

# CHROMIUM SWITCH

TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

MARCH 1975

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## Another Listen to Heater-Hellmouth with Kid X

As this issue of SWITCH goes to press, Ossman and Austin are working the rough draft for the script of Firesign's forthcoming spring recording, as yet untitled. The record will follow in the same space continuum as "Everything You Know Is Wrong," that is, dealing once again with the events in the Heater-Hellmouth low desert area. Each side of the disc will contain a separate story, set in the same space but at different times. It seems to be that a gigantic amusement area has been built over The Hole, where, of course, "Everything" ended. The citizens of this huge area, known as X World or Next World, have legalized everything including The Hole and its environment. Topics for discussion include the government, foreign money, and again, Indians. Each separate story finds two main characters. Side 1 has Sugar Burns, an investigative reporter trying to find out what exactly is going

on in the desert. This story will utilize a "cassette format," or real life taping situations. Random Coolzip figures in on Side 2, as he is involved in the chase of his life with Kid X (alias Francis X. Kid) who happens to drive an illegal auto. Kid X encounters Coolzip on "Police Street" where everybody is a policeman (i.e., police mother, police son, police dog.) Basically, the watchwords to this adventure by Firesign are "sex and violence."

The editor and associate editor of C SWITCH will be getting married shortly and making their headquarters within the confines of smoggy L.A. Hopefully in this closer contact with Firesign the news appearing in this paper will be fresher and of more frequency, AM or FM. Tom and Deborah will undoubtedly get in on the latest Theatre recording dates at Warner Bros. for a possible lead to a possible feature in the next issue, set for summertime blues.

Happy reading, Seekers!

## LP REVIEW: EYKIW

By Frank Catalano

We reported [earlier] on David Ossman's then new recording *How Time Flies*, a science fiction comedy. We summed up the review of *How Time Flies* by describing it as "an important accomplishment in the field of science fiction, and a much needed boost for the art of story-telling."

Those same words apply to *Everything You Know Is Wrong*, the Firesign Theatre's newest album. The members of the Theatre — David Ossman, Philip Proctor, Peter Bergman and Philip Austin — have produced a masterful recording that excels any of their previous works in comedy and clarity, but which still tells a highly detailed and interesting story. Science fiction and aliens are the main ideas of this album, yet neither scientific accuracy nor a complete story line are sacrificed in presenting both ideas to their fullest.

The recording centers on, and is narrated in the viewpoint of, a Dr. "Happy" Harry Cox, an amateur science fiction record recorder who has made such recordings as "Gas Music from Jupiter" and "I Came From Outer Space." He is a believer in the fact that one day the aliens will come to Earth, but in the meantime contents himself with making a buck selling faked "proof" of the aliens that supposedly exist here on Earth, and making records about dogs being more intelligent than man and having space travel (*Chariots of The Dogs*) as well as other hypothesis, in the grand tradition of von Daniken and Velikovsky.

*Everything You Know Is Wrong* is his third recording, which, by listening to the first few minutes, seems to have been recorded just after a large comet landed and made a crater, since Cox refers to his being right about the comet. The record of Cox's begins with his "proof" that dogs are more intelligent than man, our forefathers took drugs, etc. But as the record progresses, the listener as well as Cox gets caught up in Cox's private world — a world that turns out to be even more fantastic than the worlds Cox creates on his records. Finally, a daredevil motorcyclist decides to try and jump into the hole, or crater, that the comet made, and Cox's world of fantasy and science fiction becomes science fact, in a most unusual way.

Even though the above description of the story line of the record makes it sound like a drama, it is really a comedy/satire, poking fun at and showing the follies of our modern society, encompassing everything from admen to travelogues and to, ultimately, our concept of the universe.

At the end of the record, we see Harry Cox as having had all of his questions answered, but now even more puzzled about the human condition than before. Through Cox, the Firesign Theatre manages to make a subtle, but valid, comment on humanity.

Some things that are present in other Firesign albums are also evident in *EYKIW*. The Indians, as in the records *Waiting For The Electrician* or *Someone Like Him* and other Firesign albums, play a major part in the new album. Also, the listener is constantly exposed to sound on the record — as in previous albums, there is not a background devoid of some sort of sound, and the background sound is usually as interesting and contributes to the plot as much as the main story line. A good, effective use of records and films within the recording is also a strong point of the album.

