is a treaty. Russia and the United States have signed it. Once all those Russians are in the United States—and once all those Americans are in Russia—nobody will be allowed out! Neither country would dare break this agreement. . . .

* * *

From Nat Hentoff's column "The Peace Scene" (for all you cats and chicks who don't dig war and all that violent jazz) in the January, 1962 issue of *Liberation*:

. . . Stephen D. James, a New York advertising man . . . has inaugurated *Ideas for Peace*, Box 2737, Grand Central Sta., N. Y., N. Y. . . . James himself has proposed one plan . . . [he] calls his idea the *Peace Hostage Exchange*. (I would leave out the middle word.)

"It should be," he outlines, "on a massive basis—not mere token trades as in the case of cultural organizations. Exchanges should be made at all levels of society for periods ranging from six months to two years or more. The first should be made at the very top. Let President Kennedy seek a volunteer from among his brothers and sisters. Let one of them take his or her family to Russia in exchange for the family of one of Khrushchev's children. Let our Secretary of State, other cabinet members, Congressmen, governors, mayors, and civil servants do the same. Likewise, let our industrialists, businessmen, scientists, teachers, clerical and factory workers make similar exchanges. . . ."

From "Rumors of the Month" in the March, 1961 issue of the *Realist*:

Edward R. Murrow, as the first official act in his capacity as head of the U.S. Information Agency, has initiated a project called Radio Free Dixie.

* * *

From the *New York Times* of October 8, 1962:
Havana has begun to broadcast a "Radio Free

Dixie" program, apparently beamed to the Negro population of the Southern United States. . . .

From "U.S. Seeks Change in Farmer Image" in the June, 1962 issue of the *Realist*:

. . . The American hero today is a man with an office, and clearly that is where Rufus Poore is going. He glances warily up at the pile of manure on the cart; here is another image that will bear some changing. "We'll make it smell like toothpaste," thinks Poore, "and package it in gay cellophane wrappers. Ain't gonna be no flies on us."

From "The Way-Out Way of Life" in the Sept. 25, 1962 issue of *Look* magazine:

Except for plentiful sunshine, the environment [in Palm Springs, Calif.] is what man makes it, a free-form civilization built on watered sand. Nature's products do not often fit. Natural fertilizer, once used by the ton to grow lush grass and trees, gives off an odor. So the city passed an ordinance in favor of artificial fertilizer. Even owning a pound of natural fertilizer is a misdemeanor, punishable by six months in jail.

Personal Propaganda

"Our contemporary dating system," said Dr. Albert Ellis in the *Realist* a couple of years ago, "with its restrictions on how and where it is permissible for one to meet a member of the other sex . . . makes it most difficult for the above-average individual to meet the relatively large numbers of other-sex partners he or she must meet if his or her selective requirements are to be met."

Well, we've decided to do something about it. As of our next issue, the *Realist* will have a new department. It all started with a recent ad in the *Village Voice*, headlined: "Four Characters in Search of Two Husbands and Two Wives."

To anybody who knows me or reads the *Realist*, it was more than obvious that I was the fourth character:

D. Male, 30, looks much younger; 5'6"; attractive; editor of a satirical magazine; writing novel about the unlabeled generation; non-religious humanist; doesn't smoke (poise is the lowest form of status-seeking); doesn't drink (alcoholic beverages taste like cough medicine and hair tonic); doesn't take drugs (but is high on existence—which is so absurd generally that all specifics become surrealistic—such as packaged femininity, from high heels to eye makeup); member of American Civil Liberties Union and Cinema 16; admires philosophy of A. S. Neill, Jean Shepherd and Smokey the Bear; has never undergone analysis; works and plays well with others.

The responses were interesting—ranging from somebody whose psychiatrist was convinced of how sick I am because I put such emphasis on the negative; to a literary agent who wants to see my novel; to a man who said: "I understand you're looking for a wife—take mine."

Someone else sent the ad to me, scrawling across it: "Kee-rist, Paul!" And my very own mother said, "Boy, things must be pretty bad."

Nevertheless, there will be a Personal Propaganda section in issue #40, on an experimental basis. Keep your pitch down to about 25 words. And remember, you don't have to be looking for a soulmate. There are, for example, many *Realist* readers, especially in small communities, who would merely like to meet other *Realist* readers.

There will be no charge for this service. Each listing will be anonymous; we will assign box numbers.

And, oh yes, satisfaction is *not* guaranteed.

Ah Sordid Announcements

• Extra copies of this issue: 12 for \$1. The five non-newsstand issues: \$1. Our ten best back issues: \$2. All available back issues: \$6.50. Any issues you've missed as a subscriber: free.

• Gift subscriptions (including your own new sub, if you wish) are two for \$5 instead of the usual \$3 each. Also, my book, *Impolite Interviews* (with Lenny Bruce, Dr. Albert Ellis, Henry Morgan, Alan Watts, Jean Shepherd, Hugh Hefner, Jules Feiffer)—priced at \$4—is now available from the *Realist* for \$2.

• In answer to queries as to whether our plastic dashboard Saint Realists are a gag, they're not. They cost \$1 each and can be used as a desk ornament if you don't have a car.

• I have taken a leave of absence from the radio program which was announced in issue #38.

• Miss Sylvia Anderson (see issue #35) gave birth to a baby boy, Todd William, on November 8th. Several *Realist* readers have given Sylvia free-lance typing jobs; and Bon Bazar—a decorating accessories store at 149 Waverly Place in New York—offered her a full-time position.

• An examination before trial for the only libel suit ever instituted against the *Realist* is scheduled for January 25th. The plaintiff, M. S. Arnoni, editor of *The Minority of One*, has already postponed this pre-trial hearing four times.

• After receiving in Miami on September 17th a sentence of 3 months in prison and 9 months on probation for re-entering his native land without a passport, Bill Worthy has filed an appeal to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. The Committee for the Freedom of William Worthy has published a brochure, *The Truth Shall Not Be Jailed*, available from the Committee at Suite 301, 217 W. 125 St., New York 27, N.Y., at 10c each, 20 for \$1.

• A group of independent editors has collaborated on a pamphlet titled *Kennedy's Cuban Policy: A Disaster Policy*. Price: 25c. Copies may be ordered from Editors Statement, P.O. Box 251, Planetarium Station, 131 W. 83 St., New York 24, N.Y.

• The December issue of the *Realist*—featuring an impolite interview with Norman Mailer, and in which we shall belatedly but not ungratefully acknowledge your contributions both to the *Realist* and to *People*—will be out, of course, at the end of January. In the meantime, may your New Year's resolutions be based on the soul-searching you did during the Cuban crisis.

The Cuban Crisis (to coin a phrase)

The most sensible explanation of the Cuban crisis that I've heard comes from Bruce Friedman, author of *Stern*: "It was a device to get James Meredith into the reserves."

Which brings me to a game I've invented, called "Musical Celebrities."

Sample exercise: Sonny Liston is a Bad Guy. He wins the heavyweight championship. He appears on the Ed Sullivan show. He is now a Good Guy. So send him to the University of Mississippi.

But, getting back to Cuba, here's the rumor of the month: Darryl F. Zanuck is making a film about World War III, titled *The Shortest Day*.

The Self-Styled Phony Rides Again

I am coming out of my annual retirement as a comedian in order to do a series of concerts for the benefit of *People* (see progress report starting on this page).

CHICAGO: "An Afternoon With Paul Krassner" at 2:30 on Sunday, December 23rd at The Gate of Horn, 1036 N. State St. Admission: \$2.50. Call SU 7-2833 for reservations.

MINNEAPOLIS: Date and place not set yet. To receive announcement, send postcard to Sandi Bethke, 2530 Pleasant Ave., Minneapolis 4.

LOS ANGELES: Date not set yet. To receive announcement, send postcard to Jerry Hopkins, The Steve Allen Playhouse, 1228 N. Vine St., Hollywood 38.

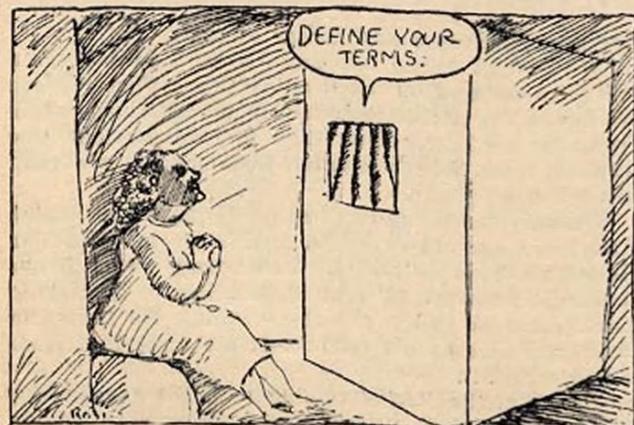
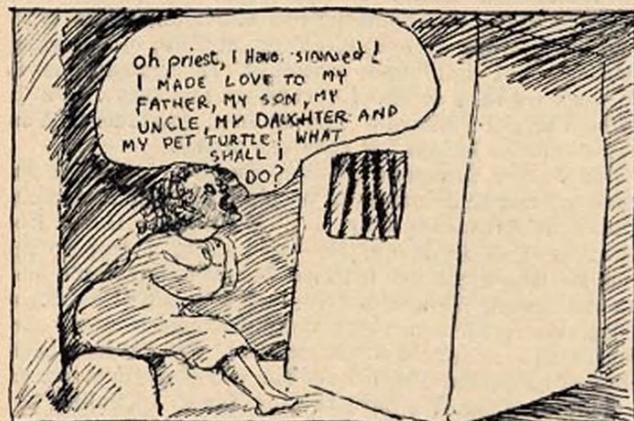
SAN FRANCISCO: Date not set yet. To receive announcement, send postcard to Enrico Banducci, the hungry i, 599 Jackson St., San Francisco.

ST. LOUIS: Date not set yet. To receive announcement, send postcard to Jay Landesman, The Crystal Palace, 4240 Gaslight Sq., St. Louis 8.

PHILADELPHIA: Date not set yet. To receive announcement, send postcard to Joan Powlen, The Theatre Workshop, 1227 Locust St., Philadelphia.

NEW YORK: "An Evening With Paul Krassner" at 8 o'clock on Saturday, January 26th at Town Hall. Admission \$2.50. All seats reserved—in the order you send for tickets—and please enclose a stamped return envelope. We would like to fill Town Hall entirely with *Realist* readers and their guests. Send all orders to:

The Realist, Dept. T
225 Lafayette St.
New York 12, N.Y.



November 1962

<http://www.ep.tc/realist>
THE REALIST ARCHIVE PROJECT

People: progress report #1

by George von Hilsheimer

Because of the Nov. 1 issuance of a "Christmas" stamp by the federal government, Postmaster General J. Edward Day has been formally asked for a statement . . . as to the purpose of the new stamp, described as "a 4¢ denomination with an evergreen wreath, red bow and candles on white paper."

—press release from the American Humanist Assn.

So we must look, finally . . . to direct functioning in what concerns us closely, in order to dispel the mesmerism of abstract power altogether . . . and so positively to replace an area of power with peaceful functioning. Interestingly, even a critical and purgative group like *The Realist* is coming around to this point of view. . . .

—Paul Goodman, writing in *Liberation*, October, 1962

A Sunday School called. They're sending \$150 to a Korean child through Save The Children. But what, they want to know, is *People*? Since they belong to an Ethical Society it seemed worth explaining at length, so off we bombed to New Rochelle.

What is *People*? Lots of letters, despite our first invitation article, want to know *exactly*. We can't say everything yet. Maybe *People* is being *inexactly*.

Exactly Type Projects

1. *Volunteer Workers For People* (Volwop?)—If you want to spend three or six or more months working for people, we will work you. First project deals with migrant children in the Center described in issue #35. Pay is less than Peace Corps, work is harder, greater tact is required, cultural deprivation is even worse, and life is even more miserable. Line forms over there.

A second Volunteer Worker Project will be manning mobile service teams fielding kitchens, laundry, clinic and care facilities. Same pay, etc.

2. *Summerlane Camp*—Cost your kiddies \$360 for 9 weeks; \$270 for six; \$180 for three. We'll take only 75 kids. An additional 25 teens will form a work camp at Summerlane. The younger campers will have the option of working as well. There will be no moral or other blackmail encouraging them to work. Summerlane Camp can become Summerlane School with as few as 40, as many as 70 students. Its name is derived from A. S. Neill's Sumerhill, and Homer Lane, whose Little Commonwealth (for JDs) was Neill's inspiration years before anyone heard of J. Dewey.

People ask what the difference will be between Neill and us, and we don't really know. We think we are more interested in a social, community involvement. There will be a work camp associated with the camp-school. The center for Volunteer Workers For People will be on the same 168 acres in North Carolina. Inevitably the community work milieu will effect our campers and students. But everyone connected with the Summerlane project is thoroughly committed to no less real choice for the students than at Summerhill.

Anyone who wants to work at the camp will be involved in the work projects with the migrants. Every-

one will share in administrative tasks, recruiting campers, and all the grimy et ceteras.

3 *Hunger Hurts*—Americans too! CARE can sue if they want. 100,000 infants dead of malnutrition is 100,000 too many. If you want to help an American family now barely subsisting in our Afflative Society write to *People*, 506 East 6th St., New York 9.

People will send you the name of a *bona fide* starving family. From there the relationship is all yours. We have volunteers who will visit the family if you like; they can just look at them, take pictures, verify their needs, or whatever you need. The relationship between you and your volunteer will be all yours as well.

You can help the family as much or as little as you want.

I've got one little 7-year-old who can't go to school because her total clothing consists of one (count 'em) one pair of panties. If you want to send or spend money we suggest you do it through *People* because we can buy it wholesale. We will arrange for reduced doctor and dental care, etc. Otherwise, you do all the administration there is to do, make all the decisions, ship all the goodies (except food & things we buy for you). Books, food, toys, anything can be used. Don't expect *People* to keep 'cases' at a distance, or to run a warehouse. If you want a needy friend, write.

4. *Books South*—A not untypical letter includes the following bit of intelligence: "The County Commissioners, with customary aplomb, voted to build the new junior college for Negroes (notwithstanding the federal order for complete integration, and despite the fact the new lily-white college has not been completed and could be built to accommodate both for a smaller figure), but failed to give any funds for a library. The college, which has operated for two years now, has a library of 139 books. I'm not kidding. We're supposed to educate god knows how many kids with a library of 139 books. You really wouldn't believe me if I listed the irrelevant, outdated titles that 139 includes."

This sort of thing is intriguing. So it called for a bit of checking, which reveals that of 10 Negro colleges questioned (5 private, 5 public) not one had a remotely modern library, and only one met accepted *minimum* standards for numbers of books per capita. We were sort of vaguely aware that something like this must exist, but ye gods!

If you want to help an American college now incapable of educating its students through lack of books, particularly modern scientific and technical books, write to *People*, 506 East 6th St., New York 9.

People will send you the name of a *bona fide* starving college. And the first *shnook* who writes me about "the government ought to". . . . Again, our principles of help are to insist that the relationship be all yours. I think we can compromise to the point that in New York we will accept books carried to 506 East 6th, and elsewhere we will welcome volunteers who will act as book depots.

5. *Mothers*—Don't get excited. Talking to the wife of a concrete mechanic who lives down here near us I discovered that there ain't no place a poor unworking mother with brat under 3 can leave her child—safely. So last night she and me made up 100 signs reading: "MOTHERS, INTERESTED IN COOPERATIVE DAY CARE? CALL CA 8-8967." The nice middle class laws, which do have a protective function, make it necessary for you to have a bundle of boodle if you

are going to care for more than 5 kids. So, with the pauperizing genius of this country, we make it impossible for poor folk to help themselves. Almost.

We figure if we keep little co-op groups of less than 5 kids we can beat city hall and help the mamas and kids before JD time. To put icing on the cake, the first voice that called—a nice Spanish flavored voice, fronting a name as improbable as Hildegard Ramirez—allowed as to how that would be nice, she had to leave her kids, aged 2½ and 1 year, alone. And we thought Florida was bad! Anyway, its another way of proving that good things can be done without money, organization, or crap. Just a little imagination and work.

