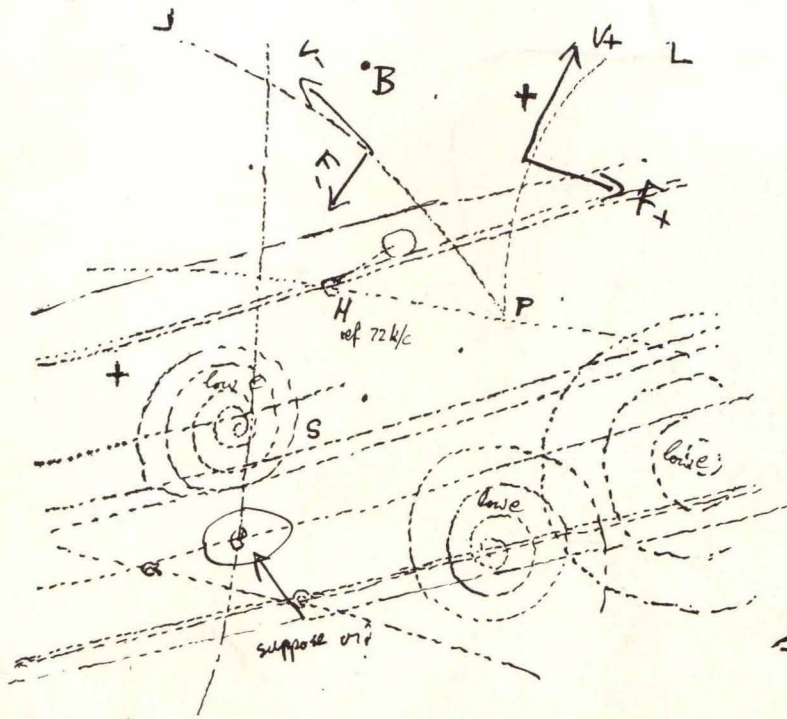
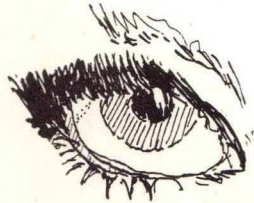


VECTOR 47

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VECTOR

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My Father's House — Damon Knight

In the beginning, there was Gernsback. And the world was without form and void.

And Gernsback said, Let there be science fiction. And it was so.

Let us pray.

I mention this charming myth because I believed it for 30-some years, until I read a scholarly volume called *FUTURE PERFECT*, by H. Bruce Franklin. Franklin says flatly that "There was no major 19th-century American writer of the first rank, and indeed few in the second rank, who did not write some science fiction or at least one utopian romance." And he backs this up with the selections in his anthology, and by referring to works by Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Herman Melville, Oliver Wendell Holmes and so on. He finds "scientific fiction" being discussed critically as early as 1876. And the point he makes is that during the 19th century in America, science fiction was not a segregated form, it was not looked down on; it was published, as a matter of course, in all the literary magazines of the day --Harper's Monthly, Putnam's, Scribner's, the Atlantic Monthly and so on. Mark Twain wrote it; William Dean Howells wrote it, and it never occurred to anybody to look down on those who wrote science fiction or those who read it.

What Gernsback actually did, it would now seem - but he may have had some help from the dime novels that began to appear in the late 1800's - was to ghettoize science fiction - to make of it, what it had not been before, a separate and despised genre - published in magazines with gaudy covers and read by a little group of nuts.

And it has taken us forty years to struggle back into the daylight again.

Now I don't know whether the dime novels and the pulp magazines took up science fiction because it had ceased to be respectable, or whether it ceased to be respectable because the dime novels and pulp magazines took it up. Some research on this point would be of interest.

But whichever way it was, the curious thing is that I find

I cannot be sorry that Gernsback existed. I say to myself, suppose this downgrading of science fiction had never happened - suppose it had remained a perfectly respectable literary form - what would the result have been? Well, of course we can't know what we might have got in the way of science fiction from literary writers of the early 20th century. But I think it's quite clear what we would have missed: E.E. Smith, Jack Williamson, Henry and Catherine Kuttner, L. Sprague de Camp, Robert A. Heinlein, and so on right up to Roger Zelazny and Samuel R. Delany.

I have a personal reason for feeling this way, too: if there had been no Hugo Gernsback, I honestly don't know where the hell I would be now or what I would be doing. It gives me a peculiar feeling sometimes to realize that my whole life has been determined, in the strictest sense, by the existence of this gentleman, now in his 80s, whom I have never met. If there had been no Gernsback, praised be he, there would have been no August-September 1933 issue of *Amazing Stories* and I would not have read it; there would have been no fanzines for me to imitate and I would never have published snide; there would have been no Futurians and I would never have gone to New York to join them; I would never have got a job with Popular Publications or with the Scott Meredith Literary Agency, praised be it; I would never have met my wife and my children would not exist. I don't know what in the world would have happened to me; I suppose I would be back in Oregon still, doing God knows what. So you see Gernsback has a heavy responsibility.

But aside from such personal considerations, I must tell you that I believe the concentration of science fiction into a ghetto was essential to its growth. A ghetto - and I use this ugly term deliberately, because it is apt - a ghetto is a kind of hothouse. Science fiction writers, instead of being scattered and absorbed by the literary world, were crammed into this narrow little field, where every writer was intensely aware of what the others were doing. They wrote for each other and for a coterie audience of people who knew what they were talking about; they picked up ideas from each other and fed them back; they built up a body of common assumptions and knowledge - and it was this concentration which made science fiction the fantastically rich and vigorous field it is. Last year 213 science fiction books were published. About 20 of these were anthologies, and this happens year after year - 20 anthologies, most of them in hardcover, of stories from this little bitty magazine field. To realize how incredible this is, you have to compare it to the much older and more respectable mystery field, which considers it has done well if it cranks out three or four anthologies a year.

The reason for this vigor and explosive growth, I believe, is the same thing that outsiders have always complained of - the over-technicality of science fiction, the in-group jargon,

the things that make most science fiction just incomprehensible to the general reader. Science fiction writers did not have to water their stuff down to make it acceptable to the man on the street, because they knew he was not going to buy it anyhow. They could write for a specialized audience who would not have to have every damn thing explained to them in simple terms, and therefore they could tackle any idea they could understand themselves and make it into a story which would be published and read with understanding and pleasure.

Now this may seem like an odd stance for anyone to take who belongs to what has been variously described as the Blish-Knight axis or the Milford Mafia. If any of you have read the recent debate in Habakkuk, edited by Bill Donaho, you will know that I am supposed to be one of those who are trying to ruin science fiction by importing literary values into it.

Let me try to explain. I was struck particularly by one thing that was said during the Habakkuk debate. A couple of people, including Donaho, made the point that for them, literary values in science fiction are not only unnecessary, but actively interfere with their enjoyment of the story. These people say that they are not literary troglodytes, that they read mainstream fiction with pleasure - but that if they want that kind of thing, they can get it from the mainstream: they don't want it in science fiction, which they read in a different way and for a different kind of pleasure.