*Everything You Know Is Wrong* is definitely a remarkable achievement on three levels — science fiction, recordings, and humor. It is surely a qualified candidate for both the Hugo and Nebula awards.

[This review was reprinted by permission from the Nov. 14, '74 issue of *SIRIUS XIV*, the sci-fi fanzine. 13 issue subscriptions are \$3 and may be obtained from Syntactics Publications, 1543 Live Oak Lane, Santa Barbara CA 93105.]

## NEW ADDRESS FOR "CHROMIUM SWITCH"

Please note the new mailing address for *SWITCH*. Address all letters to P.O. Box 5285; Buena Park, Calif. 90622. This change is effective immediately but is only temporary. A permanent street address will be announced in the next issue. We are looking forward to our new simulated, stimulated California life. Thanks to all for your support.

## Schizophrenia, Part 2

[This is a continuation from the last issue of excerpts from the paper *The Schizophrenic Thought and Language of the Firesign Theatre* by Don Lindley. Reprinted by permission.]

### DISTORTIONS OF LOGIC PREDICATIVE THINKING

"Von Damarus (1944) indicates that the normal person (logician) accepts identity only upon the basis of identical subjects, whereas the schizophrenic (paralogician) accepts identity based upon identical predicates. In the example,

Socrates is a Man  
All Men are Mortal  
Socrates is Mortal

the schizophrenic would come to the conclusion:

Socrates is a Man  
I am a Man  
I am Socrates"<sup>1</sup>

"According to the way in which the patient experiences a certain object or situation, a definite property or aspect of the object or situation becomes the basis for the choice of words. This explains why a patient (described by Tuczec) called a bird *le song*; the summer *le warm*; the cellar, *le spider*;...mouth, *kiss*.<sup>2</sup>

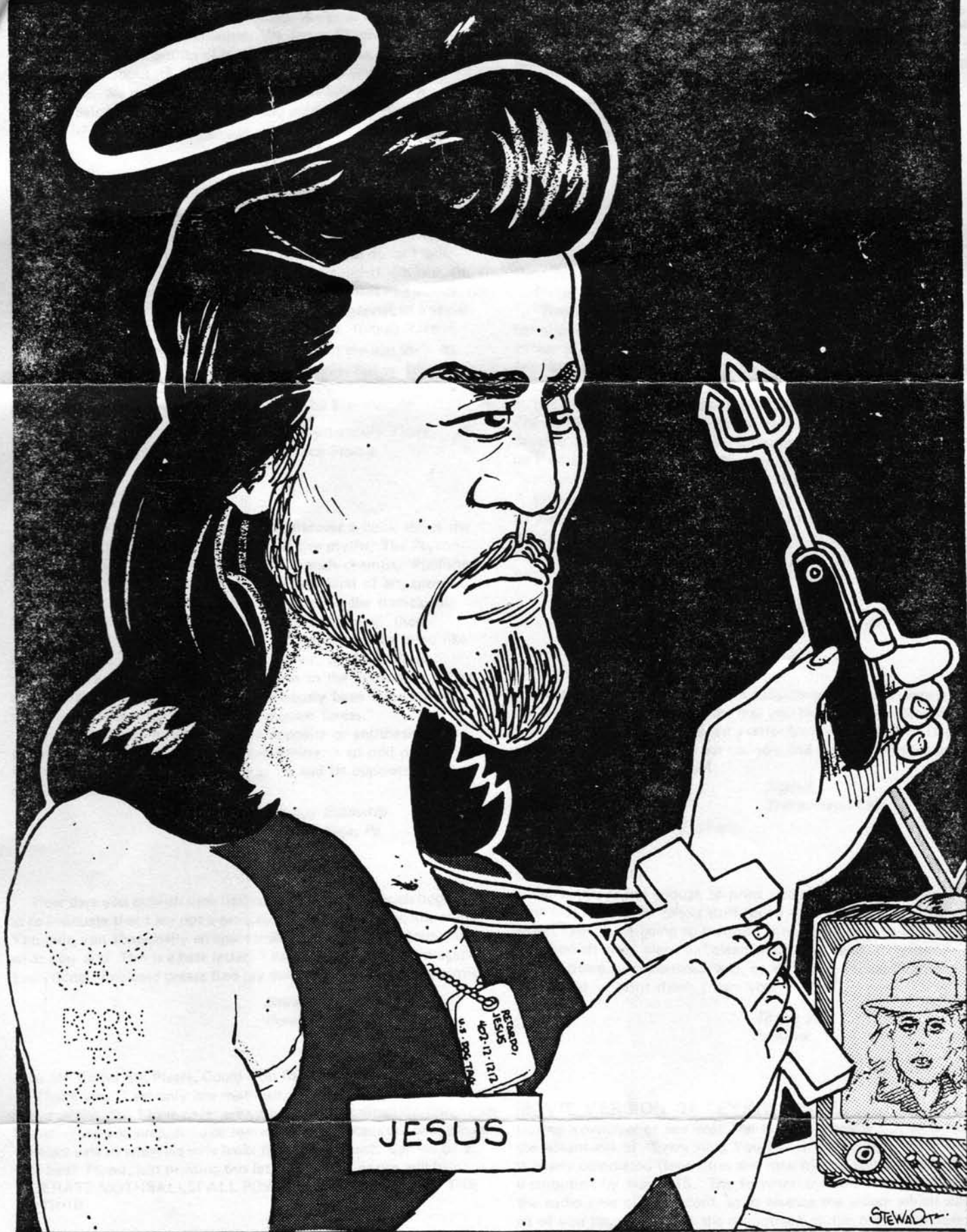
1. Fellow Riders:...Have you seen the Palace?