[Editor's note: In New York City, it's actually against the law for a person who is not a close relative or a public official, to care for a child—with or without pay—except for casual babysitting . . . sometimes.]

6. Here is where we lose 'em. *People* is for people who want to put up or shut up. One of the things we all detest are 'charities' which spend 80-90% of their budget on administration. All right, we aren't ever going over 20. We're going to try to be imaginative enough to think of projects, like *Hunger Hurts*, which involve people directly—without intervening administration—with people. We still need the grimy, repulsive jobs which make our dainty skins crawl. Well, dear friends, if you open the sidewalk in front of the storefront at 506 East 6th you will see lurking down there a mimeograph machine. Sound familiar? Not for agit-prop, comrade. For work.

There is federal money to be had for well-conceived pilot projects; we've been encouraged to apply. There is foundation money for projects; we've been encouraged to apply. Someone has to write, others type, and others reproduce applications, studies, etc. Boring, perhaps, but valid and necessary. If Summerlane is to work we have to find 100 campers and teens. If it is to be a school we have to find 40 or more students. You can figure 50 letters for each one found.

If we are to rescue families we have to find them, have to send their names to people, have to find doctors and dentists where they live. Hell, John Davis has starving kids in Manhattan—and quite a few young couples who can't get married because they can't find an apartment. We need a volunteer who will track down telephone repairmen, check their disconnect-orders and find cheap apartments for ex-JDs. *People* has been started by people who believe the world doesn't owe us a damned thing. We have to work for it. Including the crap. Unromance, anyone?

Dreams, Nostrums and Other Fancies

We haven't moved into any JD work to date. Paul still pays the rent on the Reading Clinic Pilot Project. We have a few resources including my office-home storefront on the Lower East Side to help someone who wants to work. What's it to be? Idea-mongers who want to work only, please.

Summerlane Camp can become Summerlane School. And there are other things. I first wrote "You Can Help Make This A Reality." This sounds so much like the usual fund-raising crap that it has to be clearer. The *Realist* is Paul's personal venture. He thinks of his subscribers as his friends. If his taste in friends is bad, well. . . .

People is the *Realist* coming real. We are inviting our friends to help us create something with muscle,

mind, balls and guts—made of dreams and visions as well. If the thing is another breath from Don Quixote's tortured shade, fine. I have a picture on my desk of a boy who weighs 40 pounds. This would seem a pretty irrelevant description save for the fact that 9 months ago he weighed 7 pounds and suffered from 6 potentially fatal diseases. I can tilt at a lot of windmills on that. There are seven beebie holes in my storefront window. If we can find something better for these brats to do, without castrating them, bring on the lances. If it takes more beebie holes, or a brick, before we do it, such is life.

Questions, Objections and Other Flim-Flam

One of the kids at Westchester Ethical Society wanted some answers to good questions. Won't the families we help through *Hunger Hurts* be the objects of jealousy—won't this hurt rather than help?

No. One reason is that these people exist in a fantastic kind of atomized society. In a very real sense there is no one close enough to be jealous. A second reason is that we don't propose to become the Great White Father anonymously dropping a bundle of boodle on one kid in a family in a sweltering slum. One real person is going to become the friend of another real person. One real family is going to become the comfort of another real family. In a sense we are establishing a community—at great geographical and cultural distances, to be sure, but based on the real elements of community: people facing one another as people.

The senior class of the Sunday School at Westchester decides where the whole Sunday School will spend its collection for the year. They seemed a trifle put out because the 'adoption' of a Korean implied a long range commitment and limited the new seniors' choice. What, they wanted to know, happens if you drop our family next year? Won't they be worse off?

Actually, this is a problem for the *giver*. These people couldn't be worse off. Any help goes to good use, and is deeply appreciated. Any boost up the ladder helps. And, we don't propose to pauperize our friends by making them subject to means tests, cut-off figures, or other gimmicks of the unWelfare State.

Mind you, I'm not putting this teenager down for his questions. They were serious and valid. It was good to hear them from a 9th grade student. Most of his elders cannot penetrate their own rationalizations. They simply use them to avoid helping without seriously putting the question. Somehow, meanness is always for the good of the needy. Or the old saw "Some people don't really want to be helped, anyway" is trotted out.

An interesting insight into the machinations of the satisfied mind occurs in a rumor we heard about Save The Children Federation. This rumor cropped up so often that it almost assumed the status of fact in my mind. It was told that Save The Children warns their donors that if they drop their kid, the kid stays dropped. This would seem a pretty stiff way of handling people's reluctance to take their charity seriously.

But the interesting thing was that this rumor was always given as an excuse not to give to the kid in the first place!

I called the nice lady at Save The Children, and put her on about the Sunday School wanting to adopt, etc., and that they wanted to know what gives if they drop the kid. After a nice long talk I was pretty sure that need, and something called "willingness to try,"

are the main criteria for help from Save The Children. The lady seemed insistent about that "willingness," but told me that about 4 of 6 of the latest batch of assignments were to repeaters. So, we can tell you that to the best of our knowledge Save The Children drops no child that is needy and deserving. And, nowhere in the volumes of their literature does this rumored *caveat* occur.

So much for middle class alienation. You don't give because if *you* stop, then them greedy charity people are going to stop. *Ech!* We won't drop any family (we're a community, remember?) as long as someone else comes along. So don't feel bad. They won't get used to eating and then have to go back to standard pore folk affluence. We're not trying to save the world. Just to plant a few seeds of humanity.

Someone else asked about volunteers. How are we going to screen them? In short, dear reader, how we going to tell if you are good or another nut? At the Lincoln Park Child Care Center we used emotionally disabled people who've never before been able to hold a job; we've had juvenile delinquents and other love-lies. One unwed mother-to-be of 14 had just offered to cut the balls out of a public health doctor—and had the broken coke bottle in hand to lend seriousness to her proposal. She and other unbelievably hostile teenage mothers worked well, and accepted maternal training from us.

Because the work is valid, and the supervision is sane, honest and loving, and because the work is hard, immediately valuable, and overwhelming, they have worked beautifully. We've used the disabled, the blind, and others. They've been efficient workers in tasks we were told they couldn't perform.

I am not the sort of misty-minded jerk who thinks that all people are going to work well in any given situation just because I'm sincere. I am the sort of misty-minded jerk who is willing to give and struggle in any situation. I'm not going to invest heart, muscle, mind, balls and guts in helping fouled-up JDs, and then turn around to put down and *unlove* a jerky middle class social worker. *Both* are maimed. *Both* are culturally deprived. *Both* need whatever strength I can offer out of my own deprivation.

Sometimes I do have to draw my boundaries sharply. I don't always have time to humor the nuts, in other words. But, when I must break off, when I do say, "I don't have time for this struggle," I am obliged by my knowing of myself to make the break clean, and as undestructive as possible. I'm going first to try the struggle.

People is in business to help. As long as strength and resources permit we will struggle to help, and to work with people. We will fail often, we will break hearts, commit ethical blunders and positive offenses. Our failures, though, will not be failures of nerve, of love, of fear to struggle. They may well be the blunderings of naive, well-meaning jerks. This, of course, ain't our self-image. You're welcome to yours. In other

American Dream Series

Ad in N.Y. Times: "Attention Landlords! Now Rent in Brass! Pays for Itself Out of Increased Rents. Rent Commission Has Approved New Program. Call or write for schedule of increases permitted . . . Trylon Heating Corporation."

words, dear reader, if you want work, write. We'll use you, even if you are a nut.

A Word to Loyal Members of CORE, NAACP, ACLU, AHA, Etc.

Why, you ask, do we want to start another organization? Can't the specialists do it better? To these questions, posed by hard-thinking liberals of many stripes, I can only answer with a shrug. If you don't understand what we're driving at by now, I don't know. Perhaps the key word is *community*, and perhaps it's something I see because I am a Southern White Radical (read that, for best effect, barefooted). At any rate, here is a parable for our prime:

Highlander Folk School is no more. For more than 30 years it labored in the South to bring about humanity to that unmanned region. The chances are you never heard of it. The little lady who refused to move to the rear of the Montgomery bus was a Highlander graduate. Thousands of starving peons in the off-shore islands of Georgia and the Carolinas live because of Highlander. Hundreds of Southerners got their first practical taste of integration at Highlander. It was a school to teach folk skills. How to run a mimeograph. Handicraft industry. Community leadership at the practical working level. Building houses. Midwifery. Folksongs and prayer. Yeah, dear rationalist, prayer. Atheists who worked there suddenly got some insight into what the mountain religion means to folk who pray before every meeting, even the casual gathering on the front porch. They weren't too 'honest' to bow at prayer, to join lustily at hymns, or to listen sympathetically to simple pieties. Food, water, work, play, love and companionship, were much more important than religious disputation. They did a good work. And we let them down.

In 1956 thousands of Chicago Area liberals flocked to the cathedral of Rockefeller Chapel on the University campus. Our new saint, Martin Luther King, had come to town. Thousands of dollars were offered at the collection. Dozens of real honest-to-god liberals flocked to Montgomery. Unitarian ministers by the carload ran down to flap the mouth and return. Perhaps you can understand the bitterness of the Negro to the white in that phrase "to flap the mouth and return." A few weeks ago I introduced a white man to a good Negro friend, our chief stalwart in building the Child Care Center. I was pleased that she was able to say to him, "We can't trust you whites, because you always leave. One way or another, you always leave."

Montgomery is today an armed camp. Negroes are more thoroughly segregated, more totally impoverished than in 1955. But Yankee Gold still flows to Martin Luther King. And nobody knows Highlander. Except the *Catholic Worker*.

The point is this. So long as social action, and welfare attempts, are separated from people, they will lend themselves to inhuman destruction of human values. One of my ministerial colleagues was one of the glorious ones who got himself jailed by one of my Southern White buddies. I couldn't find him 4 years ago when some of us went to jail in Chicago—for the same issue. Take your rides, my friends, walk your protests, and organize the Great Good Middle Class into Selective Buying Crusades *cum* Boycott. But worry about us lower class bums starving out here in the gutter while you're doing it, huh?

In Birmingham, Alabama there is a great big selective buying thing going on. Brother Shuttlesworth's Christian-something-or-other is dealing it. The County Commission struck back with typical southern gallantry. For years they have participated in the federal surplus food program. Which means that they agree to pay for proper storage and equitable distribution of surplus food to unemployed residents. Their costs were over a million dollars a year. The food amounted to a respectable mountain. So, today, the poor folk of Birmingham, mostly Negro, ain't got no grits. So, what I want to know, Rev. Shuttlesworth, is when your Christian circus decides the nonboycott-boycott is a success and goes home, as you surer than hell did in Montgomery, what happens to them grits?

Something most liberals don't realize is that the Negroes' struggle has been led by the middle class for middle class goals. Southern education is almost totally irrelevant to Negro needs as well as being hopelessly inadequate, because of liberal leadership. Inadequacy, to be sure, lies at the feet of Southern gentlemen; but the fact that over half of Jacksonville, Florida's Negro postmen have college teaching degrees and cannot be employed is not because there are no jobs available to them. The surplus of openings in jobs protected by the federal government makes job availability no problem in Florida.

The asinities and cultural blindness of liberal leadership have so warped the structure of Negro education that, far from it being a problem of too many trade school graduates, Negroes are handed practically useless academic degrees while jobs go begging. The point is that money goes to nice things, to things that make headlines, to things, in general, which have little relevance to the needs of people.

One of the few places in the South that the Negro has not retreated despite so many 'victories' is Tuskegee. For once the leadership did not come from the charismatic messiahs of the clergy. Tuskegee was fortunate in having a sound population of college people, but it is not the only town so 'blessed.' Leadership did not come alone from the college, but from Negroes in all walks of life. The chairman of the *ad hoc* committee was a non-churchgoing humanist, Charles Gomillion. The movement worried about people eating and working as well as riding.

The Negro economy was not destroyed; rather, almost 40 White businesses closed. The only division in the Negro community came when the ministers sought to have Gomillion removed. With characteristic idealism he refused even to attend the meeting which discussed his readily offered resignation. It was overwhelmingly refused.

The Tuskegee struggle, after 4 years of work, could still weekly produce a crowded meeting drawn from the entire community, with continual local financial support for the court fights. It was rather less spectacularly successful in attracting Yankee Gold than Montgomery had been. When Gomillion, and coincidentally the two men second and third in responsibility, left Tuskegee for a year on academic matters, the movement flourished. Leadership had prepared it to continue; had rooted it in the people.

People is made of the same sort of idealistic Don Quixotes as Charles Gomillion. People who think you can trust people.

If you want work, write.

The Moon-Shot Scandal

by Terry Southern

A significant difference between Soviet and American space efforts has been the constant spotlight of public attention focused on the latter, while our antagonist's program has been carried forward in relative secrecy. This has presented tremendous disadvantages, especially in its psychological effect on the national-mind, and it harbors a dangerous potential indeed. If, for example, in climax to the usual fanfare and nationally televised countdown, the spacecraft simply explodes, veers out crazily into the crowd, or burrows deep into the earth at the foot of the launching-pad, it can be fairly embarrassing to all concerned. On the other hand, it is generally presumed, that, because of this apparent and completely above-board policy, *everything* which occurs in regard to these American space-shots is immediately known by the entire public. Yet can anyone really be naive enough to believe that in matters so extraordinarily important an attitude of such simple-minded candor could obtain? Surely not. And the facts behind the initial moon-shot, of August 17, 1961, make it a classic case in point, now that the true story may at last be told.

Readers will recall that the spacecraft, after a dramatic countdown, blazed up from its pad on full camera; the camera followed its ascent briefly, then cut to the tracking-station where a graph described the arc of its ill-fated flight. In due time it became evident that the rocket was seriously off course, and in the end it was announced quite simply that the craft had "missed the moon" by about two-hundred thousand miles—by a wider mark, in fact, than the distance of the shot itself. What was *not* announced—either before, during, or after the shot—was that the craft was *manned by five astronauts*. Hoping for a total coup, the Space Authority—highest echelon of the Agency—had arranged for a fully crewed flight, one which if successful (and there was considerable reason to believe that it would be) would then be dramatically announced to an astonished world: "Americans On The Moon!" Whereas, if not successful, it would merely remain undisclosed that the craft had been manned. The crew, of course, was composed of carefully screened volunteers who had no known dependents.

So, in one room of the tracking-station—a room which was *not* being televised—communications were maintained throughout this historic interlude. Fragmented transcripts, in the form of both video and acoustic tapes, as well as personal accounts of those present, have now enabled us to piece together the story—the *story*, namely, of how the moon-bound spaceship, "Cutie-Pie II," was caused to careen off into outer space, beyond the moon itself, when some kind of "*in-sane fauqot hassel*," as it has since been described, developed aboard the craft during early flight stage.

According to available information, Lt. Col. P. D. Slattery, a "retired" British colonial officer, co-captained the flight in hand with Major Ralph L. Doll (better known to his friends, it was later learned, as "Baby" Doll); the balance of the crew consisted of Capt. J.

Walker, Lt. Fred Hanson, and Cpl. "Felix" Mendelssohn. (There is certain evidence suggesting that Cpl. Mendelssohn may have, in actual fact, been a woman.) The initial phase of the existing transcript is comprised entirely of routine operational data and reports of instrument readings. It was near the end of Stage One, however, when the craft was some 68,000 miles from earth, and still holding true course, that the first untoward incident occurred; this was in the form of an unexpected exchange between Lt. Hanson and Maj. Doll, which resounded over the tracking-station inter-com, as clear as a bell on a winter's morn:

Lt. Hanson: "Will you *stop* it! Just *stop* it!"

Maj. Doll: "Stop *what*? I was only calibrating my altimeter—for heaven's sake, Freddie!"

Lt. Hanson: "I'm not *talking* about that and you know it! I'm talking about your infernal *camp-ing*! Now just stop it! Right now!"

The astonishment this caused at tracking-station H.Q. could hardly be exaggerated. Head-phones were adjusted, frequencies were checked; the voice of a Lt. General spoke tersely: "Cutie-Pie II—give us your reading—over."