Let me say that I understand this attitude perfectly, because I feel the same way about mystery fiction. I have been told, and I believe, that the mystery novel in the last decade or so has staked out serious claims to consideration as a literary form, and I couldn't care less. I read mysteries, when I do, for pure entertainment, and I often like them even when I know they are bad.

Is it not inconsistent of me, then, to be trying to import literary values into science fiction? I don't think so. The mystery field, like science fiction, covers a broad spectrum. There is the pure-entertainment stuff, like James Bond, for people like me. There is the highly technical deductive mystery novel for those who like it, and the literary mystery novel for those who like that. The mystery tent is big enough to cover all those people, and the science fiction tent is big enough to cover me and Bill Donaho. And I submit that we should all be glad there is this much variety in science fiction, because if there were not - if it were all one kind, no matter which kind - three out of four of us would be left out.

I've been using a term pretty loosely without defining it. When I talk about science fiction with literary values, I simply mean stories which are well written. I have no interest in

making science fiction more like the mainstream, or, heaven forbid, more like the avant-garde movement. I simply want it to be well enough written that I can read it with pleasure, and stand some chance of being able to read it again, ten or twenty years from now, without finding that it has gone rickytick on me. I have tried to reread some of those stories from the 1930s Amazing, and I know that most science fiction does not stand this test, but this to me is simply another illustration of Strapeon's Rule - "Nine tenths of everything is crud." I want a science fiction story to have exciting ideas, logical development, and, all right, the sense of wonder - but I also want to be able to get through it without tripping over gross grammatical errors, clichés and cooky-cutter characters.

In my Father's house are many mansions.

Editor's Note: The rest of this speech was concerned with a project designed to make sf books more widely available in the bookshops. It has been omitted, being relevant only to the American market. In fact most of the observations (but not the opinions) in the speech apply mainly to the American scene. For example, in Britain it is true of this century as well as the last that "there is no writer of the first rank, and indeed few in the second rank, who has not written some science fiction." Would it be unfair to contrast Wells and Gernsback as the father figures of science fiction on the two sides of the Atlantic? --AS/



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Mike Ashley

The past few VECTORS have been void of this column whilst I've been waiting for a regular editor to appear. With the hope that the present editor will remain as such, at least for a few issues, I've grabbed the trusty types and resumed work.

Shortly after the last column appeared I received a postcard from Ken Slater in answer to Darroll's question about the Asimov titles: "1,000 YEAR PLAN (FOUNDATION) was published as part of Ace D110 with NO WORLD OF THEIR OWN, Anderson, as the other half. Later published on its own as D538. SECOND FOUNDATION: GALACTIC EMPIRE was the Avon publication."

And in answer to Tom's query on Weinbaum paperbacks:

"Weinbaum: "The Black Flame" published by Harlequin pbs, Canada, in 1953. Very scarce."

From John Davies, 26 Trevale Rd., Rochester, Kent comes this:

"A friend of mine wishes to know where he can get hold of the short story "Satisfaction Guaranteed" by Isaac Asimov, which he has recently seen on television. Can you help, please?"

--BBC-2's OUT OF THE UNKNOWN series unearthed this Asimov short and screened it just after it had reappeared in several formats. It can in fact be obtained in various places. With luck the original in the April 1951 AMAZING STORIES. It appears in the collection "Earth Is Room Enough", published by Doubleday in 1957, and brought out as paperbacks by Bantam in the US (1959) and Panther in the UK (April 1960, reprinted October 1962). More recently it was anthologised by Roger Elwood in his "Invasion of the Robots" (Paperback Library, April 1965), and even more recently FANTASTIC STORIES reprinted it in its July 1966 issue.

So there's quite a chance, and as far as I know each version is the same. No doubt at least one, if not several, can be obtained easily, probably from Ken Slater's Fantast Bookshop, 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire--

Since that is all that has come in since last time, I feel it best to add some more information of my own, otherwise it's going to be a rather small column.

So here's hoping that VECTOR will expand enough to incorporate the following checklists, one of Otis Adelbert Kline (all his sf and fantasy to appear in magazine format, plus any originals elsewhere), and one of Roger Zelazny. Both are as up to date as they can be leaving me. If anything appears between

completion and the appearance of this checklist, well, it can't very easily be included!

✓OK, VECTOR herewith expands. But I'm afraid Mike's beautifully typed lists will have to be squashed somewhat, as well -- AS/

ROGER ZELAZNY

*pseud Harrison Denmark

Mister Fuller's Revolt	ss LC	10/54	The Doors Of His Face,	
Passion Play	ss AS	8/62	The Lamps Of His Mouth	ss F&SF3/65
Horseman!	ss F	8/62	The Furies	ss AS 6/65
The Teachers Rode A Wheel Of Fire	ss F	10/62	TheLinde's Song	ss F 6/65
			Devil Car	ss G 6/65
Moonless In Byzantium	ss AS	12/62	Of Time And The Yan	ss F&SF6/65
On The Road To Splenoba	ss F	1/63	...And Call Me Conrad (2pts)	F&SF10/65
Final Dining	ss F	2/63		11/65
The Borgia Hand	ss AS	3/63	But Not The Herald	ss MH win65
Nine Starships Waiting	nt F	3/63	Love Is An Imaginary Number	
Circe Has Her Problems	ss AS	4/63		ss NW 1/66
The Malatesta Collection	ss F	4/63	The Bells Of Shoredan	nt F 3/66
The Stainless Steel Leech*ss	AS	4/63	For A Breath I Tarry	nt NW 3/66
A Thing Of Terrible Beauty*ss	F	4/63	Divine Madness	ss MH sum66
Threshold Of The Prophet	ss F	5/63	This Moment Of The Storm	nt F&SF6/66
Monologue For Two*	ss F	5/63	(Circe Has Her Problems - rep)	GSF 6/66
Museum Piece	ss F	6/63	The Keys To December	nt NW 8/66
Mine Is The Kingdom*	nt AS	8/63	(For A Breath I Tarry - rep)	F 9/66
The Misfit	nt AS	10/63	Comes Now The Power	ss MH win66
King Solomon's Ring	nt F	10/63	(Divine Madness - rep)	NW 10/66
A Rose For Ecclesiastes	ss		The Mortal Mountain	nt IF 3/67
	F&SF	11/63	Dawn	nt F&SF4/67
The Great Slow Kings	ss WOT	12/63	Death And The Executioner	nt F&SF6/67
The Graveyard Heart	nt F	3/64	The Man Who Loved The Faich	ss G 6/67
Collector's Fever	ss G	6/64	In The House Of The Dead	ss NW 7/67
Lucifer	ss WOT	6/64	Angel, Dark Angel	ss G 7/67
The Salvation Of Faust	ss F&SF	7/64	Damnation Alley	nt G 10/67
The Monster and the Maiden			(Passion Play - rep)	GSF Fall67
	ss G	12/64		
He Who Shapes (2 pts)	AS	1-2/65		

KEY: LC = Literary Cavalcade; AS = Amazing Stories; F = Fantastic; WOT = Worlds of Tomorrow; G = Galaxy; MH = Mag of Horror; GSF = Great SF IF = Worlds of If; NW = New Worlds.