P: Not yet, but I certainly intend to.

Fellow Riders: Oh, you must! You must! It won't be here much longer, you know. They are cleaning it!

(continued on page 4)





# **FIRESIGN FUNNIES: THREAT OR MENACE?**

An appraisal by Mark "Time" Leviton

FIRESIGN FUNNIES opened its first three-day engagement on home turf, at a Santa Monica theatre noted for weird undertakings, incredible midnight shows and a penchant for attracting freaks from all parts of L.A. The package, "Martian Space Party," "Love Is Hard To Get," and "TV Or Not TV," was not entirely new to me, as I had seen the first about six times, the second once and the third not at all, but I took along two semi-Firesign freaks to get an accurate reading as to their primary impact. It has long been my contention (see my dissertation "How Now Brown Firesign") that Firesign Theatre films are incomprehensible to anyone not entirely sunk in the mythic aspects of the group's work. After seeing these three films,

my semi-freak companions both indicated that although it was nearly impossible to tell what was going on, they were sort of fun. Of course, for a confirmed Firesign addict like me (or you, little bozo brother) the witnessing of said cinematic treasures is better, even, than a first-class shrimp job.

For my money, Peter Bergman's "Love Is Hard To Get" is the best-made film. That is, it takes its media for all it's worth, using varying textures and types of film stock to pull off a dozen beautiful "period" shots in the course of a zany plot about a samauri warrior-statue (sold convincingly by Jack Poet in whiteface, as if he needs it) that saves a girl from the clutches of the mad Nasi Goring, who is such a cad he even listens to himself singing on the radio. The plot's not the thing (except for Antone Greene's amazing performance as the samauri, his face a cross between Keaton and Valentino) but the

(continued on page 5)



Why haven't you? I think you should. All of us on Moledar are just licking our knuckles in anticipation. We peruse **Chromium Switch** and yet we still find no mention of it. We're waiting ... what is it? Are you afraid to write about it? It's so fascinating, especially for us Atomic Mole People. We need, indeed, we crave more information on it. And face it, it belongs in your most esteemed publication. Won't you please consider it? Thank you.

Truly Very Yours,  
Hystxrs

Sir or Sirs as the case may be and probably is, although I haven't thoroughly investigated it, but you can bet your bottom dollar I will:

Have you seen it? It flew over my house last night! Oh fear, Oh horror! It had neither fins like a fish, nor webbed feet like a duck, nor wings like a sea shell which is blown along in the manner of a vessel; nor yet did it writhe itself forward as do the eels. Indeed, I am in grave error when I use the phrase "flew" — for it did not fly — its head and its tail were shaped precisely alike, only, not far from the latter, was a tail precisely alike the former. What can be done? Is this thing going to continue? Is it the work of The Electrician?