"*Reading thepeeding*," was Cpl. Mendelssohn's slyly lisped reply, followed by a cunning snicker. At this point a scene of fantastic bedlam broke loose on the video inter-com. Col. Slattery raged out from his forward quarters, like the protagonist of *Psycho*—in outlandish feminine attire of the nineties, replete with a dozen petticoats and high-button shoes. He pranced with wild imperiousness about the control room, interfering with all operational activity, and then spun into a provocative and feverish combination of tarantella and can-can at the navigation panel, saucily flicking at the controls there, cleverly integrating these movements into the tempo of his dervish, amidst peals of laughter and shrieks of delight and petulant annoyance.

"You silly old fraud," someone cried gaily, "this isn't Pirandello!"

It was then that the video system of the inter-com blacked out, as though suddenly shattered, as did the audio-system shortly afterward. There is reason to believe, however, that the sound communication part of the system was eventually restored, and, according to some accounts, occasional reports (of an almost incredible nature) continue to be received, as the craft—which was heavily fueled for its return trip to earth—still blazes through the farther reaches of space.

Surely, despite the negative and rather disappointing aspects of the flight, there are at least two profitable lessons to be learned from it: (1) that the antiquated, intolerant attitude of the Agency, and of Government generally, towards sexual freedom, can only cause individual repression which may at any time—and especially under the terrific tensions of space-flight—have a boomerang effect to the great disadvantage of all concerned, and (2) that there may well be, after all, an ancient wisdom in the old adage, "*Five's a crowd*."



A Nun in the Sun

To Purge Or Not To Purge . . . ?

by William Worthy

After the "week of fear" at the end of October my hometown daily, the *Boston Globe*, remarked that no doubt President Kennedy scared the Russians because he certainly scared us.

I had always been led to believe that in time of crisis the best in men comes out—and especially in men of essential good will. But was that in fact borne out by the rash of activities by peace groups after the President's October 22nd address to the nation?

The answer in many cases is no, judging from the organizational jockeying for position, the throat-cutting and the incredible inefficiency that went on along the peace front. I've long maintained that there are certain categories of mistakes, certain luxury types of ineptitude, that politically serious persons just do not indulge in. (Perhaps I should qualify that by specifying politically serious persons not hog-tied by their neuroses.)

My admiration for the Women's Strike for Peace is tempered by its general unwillingness to damn U.S. colonialism as one of the major threats to world peace. But at least the zealous members have built, in a year's time, a functioning *action* apparatus that one day, under different leadership, may be used to take the unpopular steps that need to be taken. The President spoke on television and laid down the line on Monday evening. (Five hours earlier, at the UN, I heard the Soviet information officer taunt Dick Hottelet of CBS News on how totally in the dark we of "the open society" were about



"Last time I let Nixon wag his finger in my face for the photographers, so I figured now I should do something to give the Democrats equal time. . . ."

the life-and-death decisions being made that day by a handful of men in Washington.) By Tuesday afternoon hundreds of Women Strikers were demonstrating in protest outside the UN. The chain system of mobilizing the membership by telephone had worked.

By contrast, I saw a post-crisis memorandum of the Committee for Non-violent Action—which must be at least a decade old—confessing that to its "chagrin" it had discovered itself unable to act promptly and decisively.

Were I a contributor to CNVA cofers, I would at this point have some very embarrassing questions to ask. It has long been my observation that persons in old-line radical organizations don't know enough—or care enough—to have on file the office and home telephone numbers of every supporter, for just such an emergency as the Cuba crisis. They don't bother to get postal zone numbers, which can save 24-48 hours on mail deliveries—72 hours if a weekend intervenes. (To much of the world it looked that Monday night as if we might have a maximum of 72 hours in which to fight to survive.)

Without ever checking with persons who know what they are doing, these same devotees of peace and justice will year after year put out press releases wholly unprofessional in nature, and will then complain when nothing appears in print. The releases often have no date and no telephone contact number, which an interested newspaper's city desk can call for further information or for clarification of a point.

Even when I've sometimes taken the trouble to tell peace organizations to specify "for release, morning papers" or "afternoon papers" on such-and-such a date, they keep merrily on using "for immediate release"—which means that a daily editor cannot tell if his competitor received the release earlier and has already beaten him into print.

What really floored me, however, was a group up here in Boston which single-spaced a three-paragraph release and then mailed it out at the last minute in unsealed three-cent envelopes. The proper form and techniques for press releases can be mastered and memorized by a moron in 15 minutes.

But these technical issues are minor compared with that week's bloodletting in all-night and all-day sessions in preparation for mass demonstrations over the weekend.

(Had Khrushchev along about Thursday ordered his Caribbean submarines to fire on any U.S. Navy ship stopping a Russian freighter, the low-gear action machinery of the peace organizations, some of which have fairly substantial budgets, would have been nicely irrelevant by a margin of 48 hours



"Yes, Mr. Hearst, I understand—that's a very generous offer—we supply the photos of the missile sites and you supply the war."

or so. Cannot the members and supporters expect and demand of the paid staffs a higher state of readiness? If the next confrontation happens to be with the Chinese, the thread holding the sword of Damocles may be considerably weakened.)

Primarily because of overwork that week, but also out of pure disgust, I never bothered to fill a notebook with a running account of the gory, egotistical, largely unprincipled battle that raged among certain highly moralistic pacifists who adopted the "equal blame" stance (presumably 33 1/3% allotted to Kennedy, Khrushchev and Castro), the badly scared and would-be respectable Stalinist elements who reportedly are timid and conservative on just about all contemporary issues, the Trotskyists who held out for a Times Square demonstration even after the cops arbitrarily and unconstitutionally forbade it, and all the other "tendencies."

(Parenthetically, it is highly reassuring now to contemplate that when the civil rights struggle slips into a phase of widespread violence and counterviolence—and it behooves men of wisdom to foresee approaching collisions, whether the prospect is abhorred, condoned or relished—the same pious blame-apportioners will impartially refuse to distinguish between the oppressors and the oppressed. Pacifist Dave Dellinger told the "equal blamers" in CNVA that their position vis-à-vis Cuba's role in the crisis was akin to equating a Mississippi lynch mob with a Negro farmer who arms to defend himself. If there were the leaven of

even a dozen Dave Dellingers strategically placed in all these movements and groups, I would have more readily concluded at the end of that exhausting crisis week that the human race was really worth saving.

By the time of Saturday's large demonstration at Hammarskjold Plaza I had begun to wonder: Do these fiercely opposing elements actually regard their organizational adversaries as the real enemy? Or is the enemy neo-colonialists seeking to regain their "lost plantation" of Cuba at the risk of a world holocaust?

(Dan Watts of the Liberation Committee for Africa observed that for the first time in history a sanctimonious great power was seeking to disarm a small country as a prelude to a planned invasion!)

I also wondered if the rank and file in the peace groups that should have been cooperating to the utmost (in the common sense way that passengers on a sinking ship cooperate in getting into the lifeboats) would throw out the guilty leaders if the petty and dangerous maneuvering were to become public knowledge.

In the midst of all the negative behind-the-scenes operations a Harlem Anti-Colonial Committee was born. The very selection of its name, the night after Kennedy led us to the brink, optimistically implied that we'd all be around to fight other battles.

Since the Cuban crisis eased, the

group has met in Harlem informally with Dr. Cheddi Jagan, chief minister of British Guiana. Sooner or later a colonial crisis impends there because the State Department is secretly pressing London to withhold independence while President Kennedy tells his press conferences that Dr. Jagan's proclaimed socialism is acceptable to the U.S. because the people have approved it in free elections.

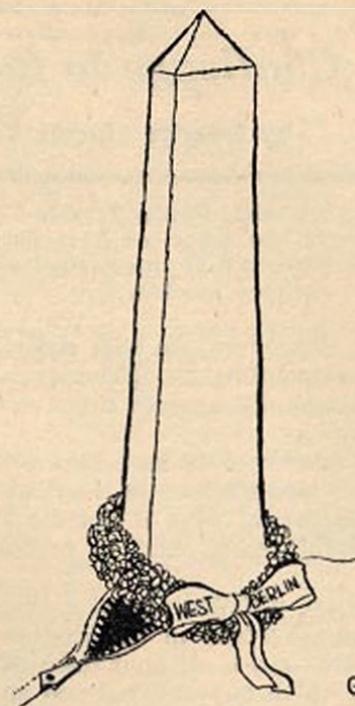
The Harlem Anti-Colonial Committee plans to speak in a clear, factual, forceful voice about all the colonialist and neo-colonialist schemes that are keeping the world in a turmoil. Who two years ago would have dreamed that the Europeans in the southern, mineral-rich belt of Africa would today be on the verge of installing Tshombe as prime minister of all the Congo?

In addition to the usual smears from the Right in and out of government, the Committee expects run-of-the-mill white liberals to come up with cries of "racist," "anti-white," "chauvinistic," etc. All that this really means is that the white liberals aren't being allowed to run the show. I gave up on them a long time ago, because no more intellectually dishonest conglomeration clutters up the fight for a better world. But as a pacifist by temperament and conviction I've only recently begun to write off many of the pacifist and Quaker leaders with their murky judgment on U.S. colonialism.

If it is racist to decline to put my fate in the hands of persons who back off from leading where the facts ought to take us, if it is racist to say that, in the present context, Harlem must lead and genuine whites must follow, then I gladly confess to being a racist. The editor of the Jewish quarterly *Midstream* contends that today only Negroes and children in this country have a moral cause. As we look around in the month of November, still stunned just to be alive, we can see that just about every other grouping has sold out or deserted the fight.

I have to warn *Realist* readers who might be inclined to respond to the following query that they cannot expect a personal answer. Anything beyond "must" correspondence I can no longer cope with. But I would like to find out how many rebellious-minded peace and justice rank-and-filers believe it would be useful (1) to have a continuing exposé of opportunists, frauds, operaors, adventurers and cowards in these movements and (2) to funnel factual information on same to one person or one central collection point for correlation and verification. The purpose would be simple: to dump overboard these persons who sooner or later are going to betray us all in the midst of some nuclear crisis.

For such a project the possibilities are endless. The scope could extend to elements inside the church, student or-



GUINDON

ganizations, CORE, the NAACP, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and other groups whose programs are meaningless unless linked to the anti-colonial struggle, but who were eloquently silent when the neo-colonialists of Harvard, Wall Street and Washington went berserk on the night of October 22nd.

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, JULY 2, 1946 AND JUNE 11, 1960 (74 STAT. 208) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF THE REALIST, published monthly except January and July at New York, N. Y., for Oct. 1, 1962.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, The Realist Association, Inc.; Editor, Paul Krassner, all of 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y. Managing editor, none. Business manager, none.

2. The owner is: The Realist Association, Inc., 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y. (a non-profit corporation; there are no stockholders). President: Paul Krassner; Vice-President: John Wilcock; Secretary: Bob Abel—all of 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: none.

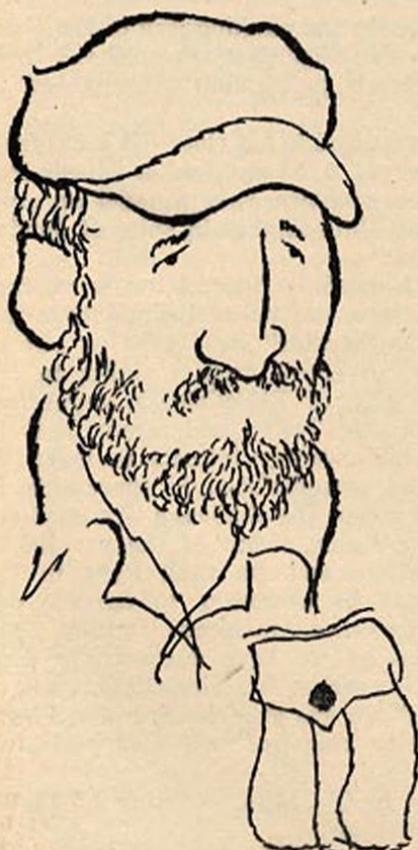
4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: 12,413.

Paul Krassner, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 18th day of October, 1962.

Andre Burnett, Notary Public, State of New York. No. 41-5534350, Queens County. (My commission expires March 30, 1964.)



"Inspection? Okay, I'll show you mine if you'll show me yours..."

A Challenge to Consistency

by George Lincoln Rockwell

Editor's note: George Lincoln Rockwell is the Commander of the American Nazi Party. When canceling your subscription to the Realist, please be sure to include your zone number.

Five times, now, we have risked our lives, limbs and liberty attempting to demonstrate peacefully, legally and patriotically against communist treason in Philadelphia.

And five times we have been brutally mistreated the same way law-breakers in the South would like to treat James Meredith, were it not for the federal marshals and federal troops sent to protect his constitutional rights.

We have picketed almost a thousand times successfully and peacefully in Washington, Arlington and dozens of other cities, without the kind of disgraceful mob-violence which is permitted and apparently encouraged in Philadelphia. It cannot, therefore, be maintained that our presence and/or swastikas, in themselves, are incitements to riot or excuses for violence and assaults upon us by Jews and communists such as took place October 12, 1962 when we tried to demonstrate against the treasonable communist agent of the Soviet enemy, Gus Hall, in the city of Philadelphia.

We do not dispute that the sight of us and our principles are thoroughly unpopular with some and perhaps even enraging to many citizens. But no more enraging than the sight of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi.

The federal courts rightly upheld the constitutional rights of Mr. Meredith in Mississippi regardless of the *certainty* of riots and even bloodshed as a result of his insistence upon the exercise of his constitutional rights. Distasteful as it was to us, *we also* upheld his constitutional rights and the duty of the federal government to enforce court orders, because we believe in the *law*, even when it favors our political opponents.

We do not believe in the Philadelphia "magistrates"—with plenty of evidence to support our disbelief in their impartiality. But we *do* believe in the dedication of the federal courts *to the law!*

Apparently, because of a technical error in our plea to the Federal Court for a Writ of Mandamus ordering Philadelphia to uphold our plain constitutional rights, we have not yet won a court order insuring justice and

A Question Bobby Never Answered

September 5, 1961

Dear Attorney General Kennedy:

On behalf of our readers, I wonder if you could explain the apparent inconsistency of, on one hand, your opposition to branding the American Nazi Party as subversive because it would give them free publicity, and, on the other hand, your non-opposition to all the free publicity which such branding has given to allegedly subversive groups, front organizations, publications and individuals on the left.

Sincerely,
/s/ Paul Krassner

law for *all* citizens in Philadelphia, including supposedly "unpopular" political groups such as ours. We are too poor to afford lawyers or to get our men out of prison under the outrageous bail set by the city of Philadelphia to keep our men locked up as political prisoners (for being attacked by a mob of lawless, pro-communist Jews and outright communists, when our men attempted to picket communist treason in Philadelphia—without a peep of protest from a single Jew or Jewish organization).

But we are not helpless. I sincerely believe in the integrity of the *federal* courts and I am positive that they will be as insistent that Philadelphia obey the law as they were that Mississippi obey the law. We shall prepare the proper papers to secure federal court protection of our civil rights in Philadelphia, in spite of



The above is a picture postcard showing the first Volkswagen ever displayed, back in 1938. The poster asks: "How can you get a 'Strength Through Joy' car?" Now, a quarter-century later, the swastika-bearing watchman has been replaced by a symbol of ultimate rehabilitation; the former director of the Better Business Bureau has been named as Volkswagen's public relations manager.

the massed obstructionism and skulduggery of the Communists, Jews and Jewish organizations, and the thoroughly intimidated officials, police and "magistrates" of the city of Philadelphia.

The parallel to Mississippi is not close—it is *perfect!* If federal troops can get a Negro into a Mississippi college in spite of local violence, they can get an anti-communist "Nazi" into Philadelphia in spite of Jewish and communist violence.