Roger Zelazny has also made several fanzine appearances, and as yet no actual record has been made of them. The only ones I have are:

Late, Late Show	ss	TIGHTBEAN	37	May	1966
excerpt from Nine Princes In Amber	extract	KALLIKANZAROS	1	June	1967
A Knight For Merytha	ss	KALLIKANZAROS	2	September	67

"A Knight For Merytha" is a light-hearted story and not in keeping with Zelazny's usual style (except perhaps "The Great Slow Kings"). It is in fact the fourth in the Dilvish series, of which "Passage To Dilfar", "TheLinde's Song" and "The Bells Of Shoredan" are the first three.

Views from the Interface

Bob Parkinson

Was it really, I wonder, Robert Heinlein who made that remark about science fiction being the only route still open to serious literature? Or is this merely a trick of the memory? It is an attractive notion, admittedly, providing our microcosm with a desired significance. But I do not think that it is true.

Rather it seems to me that as time and change make their progression we shall tend to find the writers of "serious literature" (who, after all, have always been a law unto themselves) intruding more and more often into territory that was once held as purely "SF". The interface has always been quite nebulous with regard to "fantasy". Slowly it will become true of SF also.

Besides, there are a number of surprising gaps in the traditional SF imagination. Man has been portrayed as a noble or an insignificant creature at large in the universe, but - with the possible exception of Vonnegut - our writers seem to have failed to see that Man waving his fist against the stars is a somewhat ridiculous creature also.

* * * * *

Science fiction, of course, was not first to see this vision of Man alone against the universe. The Greeks (by dint of having been born some centuries ahead of the rest of us) got in first, as usual. Oedipus Tyrannus is, in its way, the prototype of a number of SF novels - the tragedy of a man standing up against his fate.

In the middle of John Barth's recent novel, Giles Goat-Boy* there is a full length comic pastiche of Oedipus; the story of Taliped Decarus, reset in a modern American university campus, with a fully aware, analytical political Dean as the lead character. And thus transformed we see the Sophocles play in an alternate light, the ridiculous aspect of a man who "has his coming" and won't give up - the picture of a man sawing off the branch he is sitting on.

Giles Goat-Boy is a vast (710 pages), rambling, erudite,

*John Barth, Giles Goat-Boy (Secker and Warburg, London, 1966)

comic epic of a parallel world designed more than anything - I suspect - to allow critics to stub their toes. It defies categories quite deliberately. It is an allegory of our present world, set in an alternate landscape which is the hallowed Halls of Academe (American Style) - the whole world divided between the Eastern and Western Campuses. But the allegory is one way only; it illuminates the novel, but does not translate back into our own world. Further, it is moralistic, but explodes any moral that might be drawn (and is drawn) from it; it purports to give the Answer, but in reality only answers itself.

And dominating it there is a science-fiction device, the vast computer WESCAC that runs the entire Western Campus (although nowhere is it shown so to do), beginning as an extension of the library indexing system and now independent of its builders, threatening all with its EAT (for Electro-encephalic Amplification and Transmission) waves that can wipe out minds at a distance. Yet this is only the reflection of our own Bomb in the distorting mirror; only, except that you can deal with this in terms not possible with our nuclear nemesis. The work has been designed to exist in its own right, and only in its own right, and would be shunned by the critics quite properly if it were not for the temptation it extends by merely existing.

And into this comes George (who may be the GILES), the boy brought up among the goats (think of all the allusions in that simple improbability), simultaneously innocent abroad and Messiah. The SF reader will recognise similarities between Giles and Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land. But against George, Michael Valentine Smith was strictly a non-starter, propped up against disaster by the superior science of the Martians. And long though Heinlein's book may have been, he did not dare the complexity of plot, theme and comedy inherent in Giles.

Giles is a multi-level book that at no point operates entirely on one level. It is hardly an alternate present in the sense we are familiar with in science fiction, rather it is a distorting mirror of our own present. And yet within the story the logic of its own world is maintained. But the logic is, at best, an improbable logic.

There is a supposed science fiction axiom that each story should be allowed one improbability, and work from there. This is merely one of the many rules Giles breaks; objections are foreseen and forestalled, and then patently ignored. The success seems to come from its very inventiveness. It is surprising that it works at all; it is outrageous that it should work so well.

* * * * *

If Giles Goat-Boy occupies (unannounced) a quite definitive part of the orthodox science fiction landscape, Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49* must be accounted part of that landscape only insofar as the real present has moved into that imagined world. On her entry into San Narcisco, Oedipa Maas - the heroine - passes a factory, "The Galactronics aerospace industry". So far has progress taken us that, from the outside, the world of Southern California seems to have become a science fiction landscape.

And yet if science fiction is fiction concerning science, then Lot 49 must be included, for at its core are the sciences of communications and information theory. That Pynchon is interested in, and knows much about, information theory has been obvious ever since his brilliant short story Entropy** was published way back in 1960. For the most part SF's coverage of this field has been limited to the technology of computers and electronics. Pynchon's interest, however, is wider - polymath. For him "communications" includes not merely the new electronic age but also the history of mediaeval post carriers.

In essence,, the story of Lot 49 concerns the slow discovery of a mysterious clandestine communications network buried beneath the familiar outlines of our present world, its roots buried back into the sixteenth century and affecting more of history than we might care to imagine. The locale is the present day fantasy landscape whose outer surfaces look familiar enough, but whose darker recesses can prove as alien as any planet parsecs distant.

And into this is woven an incredible number of strands, connecting science, society and history. It is difficult to determine how much of the background material Pynchon quotes is true - one suspects none of it at all - but the author obviously knows the background to a depth which makes possible an utterly convincing yet quite preposterous construction upon that background.

Lot 49 and Giles Goat-Boy have much in common. Surprisingly each has a play at its centre, "Taliped" in the case of Barth, for Pynchon a Jacobean Revenge Drama called "The Courier's Tragedy" - quite grisly in its details. But in Pynchon's case the purpose is not to illuminate the history of drama, but to provide another facet to the all-pervasive background of communications. But the two books have more than this, they have caught a form of cosmic comedy that is outrageous in its own inventiveness. And behind this the authors are quietly content to be scholarly about a quite

*Thomas Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49 (Jonathan Cape, London, 1967)

**Thomas Pynchon, Entropy (in Nelson Algren's Book of Lonesome Monsters, Panther, London, 1964)

incredible range of subjects without for one moment losing the essential comic vision.

* * * * *

One could quote a number of books that have caught a similar quality to these two, but the number would not be so too great. Vonnegut, and Joseph Heller's Catch-22 are the only examples that come immediately to mind. But the third in this brief triptych is none of these. It is in fact an older book, recently brought to the fore again by whatever mysterious processes control these things. Indeed, Flann O'Brien's At Swim-Two-Birds* is not even in the realm of science fiction, but pure fantasy. Yet the multi-level structure remains, the same anarchistic, cosmic humour. One can see that the differences are unimportant, that all three books are siblings.