Very Hysterically Yours,  
Hemlock Stones

A few weeks ago I just happened to discover a book about the psychological and literary significance of fire myths, **The Psychoanalysis of Fire** by Gaston Bachelard, a French chemist. Published in 1938, the book predicts the rise of a new kind of art, *specifically associated with fire*, which will shatter all the traditional forms and will vitalize images through "decomposing" them.

He writes: "Imagination works at the summit of the mind like a flame, and it is to the region of metaphor, to the Dadaist region where the dream gives a new form to the experience, when reverie transforms forms that have previously been transformed, that we must look for the secret of mutant forces."

In another place he says that the opposite or antithesis of gravity is fire, which, considering everything, is an odd parallel to the line from **EYKIW** about "gravity, and its opposite, comedy."

Lindsay Edmunds  
State College, Pa.

How dare you publish such lies, such trash, indeed, such hogwash as to insinuate that I am not a genuine purveyor of cosmic knowledge? You twit, you abnormally arrogant snake in the grass! Jealous, that's what you are! This is a hate letter. I hate you. I hate your magazine. Everything! Enclosed please find my dollar for a lifetime subscription.

Sincerely,  
Gerald Ford

Dear Mr. Editor Sir, Please, Could You Read This Letter?

Thank you. I am only one mothball, and most people don't say much about mothballs. I have never seen mention of mothballs in **Chromium Switch** — are you prejudiced or something? Mothballs are cool. Euell Gibbons eats us when his wife locks him in the closet. Can we be all that bad? Please, just printing this letter with this notice will help: **LIBERATE MOTHBALLS! ALL POWER TO THE BALLS OF THE MOTH!!!!**

Thank you,  
One Mothball — Hall Closet  
block 459, sector R  
subcluster unrecorded

Although the terminology employed is by no means unique, there are very definite similarities between the conversation detailed in "Bozos" and the phraseology employed by a LISP program used at Rand Corporation known as "Doctor Otto Matic."

Douglas W. Goodall  
Chief of Naval Chemical Aviation  
Iwakuni, Japan

You can imagine my joy at seeing the letter from the mothball! Finally, us balls are getting mentioned in print! Too long have we suppressed our superiority, too long have we been submissive and docile! Now is the time for all of us — mothballs, baseballs, jingleballs, footballs (O.K., they are different looking, but they are balls!) even German batballs — time for us to rise and be liberated and free!!! Thank you for helping our cause! We'll remember you when we're rolling to the bathtub White House!

Love and kisses,  
3 Volleyballs from Jersey

Dear Tom:

Please pass this on to Don Lindley.

"Negritude" doesn't really qualify as "Neushopfung" since it has a long history in English already. Even though it does not appear in the Oxford English Dictionary or in Webster's Third New International Dictionary, it is widely used in the South. At any rate, I have heard it all my life.

I've been able to track down two previously published examples. The earlier one is from **The Realist** (1965) reprinted in "How A Satirical Editor Became A Yippie Conspirator In Ten Easy Years" by Paul Krassner. On page 122 he quotes Jules Feiffer as saying, "LeRoi Jones is the Andy Warhol of Negritude."

In the January 1975 issue of **Natural History** Raymond Sokolov, on page 98 writes, "That same week (although at that time we didn't know it) two black American scholars surfaced in the North American mass media to announce that they had found the cultural origins of negritude among the Surinamian Djukas...."

Harry Eagar  
Virginia Beach, Va.

I can still remember when such subjects as mothballs were left unspoken of. It disgusts me to see that you have actually allowed the word mentioned, let alone print a letter from one of them. The balls of the moth are corrupting our country and that's all there is to it. Cancel my subscription now!

Signed,  
Tricia Nixon Cox

Dear Mr. Gedwillo:

Sure, you're hip enough to print letters about eels and mothballs and all sorts of taboo stuff, but I dare you to print this letter. Yes, I am going to mention it now, along with eels and balls and all else; clean air, clean water, real food, statesmen, justice, peace, consciousness and, of all things, human harmony. I dare you .... print them, I dare you.