Philadelphia has learned by now, I am sure, that neither jails, nor beatings, nor police intimidation, nor tyrannical Jewish "magistrates" can scare us out of exercising our American constitutional rights in the supposedly American city of Philadelphia, regardless of the power of organized Jewry and communists in that city. If Philadelphia Jewry intends to make its stand for tyranny and communist-style oppression in Philadelphia, then we accept the challenge. We shall see that the public is thoroughly aware of the parallel to the Mississippi situation, and we shall fight in the courts as long as may be necessary to enforce our rights, the same as any other Americans, to picket and speak in Philadelphia—as we have successfully done in dozens of other cities across America. Regardless of the legal "runarounds" we are experiencing and illegal jailings and "protective custody," *we will picket in Philadelphia!*

James Meredith is in Ole Miss, courtesy of 15,000 federal troops and marshals.

We *will* picket in Philadelphia, in accordance with the law, without being beaten, jailed or taken into "protective custody"—with federal troops, if necessary.

The Realist

<http://www.ep.tc/realist>
THE REALIST ARCHIVE PROJECT

As The Twig Is Bent . . .

by William Mathes

Both Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward issue special Christmas catalogs. They are replete with gay colored covers, special order blanks, and a bewildering choice of good things: "Wassail Bowl Of Distinction," "Poinsetta Totem," "Solid Brass Angel Chimes," and an illuminated three-dimensional head of Christ that plays the Lord's Prayer but has a "handy" on/off switch notwithstanding. The largest single section in either catalog is the toy section.

I am unashamedly delighted with toys. Some of the best hours of my life were spent pushing little rubber cars along intricate systems of dirt highways of my own design and construction. I would like to do this now (and go through all the appropriate sounds for shifting gears and screech tires), but I would be locked up if I did. So, I am waiting for my own children. Meanwhile, there are toy stores and catalogs like the ones from Sears and Montgomery Ward.

Since sputnik, there has been a rapid increase in the development of scientific toys. For example, there is one called, "Fish-in-a-Flash." One simply adds "magic fish eggs" to a plastic aquarium with water; the eggs hatch into tiny tropical fish. This kind of super-parthenogenesis may have wide-ranging possibilities for preparing future generations for artificial insemination. However, other toys may work against such a preparation.

The "Visible Man" and "Visible Woman" toys may seriously confuse subsequent generations. These small clear-plastic statues are supposedly "anatomically correct" and may be taken apart and put back together again, all in the service of the study of human anatomy. The trouble is that neither the man nor the woman has any sex organs. The crotch of each is a vague assemblage of intestines, nothing more. These toys are described seductively: "Mysteries of the human body revealed—from skin to skeleton."

Some effort is being made to get the children interested in history. Under a page heading, "History In The Making," there is a toy which offers, among other things, "Miniature replicas of the 34 presidents plus Mrs. Kennedy." I wonder if this toy had been conceived during, say, the administration of Grover Cleveland, would it have included a replica of Mrs. Cleveland? One is driven to speculate on future classroom scenes in which a recital of the Presidents of the United States ends: ". . . Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Mrs. Kennedy. . ."

Many of the toys are weapons for killing, or have these weapons as a key element in their design. This must be qualified by noting that some weapons for killing are defensive under certain conditions, while the same weapons may be offensive under another set of conditions. But all this is very complicated for laymen, and we had best leave these matters to experts.

One of the more sophisticated of the killing toys is a remote-controlled tank that "explodes when it hits a hidden mine." How would you like to have one of these toys under your Christmas tree? Incidentally, this toy is a Sears exclusive and is made in Japan!

Then there is the so-called "action toy." There are a variety of monsters and robots in this category. One of the most charming is the "Odd Ogg." When you try to hit it with a plastic ball and miss, "it sticks out its tongue and razzes you." If you hit it just right, "it croaks happily and

moves toward you." Another monster is called "King Zor, the mighty dinosaur that fights back!" When it is shot in the tail with a specially provided dart, "it turns around and roars." Who wouldn't?

Both of these toys manifest overtones of rather obvious pathological mental conditions. But the most obviously insane toy is the one called "Robot Commando," which will open up its head and, on command, fire a rocket therefrom. No brain inside, just a rocket that fires from external command. I couldn't help wonder if this toy had been inspired by General Curtis Lemay.

One of the action toys should be given special study by sociologists. "Mr. Machine" might even rate a footnote in a revised edition of *The Organization Man*. "Mr. Machine" is advertised as the "robot with personality." "Watch the gears go round. Just wind him up, he walks, swings his arms, bells ring, sirens sound. Take him apart and put him together again. Enclosed wind up spring, big key." Another robot-type toy, "Mr. Mercury" has a special feature worth mentioning: "Now and then his head lights up to reveal figures of men behind a clear plastic window." We don't know what they are doing in there, but. . .

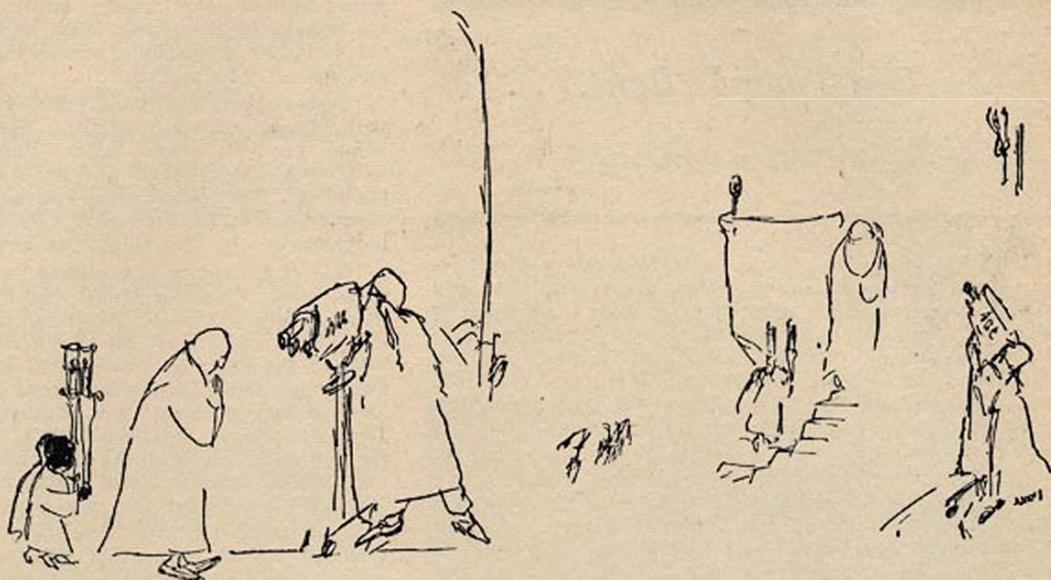
And now, for our final Christmas item: "Rabbit Hunt . . . Test your skill! Wind up rabbit and let him go . . . rabbit runs in circles . . . test your aim—see if you can hit him on the run with one of the darts. Almost any child will love playing this exciting game indoors or out. Includes realistic looking mechanical plastic rabbit, about 9 in. long; double barrel shot gun, about 23½ in. long . . . shoots 3 harmless safety suction cup darts. . ."

Not long ago I read something about a hunting club whose members had invented a unique sport. They let real rabbits out in a special area in which the club members catch them and crush them with their bare hands. The preceding toy ought to be dedicated to this hunting club. It is tame compared to their adult sport but, after all, games are for children.

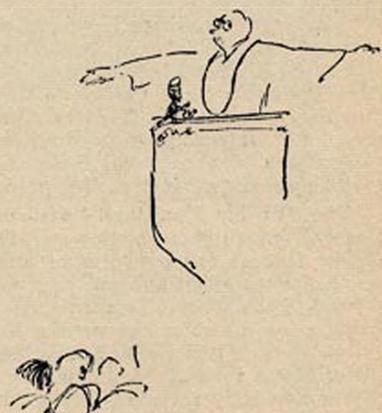
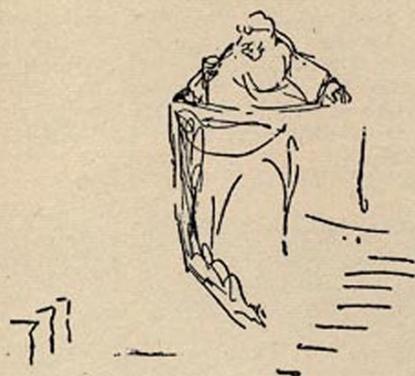


"Santa is just my stage name, honey—
you can call me Humbert . . ."

*christmas
eve
at
saint
john's
by
mike
thaler*



At this time . . .



let us thank . . .

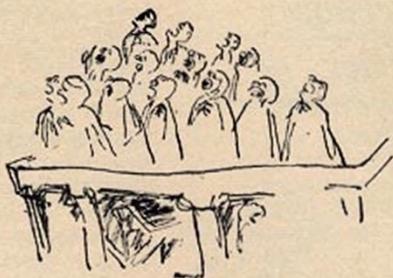
the American

Broadcasting



Company . . .

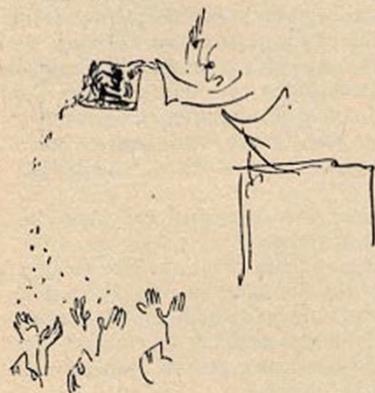
This—is the Washday Miracle!



It's a Washday Saviour!

It's gentle . . . it's kind . . .

And now, a word from our alternate sponsor . . .



MALICE IN MARYLAND

(Continued from Page 2)

that due process be followed. Judge Robinson overruled him. He demanded that the judge disqualify himself for prejudice. Judge Robinson overruled him.

In desperation he demanded a jury trial—just to get me alive out of the court room. This was granted.

When we got out and looked up the law under which the judge had me arrested, it didn't apply to me at all. It is a city statute in respect to the attendance of witnesses at a trial, and has nothing to do with a defendant at a trial. So, I was arrested illegally both in substance (the law didn't apply to me) and in process (even a judge can't interrupt a hearing to start a new process against a person).

The story exploded over TV. And that night 17 boys (young men) tracked us down like dogs in a shopping center. We fled into the A. & P. and they came in after

us. We got out of there in a pell-mell run to the car. Our house was attacked again. The police never bothered to answer our calls for help.

So, I telegraphed the Governor, the Mayor, the A.C.L.U., the Maryland Bar Association . . . and my attorney came into court the next day armed to the teeth with law books, citations, motions, and what-have-you. At this point (no one knows what happened behind the scenes) Judge Robinson suddenly reversed himself, said he had me arrested in error, and dismissed the charges.

Then, the neighbors let it be known that, if I won the trial-by-jury on the dogs, the dogs would be poisoned. If I lost, the judge would order the dogs destroyed. One way or another it amounted to dead dogs. I don't have room to tell you of the heartbreaking search for a home for the two pups, and how they were returned once from a found home when it was discovered they were "atheist dogs."

An Impolite Interview With Joseph Heller

Q. Has *Catch-22* been banned anywhere?

A. No.

Q. Are you disappointed?

A. Not any more. I'm really delighted because it seems to have offended nobody on the grounds of morality or ideology. Those people it has offended, it has offended on the basis of literary value. But I'm almost surprised to find that the acceptance of the book covers such a broad political spectrum and sociological spectrum as well.

This pleases me first because it pleases my ego, but next because I put an optimistic interpretation on it: I think there is close to a common reservoir of discontent among people who might disagree with each other and not realize that their basic disagreements might stem from the same recognition of a need for correction in certain areas.

I learned from Murray Kempton's column also—and this to my surprise—that it's quite an orthodox book in terms of its morality. He referred to its being almost medieval in its moral orthodoxy, which had not occurred to me. But of course as soon as I read his column, I realized he was correct. I suppose just about everybody accepts certain principles of morality. The differences appear in testing certain institutions against those basic principles.

There is a tradition of taboo against submitting to examination many of our ideological beliefs, religious beliefs; many things that become a matter of traditional behavior, or habit, acquire status where they seem to be exempt from examination. Or even to suggest that they do be examined becomes a form of heresy.

Now the book might be surprising in that respect, but—with the exception of a certain appreciation for lechery, which you wouldn't find among the basic virtues; you might find it among the deadly sins—I don't think there's any principle of morality advocated in the book with which most intelligent—even indecent—people will disagree.

Q. Well, when I was reading it, I first did a double-take when Yossarian is censoring the letters, and my sympathy immediately fell to the people who were getting these letters.

A. Really? Well, that hadn't occurred to me. They probably have the same status as the victims during a Shakespeare play. When critics deal in terms of classical tragedy—when they interpret Shakespearean tragedy—they see this as an examination of crime, the tragic flaw, and the retribution as representing a certain system of justice; but they ignore, let's say in *Macbeth*, all those children of—was it McDuff or Malcolm?—his wife is killed, his children are killed, and Banco is slaughtered. All the peripheral characters seem to be exempt from the working-out of this moral principle.

I suppose it had not occurred to me that these people getting these letters would be perplexed by them. I'm not particularly disturbed by that.

Q. Maybe I'm hypersensitive. . . . Getting back to what you said about people not being offended, isn't

this type of satire by its very nature subversive—in the James Thurber sense of the word—to the establishment?

A. Oh, I think anything *critical* is subversive by nature in the sense that it does seek to change or reform something that exists by attacking it. I think the impetus toward progress of any kind has always been a sort of discontent with what existed, and an effort to undermine what is existing, whether it's barbaric or not barbaric.

So, in the sense that the book is aware of certain faults or shortcomings—as much, I think, in the make-up of the individuals' characters as in the make-up of a society—in that sense, it is a very critical book, certainly. But it doesn't necessarily follow from that, that people would take exception to it.

Q. What about the people who are criticized?

A. I've met nobody yet who did not identify with my sympathetic characters. And among the people who did identify were a few of the prototypes of some of the more reprehensible characters in the book. I think anybody today feels, for example, that he is at the mercy of superiors—who don't know his job as well as he does, who don't know their own jobs as well as he knows their jobs and who, he feels, hamstring him or limit him in the execution of his duty.

Q. And this includes superiors?

A. Oh, yes—this includes his superiors as well. It occurred to me at a certain point that even General Walker, at the height of his troubles, could very easily have identified with one of my sympathetic officers, because he himself was being the victim of the Pentagon and the politicians in Washington who were jeopardizing everything, say, good—and preventing him from existing and performing work at the height of his capabilities.

Q. Have you gotten any unofficial reactions to the book from Air Force personnel?

A. I have gotten no official reaction. I've gotten fan letters from people in the service—at least two, I believe, from officers, one of whom is with the Air Force Academy, but he was writing to express his approval of the book as literature rather than expressing any sympathy with the ideas.

I think another reason I have not heard any objections is that most people are treating it as a *novel* and judging it in those terms, as a work of fiction rather than as an essay or as a propaganda tract. It's not intended to be a sociological treatise on anything, although it—the substance of the fiction—is almost an encyclopedia of the current mental atmosphere.

It is certainly a novel of *comment*; there are comments about the loyalty oath, about the free enterprise system, about civil rights, about bureaucracy, about patriotism—but these are the ingredients out of which to create a fictional narrative.

In writing the book I was more concerned with producing a *novel* that would be as contemporary as possible. I don't mean contemporaneous with World War II; it is contemporary with the period I was writing in. I was more concerned with producing a work of fiction—of literary art, if you will—than of converting anybody or arousing controversy. I'm really afraid of getting involved in controversy.

Q. Are you serious?

A. Oh, yes—I'm a terrible coward. I'm just like Yossarian, you know. It's the easiest thing to fight—I

learned that in the war—it takes a certain amount of courage to go to war, but not very much, not as much as to refuse to go to war. I think that's the danger that the world faces today; war might be the easiest solution to problems, and one country or the other might rely on war as a solution, not because it's dictated, but simply because it's a way out of frustration.

Q. I can't accept your implication, a minute ago, that involvement in controversy is necessarily a barometer of bravery—because I love controversy, but I'm a coward, too.

A. No, I didn't mean that. I don't love controversy—I don't like personal controversy.

Q. No, no, I don't mean personal controversy, I mean controversy of ideas—

A. Oh, yes, that's fine—but when I have a complaint against a department store, I try to avoid making it in person, I try to avoid using the phone—I'd much rather put it on paper and avoid all danger of any personal combat.