The levels at which At Swim-Two-Birds (the title is the literal translation of an Irish place name) basically operates are these. First there is the everyday life of the narrator as a student in 'tween-wars Dublin, writing his novel; familiar to us through Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. The second level is the novel-within-a-novel, where a second character is engaged in writing his own novel. However, this second (or third) author is much less effective, he must hire his own characters to live with him while he composes the novel of which they will be part.

This is the first level of fantasy. The characters of this ternary novel are professionals, out of work from other volumes, Irish ex-cowboys and the like from hack novels. And these have minds and wills of their own. As the book progresses they will begin to take over from the writer and manoeuvre it (and him) for their own purposes.

And beneath the primary (realistic) and secondary (fantasy) levels there is the third level of the primitive myth and folklore of Ireland. The heroes - represented by Fin Mac Cool and King Sweeney, and the sprites and elementals - the Pooka Mac-Phellimey and the Good Fairy. The multiple levels intermingle constantly, as though occupying the same book they should occupy the same words. And once more nothing will be resolved, because nothing is resolvable. Complexity is the order of nature. All three books, Giles, Lot 49, and At Swim-Two-Birds undermine the world-order we are familiar with.

It is in this element of complexity, I think, that the essential comedy arises. In the equivalent tragedy - the Oedipus story, for instance - the story will eventually resolve into stark simplicity. The doom will be revealed, the heroes will stand or fall, and that will be sufficient. These comedies reverse this order; building elaborate and outrageous makeshift structures which will eventually collapse about our ears, burying their characters and ourselves in the final preposterous debacle. /*Flann O'Brien, At Swim-Two-Birds (MacGibbon & Kee 1960)

THE HARRISON LETTER	WORLD CON REPORT
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Well, back in California after a hectic couple of weeks in and around New York City. Rather exhausted, lost seven pounds (drinking and not eating will do that every time) and with a slight case of vibrating hands, what the Mexicans call "telegrafista" (working a code key) that is supposed to come from over-indulgence in drink, but never mind about that. This is a con report, not an application for AA.

Before the Nycon proper started there was a thing called the Milford Conference, a writer's conference for SF types. I managed to make the last day of this, which was enough, doubt if I could have lasted the entire week and then the convention. Damon Knight and the delectable Mrs Kate Wilhelm Knight preside over these things, and everyone you can think of was there. I met Gordy Dickson for the first time, a fine boozier and late-night singer, apparently knowing almost as many exotic songs as does Brian Aldiss. He would grace a BSFA con and I must see if I can con him into coming to one. Marlan B. was there, had just been in a fight with some guy twice his size, Marlan had beat the hell out of him too, but had a split lip, black eye, etc. to prove it had not been easy. He flattened some innocent and empty beer cans for us with a kara-te chop to show how it was done. Fritz Leiber was there (I have vague memories of indian-wrestling on the kitchen floor with him about 4 AM, God knows why), Ed Emshwiller, with writer wife Carol, Kay MacLean, Judy Merrill, Alan Nourse, Terry Carr, Ed Ferman, our own John Bush of Gollancz, the list is endless. And the next day the convention.

Well, for one thing, it was in the world's worst hotel. So help me, this dive was worse than the The King's Truss, or whatever the name was of that evil dive in London where the worldcon was held in 1957. Americans do everything in a big way, even being bad. We were overcharged, served watered overpriced drinks, watched black beetles amble across the jakes floor, waited hours for food (Ellison threw an inedible roll against the wall in mild protest, while across the room DelRey was hurling a salad the length of the room, it was that kind of service), discovered that all the elevators went down, none up, and I counted and it was true: there must have been a great pit in the basement full of broken lifts and a crew of busy chaps on

the roof constructing new ones, and to crown the insult we found we were sharing convention space with L.Ron Hubbard's scientology nuts. The American Assyrian Foundation was also meeting, but they were harmless except late at night when they came down like a wolf on the fold with wild drinking parties.

Aside from the quality of the hotel it was a good con, though too big. 1,200 people there or some such figure, and the programme was even duller than usual. I don't know whom to blame, though Ted White as chairman must shoulder some guilt. Everyone was there, and there could have been whizz-bang speeches, debates, arguments, but boredom ruled instead. Most of the people who made it to the platform were stuck in silly formats and could not do their best. But I suppose this always has to happen. Not that there weren't high points. The costumes were real like crazy and there were a number of lightly clad wenches with fine figures that kept the old orgone radiating. This was also true of the Galaxy Fashion Show where some equally fine figures sported almost nonexistent costumes. Galaxy did very well by the entire affair. They had a suite where booze flowed like water for four days and nights. Publisher Bob Guinn started it all going the first night, then left Fred and Carol Pohl in charge. When they weren't there my favorite editress, Judy-Lynn Benjamin, played hostess.

You're not going to get one of those play-by-play con reports from me. You've probably read enough of them by now and besides, it has all become sort of hazy for a number of good reasons. High points emerge, though. I enjoyed meeting Harry Stubbs (Hal Clement) who ruled on high about that navigation problem, the one for DEATHWORLD III. It appears that he had worked it out years ago so had the answer ready. (If you want it simply, on a planet with no axial tilt the sun has to rise due east and set due west anywhere on the planet, with the exception of the poles where it just whips around the horizon forever.)

This was my first worldcon in the US in about 14 or 16 years, so there were a lot of people I had never met before. Keith Laumer for one, who is very much like you think he would be. I recall crawling out of one of those terrible lifts at 11:45 AM one morning and meeting Keith all radiant and healthy. (He does not smoke, prefers not to drink.) There was I, fresh from bed and mouth like the bottom of the parrot's cage, and I invited him to join me for breakfast. "Thank you no, Harry," I quote, "I have already had my breakfast. In fact I am meeting ~~someone else~~ now for lunch." Healthy, clean-living sod.

Another high point was--- no, hell with that, there are still laws of libel. I'll tell you about it at the next con. Just don't cut tapes.

There was a banquet, of course, plastic chicken and patri-

fied potatoes, shrapnel green peas, you know the drill, which was marked by hours of terrible speeches. I came close to a Hugo, actually fondled the thing, since I accepted one for Jack Vance, who was not present. I had a green beret infantryman at my table, nice guy though proud of his strength, and I did my bit for disunity by showing him a statement protesting the US involvement in Viet Nam that had been signed by every SF writer. My publisher, Sol Cohen, sat by me, meeting the great and the near great. (If you have not heard I am now editing AMAZING and FANTASTIC, and I need good stories. If you have any send them to me at Box 1058, Imperial Beach, Calif. 92032 USA. Return postage please, but it can be some of those quaint stamps with H.R.H. in profile. I have secret uses for unused British stamps.) Bob Sheckley and lovely wife Ziva also sat at the table (I hate to keep lauding the wives this way, but some of these SF types have married some smashing broads.) You lucky Britons, Bob and Ziva are now on the way to London for what they hope will be a protracted stay.