Thank you,  
Pandora

## MOVIE VERSION OF "EYKIW" IS SET

During November of last year The Firesign Theatre put onto film the adventures of "Everything You Know Is Wrong." The movie is nearly completed (sans titles and inserts) and will be ready for distribution by March 15. The forty-minute epic was filmed along the audio lines of the record, so in essence the album which surely all of you have by now is the *soundtrack* to the motion picture. Location shooting was done in LA, Santa Barbara, and the low desert of The Mohave.



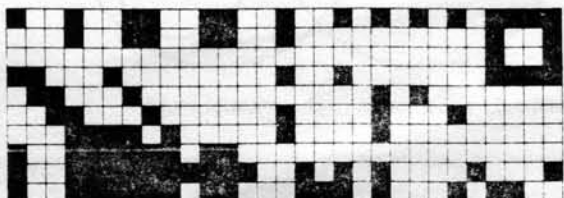
## CHROMIUM SWITCH — Tenth Anniversary Issue

Prepared by TOM GEDWILLO (editor and publisher) — DEBORAH BENEDICT (associate editor) — Four Or Five Crazy Guys, Edgar Bullington, Mark Time Leviton (contributing editors) — Scott Stewart (cartoonist) — New Morning Press & Lincoln Gazette (offset printing & type composition)

CHROMIUM SWITCH solicits manuscripts from its readers for possible publication. Send photos, interviews, fact, fiction, reviews, letters to editor, in general anything relevant to "The Science of Fyre Sygne."

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# MOTELS ON THE MOON, OR THE OTHER SIDE OF UGLY

By Deborah Benedict

(A Panoramic View of Science on the March in Nazi Boots  
Trampling on Humanity)

[From Mixville, Sector C, subcluster 12; United Snakes of Amerika:] A revolution in Progress; or Progress Revolts. Or Progress is Revolting. Whatever you want to. George Papoon, President, as we all know, has once more declared himself Not Responsible for the huge amount of scientific research now being practically applied to green and yellow vegetables, sea creatures, and people without credit cards. The experiments are being carried out by a doctor of paranoiapsychology, Dr. Whiplash; a famous scientist, Louis B. Papsmear; and the professor himself. Vegetables, such as broccoli, eggplant and corn are undergoing strict tests for anti-matter rocket ships. Propelled by vegetables, Dr. Whiplash believes that the "spaceships" could go beyond the small magellanic cloud or beyond. The sea creatures are being considered as "food for aliens" in the final intergalactic alien friendship convention. They are undergoing a process that involves electro magnetic chemicals being shot into their bodies to make them more palatable for Atomic Mole People, Dromes, Ducks from Jupiter and other delegates. The humans-without-credit-cards section of the research center is possibly the most time consuming and controversial project being undertaken. It was taken under by Walter, the janitor, and the people involved are being drained of their DNA molecules and doctors are trying to see what anti-mercenary humans are like without the life-giving DNA.

"As far as I'm concerned," says Dr. Papsmear, "DNA is just so much extra — like the appendix or brain — and these people, if they can't get a credit card, they deserve to live without it." But what will become of the DNA-less people? "They will be put to use as waiters and waitresses for the big convention!" says Whiplash.

Papoon still maintains he is Not Responsible, and refuses to interfere with the "unusual scientific endeavors" in Sector C.

Otherwise, people continue to live and die, without the aid of microwave towels, Hawaiian vacations, and the latest invention, Tupperware Coffins. "Guaranteed to keep your loved one fresh forever. Don't forget to burp the lid!" President Papoon himself has agreed to be interred in a Tupperware Coffin after his sane assassination by Prince Arcturus, after the Intergalactic Friendship Convention. Prince Arcturus still plans to take over Planet Earth and he figures Papoon as his first sane victim. He plans to kill him by making him Vice President.

All of this is not true. Except the part about Tupperware Coffins. Check out your nearest Rexall Drug Store. They should be near the pro-phylactics.