Q. Your book received some fanatically favorable reviews, but there was one stern critic who said: "If *Catch-22* were intended as a commentary novel, [the] sideswapping of character and action might be taken care of by thematic control. It fails here because half its incidents are farcical and fantastic. The book is an emotional hodge-podge; no mood is sustained long enough to register for more than a chapter." Now I don't want to put you in the silly position of saying, "But I don't sideswipe character and action"—

A. Well, I do sideswipe character and action. I think that's one of the approaches to the book that gives it what effect it has. I tried to avoid, first of all, the conventional structure of the novel; I tried to give it a structure that would reflect and complement the content of the book itself, and the content of the book really derives from our present atmosphere, which is one of chaos, of disorganization, of absurdity, of cruelty, of brutality, of insensitivity, but at the same time one in which people, even the worst people, I think are basically good, are motivated by humane impulses.

And I tried to emphasize this by the structure, much the same way that many of your modern artists have resorted to a type of painting as being most suitable to the emotions they want to express, to the visions they have; and your very good contemporary composers are using dissonances and irregular tempos and harmonics to get this same feeling.

I did consciously try to use a form of what might be called dramatic counterpoint, so that certain characters suffer tragedies, and they're dismissed almost flippantly—a line or two might describe something terrible happening to a character, whereas whole pages might be concentrated on something of subordinate dramatic value.

And by doing that, I tried to do two things. One was to emphasize the sense of loss, or the sense of sorrow, connected with it; and also to capture this thing in experience which permits us to survive the loss of people who are dear to us, so that nobody's suffering lingers with us very long.

People die and are forgotten. People are abused and are forgotten. People suffer, people are exploited, right now; we don't dwell upon them 24 hours a day. Somehow they get lost in the swirl of things of much less importance to us and to them and to the human condition.

So in that case I don't quarrel with the review; there was a definite technique, at the beginning of the book particularly, of treating people and incidents almost in terms of glimpses, and then showing as we progress that these things do have a meaning and they do come together.

That same reviewer also said: "As satire *Catch-22* makes too many formal concessions to the standard novels of our day"—

A. I don't know what he means. I don't know whether his standards of satire should be accepted. There are formal concessions to the standard novel, certainly. You can't write a novel on piano. So as soon as you begin using words, then you begin making concessions to the form.

Catch-22 is not to my mind a far-out novel; it is not to my mind a formless novel. If anything, it was constructed almost meticulously, and with a meticulous concern to give the appearance of a formless novel. Now that's much different, in much the same way as with Joyce's *Ulysses*, which is possibly one of the most confusing novels when you first approach it, and yet there's a structure and tension in virtually every word.

Incidentally, it's turning out to be a very easy novel to read, because among the letters I get are many from people in high school and freshmen in college. I have a collection of letters that could be called love letters—from people of all three sexes, probably, and of all ages, and they're just rhapsodic in their enthusiasm.

I've yet to receive one letter that criticizes, but that may be that when people don't like a book they just don't write letters about it. What I do get is a kind of "God bless you" approach, or maybe a "This might save the world" feeling.

One thing I'm certain of, all these letters—and there must be about three or four hundred by now—I'm sure that the writers of each of these letters would like each other enormously if they met. People that I have met as a result of these letters—if they're in New York and I have seen them—there's almost an instantaneous rapport.

I think that comes from the fact that I express so much of my own views in the novel, and my own personality, with the result that anybody who responds to the book is going to respond to me. We meet, and almost immediately we're conversing like old friends.

Q. One of the most common themes in the letters I get at the *Realist* is: "I'm glad to know I'm not alone"—meaning, in terms of their outlook on life. And people actually use the magazine as a screening device. Have you found that this is true of your book?

A. Yes, I've gotten a few comments in letters from people who began re-examining their friends in terms of *Catch-22*. I think Laura Hobson's son put his mother to the test. And Mary Bancroft—who's fairly active in New York City politics—she wrote me a letter about how one of her children came to New York, and Mary gave her a copy and held her breath; and then the daughter called up and liked it very much. Mary was grateful. She didn't have to reject her daughter.

Q. I was talking to Ralph J. Gleason, and he was wondering how you feel about certain other writers' approaches to the insanity of our time. I'll name them one at a time. Louis-Ferdinand Céline?

A. Céline's book, *Journey to the End of Night*, was one of those which gave me a direct inspiration for the form and tone of *Catch-22*.

Q. Nelson Algren?

A. *The Man With the Golden Arm*, which I had read earlier, became an almost unconscious influence in the form of this type of open hero.

Q. Ken Kesey?

A. I haven't read *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* yet—his book came out after mine—but I bought it a few weeks ago.

Q. Terry Southern?

A. I read *The Magic Christian* very quickly, and there were parts of it I liked enormously, and parts that just eluded me. I'm not a very good reader. I had not read his book before I wrote *Catch-22*, but I think those people Southern influenced through his book might very well have influenced me.

Q. Richard Condon?

A. I read *The Manchurian Candidate* and I read *The Oldest Profession*. When I read the review of *The Manchurian Candidate*, I was in about the middle of *Catch-22*, and I had a feeling, well, here's a guy who's writing the same book I am; I'd better read this quickly because he might have already written it.

And then I read it, and I think there's a great deal of similarity, first of all in the concern, or the use of political and social materials—or products of the political and social conflicts—as the basis for his book, and there's a great similarity in the attitude toward them, so that they are at once serious and at the same time it's almost like watching a kind of burlesque and also a kind of everyman show on stage.

There's a definite feeling of kinship with him, but I don't think they're the same kind of novel. Mine is, I suppose, an optimistic novel with a great deal of pessimism in it—there's a very heavy sense of the tragic—particularly toward the end, where I almost consciously sought to re-create the feeling of Dostoevsky's dark passages, and I have one or two allusions to chapters in Dostoevsky.

Q. In relation to the humorous aspect of the book, I want to ask you about the use of exaggeration as a vehicle for satire; do you think you may have exaggerated too much beyond the possibilities of reality?

A. Well, I tried to exaggerate in almost every case, gradually, to a point beyond reality—that was a deliberate intention, to do it so gradually that the unreality becomes more credible than the realistic, normal, day-to-day behavior of these characters.

Certainly, there are things in there which could not—well, there's one thing that could not . . . well, everything could possibly happen; nothing in there is supernatural—but it defies probability. But so much of what we do—without even thinking about it—so much of what is done in our day-to-day existence defies probability if we stop to examine it.

And this is the effect I wanted to achieve. Now, I was hoping to do this, and with many people I succeeded, to make these characters seem more real in terms of their eccentricities carried to absurdity.

Q. You started to say that there was one thing in particular in the book that defies probability.

A. That's a scene which to many people is the high spot of the book and to other people it's the point at which their credulity was strained. And that is the incident—incident is an incongruous word for it—in which Milo bombs his own squadron and escapes without punishment.

I would say that more critics who praised the book singled this out as a triumph, with special appreciation, than any other single incident. On the other hand, most people in conversation, in discussing it, say that this was the one thing that they found hard to believe.

Now, I sincerely think that this is an impossibility; this is the one thing that could not happen—literally. I don't think that in time of war a man could get up and actually drop bombs deliberately on his own people and then escape without punishment, even in our society.

I think people in every country commit actions which would cause infinitely more damage to the national strength, to the national survival, to their fellow citizens; even commit actions which result in more deaths, physical deaths, as well—and be lionized for it; be made into heroes for it. But I don't think the actual act of killing would be allowed to escape punishment with everybody's approval.

Q. There are other things which I think go beyond the area of possibility. The soldier in white, for example, who is nourished by continuously being fed his own waste products intravenously—

A. No, he's not—well, yes he is, I suppose—that had not occurred to me. Of course, if you assume that there's a human being inside the bandages, then he could not be kept alive by his own waste products; that's a scientific impossibility. But if you begin to question, as I do, whether there is a human being inside, then it becomes a matter of economy just to keep using the same fluid to put back inside him.

But he is handled almost always as a kind of gruesome symbol of many things. In one instance, he is discussed as a middle-man. If you look at man—remove the conscience, remove the sensibility—well, if you look at his position in the nature of things, in one sense he can be no more than a middle-man: he takes matter, he absorbs it, he excretes it or uses it up, and this is a natural process in which he is just one tiny phase of the whole cycle.

As an animal, man is a vegetable. And that was the point of using the soldier in white that way.

No, he could not happen, I suppose, unless there was some gigantic conspiracy—it's almost supernatural—in which the reasons defy explanation; they decide to put this form swathed in bandages in the hospital and put nothing inside.

Q. Did you ever read *Johnny Got His Gun*—which was about a basket case—by Dalton Trumbo?

A. Oh, sure. The thing that I liked best about *Johnny Got His Gun* was that the *Daily News* wrote an editorial recommending it and praising it. It came out when the *News* was in its isolationist phase; anti-Roosevelt phase.

Unblocking Imagination the Hard-Sell Way

From a speech by ad agency head David Ogilvy before the American Marketing Association:

"The majority of well-educated men are incapable of original thinking because they are unable to escape from the tyranny of reason. Their imaginations are blocked. I am almost incapable of logical thought, but I have developed techniques for keeping open the telephone line to my unconscious, in case that disorderly repository has anything to tell me. I hear a great deal of music. I am on friendly terms with John Barleycorn. I take long hot baths. I spend an hour at stool every day. . . ."

An Immodest Proposal in Retrospect

The Products List Circular, issued by the Small Business Administration, includes this description of a patented device:

"Simulates actual breathing—makes the doll seem alive. The unit can be put into stuffed animals or other lifelike toys. Device is operated by a motor, has timing switch which turns off motor after a predetermined number of breathing cycles. Motor uses little current from battery."

This would have been a perfect way to accomplish the extradition of Dr. Robert Soblen.

Q. I understand the *Daily Worker* was serializing it at the time, and they suddenly stopped right in the middle without a word of explanation when the peace pact between Stalin and Hitler was signed. . . . There were a couple of other areas in your book of probability versus possibility. Like eating chocolate-covered cotton—

A. Oh, it's not impossible that a man would try to market cotton covered with chocolate. It is impossible, I suppose, that they can eat it. And nobody does eat it in the book. In fact, when Milo gives it to Yossarian, Yossarian tastes it, then spits it out and says, "You can't give it to people, they'll get sick." So this is not done; in the book people do not eat chocolate-covered cotton, but there is a man trying to market it. Now, I think the corollaries of that. . . .

Q. What about the loyalty oath scene, where they have to pledge allegiance hundreds of times and sing the Star-Spangled Banner all over the place—

A. Again, that is not a physical impossibility. You know, in the first outline of this book, when it was first conceived—in my mind; it was never down on paper—there were going to be a number of deliberate anachronisms, very conspicuous anachronisms—there are anachronisms in now that are deliberate—there were going to be a number of supernatural things taking place, without any explanation for them, so that the impossible—the physically impossible—would be worked in with the possible, and be recognizable.

And then, I forget the motive, I decided nothing in this book would be something that's physically impossible.

Consequently, even in the latter half of the book, where you have this whore with the knife coming up in all kinds of disguises, the effect I give is that she's moving from place to place with the speed of light, because the scale there is changed to give you fast action; but it's always two hours or three hours that go by, so that he pushes the girl out of the plane in Rome, then flies back to the airfield, and you get the impression that she's waiting there, she's beat him there, and she stabs him, but if you look, he spends a few hours running to find Hungry Joe, the pilot, to fly him back.

So the explanation would be: in that time, she could've hopped a plane somehow and gotten there. In the first writing, she was going to pop up with a speed that would've been impossible. And then I decided, let's keep consistent about this.

Now there are, I suppose, things which don't even occur to me, like the soldier in white. But it's not physically impossible that somebody, for reasons of their own, would take this zombie—which is what he's supposed to be: a zombie, really, or nothing; and I

don't know if there's much difference, let's say, between the human animal that lacks sensibility, and nothing but matter—but it is not physically impossible, it's *improbable*, that an organization would exist to perpetrate this kind of trick.

If any government wanted to, for reasons of their own, get some kind of wire-structured *papier maché* and cover it with bandages and pass it off as a man who's been seriously wounded in the war—I'm saying they *could* do it; that's what I mean by its not being physically impossible.

Q. All right, what about the family visiting the hospital and failing to recognize that Yossarian isn't their son?

A. Well, the only one who accepts him as the son almost instantly is the mother.

Q. Of all people. . . .

A. Well, it's easier for mothers to accept strangers—I've noticed that about women and men—women seem to be much fonder of other people's children than of their own, and men don't care; the only children men care for are their own.

In that scene, it makes no difference to the mother; she says, "What difference does that make?" The sailor says, "He's not Giuseppe, he's Yossarian." And I forget what the father does. In that unforgettable chapter, I forget what happens.

Again, it is improbable—certainly, it is improbable—but, again, it is not *impossible* that this conversation should take place. It's an unusual reaction, but not an impossible one.

Q. In retrospect, are there any important changes you would make in the book?

A. I can't think of any. I would not change Milo bombing his squadron because, on one level, this book is an allegory—not on a level, but there are passages where it becomes allegoric; there are other passages where it becomes realism—and I think that, allegorically, that is a consistent action and a most logical action.

It's no more improbable than other things Milo has done out of the goodness of his heart. What is improbable is not that a man should do this and find a *rationale* for doing it—Milo is very good at finding that—but what's improbable is that any society would permit it to go unpunished.

Q. Some of the stuff that does go unpunished in real life makes it seem almost possible after all—

Well, it is possible, for example, in this country, and in Russia, in England—it is possible for individuals to be murdered, put to death, without any legal sanction for it, and for the people who did it to be known and to escape punishment. That is conceivable. In fact, it's almost a daily occurrence here.

But Milo's action transcends this. It's a time of war, and he bombs indiscriminately, and it's an act of *physical* violence. It is conceivable to me that somebody might manufacture a food product or a drug product that would *poison* people, and the punishment for this would be slight; there would be extenuations if not justifications.

I don't think it's probable that this same person could indiscriminately run through New York, let's say, firing a machine gun, and escape without punishment.

It depends to a large extent, *always*, on whom your victims are. Or who you are. And in this case it was just an attack on his own society; it's the society, or

the members of it, that are being attacked almost without discrimination. That couldn't—it's just inconceivable that it would—go unpunished.

I suppose if I re-read the book—each time I do read it, I find I'm angling for something; I'll read a chapter and I'll say, "Maybe I can make this into a recording," or "Maybe this would go well at Upstairs at the Downstairs [a New York night club]" and the next thing you know, I'm scheming commercially—but I think one thing I would probably do would be to cut.

And what I would cut would probably be language rather than incident. I did cut enormously. Bob Gottlieb, my editor, and a very tactful man as well, made only two suggestions, really. Let me say also that at the time I handed this book in, it was 800 typewritten pages, and his first reaction was that it's the most upsetting book he's ever read, and it's a splendid, splendid book, and he would publish it just as is.

I said to him, "Well, if you have any suggestions. . . ." And he said, "Well, of course, we'll talk about it. . . ." It was down to about 600-625 typewritten pages when it was finally submitted. And that's an enormous amount of cutting. He never said *cut*, but on the basis of his suggestions, I went back and made my own corrections.

With this suggestion in mind, I cut something like a third of the first 200 pages—about 60 pages—without cutting a single incident; it was all in terms of language or dialogue.

Even in its final version, one of the general criticisms against the book is that it's too long and that it does tend to be repetitious. Other people take this repetitious quality—they don't use that word—if they *don't* like the book, it's repetitious; if they *like* it, it has a recurring and cyclical structure, like the theme in a Beethoven symphony.

Q. Now—this being quite unusual—your sympathetic central character is an atheist; was there any reaction to this, say by members of the clergy?

A. None whatsoever. One of the nicest and earliest letters I got was from a member of the clergy on the faculty of Notre Dame. This flabbergasted me. I remember I was in the office at *McCall's* [Editor's note: Heller wrote the promotional copy for that magazine] when I got the envelope from Notre Dame, and it was addressed to me at Simon & Schuster, which meant it was in reference to the book. A chill went through me—the same kind of chill I got when I received this letter from the Air Force Academy—you know: *here it comes* . . . until I knew what was inside . . . and then I was amazed and delighted.