Enough of this name dropping. It was a lousy program, a terrible hotel and a great con. All cons are great cons. I keep going. It is becoming a secret vice.

Speaking of name dropping, I hear by my secret grapevine that old Archie Mercer is miffed at me. He finds fault with my LETTER and my con report. If he were here I would poke him, friendly like, in his meatpie filled middle, and make a rude remark. Since this is to appear in public print I will say only Archie, where is your sense of reciprocity? I have suffered through name-filled, ennui-producing reports of yours for ages, and never a complaint you heard from my lips. Read my lists of dropped names, Archie old man, and try to enjoy. You have no other choice. So-- let us rest it at that, then, until next issue.

Harry Harrison.

THE CENTRAL CONTRIBUTORS' POOL

The Pool exists to help editors find contributions, and to help writers and artists place their work.

Editors seeking assistance should write to the relevant section, enclosing 1/- to cover postage and envelopes, and stating requirements. In the case of artwork, size required (and, if applicable, subject matter) should also be stated.

Contributions to either section will be gratefully received; contributors receive a free copy of the fanzine in which their work was used.

STORIES and ARTICLES: Tom Jones } for addresses
ARTWORK, POETRY and anything else: Mary Reed) see BSFA list.

BIOENGINEERING

Roje Gilbert

If stories frequently employ the concept of bioengineering, the science of altering the genetic constitution of an animal to produce something that is intelligent or adapted to a particular environment or job. The idea is an attractive one, and there are many applications which would benefit one in this world. Say, a semi-intelligent dog that could walk upright and do the housework while the humans are out, Or small elephants to act as transport. (By small, I mean about the size of a minicar. They would be cheaper to run, self reproducing, and a damn sight faster than cars in our cities.) Or perhaps some sort of amoeba that could be injected into the blood and would kill all bacteria and viruses, and would ingest cancer cells before they destroyed the victim. Or perhaps a semi-intelligent cheetah for work with the police, the cheetah because of its high turn of speed in emergencies.

There are many possibilities apparent in the field of non-nuclear war, and I am thinking at the moment of VietNam. The warfare there is mainly in the jungle, so what better thing to use than something adapted to a jungle life? Heavily plated and semi-intelligent Rhinoceroses could be used for blasting a way through thick vegetation, varicus types of big cats, again intelligent enough to tell the difference between an American and a VietCong, to stalk small parties of insurgents. The advantage of this is that death would strike the enemy silently and not give warning to nearby groups. Or perhaps sentient birds to spy on enemy emplacements. Well, I need not go further. The possibilities are immense, to put it mildly.

However attractive the idea seems, its actual accomplishment is quite another matter, and in my opinion will be impossible for a very long time to come. Some bioengineering occurs at present, but it is a hit and miss affair. Breeding experiments to produce monstrosities like poodles and curly-coated cats are one method, and induced mutation is the other. There is a bacterium known as Escherichia coli, abbreviated for pronunciation reasons to E coli, which figures in most experiments of this kind. This creature suffers from attacks by a virus known as the R2 phage. If a culture of E coli is coated with R2, plaques, or rings of dead bacteria, soon appear. Every now and again, individual E coli resist the R2 and survive. Most of their progeny inherit this resistance. If a culture is irradiated with a reasonably "soft" radiation, it often happens that more

of the E coli are resistant to the R2 than in an unirradiated culture. A sort of bioengineering has been accomplished. Mutants are also produced that lack the ability to make certain essential growth substances, and by using these it is possible to ascertain the dietary minimum for E coli and other bacteria.

Moving up the scale to animals, the information needed to describe the form of any particular animal is coded in the form of strings of purine and pyrimidine bases in the chromosomes, threadlike bodies that reside in the nucleus of cells. The chromosome is divided into a number of sections, called genes. Genes determine one character only or one facet of a character (this is an extreme simplification of the actual state of affairs but these ideas will be sufficient for my purpose). By many, many breeding experiments, it is possible to determine the position of these genes on the chromosome. Various biochemical experiments have also shown that genes make proteins and that proteins are divided into subunits called amino acids. Three purine and/or pyrimidine bases are all that are necessary to code for one amino acid. So the sequence of the bases determines the order of the different amino acids in the protein that the gene makes.

Please note:- all this is occurring on the molecular level. We know some of the codons (sequences of three bases needed to code an amino acid) but we would need to know the complete sequence of amino acids in any particular protein to discover the sequence of bases in the gene producing that protein. And proteins more often than not have hundreds of amino acids in them. Science is wonderful, but it takes almost a lifetime of research and infinite patience to work out the primary structure (the sequence of amino acids) of a single protein. A further complication is that proteins are folded into very wiggly forms before they become active, and their mode of action is only incompletely understood. Also, proteins differ from species to species. The haemoglobin of a rat has a slightly different primary structure to that of a human being, although its mode of action is essentially similar.

To accomplish bioengineering on the scale described in my first paragraphs, we would first have to work out the structure of every protein in every animal, then the genetic constitution of every animal, then know why a protein acts in the way it does (this means knowing the secondary and tertiary structure as well, i.e. the way the protein is folded), and finally invent a means of altering genes (consisting of a single string of molecules) to make the proteins we need to construct the animal we want. To give you an idea of the stage we have got to. The primary structure of only about twenty proteins has been elucidated, and that since 1945, when Sanger discovered the primary structure of insulin. The secondary and tertiary structures have been worked out for even fewer, and then the primary

structure is not known. The sequence of codons on a gene has not yet even been attempted. More is known about the E coli killing gene of R2 than any other gene; no-one knows what protein it makes.

I've left out very many aspects of this, including differentiation of cells, the mode of action of proteins, and dozens of technical details, but this should give you an idea of the immense implications in the idea of bioengineering. Personally, I don't think it will ever happen, and besides, it has already been done. When life began on this earth, the first living object must have been a chromosome that could reproduce itself. Its progeny "learnt" to make proteins to cover itself and support itself. Whether you believe in God or not, you'll admit that that was quite some feat.

FORECASTING THE FUTURE
Science Journal Oct. 1967

This was a disappointing five bob's worth after the editor's talk of new scientific ways of guessing the future. It appears that we still have to rely on clear thinking and the opinions of experts. Apparently it is not the done thing to let the experts consult each other, though one of the articles does mention the surprising fact that better results are obtained if each expert is allowed to see what the others have written.

However, many of the Forecasts are interesting, and an account of some of them may appear in a future issue of Vector. A rather freer look at the

FORECASTING THE FUTURE
of Vector

future will be contained in the next issue of Vector, which will have a section on automation; also vaguely in the air are critical articles on various authors and another look at hyper-space and relativity. We hope to maintain a good balance between criticism, science and speculation, but we depend on you to send us the articles.

and from forecasts
to SPECULATION

Pete Weston's SPECULATION, one of the bigger names in the world of sf criticism, has been nothing more than a name since

Easter. However, Speculation-16 will soon be published, and will consist of a full report on the 1967 Convention, including the texts of the speeches given by Michael Moorcock and John Brunner and a transcript of the discussion between the authors on the professionals' panel; also an editor's eye view of the "less formal" part of the weekend, and a review of Ed Emshwiller's film Relativity (not related to Einstein's idea of the same name).
2s 6d, from P.R.Weston, 81 Trescott Rd., Northfield, Birmingham 31.