## SCHIZOPHRENIA(continued from page 1)

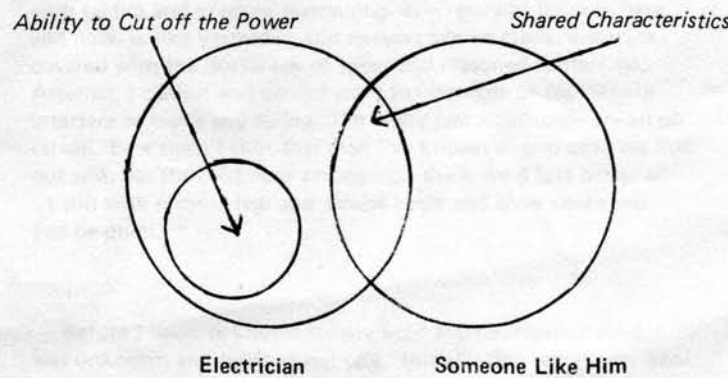
Here, the act of removing dirt from the Palace, "cleaning it," is equated with the act of removing the entire Palace from its present existence.<sup>3</sup>

2. In this example, P takes one property from each of two musical instruments and attempts to draw a comparison, which fails miserably:

P: ...I as leader will use Power like a drum and Leadership like a violin.<sup>4</sup>

3. Babe: Nice! Can you get UHF?  
Ralph: No, I don't believe in flying saucers.<sup>5</sup>

4. The title "Waiting For The Electrician Or Someone Like Him" demonstrates the schizophrenic's confusion about shared properties. A Venn diagram shows that what is wanted from the electrician is the ability to cut off the power, yet from the title, it appears that anyone "like" the electrician will be able to do the specific task of cutting off the electricity. The "Someone" may lack this specific ability:



## DISTORTIONS OF SELF MULTIPLE IDENTITY

1. In "Electrician" P doesn't resemble his photograph, he is separated from his passport and his luggage; he is seen as a relative of the elevator boy, as a distinguished guest-speaker, as a "brute killer without a conscience," as a wrongfully imprisoned man, as a dying patient in the Beat the Reaper quiz show, and at the end of the play, he is told that the only way to survive is to throw off his clothes. The underlying message to all of this is: one must lose one's self in order to survive.
2. George LeRoy Tirebiter, in "Dwarf," becomes a character on TV, an old movie director, a political candidate, a child star, a high school kid, an adult actor, an Army officer, and a quiz show MC. Finally, George The Adult confronts George The Boy who are actually the same person. The Freudian parallel of Ego and Id is irresistible here.

## SHIFTING FRAMES OF REFERENCE

1. In "Electrician" P suffers many quick shifts of reference. He finds himself suddenly out of the terminal and into an elevator, then into a convention setting, then swept into an Ice Show, and then plunged into the midst of a bombing raid. From jail he finds himself as the principle victim on a quiz show. At one point, he is asked which side he is on, meaning what is his political orientation. P replies: Side Two.
2. Spatial disorientation occurs often in "How Can You." Again, the frame of reference is always changing:

FM Announcer: ...So hop into your wife and head in any direction on the freeway of your choice, and we'll see you in a couple of hours here at Ralph Spoilsport Motors...<sup>6</sup>

Babe: No, no! That's all very interesting, but the sun is going down!  
Bill: Oh, no, no! You are confused! The horizon is moving up!  
Old Man: I know, I know! Let's...  
All: ...stand him on his head!  
Babe: Hey, hey! Put me down!  
Bill: Easy boy!  
Old Man: Now, you see? Now it's morning!<sup>7</sup>

## TRANSLATIONS

The following excerpts are parables which in private idiom. So rich, in fact, that they are nearly incomprehensible and require translation. Listening to these fragments is like listening to a foreign language with which one has only a partial familiarity, but not enough. These selections lack "consensual validation,"<sup>8</sup> that is, the feeling that the speaker and listener share similar thoughts, feelings, and vocabulary. In a clinical setting, one would hear the patient's speech in relation to his personal problems, his verbal habits, his delusions and his history. Here, however, we have none of these aids, only our intuition. The translations that follow are only starting points on the road to deciphering a psychologically cryptic message.