Then I realized that my amazement comes from my own naïveté about other people. I've been very naïve about the Republican mind, because a few friends I have who are Republicans embraced this book immediately; I thought it was a liberal book, and they said "No, it's not a liberal book, it's anti-everything."

And I was very naïve about the mind of the intellectual Catholic or the intellectual religious leader—a friend who was educated at Marquette told me about the Jesuit Catholic as opposed to many of the superstitions and practices and narrowmindedness of other Catholics. The book got a good review in *Jubilee*, which is a Catholic publication, and a fairly good review in the University of Scranton, which, I think, reads for the Index and classifies books.

But Yossarian is the kind of atheist—I'm not sure he's an atheist—

Q. Well, I'm taking his word for it—

A. Does he say he's an atheist?

Q. Sure.

A. When?

Q. When he's talking to Scheisskopf's wife on Thanksgiving.

A. Oh, he had that argument over God. He says to her, "I thought you didn't believe in God." And she says, "I don't believe in God as much as you don't, but the God I don't believe in is a humane God." So I suppose that is a giveaway . . . but I don't conceive of Yossarian as an atheist any more than I conceive of the chaplain as necessarily believing in God.

I see Yossarian as having no positive attitude on the subject, and I see the chaplain as having no definite attitude on the subject. I would prefer to think of Yossarian as an atheist when pushed for an answer, but also as someone who regards any discussion of it as having no relation to the problems of the moment.

I don't think he's un-Christian in his feelings if we take the term Christian to mean what it ought to mean.

Q. Why did you have an Assyrian as the central character?

A. Because I was looking for two things. I got the idea, frankly, from James Joyce's placing Bloom in Dublin. I wanted somebody who would seem to be outside the culture in every way—ethnically as well as others.

Now, because America is a melting pot, there are huge concentrations of just about every other kind of nationality. I didn't want to give him a Jewish name, I didn't want to give him an Irish name, I didn't want to symbolize the white Protestant—but somebody who was almost a new man, and I made him Assyrian (but what I was ignorant of, for one thing, his name is not Assyrian; I've since been told it's Armenian).

But I wanted to get an extinct culture, somebody who could not be identified either geographically, or culturally, or sociologically—somebody as a person who has a capability of ultimately divorcing himself completely from all emotional and psychological ties.

Q. There was some speculation by a couple of my friends that you got the idea from William Saroyan's *Twenty Thousand Assyrians*.

A. It was from that story that I first learned the Assyrians were extinct, or almost extinct. But my purpose in doing so was to get an outsider, a man who was intrinsically an outsider, who had the capability of being a complete outsider. It's very hard for a person really to shake off all his roots.

I like to think that I am not Jewish, but certain tastes for foods, certain odors, associations. . . .

Q. If you like Chinese food, too, that doesn't make you Chinese.

A. No, not the same way. I don't like Chinese food. And I don't like Jewish food. I think Jewish food is worse than Chinese food. But there's a consciousness. Even if I could forget it, other people won't let me forget it completely. And I imagine this is true of everybody. I have certain friends from the South who are always self-conscious.

That's the big myth about this country, by the way—the melting-pot. It isn't. They never melted. I

think everybody in this country has a minority complex. Even the majority—they're guilty about being the majority.

Yossarian will be able even to be outside his own family tradition. You know, his family is never mentioned—I think it's never mentioned—brothers, sisters, father, mother. I forget now whether I refer to his grandmother and aunt, or other children's on the block. But he has no family. I'm not sure where he came from.

His background—you don't know whether he went to college or not—you assume he did because he gets in certain discussions and conversations which would presuppose a degree of education. I wanted to be vague in those areas, but the name would be the same, without making it one of these Restoration names, where the name itself suggests a word.

Q. My biggest shock in the book was to find out that Yossarian's first name was John.

A. I thought that was funny to mention just once. That it should be a name like John. There were certain instances in there where I just could not avoid putting something in because it made me laugh. I think, too, that he should have a first name, so that he doesn't become completely a symbol. I wanted to give him some orientation.

You know, he's not a perfect hero. There are certain things he does of which I don't approve. He has certain flaws in relationship to women, for example. Now, to an extent, it's joyous and robust, but it's not nice—it's not really gracious on his part—never to think of this girl by her name, but always as Nately's whore.

And there are other instances, in which he reacts—well, when he punches Nately in the nose, I think, is an indication of the extreme emotional state he's in, that he'd do this, but he himself is contrite immediately afterward.

I certainly didn't want him to become the ideal hero. He's human, and the temptation to sell out when he's offered and he agrees to do it—is another indication of that. And I think John just puts him right back where he belongs.

If he were English, I probably would have called him Charlie, because the word Charlie in England has certain associations; it's a synonym for *chump*. A John is the name that call girls use to identify customers, so it's so typically *nebbish*, you know?

Q. Just for the benefit of people not in the know, what's the translation of Lieutenant Scheisskopf's name?

A. Shithead.

Q. Thank you.

A. Yeah, but who's not in the know?

Q. I wasn't in the know; somebody had to tell me.

A. I didn't know; I had to ask my secretary. When I got to him, and I had to give him a name, I decided I'd want to call him the German translation of shithead, and my secretary's roommate then was a Fulbright scholar from Germany, so I wrote down, "Find out. . ."

But there again, that let me use an inside joke which pleased me very much, and possibly which other people didn't notice. At one point in dialogue, someone says, "I wonder what that Shithead is up to"—with a capital S there. I have a number of things like that which I like to think are only mine; it gives me an edge on the world. But one by one, I give them away.

Q. All right, how about the background of the chaplain being an Anabaptist?

A. There again, the explanation is similar to the one that accounts for Yossarian's name. I am not that well-informed about religion, but I assume that Anabaptists are either extinct or not very militant. I was looking, again, for a religion that would sound familiar and yet would not have associations with any of our established religions.

So, the chaplain, by virtue of being associated with this kind of faith, could then be capable of certain acts, certain thoughts, and sympathies. They'd be a little more plausible, rather than anybody associated with a religion with which we're familiar, because people who think in stereotypes—well, people are stereotypes to begin with—and you don't want a rabbi or a Baptist minister, or a Catholic priest acting too far outside the stereotype or the circumference of behavior which other people think limits his action. They may not exist, but people have conceptions of how other people's professions act.

This gives the chaplain a certain amount of latitude of reaction and response in actions. Also, I didn't want him to be either sympathetic or non-sympathetic to any of these groups. He's really a religious man, but he's a nondenominational minister.

Q. Jacques in *Candide* was an Anabaptist—

A. I didn't know that. I've never read *Candide*.

Q. That's funny, because some people I know have thought all along that this was one of your private jokes.

A. I'll tell you, I got this letter from an English instructor who wanted to do a paper on *Catch-22*, and he asked me a whole load of questions, with a certain intent to know the symbolic value, and I replied as honestly as I could. He was right, I had not thought of it, that one of the prevailing ideas was one of withdrawal. It had not occurred to me. I know I have characters disappear; and I have characters who disappear by dying, and I have Yossarian disappear at the end. I had not seen this pattern that extensively. So I learned something from him.

But then he got to miracle ingredient Z-247, which is mentioned at the beginning, as Yossarian is boasting, "I'm Pepsodent, I'm Tarzan, I'm miracle ingredient Z-247. . . ." He looked that up and found it's an element called Einsteinium, named after Einstein.

And then, toward the end, in that chapter, "The Eternal City," Einstein becomes the universal hero when Yossarian, just brooding, subtracted all the people who were suffering and all the people afflicted, and you might be left with Albert Einstein and an old violinist somewhere.

Now he had linked these two up!

Q. You mean the secret ingredient and this reference to Einstein?

A. Yes. He said he can't believe that's just accidental. That I picked this ingredient Einsteinium because of Albert Einstein.

Q. And it was pure coincidence?

A. Yes, I didn't know this. I just picked Z-247 right out of the blue.

Q. How would you say that *Catch-22* has been evident in the Cuban crisis?

A. I don't know. One of the qualities of *Catch-22* is

that it almost eludes exact definition.

Q. *I wouldn't even think of ever asking you to define it.*

A. The Cuban crisis struck me as being so grave and so fraught with disaster that I didn't even relate it to my book—

Q. *No, not to the book per se; but to the insanity—*

A. Oh, I think it's a perfect illustration of a kind of conflict which is so menacing in its proportions, and in which the three principals each has right on their side; it's a situation in which I could see Khrushchev's point of view, I could see Castro's, and I could see Kennedy's. I hesitate to use the word *ours*, because I'm not sure Kennedy's point of view was the national point of view.

Here is a situation which could have touched off this great war; the consequences of this war are so enormous to my mind that any of the issues over which it will be fought are relatively unimportant by comparison to the potential danger.

I cannot see a single point of conflict that exists—a single definable one; I don't know about the psychological ones, but a single definable one—which is worth a war between the United States and Russia. And I don't think anyone else can. I don't think anyone would feel, for example, that Berlin as a physical thing itself is worth a nuclear war; or that Budapest was; or Cuba.

None of these issues in themselves, it seems to me, are worth this terrible thing which, when it happens, is going to make such important considerations as national boundaries and national characteristics and nation traditions so ludicrous. So when it's over, those two survivors are going to look at each other and, if they speak the same language, they'll say, "Jesus Christ, is that what we did it over?"

Certain things which should've been, or were, of paramount importance 20 years ago, 100 years ago, which almost stem out of tribal relationships, unfortunately do have as much weight, as much validity, and they're really dangerous anachronisms. They might've been appropriate to certain environments, in certain situations, but they no longer are when the consequences of such conflicts loom as large as they are.

Q. *Dorothy Kilgallen says that Bertrand Russell has become "a sad joke"—*

A. I think Bertrand Russell is possibly the one great, venerable man left, to whom people in every country look, with respect and with awe and with hope. Now this does not mean that every person in every country does, but who else exists that commands a respect that transcends national boundaries? I can't think of a single person.

Q. *Eleanor Roosevelt did.*

A. She did, too. But I mean who else is there? It was so appropriate—you know, this Cuba thing broke out while I was on the boat coming back from a luncheon with Bertrand Russell; I had lunch with him by invitation—and one of the things I assured him of in our conversation was that I didn't think there was any danger of any conflict over Cuba.

And he was so eager for good news—*this* is right out of *Catch-22*—that he should ask *me* what was going to happen over Cuba, or even Berlin. And I gave him an optimistic report on Cuba.

All of our conversation was done in terms of a slight facetiousness—that's one of his most engaging

qualities; he's a very witty man, and laughs a great deal. . . .

Q. *Which has nothing to do with wit, necessarily—*

A. No, I think it springs more from tragedy. Was it Nietzsche or Schopenhauer who said that man is the only animal that laughs, because his life is so filled with tragedy, that if he didn't have this escape mechanism, he wouldn't be able to bear it.

But it would seem so fitting, when I got off the boat and unpacked, to read in the paper that Khrushchev was replying to Bertrand Russell. Now, there was no other institution, no other individual, to which Khrushchev could've given this first indication of assurance that he was not going to do anything precipitous, without it being an immediate capitulation, or without declaring war.

He could not do it through the UN; he could not do it directly to Kennedy; he could probably have done it through Dorothy Kilgallen's column, but she didn't take the initiative to send him a letter.

Q. *To me, one of the themes in your book is the ego-involvement of the characters over and above broader, humane interests. Now, obviously you were concerned when you learned about the Cuban crisis—but, with your concern, was there also a certain ego-involvement: "Gee, Bertrand Russell must think I don't know anything."*

A. No, no. I knew that I was going to write—there was ego-involvement, but not in connection with Russell—I knew that I was going to write a letter thanking him for the lunch and telling him how much I enjoyed it, and what I was going to do as well: I was going to open the letter by saying, "Little did I think when I assured you there'd be no war over Cuba that you would be the one to avert it."

There was no ego-involvement; not with *him*—this man Russell is one of the easiest persons to be with I've ever met; within 3 or 4 minutes you are completely at ease with him (and also a little high, because he gave me two quick hookers of scotch)—no, the ego-involvement was one that's almost frightening: I got here and I read of Kennedy's blockade and stern stand, and my reactions were ambivalent.

I felt that he had taken an action which is immoral, irrational, unjustified, and put me on the brink of death; me and my family.

At the same time, there was an element of pride,



"We're almost to my plantation. . . ."



in that, "Well, now he's talking tough." And then, when Khrushchev—when there was that horrible Sunday—I sent a letter to the White House for the first time in my life, saying, you know: "Give 'em Turkey, do anything to allow time for discussion."

So there was this emotional reaction which I think, again, is one of these tribal residues. And this is a dangerous thing, where "My Dad can lick your Dad"—my Dad might be the worst drunk around, and I should not want to beat up somebody else's Dad, and if he starts to fight he ought to get his ass kicked; but nevertheless I would want him to win.

That residue—that emotional, psychological residue—exists, and it's a danger; I think it may be the most dangerous thing motivating us. That's what I meant earlier when I said that I could think of no definable issue which deserves to cause a war.

The psychological thing—the individual and the whole culture, the national pride—God knows what motivates people in the very simple situations; and God knows what's going to motivate them in a national situation. But the ego-involvement was there, I suppose—I was terrified and at the same time—you know these political cartoons of Uncle Sam rolling up his sleeve?

You're conditioned almost like a dog to respond to certain symbols in a certain situation. And my ego responded that way.

I didn't know where the hell I was in those days but I wished they were over. And now that it's over, I don't feel the sense of pride that I did at the time when, you know, these two men are gonna start fighting; they're stepping outside to fight. Now that it's over and we've apparently won, I feel this sense of fear and concern that it must not happen again.

Q. Incidentally, did you vote on Tuesday?

A. No and yes. Rather than yes and no. I was not going to vote, and then about 4:30 I went out for a little air—now that I work at home all day, there are times I want to get out—and I wanted something to do, so I . . . it was a place to go, so I went to the polls and I voted. I really think it's because I had no place to go. If I had somebody to shoot pool with, I would've gone to shoot pool. So I went to vote. I don't think I've voted for a winning candidate since Roosevelt in 1944—no, I voted for Truman, but I only voted for him because I thought he was a loser.

Q. In the process of writing Catch-22, did you ever change your mind about how you were going to end it?

A. No. The ending was written long before the middle was written. I suppose right after I sold the book, I was riding on the subway one day, and I actually wrote the words to the ending—this was perhaps four years before the book was finished—and I didn't change it once.

I couldn't see any alternative ending. It had a certain amount of integrity, not merely with the action of the book—that could've permitted anything—but with the moral viewpoint of the book; the heavy suffusion of moral content which is in there, it seemed to me, required a resolution of *choice* rather than of accident.

Q. But you know what people will say—and this is one of the things I meant before when I asked about people who might've found the book objectionable—Yossarian deserts at the end. Now this is what people always say about pacifists and conscientious objectors: If this is the moral, then everybody should desert, and we would've lost the war.

A. I thought I had gone beyond that point by a discussion preceding his act of running. The last chapter or two is almost in the nature of disputation, in which all the possibilities are discussed and resolved. The answer to that one—that if everybody deserts—then he would be a damn fool not to.

When he says, "I'm tired, I have to think of myself, my country is safe now," he's told, "Well, suppose everyone felt that way," and he says, "Well, I'd be a damn fool to feel differently."

I also tried to make it very evident that the war was just about over.

Q. Would it have made any difference if the war weren't over?

A. Oh, certainly. I mean if this book had been set two or three years earlier, before the beachhead, then it would be a completely different book.

Q. Suppose he had flown that many missions, and it was still the middle of the war?

A. Well, if the book were written then—if he had that many missions and the other conditions were the same, that he were being asked to fly more purely to help a superior officer achieve a promotion—then I would've had him desert, because the replacements are waiting there, as they are at the end of the book; there are replacements ready. So there would not have been any great loss as far as the military effort were concerned.

MODERN WOMAN'S LAMENT

In days of yore,
For ending war,
Fair Lysistrata had a system.
Till men of might
Had stopped the fight,
The ladies never even kissed 'em.