CORRIGENDA

The opinions and attitudes....The title page disclaimer should, of course, have included the editor. Oh, yes. Definitely. And the editor is definitely grateful for the help and advice he got from Vic Hallett, Mary Reed and Archie Mercer. Finally, the heading on p.25 should be regarded as artistic licence, as hypocoristic or hyperbolic, hypochondriac or megalomaniac (delete to taste). We are not the BSFA Ltd.; a company limited by guarantee is not, it seems, a Co. Ltd.

THE
V I S U A L
S I D E

SF SEASON AT THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

Michael R.J. Kenward

The British Film Institute is showing a season of science fiction films at the National Film Theatre, Waterloo Bridge, in November and December. The films to be shown are:-

<u>film and year of prod.ⁿ</u>	<u>director</u>	<u>date & time</u>
		Nov.
Fantastic Voyage(1966)	Richard Fleischer	7 6.15 8.30
Things To Come(1936)	W.C.Menzies	10 6.15 8.30
Alphaville(1966)	Jean-Luc Godard	11 8.30
Fail Safe(1964)	Sidney Lumet	12 4.00 8.30
Seconds (1966)	John Frankenheimer	12 6.15
Lord of the Flies (1963)	Peter Brook	18 4.0 6.15 8.30
It Came from Outer Space(1953)	Jack Arnold	19 4.0 6.15 8.30
Panic in Year Zero(1963)		} Dec.
The War Game(1966)	Peter Watkins	7 6.15 8.45
Seven Days in May(1963)	John Frankenheimer	5 6.15 8.30
The Haunted Palac ³ (1963)	Roger Corman	6 6.15 8.30
The Damned(1961)	Joseph Losey	8 6.15 8.30
The Prehistoric Sound(1965)	Jose Nieves-Conde	9 4.0; Dec.10, 8.30
The Thing from Another World(1951)	Christian Nyby	} 9 6.15
La Jetee	Chris Marker	
Forbidden Planet(1955)	Fred Wilcox	9 8.30; Dec.10, 4.0
Death Takes a Holiday(1933)	Mitchell Leisen	10, 11 6.15
The Man with the X-ray Eyes(1963)	Roger Corman	11 8.30
This Island Earth(1955)	Joseph Newman	12 6.15 8.30
Invasion(1966)	Alan Bridges	13 6.15 8.30
The Incredible Shrinking Man(1956)	Jack Arnold	14 6.15; Dec.16, 4.0
Voyage to the End of the Universe(1962)	Jindrich Polak	14 8.30; Dec.15, 6.15
The Day the Earth Stood Still(1951)	Robert Wise	15 8.30; Dec.16, 6.15
Un Amour de Poche(1957)	Pierre Kast	16 8.30; Dec.17, 4.0
Robinson Crusoe on Jars(1964)	Byron Haskin	17 6.15 8.30

This programme contains a varied range of both sf and cinema, with such well-known directors as Joseph Losey (The Servant and Accident), John Frankenheimer (Grand Prix) and Robert Wise (West Side Story and The Sound of Music), and stories from writers such as John W. Campbell (The Thing from Another World), Raymond F. Jones (This Island Earth) and H.G. Wells (Things To Come).

It is also worth noting that in November Alphaville is being screened as part of a season of the films of Godard. This most certainly is sf, despite the remarks of John Brunner in NEW WORLDS 165. Also being shown, as a short with The Thing from Another World, is Chris Marker's La Jetee (raved about by Ballard in NW 164).

Details of membership of the British Film Institute can be obtained from:

The British Film Institute,
Membership Department,
162 Dean Street,
London, W.1.

It is well worth obtaining associate membership (about 10s 6d) just to be able to see these films. As a bonus there is a forum on Science Fiction on the afternoon of December 16th.

THE REST OF THE NEWS

Vic Hallett

Quatermass and the Pit, starring Andrew Keir as Quatermass, also James Donald, Julian Glover and Barbara Shelley, is now on release. Directed by Roy Baker and scripted by Nigel Kneale, it follows very closely the original television script, but it is now in wide screen and colour.

FANZINE RECEIVED

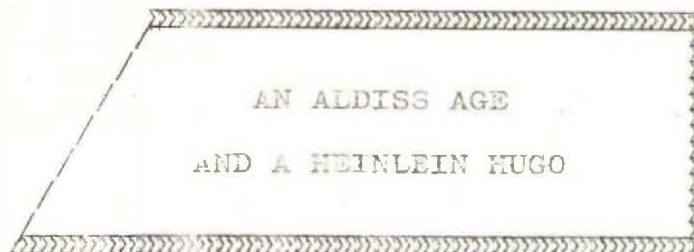
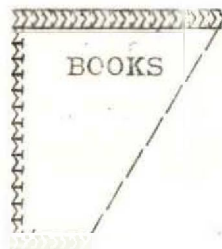
Phile No. 4 29pp., duplicated well but a little heavily on very good quality paper. Contains an editorial on (what else?) NEW WORLDS; articles on UFOs, immigration, and professional cartoon-drawing by Graham Charnock, Beryl Mercer and Dick Howett respectively; fiction by John and Bill Odds; and a long correspondence column discussing such topics as non-linearity and when Harry Warner has ever been nasty. Available on "the usual fannish terms", whatever that means, from Graham Charnock, 2 Walsingham Mansions, Fulham Road, London S.W.6, who produces it.

FANLINE not RECEIVED: Speculation no.16. See p. 17.

SOME ISOLATED MAIL RESPONSE

From Joe Bowman, Balnace, Ardgay, Rosshire:

Phil Muldowney states that NEW WORLDS is being fitted to the modern age. But it used to look to the future, not the present. It is not an ultra-modern "with it" sf mag. It is a doddering old man staggering along leaning on the shoulders of his devotees who are purely supporting him out of an old affection. I remember him in his hey-days, the early 1950's, when he jogged along at a great pace. It is already proving that sf written for the select few, making sense out of nonsense, doing for sf what Picasso did for painting, doesn't pay. What we need is a new British sf magazine, with real stories, good illustrations and a far wider appeal.



AN AGE by Brian W. Aldiss
Faber, 21s. 224pp.

Reviewed by
Richard Poole

Edward Bush: star minder, artist/painter, haunted by the Dark Woman, obsessed by time. On the barren sands of the Devonian Era he wins Ann from Lenny, leader of the weird bike-riding tershers. In the Jurassic he finds his art outdated by Borrow, loses Ann, is attacked by Stein: he returns to the present.

His mother, the central figure in his existence, is dead: he wrecks his studio in a fit of anguish; the cherry-trees in the garden are mere stumps of remembered beauty. The rest of the novel is the story of Bush's greatest act of creation, his self-elevation to psychopomp: the creation of a world in which he can live, of an egocentric womb-oriented reality.