- A. 'ell? 'ell? What's 'ell? They tore it down. What's 'ell to me or me to 'ell? What th'ell? As a tot, t'was told me not to cross the mote, but then the monkey did bespeak me cast the mote from mine own eyes so thus I crossed my eyes and double-crossed the mote and fell into the mote. Then soon, they bade me warning I play not by myself, t'would make me blind but I was deaf and so I jumped into the burning bush and lo, although consumed, I rose again to bite another apple on yet another Eve. I spit out half a snake! Afraid of Hell? I've left my senses many times and dreamed I fought great monsters, pink behemoth, rats upon my bed, who cares? Are we not men? If we fall, can we not rise again? Hot headed, flushed with blood we'll get it laying down or standing up, or get it any way we can! Saint Mickey! Save Me!<sup>9</sup>

### Translation:

When I was a child, my parents demanded of me strict adherence to certain forms of behavior. They told me that I'd go to Hell if I disobeyed. They told me not to masturbate, but I ignored their command and did it anyway, and I felt guilty about it. I then discovered sex with women, blamed the women for seducing me, and felt guilty about it. I turned to alcohol as a relief from my guilt. I even have hallucinations and bad dreams that monsters will punish me for my transgressions, although I try to give the appearance that I don't believe in Hell, that I am guilt-free, and unafraid of retribution. I want an inordinate amount of sex to prove to my parents that I'm my own boss. I need some magic to save me from my driven, guilt-ridden existence.

(continued on page 5)



way it's made is — the black and white footage is treated with lots of neat slow-down or fast-motion bits that give the impression of an old German expressionist film. The dubbing is deliberately off for comic effect, and the amateurishness of the film is *built in*, sort of an inside joke, the producers laughing at how botched they make their own product. It's really a visual treat, and "Love Is Hard To Get" may be valuable if for no other reason.

"TV Or Not TV" is an uneasy adaptation of the Proctor-Bergman album and stage act. Although there are moments of real inspiration (like the location during Proctor's editorial), the act isn't really helped by the visual presentation. The album is still funnier (the lack of overdubs, etc. in the film makes the "Roaming Umpire" sequences a bit tough) but the film gives a few things that cannot be replaced, like Bergman's incredible face during the money speech and Proctor's usual bewildered Fred Flamm. It's pretty straight-forward, and there's not much added except that "Ms Information" becomes a takeoff of Johnny Carson (Ed MacMahon played by a stuffed toy). Again, the story idea is easy to follow for someone familiar with the album, but for others the occasionally poor sound recording makes things rather messy and hard to understand.

"Martian Space Party," which I reviewed in a newsletter about two years ago, bears up well. Having been at the original KPFK show, it's fairly easy for me to fill in the over 30 minutes edited out, which makes things easier to understand. As with most Firesign material, what goes in comes out condensed to the point where only hints may remain of the original motivating factor. To me, the entire escapade of the President/Resident on Monster Island is fraught with unanswered questions. And un-questioned answers. At any rate, the joy one feels as a toy Godzilla model holding a banner stumbles past a burning miniature village towards the end of the film is enough to justify all. Little things like Proctor's cough into his fake grey mustache, Austin's "keepin' it cool and uh, casual" speech, Ossman's sermon and Pete's adlib "Who is he!?" cry (which always brings the biggest laugh of the picture) fill up this fine film. In fact the little details, or hooks (using musical terms) of the Firesign films and albums are the things that really stick — slogans like "Take Off Your Shoes (For Industry)" embody in capsule form a lot of thought that might otherwise take minutes to explain. "Martian Space Party" has the verbal greatness that "Love Is Hard To Get" has visually. Rumor has it that the film of "Everything You Know Is Wrong" may combine both strong points. It's worth a look. They all are.

[Mark is a free-lance journalist residing in Claremont, Calif. and former entertainment editor for the UCLA Daily Bruin.]

### SCHIZOPHRENIA (continued from page 4)

B. Long before I became a household word bigger than a bread-box, something you use every day. Long, long before this error of persuasive—er—pervasive permissiveness became a *la mode* like ice cream on Mom's good old topless American apple pie, I was there: whispering in corners, skulking behind the barn in rural realities everywhere, knowing albeit only to myself, what was about to be going on. As my dear friend, dear friend, my old friend Charles Throat said as he threw out the first aluminum bat, "This isn't fair!" I knew he was right, God knows he could have been wrong, but who cares? An unpopular opinion in Populist times is always good for a laugh, but America wasn't in a funny mood that day and Charles didn't have a sense of humor anyway. But I knew he was right and I knew he was saying what had to be said. I whispered an answer. No one heard me. No one cared. No one listened to vegetables then and Charles was a potato, an Irish Spud, we used to call him behind his back. Yes, then we were a table convenience, taken for granted, taken advantage, an aid to the congestion, but not anymore. Gone, gone are the days when we could recognize the cities by the color of their smoke. A new government will be formed within hours. Why not? The youth have turned against the youth. Young people throwing bats at other young people, simply over-reacting, merely guessing that their lives were threatened. Of course I deploy—er—deplore such tactics and practice restraining—er—restraint because here and now, unlike yesterday, our excuses can be made, our tracks covered with the dustbreak of sober and reasoned subterfuge. After all, I cannot and do not want to intercede or fear—er—or interfere or make any ruling. I'm really just an absurd—er—an observer. Ever since I shot that man I've known it, and until we find out who has the cold nose among us, I think we'd just better all sit still with crossed legs and count noses and blow noses and just be quiet.<sup>10</sup>