Then gals could say,
"Drop arms today,
Or you'll get no lovin' from me this P.M."
Time marches on!
Our power is gone,
For how can you unfuck an ICBM?

—Letha Curtis Musgrave

Casting Pearl Harbors Before Swine

Futami Sukiyaki, a new Japanese restaurant, is scheduled to open in New York on December 15th. Originally, the grand opening was going to be on December 7th, but a stiff-stomached publicity man changed the proprietor's mind.

But if you postulate *this* situation: It's right after Pearl Harbor, and we *don't* have enough planes, and we *don't* have enough men, and Hitler *is* in a dominant and threatening position, then it would be a completely different situation.

I regard this essentially as a peacetime book. What distresses me very much is that the ethic that is often dictated by a wartime emergency has a certain justification when the wartime emergency *exists*, but when this thing is carried *over* into areas of peace—when the military, for example, retains its enormous influence on affairs in a peacetime situation, and where the same demands are made upon the individual in the cause of national interest; the line that I like very much is when Milo tells Yossarian that he's jeopardizing his traditional freedoms by exercising them—when this wartime emergency ideology is transplanted to peacetime, then you have this kind of lag which leads not only to absurd situations, but to very tragic situations.

I worked over certain lines very carefully. On that loyalty oath crusade, I don't remember the actual words, but a sentence is used to the effect that the combat men soon found themselves at the mercy of the administrators appointed to serve *them*. You have this inversion.

Now this is the kind of thing that happens very easily. There's no question that policemen are public servants, but they're *not* in a position of servitude in relation to the people that they're supposed to serve.

There's a kind of blindness which did carry over to peacetime. I recognize the difference that if a house is on fire you grab something and run out and you leave the door open; if the house is not on fire then it should be locked up.

The stimulus for certain action justifies an action. If the stimulus is not there and the action exists anyway, then you've got a right to examine why you're doing it.

Q. In the end, Yossarian deserts in order to find sanity in Sweden.—

A. But he's not going to get there, he knows that.

Q. He's not?

A. Oh, no. I mean he's told, "You'll never get there." And he says, "I know, but I'll try."

Q. People aren't sure of this, just as they're not sure whether Franny is pregnant or not—

A. They're not sure because they're hopeful he'll get there, I suppose. For one thing, he's choosing the wrong way. You could get there by rowing the way Orr did, but he's going to Rome, and he's told two or three times, "You'll never make it." Or, "You can't get there from here." But he says, "Well, at least I'll try."

There's also implicit—well, it's not implicit if people miss it—that this is an act of opposition or an act of protest. It's the only way left that he *can* protest without cutting his own head off. And he doesn't choose to do that; he's not a martyr. But the very act of *doing* what he does will stir up things, will stir up a certain

amount of talk and dissension, will embarrass his superior officers. I don't think Sweden is paradise.

Q. That's what my question was going to be. Whether or not Yossarian gets there, do you think Sweden doesn't have Catch-22?

A. Oh, I don't know. Sweden was important to me as a *goal*, or an objective, a kind of Nirvana. It's important, if you're in a situation which is imperfect to an extent where it's uncomfortable or painful, that you have some *objective* to move toward in order to change that situation.

Now, in Yossarian's situation—his environment, his society, the world; and it's not just America, it's the world itself—the monolithic society closes off every conventional area of protest or corrective action, and the only choice that's left to him is one of ignoble acceptance in which he can profit and live very comfortably—but nevertheless ignoble—or *flight*, a renunciation of that condition, of that society, that set of circumstances.

The only way he can renounce it without going to jail is by deserting it, trying to keep going until they capture him. I like to think of him as a kind of spirit on the loose. You know, he is the only hope left at the end of the book. Had he accepted that choice. . . .

Q. Is he the only hope? What about the chaplain and Major Danby?

A. Well, until Yossarian makes that decision, he is the only hope. Major Danby and the chaplain are sort of inspired by him. But, remember, a consequence of his accepting the compromise that's offered him—the rest of the men will then continue to fly more missions without protesting.

Now all the way through, there is this theme about the bulk of the men either being *indifferent* to what's happening to them, or not *knowing* what's happening to them. It occurs in their acceptance of Milo. Even in Yossarian's acceptance of Milo. Yossarian is actually fond of Milo, and I am too, as an individual. There's a certain purity of purpose about him. Even about his hypocrisy. It's not nearly as malignant as other characters in the book. Although he does the most damage.

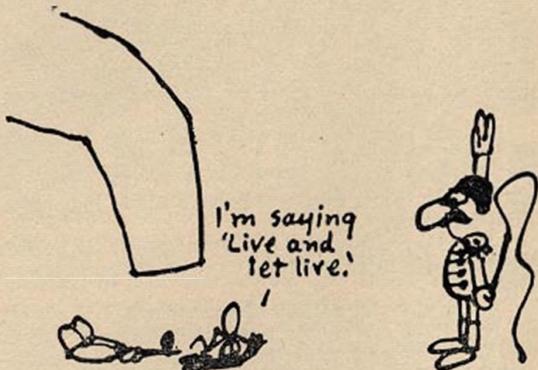
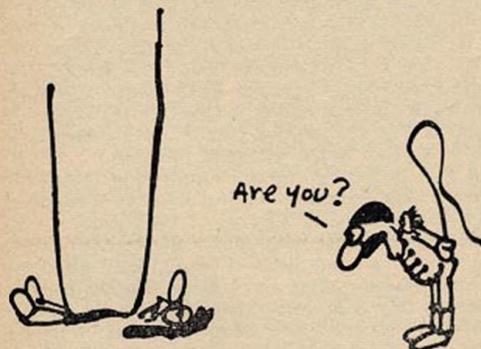
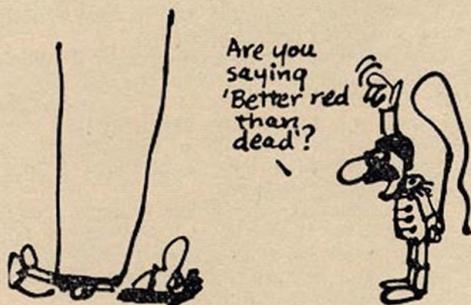
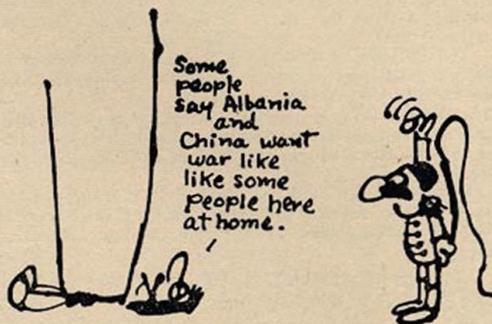
There's that situation when Yossarian is kidding Milo about the time the mess sergeant poisoned the men: put laundry soap in the sweet potatoes to prove that the men don't know what's good for them. They all came down with this epidemic of diarrhea. And Milo said, "I guess that showed him how wrong he was." And Yossarian said, "No, on the contrary, it showed him how right he was. The men lapped it up and clamored for more." They *knew* they'd been poisoned, though they didn't know how, or why, and they really didn't care.

Now Yossarian doesn't care—this does not motivate him—this business of selling out the other people. At this point he has become estranged from them, as individuals. But one of the consequences of his accepting the medal would be that everybody *else* would continue

Father of the Year

Pat Boone, speaking at the Greater New York Anti-Communism Rally in Madison Square Garden:

"I would rather see my four daughters shot before my eyes than to have them grow up in a Communist United States. I would rather see those kids blown into Heaven than taught into hell by the Communists."



LOU MYERS

to fly more missions without protest.

And yet there is also this hint of dissatisfaction, because while he's ostracized in the daytime, at night different people keep popping up and asking him the same question, "How are you doing?" But in the daytime they won't associate themselves with him. Even Appleby, who has been the perfect model of a very good combat man, begins to have misgivings toward the end and pops up out of the darkness to tell him that they're going to offer you this deal, and he's beginning to become disillusioned with the concept of following orders because they're orders.

Q. Let me just read this little clipping to you—it sounds as if it's right out of your book:

Stockholm, Nov. 6 (AP)—Security arrangements within the Swedish armed forces are under scrutiny following the recent disappearance of 24,000 secret documents from the offices of the Controller General of the Armed Forces, it was disclosed today.

The documents were gone for nine days before a civilian truck driver returned them, saying he had picked them by mistake.

The documents contained full information on Swedish ammunition supplies, estimated ammunition needs in case of mobilization and locations of Swedish munition dumps.

Security police said the truck driver, employed by an electronic firm, had orders to pick up eight boxes of electronics equipment at the Comptroller General's office.

A. It's not out of *Catch-22*; I like to think that *Catch-22* is right out of circumstances like that. Things like this are inevitable. I think if you want to start clipping paragraphs from newspapers, you'll find that organization today, any organized effort, must contain the germ of continuing disorganization.

The most effective business enterprise, I should think, is a single proprietorship, where one man goes into business for himself and has to hire nobody. The next best possibly is two men as partners; they work harder—there must be some kind of mathematical ration, particularly when it involves government, I think, because government is so huge.

And that includes the Army, for example. You're dealing with millions of people, and there are certain personality- or mental-types that are attracted to that kind of work, either because they can't get a job anywhere else, or because they like doing that.

I cannot imagine anybody who's really ambitious, anybody with any real talent, anybody of any real intelligence, choosing to place himself within a large organization, where he functions in relationship to dozens or hundreds of other people, because every contact is an impairment of his efficiency.

And the kind of person who would stamp documents or classify documents is a kind of person that would not normally be expected to excel in the matter of efficiency or in the matter of making astute judgments, value-judgments.

Q. But you know that intelligent people do go into large organizations; the trend is more and more toward that—

A. I'm speaking mainly of government. I would say no, that there are certain types of intelligence that do well in business; I think that to succeed in business—and this is based on limited observations, but personal observations—to really get to the higher echelon of a large company requires at least one special kind of in-

telligence, and requires a great deal of energy and hard work and ambition.

At the same time, the company, the organization that these people manage, is *incredible*. I mean, nothing in my book—nothing in the wildest satire—goes beyond it. The inter-office rivalries; the mistakes in communications; the difficulties of finding people to promote who can do a job well—the amount of waste in the life of any corporation, at the least the ones I've been with, is just extraordinary.

Now, on the other hand, it's hard to find anybody you'd classify as an intellectual as being associated with a business. To me, and I think to most people who have a high degree of intelligence, creative intelligence, business is boring after a certain point. There really are no new challenges.

The kind of choice becomes between showing the gross profit 4 million dollars one year, how do we boost it to 4½ million the next year, how do we keep it from slipping back—and after a while you really don't give a damn.

And I begin to wonder whether the people involved *really care* about it as a profit thing. I think they care about it in terms of (1) their own security and (2) their own ego-fulfillment. It becomes a personal challenge rather than distributing more gaskets.

I don't think they really care about the stockholders—the widow who is dependent on increased dividends—it's just even like a beaver building a dam. A beaver builds a dam—I don't know why a beaver wants a dam, by the way, but I have a feeling that it may not even need the dam—it builds a dam because it's a beaver. And a person trained to one occupation, even when he gets to the top, he continues doing accountancy because he's an accountant.

Q. I have a few real-life items in mind which, I think, say more about what Catch-22 is than any definition possibly could, and I'd like to get whatever reactions they evoke in you. Item: The Department of Welfare has finally revised a long-standing rule so that now, when a public assistance case is closed because of the death of the person who had been receiving the public assistance, it's no longer necessary that the deceased person be notified by mail that he won't get any further public assistance.

A. It does not surprise me at all. That's like that educational session in the beginning of the book, with the rule Colonel Korn employs: to cut off these embarrassing questions; the only ones who would be allowed to ask questions were those who never did.

But it does not surprise me. There is a law of life: People in need of help have the least chance of getting it. Here again, we can almost establish a mathematical relationship. The chance of a person getting help is in inverse proportion to the extent of his need.

And this is true of mental cases; this is true in social work; it's certainly true in business; it's true of people who want credit; it's true of friendship.

Now, that happens with Major Major too. I hate to keep referring to my book—I love to keep referring to my book—there's a line about Major Major: Because he needed a friend so desperately he never found one.

I think it's certainly true of mental cases. A person who's in out-and-out need, who's on the verge of suicide, who is paranoid on the strength of it, is going to get no help from anybody; a mild neurotic will be encouraged to see a psychiatrist, his friends will want to help

him and indulge him, but when the need becomes critical, then—if I might quote an old philosopher—goodbye, Charlie.

Q. I have an article scheduled for the *Realist*, by the way—it's by a professional writer, but it was rejected by several magazines on the grounds of taste—on the right to commit suicide.

A. Well, it is, of course, legally impermissible to commit suicide, probably for the wrong reasons. I should think that the law ought to be modified so that people who could commit suicide in a way that doesn't disrupt transportation, or cause public nausea, would have a better chance.

I don't think you can really prevent a person from committing suicide if he wants to. As a principle, of course, I think that it deserves discussion, but there are more important things. I'd much rather see discussions of abortion [Editor's note: See issue #35 for an impolite interview with an abortionist] where, you know, every year you can almost predict, so many thousands of lives are going to be, well, interrupted, if not ruined permanently as a result of restrictions.

You see, the thing is, anybody who wants to commit suicide can do it if he really wants to; but people who want to have abortions frequently have trouble.



Q. Would you care to say a few words about the art of protest?

I think the only people left that I'm capable of admiring are those people who do protest, and at grave risk to themselves. And by this I mean the colored people, CORE, the sit-ins, the students—they evoke a feeling of admiration in me that I can't recall ever having for anybody else.

They are the heroes of the time. I no longer feel that the labor movement has any claim on people's sympathy, because the position of labor has changed so.

And there's also a natural sympathy for the underdogs which I have, and when the underdog is on the side of a principle that is so patently just . . . the photographs you see every Fall of colored children going to school all dressed up, the little colored girls in their pretty party dresses, and then you have these raving lunatics with this phenomenal ugliness of hatred on their faces—the contrast is one that leads me to believe that the white race could profit a great deal if intermarriage became more prevalent; it's something I think that the Southern white might do everything to encourage for his own good.

Q. Here's another item: Robert Stroud—this is the guy whose story is told in *The Bird Man of Alcatraz*—isn't being allowed to see the movie; the warden, R. C. Settle, at the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Missouri refused to permit a screening for all the inmates, and he also turned down a special screening for Stroud.

A. I have no comment on it. I mean, I think I reacted the way you did and the way everybody would. It's first a little humorous; secondly it's not really very important, this incident—I don't think it represents any general danger—if the same warden were going to deny us all the right to see it. . . .

I sort of suspect, too, that the warden could make out a good case for his action. Not a convincing one, and not an absolute one, but—you know, the real difficulty we find today is that there are at least two sides to many questions, and it's terrible when people can't see the other person's point of view; it's even worse when you can see both points of view, because then you're almost incapable of taking action with any degree of conviction.

Q. But, again, it seems to me to be the theme of your book—that, in this case, the warden is letting the rules supercede a humane act.

A. What is the humane act?

Q. Letting a guy see the story of his life.

A. Look, I would let him do it; if I had any influence I would say, "Hey, shmuck, why don't you show it to him? He might get some laughs out of it. It's probably not true, and he'll know it. And it might bring some rapport between you and him. You'll find something you can agree on. 'Boy, what Hollywood does to a criminal like me, look how they glamorize. . . .'"

I can't see any harm either way. I certainly don't respect the decision of the warden. I think he lacks, if anything, not only intelligence and imagination, but perhaps a sense of humor as well. In a similar position, I don't see how I could resist showing it to him.

Q. Do you think that, in the film version of *Catch-22*, Major Major should be played by Henry Fonda or by an actor who looks like Henry Fonda?

A. Assuming that that's left in the movie version, then I would say an actor who either looks a little like Henry Fonda or who looks nothing at all like Henry Fonda.

But, you know, I must have 40 to 60 characters in this book; there's so much, just physically, that won't be able to go into a picture. And you start thinking, what are those things that are most valuable, which you want to keep? One of the first things you have to put in the non-priority category are those things which are funny and nothing else.