It hinges on Bush's main character (for Bush is now the novelist): Professor Silverstone, who has the magic to reverse the flow of time. The theory of reversed time is Aldiss's greatest triumph in the tale; his prose reaches poetic heights as the words flow on like a healing river of life:

"Shortly after the beginning of the year, the dead leaves stir, turn gold, rise from the ground in shoals, and coat the beech trees; the beeches then turn them green and by the eighth month suck them back into themselves in the form of buds..."

One almost feels that Aldiss wrote the novel so he could recreate creation!

And destroy it again, for the universe is a thing that moulds itself to the whim of his pen. In it there is melodrama, comedy, horror and sympathy; something of philosophy, something of poetry.

But most of all two worlds. The transfiguring anticlockwise movement of the one of Bush's neurosis, where humanity dies into existence - and the heavy clockwise round of the other, where Bush is a patient in a Mental Institution, pathetically awaiting liberation. Which he prefers the reader

Which he prefers the reader must decide for himself. Which is the more real he may not decide - for who can truly say that he can put his finger on the pulse of actuality?

THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS by R.A. Heinlein
(Hugo Award winner, 1967)
Dobson, 25s. 383 pp.

Reviewed by
Phil Kuldowney

A new Heinlein novel. An occurrence, a happening, a time for critical wailing and gnashing of teeth. Or perhaps just an anti-climax.

The scene: Luna a hundred years hence, an open penal colony ruled by the benign Authority manifest in the warden and police. They are quite content to leave the "loonies" alone as long as the grain shipments are not interfered with, and there is not too much political agitation. Luna is a strange and unusual society of three million people who grumble at Authority, but take no action until the hero comes along.

Manuel Garcia O'Kelly, computer man and jack-of-all-trades, is matey with Mike the sentient computer, who is lonely and enjoys talking to people... The sceptical and somewhat reluctant revolutionary Manuel gets involved with the fiery blonde Wyoming Knott and the gentle old anarchist Professor Bernardo de la Paz. After learning that if their present situation continues the Luna community will die, the three, together with Mike, plan a revolution. The novel tells the story of the revolution and the consequent dealings, military and political, with Earth.

Story time over, now for the hatchets. Heinlein is an old pro; this makes the major flaw in the book all the more evident. It is just too LONG. The book cries out for the editorial blue pencil. The ideas and most of the writing are of the standard that we have come to expect from Heinlein, but the plot just does not support this length of story. From a fast paced and exciting start, it slows down to a crawl; the characters fade into the background, and one is left with a dissertation on "how to organise a revolution." The book could do with a cut of a hundred pages and a tightening up of the pace and plot.

That is the major criticism; there are others. I am no expert on computers, but even to my non-scientific mind the treatment that Heinlein gives to the practicability of a sentient computer seems very sketchy indeed. At the start friend Manuel poses some questions (What is a soul? etc.) but that is about all. The blurb promises "fascinating computer lore"; well, I searched diligently but I could find much. The hero is the typical Heinlein one, the man of action, with some grey matter, but not interested in politics and with a little contempt for the intellectual. Stereotyped perhaps, but nevertheless attractive.

The sort of hero the reader can identify with. Professor Bernardo de la Paz is another type of character Heinlein is fond of, the old father figure, and in this case one again feels that he is a mouthpiece for Heinlein's political views. Yet he is the best, the most fully developed character, one of Heinlein's most memorable. Can a computer have a character? Well this one does. Whether it is relevant is a debatable point.

Reading this book one can perhaps understand some of the irritation that the new school of sf writers has with Heinlein. Though his scientific, political and sociological ideas have developed over the years, his style, the slang, the humour, the narrative technique etc. have changed very little since the early forties. One could almost be reading Gulf again.

But though one can grumble at Heinlein's style, it is entertaining, it carries you along with it. In the parts of the book where the plot is not bogged down by revolutionary lore, it is as exciting and as fast paced as any Heinlein story. Its best feature is the description of a completely different society. The effects that too few women and easy death have on a society; polyandry, the fascinating clan marriages, the different morals. And despite its flaws, the sheer entertainment of a computer with a personality.

The Heinlein fans will lap it up. It is not so blatantly unusual as his past few books, e.g. while his political views intrude, they are put better and do not have the polemic flavour that marred Stranger in a Strange Land and Farnham's Freehold. All in all it is an average book that could have been far better.

BABEL-17 by Samuel R. Delany
(Joint Nebula Award winner, 1966)
Gollancz, 21s. 192pp.

Reviewed by
Richard Poole

Copper-eyed Rydra Wong - poet, linguist, muscle-reader - is given the task of breaking Babel-17, an exact language that coincides with successful sabotage against the Alliance. She isn't content with translation - she wants to know "who, or what, in the Universe thinks that way".

The story rips successively through the technicolour world where Rydra picks her crew, Brass defeats the Silver Dragon, and cosmetisurgery transforms men into living jewels; the Alliance War Yards, where Baron Ver Dorco shows Rydra the weapons of the future and is killed at a sumptuous feast by a superman of his own making; Jebel Tarik, the shadow-ship where Rydra meets the enigmatic Butcher, criminal/murderer-key to the meaning of Babel-17; and Alliance HQ, where all is at last revealed.

Delany is most spectacular in the midst of action: verbal pyrotechnics leap out of the page at the reader, sometimes stunning a little more than they ought; ideas crackle around

and crowd him like bursts of sub-machinegun fire. Babel-17 has not quite the control of 1965 Nebula winner Dune.

As a linguistic/philosophical problem, Babel-17 promises much, ends a little disappointingly. Thinking on it on Jebel Tarik, Rydra is "suddenly seeing the water at the bottom of a well that a moment ago you thought had only gone down a few feet". But its clarity, we discover, is due really to its simplicity: it cannot deal with the complexity of paradox, a human mind restricted to it would burn out or break down. Its final "correction" is a plot fact, unexplained. How does one "correct" a computer language to be more than a human one? Mr. Delany doesn't say.

It's on the level of fast adventure that the novel wins out, compelling the reader's attention all the way. The author, one feels, is capable of very good things.

THE RUNAWAY ROBOT by Lester del Rey
Gollancz, 15s. 176pp.

Reviewed by
Bryn Portey

If you are looking for deep and hidden meanings, or "new wave" investigations of reality, don't waste your time. They are not to be found here. If, on the other hand, you fancy a well-written but unpretentious adventure yarn told in a rather gentle fashion, then The Runaway Robot is for you.

I am able to enjoy both types myself, and this is a very good novel of its kind. Rex, the runaway robot itself, tells the story first person. By and large del Rey is successful though Rex does seem a bit too human at times. But there, Rex is no ordinary robot!

The plot line follows time-honoured pathways. Boy loses robot - boy finds robot - boy loses robot - boy finds robot - fade out to happy ending. Or is it robot finding and losing boy? No matter, it is all good clean fun and guaranteed not to offend. Neither will it need any undue effort on the part of the reader. The story line is fairly predictable, and takes no devious twists or turns.