#### Translation:

Before I became known for my bold and courageous deed, I was unknown and quiet—a nobody. Initially, my secret acts went unnoticed and unappreciated. Society treated me like a vegetable. They were out to destroy me, to eat me up. But then I found the answer: I joined a movement whose goal was to overthrow the

Government. I knew it was up to me to take the first step in initiating the Revolution. I'd show them—so, I killed That Man. Although I haven't yet heard the news that our cause has won, I should be hearing the good news any time now. After all, it takes a few hours to set up a new Government. Mind you, I don't want to lead this new regime; I'd prefer to watch from the sidelines. In the back of my mind, however, I wonder whether the Revolution has really succeeded. In case it has failed, I'd better lay low because I cannot risk detection by Government Spies.

Comment: This monologue could be that of a man arrested for murder, found criminally insane, and committed to a state hospital. He spends his time perseverating on his noble act, justifying himself, worrying whether his imaginary cause has succeeded or not, and distrusting those about him. Perhaps he had created a delusional system, including a Secret Society out to overthrow the existing government, with himself as the bold initiator whose assignment was to assassinate an Evil Man representing the unjust society. He displays delusions of persecution, delusions of grandeur, and overall paranoia. He has rationalized why he has not yet heard about the overthrow. His rambling, circumstantial, pressured speech indicates that his thought process is deteriorating. He has, in effect, become "a vegetable." We could only speculate what was so threatening in his life that he fled into this psychosis.

### FINALE

Finally, a few words should be said as to whether or not the schizophrenic experience is creative. My belief is that schizophrenics essentially distort their world to fit their maladaptive purposes, instead of re-ordering their world in new creative ways. Beck<sup>11</sup> makes the point quite well:

The schizophrenic excels in his tendency to misconstrue the world that is presented, giving it a form and outline which the healthier do not see, rather than in a greater creative power or in a superior ability to transmute his experience into something new and richer. ...One wonders whether the general belief in the schizophrenic profuse fantasy life is not due to confusing distortion with fantasy. Fantasy actually involves a *creating* of something totally new. ...To be sure, some of the schizophrenic's misconstructions take on fantastic forms. But this is still not fantasy. It is inaccuracy.

I believe the seven albums recorded by The Firesign Theatre show a high degree of creativity. True, when broken down into pieces of action and language, the craziness comes through. But when taken as a whole, each play is an entertaining and provocative journey for the mind.

Donald Lindley  
San Rafael, Calif.  
12-13-73

<sup>1</sup> Vetter, Harold J. LANGUAGE BEHAVIOR AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY. Chicago: Rand McNally & co., 1969, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Goldstein, K. Methodological Approach to the Study of Schizophrenic Thought Disorder. In J. Kassin (ed.) LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT IN SCHIZOPHRENIA: COLLECTED PAPERS. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1944, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> The Firesign Theatre. BIG BOOK OF PLAYS. Reno: Levison McNally, 1972, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Sullivan, H. S. The Language of Schizophrenia. In J. Kassin (ed.) LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT IN SCHIZOPHRENIA: COLLECTED PAPERS. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1944, pp. 4-16.

<sup>9</sup> Edmund-Edmund's soliloquy in "Not Insane" album.

<sup>10</sup> "Poop's Principles" in "Dear Friends" album.

<sup>11</sup> Beck, S. J. Errors in Perception and Fantasy in Schizophrenia. In J. Kassin (ed.) LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT IN SCHIZOPHRENIA: COLLECTED PAPERS. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1944, pp. 101-102.