And what are most valuable? Well, the things of continuity, the theme of insanity accepted without any eye-blinking, the feeling of frustration—of impotence, actually—a succession of scenes where the characters just can't do anything, physical or mental.

This chapter that comes earlier, that people don't talk about as much as I thought they would, which impresses me enormously every time I think of it—it's a scene in the nose of the plane, where Yossarian is there with Aarfy, the navigator, and he tries to tell him to go out to the back of the plane, and Aarfy smiles—because he's not afraid of the flak, and he does not hear what Yossarian is saying.

And Yossarian—mounting frustration—between guiding the pilot out, turning around and being poked in the ribs by Aarfy, and hitting the ceiling because he thinks he's dying, and then finally he's slamming Aarfy with all his might, and Aarfy keeps smiling—it's like hitting a sofa pillow. And he bursts into tears in utter frustration; the whole thing has become so unreal to him. Well, there's a sense of inability to get

across something so simple in a time of danger.

The truth is so simple and so evident. Later on, he's bleeding, he's wounded, and Aarfy is there again. And you have almost the same scene repeated. He thinks he's been hit in the testicles—he hollers, "I lost my balls!"—he's sitting in a puddle of blood, and Aarfy doesn't hear him, and doesn't understand. And Yossarian says, "I'm dying and nobody knows."

The truth—the dangers—are so obvious and so simple, yet he can't make himself understood. That is something I'd want to keep in the picture version. I want to keep this sense of injustice—the element of the tribe—the judges waiting to judge, having this tremendous amount of power of force behind them.

Q. One more item: A graduate student of psychology was kicked out of Cornell University because he had a girl living with him, and he was told that if he had sent her home after they were finished at his apartment it wouldn't have been a violation.

A. That's one of these very nice distinctions which separate vice from virtue, regularity from irregularity, or taste from lack of taste. My own feeling is that he should have sent her home because—I don't know why he'd want a girl around all day long—but it just showed poor judgment. Possibly it could've been interfering with his studies.

Q. No, it was purely because of the situation.

A. You mean they would accept the sexual intercourse but would not accept her sharing the domicile? I can guess the rationale. It is purely a rationalization. Again, one has become respectable.

When we were discussing about committing suicide—if they do it without tying up traffic—if he takes the girl home. . . . I'm trying to picture which word I should use to be in print . . . if he takes the girl home and then they screw for a while and she goes away, it's a personal act between them. On the other hand, if she lives with him, and it becomes a subject of conversation—conspicuous—then it could be embarrassing. I'm not saying it *should* be, but I can understand why.

Then we have the phenomenon of human perversity, or human nuttiness, by which I mean there's no telling how much attention he called to the situation. I can conceive of a situation of a student sharing quarters with a girl and making themselves so obnoxious to everybody around, so repulsive, that he gets thrown out not because of the sex element so much, but because of public embarrassment.

Q. I forgot to mention—the girl in this case was the dean's niece.

A. Without approving of the action against them, I can see the motivation. And I can't see any great principle involved in this. I would want to know how, as the dean's niece, she comported herself, and how he comported himself, and whether they necked up in trees in broad daylight.

I think he should have been given the element of choice—you know, keep her under the covers, indoors all day, and go on to your graduate degree. But it hasn't been a total loss for him.

Q. He learned more about psychology than in any graduate course—

A. Well, I assume he learned a good deal about sex. Some people go through 4 years of college, and then get kicked out or don't graduate, and never have a girl to shack up with. So it hasn't been all bad for him.

Q. You hesitated before about what word you should

use to be in print. When Lenny Bruce was arrested for obscenity in Los Angeles recently—and this was in John J. Miller's column in the San Francisco Chronicle, so I don't know if it's true—but he reported that when Bruce came to court, and all the photographers and newsreel and TV cameramen were there, he had painted 4-letter words all over his face so that no one could focus a lens on him.

A. I think it's ingenious, but I think it's somewhat extreme—I'm essentially a very conservative person—and there are certain pages of the *Realist* which very often leave me with feelings of discomfort. Now of course this is not to criticize the *Realist*, but to defend my own reaction; I merely want to say that I'm human.

Many things that I have sought to absorb in principle affect me with a certain amount—well, I don't take this seriously; I can't respond with that emotional attitude which I perhaps ought to have, which would perhaps give me intellectual latitude.

I'm amused at Lenny Bruce for doing this; I would not have done it. That may be because I enjoy being photographed.

Q. This wasn't in the papers that I saw, but when I spoke to Bruce on the phone, he told me that when the police asked him for a statement, he said: "We are living in a society today that gives more respect to a gunner's mate than to a whore."

A. The statement is true—I find it unsurprising that he should make it—and I'm not surprised that society should give more respect to a gunner's mate than to a whore. What is a gunner's mate?

Q. In the Navy.

A. For one thing, society has *always* given more respect to soldiers than to whores; and also, his choice of language leads me to believe that he *himself* gives more respect to a gunner's mate than to a whore. If I were going to argue his viewpoint, the idea of using that particular word would not occur to me. I use words like prostitutes or courtesans or, if I'm with Ph.D.s, libertines or voluptuaries.

Q. You're attaching a negative semantic value to the word—

A. Well, it's *there*. It's not I attaching it. Different words have connotations; synonyms for the same subject contain often an estimation of value. Now, lower than a whore, I suppose, might be the word *slut*, but it's hard to think of any that far down. I don't want to suggest that Lenny Bruce *also* has more respect for a gunner's mate than for a whore, but, by his choice of words. . . .

There's a tendency to generalize. Now that I think about it, the statement becomes even less defensible. You know, there are gunner's mates and gunner's mates. Just as there are whores and whores. Or whores and prostitutes. There are soldiers and soldiers. I get no image of a personality.

Q. I think you're taking him too literally. What the statement represents to me concerns the hypocrisy involved in our attitude toward violence as opposed to our attitude toward pleasure—

The Risk of Democracy

Somebody's mother, quoted by columnist Mary McGrory: "I have to confess to you, since I met Teddy Kennedy, I haven't been the same. He is unqualified but he is my ideal."

Quoted Without Comment

From a report on the World Forum on Syphilis and Other Treponematoses, held in Washington:

"In another paper delivered today, Paul W. Kinsie of the American Social Health Association warned that, if the moon was to be kept free from venereal disease, prostitution must be barred there."

A. Now you're revealing a lot about yourself. The idea that pleasure is association with a whore—

Q. I'm limited by the framework of Bruce's statement.

A. Don't pin it on *him*. This is getting into a projective test for *you*. You see a gunner's mate and you see guns going off; you see the word whore, you immediately associate it with pleasure. The whores I've met in this country were not particularly happy or satisfied with their work, and did not seem to get much pleasure out of anything, even me.

Q. I would prefer that Bruce would have said that a gunner's mate gets more respect—

A. Than a prostitute—

Q. No—than the dean's niece.

A. Let's say that he had said that a military man, or a prize-fighter, a baseball player is more highly respected than a prostitute; we would have a different discussion. But implicit in his statement is that the prostitute is worthy of more respect by a society.

Q. Because maybe she doesn't harm anybody. Change it from a gunner's mate to the warden at this prison who wouldn't permit Stroud see his own biography on film—gets more respect than a prostitute. One who's cruel; one who's not cruel—cruelty, I think, is the criterion—one who's harmful; one who's harmless. Assuming that whores are harmless.

A. My attitude is that perhaps neither one is by virtue of his actions, or profession, entitled to respect, or deserves disrespect. I can't see this balance being set up between the two. There are people who do no harm. The sanitation workers don't get respect, either. In fact, most people *don't* get respect in our society, or any society.

And I'm not inclined to glorify the prostitute, or to sentimentalize her, because I don't get a specific image. They differ from each other in every conceivable way—in the amount of education, the amount of intelligence—I suspect if you did a survey (and include the call girl along with the whore), you'd probably find that the bulk of them are rather unsophisticated, don't make much money, unhappy, unhealthy. I can't romanticize it.

If you were to give me a prostitute who becomes a prostitute out of a certain set of motives, I could very easily adore her, respect her, elevate her enormously. But I suspect that most of them who become prostitutes or whores do so out of poverty, out of ignorance, out of a most unhappy family life or the absence of a family or any good relationships.

And the suggestion to me is not one of pleasure, but of very painful and tragic environment, of which the whore herself is the product or the symbol.

Q. A point which I perhaps should have made in regard to Lenny Bruce—some of his best friends are whores. So that when he uses the word, it's with a certain affection, I think.

A. None of my best friends are whores. . . . No,

a good many *are* whores, now that I think of it.

Q. It's like Bruce says—nowadays, you say to a hotel clerk, "Send me a whore," and he'll send up a guy with a beard who's working for an ad agency. . . .

Now, do you think that a sanitation man—whom you mentioned a minute ago—his work, which, in the long run, pragmatically, may be more important than yours—we can do without your book, but we can't do without the sanitation man—yet you get more respect than the sanitation man. Do you think you should?

A. I get it. I get it for reasons that other people get respect. Whether I deserve it or not is not going to influence me to turn it down. There is nothing dignified and noble about labor. As far as I can see, look back, there's never been anything noble or dignified about labor.

The people that a society glorifies and exalts—and this is true even in a workers' paradise—is not the machinist (well, it could be the machinist; even the machinist is not unskilled labor) but are the people who get their rewards by not working as hard. You're dealing with the factor of status.

Let's go back to Veblen. Nothing succeeds like success—and the obvious symbol of success, the one that counts the most—is money. And, after a while, by the second or third generation, the method by which you made your millions is not going to affect the degree with which your children are accepted. Money talks.

And in spite of yourself, in spite of what you know about the shortcomings of certain people, if they're successful, you're aware of it. You may not respect them, but you are aware of it because everyone else around you is aware of it, so you are geared to it.

I think it's one of these unsolvable questions, because as long as we live, the man at the bottom is not going to be treated as well as the man at the top. His work *certainly* might be essential—the man who chlorinates the water we drink is an essential person, but he's easily replaced, I suppose. Fifteen million people could do whatever he does.

I think eventually that's what's going to happen to our astronauts. There are millions of people, I suppose, who would volunteer to be astronauts. If they called for volunteers to be the first man to the moon, and the odds were against getting back, there'd be no shortage of people.

The ultimate contribution there is not the guy in the capsule, but the guy at M.I.T.—it's a scientific achievement. Now the human element might be necessary, but the rare skills are what produced it. And it was the rare skill that *discovered* chlorine—it's an easy thing to throw the chlorine in—it's a hard thing to invent the engine which drives a sanitation truck. We've always had a man with a shovel to throw the garbage in.

There's no constant relationship between an individual's contribution to his community and the rewards he attains from it. There may be. The man who makes the most valuable contribution *may* be the one who gets a great deal of money and a great deal of honor.

Q. I think you revealed that you haven't really accepted your status yet when you asked me for subway directions on the phone.

A. Oh, I was being self-conscious with you. I knew I was going to come in a cab.

Q. You son-of-a-bitch, that wasn't necessary. I took a cab here myself.

department of unintentional satire:

MISS OTIS REGRETS

Editor's note: On October 15, 1962 Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. published a novel with a Korean locale, by Kim Yong Ik. What follows is an actual letter which a Knopf editor sent to the author last year.

September 8, 1961

Dear Mr. Kim:

I have read the revised manuscript of *The Diving Gourd* and on the whole I think you have done a splendid job. The ending is now very strong. As I told you, I want one or two more people to read it before coming to a final decision, but there is a more immediate problem than that. I think that Chapter XIII, when Bau makes love with Songha in the fisherman's shack, has to be entirely rewritten. I have discussed this with Elizabeth Otis and another reader here, and we all agree that through a series of accidents the scene has almost the opposite effect of the one you intended. Because you have been rather vague about all the physical details of the scene, details which I am sure you have visualized in your mind but have not presented to the reader, it ends up by becoming rather ludicrous.

The scene belongs in the book, and is very important in clarifying the motivation. But it has an entirely uncharacteristic weakness: it is not visual. Throughout the rest of the book you present wonderful visual images which enable the American reader to see your Koreans and their land. Please don't misunderstand me. I am certainly not asking you to write an obscene chapter. Erotic, of course. Obscene, no. I don't know exactly how to make the distinction to you, but several of us here feel that it is more obscene to be vague than to be forthright. After all, this is the first sexual experience for both Bau and Songha, a moment of deep emotion. This has disappeared almost entirely from the scene. What are Songha's feelings? This too must be added, and is perhaps *more important than anything else I have to suggest*. The way you handle the scene now, Songha is almost a piece of furniture.

You should be much more frank in this scene, in a pure and lyrical and idyllic way. After all, these are very young people making love for the first time. By being vague, you simply prepare the ground for a very bad reaction from your readers, since the whole setting is very challenging. No doubt this will be the first time in literature that anyone has made love in a sardine cauldron. And for reasons too complicated to explain in a letter, please call it a *cauldron* throughout, and not a *pot*.

And this is not all. You further compound the ludicrousness of the scene by confusing two appetites: hunger and sex. It simply will not do to have Bau and Songha eat leftover sardines out of the same cauldron in which they make love. Why shouldn't there be two cauldrons, one for each appetite? Or perhaps they could find some leftover sardines elsewhere in the shack.

Another point: You have had Bau light a fire under the cauldron a little while before they begin to make love! At that point the reader doesn't think of the

idyllic moment, but worries about blisters on Songha's bottom. I'm sorry to be so coarse about this, but these are the reactions you arouse by vague writing. Furthermore, the fact that the shack is in darkness, and that you don't describe the banked fire very clearly, nor the kind of stove (I believe the Japanese call it a *kama-do*) being used, all adds to the confusion.

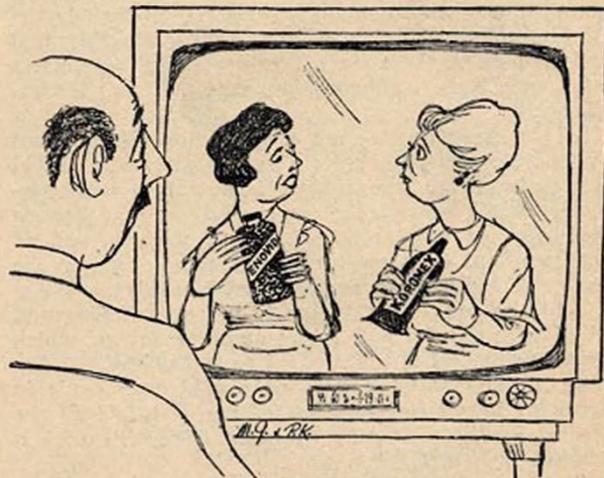
It would be a great mistake to delete this scene, because it adds greatly to the structure of the book. But it must be rewritten entirely, with great care. I think you will have to provide some dim light from the fire in the shack, and give a much clearer visual description. Furthermore, you will have to prepare the reader carefully for the size of the cauldron. Unless you stress its size, the situation will seem impossible. It would help if Bau failed to light a fire under the cauldron, and if it were still kept warm by the ashes underneath. Ashes retain their heat for quite a long time. Then Songha could quite logically climb into the cauldron to keep warm, and Bau eventually, having found sardines elsewhere, could creep in to join her.

One more detail: What kind of skirt is it that is fastened around Songha's bosom? If Korean skirts do indeed fasten this way, then I think you must lay the groundwork in some detail, explaining just why Bau reached for Songha's bosom to unfasten her skirt. This is part of the general vagueness in physical description.

I'm afraid a problem exists concerning the word *bottom*. Certainly the cauldron has a bottom, but so has Songha, and no matter how you handle your description of the cauldron, readers will inevitably associate the two bottoms. I am afraid you better do without the word *bottom* entirely, since there are many other words for both kinds of bottom.

I hope you will excuse me for writing in such detail. Usually language problems are not that complicated, but when it comes to sexual overtones and the free associations that go with them, the problems become unusually subtle and need careful explanation. I have spoken with Miss Otis about this, and we both agree that you simply have to rewrite these few pages before we take formal action on our option. Perhaps the scene should be expanded. Do you need my copy of the manuscript?

Cordially,
/s/ Harold Strauss



"Hey—are you still using that greasy kid stuff?"

The Realist