The characterisation is competent. I found myself quite liking Rex, and his young owner, Paul, comes over well. The gimmick of having the robot tell the story lifts this novel a little above the general run of the mill publication.

If you are looking for a pleasant couple of hours of easy reading, then The Runaway Robot is recommended.

SPACESHIP TO SATURN by Hugh Walters
Faber, 16s. 160pp.

Reviewed by
D.G. Bishop

This book concerns the first manned space flight to Saturn

THE BSFA LTD.

YOUR SECRETARY REPORTS...

On the 24th day of October 1967 the unincorporated body known as The British Science Fiction Association was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Such a company issues no shares.

I do not intend at this stage to go into details of the decisions taken; these will be contained in my report to be given at the Annual General Meeting. I will just go briefly into the more important aspects of the change as it affects you now.

First let me introduce you to the members of the Management Council:

Bruce Montgomery (Edmund Crispin): Chairman
Brian W. Aldiss
Tom Boardman
Ted Tubb
Ken Bulmer
Dan Morgan
Ken Slater: Vice-Chairman
David Barber: Treasurer
Tony Sudbery: Publications Officer
Phil Rogers: Parliamentarian
J. Michael Rosenblum
S. Rix Dalton
Archie Mercer
Keith Bridges
and Yours truly: Company Secretary

Obviously the above fifteen members are not going to be involved in the day-to-day running of the BSFA; it would be far too unwieldy. But certain members of the Management Council are expressly the working committee, and the other members will hold a watching brief and ensure some of the continuity which has been so sadly lacking in the past.

The considerations which affected the decision to form the Company were as follows:-

Disadvantages:

1. An initial expenditure of about £40.
2. An annual expenditure of £3.
3. Certain restrictions on the resolutions that can be passed without notice.

Advantages:

1. Legal existence.
2. Continuity of existence.
3. An improved and unambiguous Constitution framed with the assistance of experts in Company Law (not, I hasten to add, me; I took advice!)
4. Financial security for Committee Members, who were previously personally liable.
5. Ownership rights for the BSFA; previously BSFA property belonged, in law, to the Committee.
6. Protection of the membership by independent financial checking by an Auditor - or in case of extremity by the Board of Trade.

We appreciate that some members of the unincorporated Association may not wish to be members of the Company. Keith Otter (the Accountant) and myself reflected on this, and the position is that you do not have to become a member of the Company until your membership expires. Upon renewal, however, all members will have to sign a guarantee form stating (inter alia) that in the event of the BSFA being wound up they may be called upon to pay a sum of not more than £1. This is the maximum payment which will be called in if certain circumstances arise. The guarantee is in force for a further twelve months after you resign or let your membership lapse.

Membership fees have been adjusted and all fees are now £1 10s. 0d p.a. plus 5s. d for entrance if you are a new or lapsed member. Every member has one vote. If you cannot attend an A.G.M. you can appoint a proxy to vote for you, but the proxy must be a member of the Company. You cannot send your bank manager or Accountant to vote for you unless he is already a BSFA member! This means that all motions will again be voted on at the A.G.M. and you can vote for or against even if you are not present. The proxy must follow a specific form, and you must inform me at least forty-eight hours before the meeting that you have appointed a proxy to vote on your behalf. You can give a general power to your proxy to vote as he sees fit, or a specific power to vote for or against particular motions. Council Members can hold your proxy if you so wish, so that if you are a "sleeping member" of the Association and never attend Conventions, Phil Rogers will hold your proxy if you wish.

The position with regard to Overseas members is that they must appoint an address in Great Britain to which all Notices may be sent. This is the law; in fact I will send you Notices direct, but these of course will go by sea mail, which may put them out of time if you wish to vote. If you appoint an address, you can come to some financial arrangement whereby Notices can be sent to you by air mail. Subject to this, Phil and I are prepared to accept Notices on behalf of Overseas members.

At each A.G.M. one third of the Council have to retire and be re-elected if they wish to continue. Of course, others

can be nominated to contest any seat. I will give details in the next issue of the first five retiring; all I can say at this stage is that I shall be one of them and I am willing to stand again.

In due course copies of the Memorandum and Articles of Association will be available on request. There will be a small fee payable (1s 0d), and I will let you know when they are ready. I will warn you now that these consist of some sixteen pages, but once you get used to the phraseology they can be quite easy to interpret.

To me, one of the biggest advantages of the incorporation of the Association is that the A.G.M. must be run strictly in accordance with the agenda, which has to be circulated at least twenty-one clear days before the date fixed for the Meeting. This means that the fiascos of previous years' A.G.M.s can never be repeated; this, together with the fact that the A.G.M. now has the power to make decisions, makes me feel that real progress can be made.

I do not consider that forming the Company has solved all our problems; we shall always have the problem of inefficient and gaffiating committee members, but at least under the new set-up these members can be removed from the Management Council and new ones appointed in their place. Also the large number on the Management Council does ensure that at least one member will say "Well, what's going on?" when nothing has happened for some time. It is a safeguard against the Association sinking without trace, as has so nearly happened in the past.

Please let me know whether you have any queries; if there are many, I propose to run a question and answer column in the next edition of Vector.

To end on a personal note, many of you know that the work in the Secretarial Department has increased enormously since I first took over and also that my health has been indifferent in the last two years. In order that the BSFA should not suffer I decided that it was imperative that I have an assistant. I was fortunate enough to obtain the services of Beryl Mercer, and we are splitting the work between us. Beryl will handle all enquiries from new members and ordinary queries from current members which do not require committee reference. I will handle the Company Secretaryship and continue to act as liaison between the Committee and the ordinary membership. This, I think, will create a happy marriage, for, as many of you will also know, I am not a true "fan" in the sense of a member of fandom, i.e. I do not write or contribute to fanzines, etc. and I am not a member of a fan group; whereas Beryl knows precisely what is happening not only in Great Britain but also on the Continent and in the States. I am indeed most grateful for her help.

Doreen Parker.

THE MAIL
RESPONSE

From Mr. Mark G. Cotfield Rd., Badminton, Bristol :-

The cover of V. 11, such other examples of Dave Busby
articles as we read, definitely like rather than otherwise.

The editorial seems to be trying to make the best of all
possible worlds. While this is probably entirely correct, and
it is, of course, obvious, still requires making - particularly in the
presence of those who have the awesome power of selecting what
is to be professionally published.

"Symphony No. 5" is certainly a stimulating idea - breath-
takingly so in fact. It loses, I think, by being presented as
the main theme of a piece of short fiction which thus lacks any
particular "storyline". I think it would be ideal as background,
rather than foreground, material in a novel.

This was, in fact, an extract from a novella. ^{Thank you, Archie;}

"The Harrison Letter" still exists, seemingly, mainly to
drop names. Very occasionally the Name is that of a well-known
person (Blink, Seithers) rather than that of a thorough-going
professional. Apart from the thickly-broadcast nomenclature -
sorry, nomenclature - though, nothing much in particular is
actually said. I would suggest that the column be run in tabular
form - a column for Names, one for brief remarks by those Named,
one for brief remarks about same, and a final one for brief
remarks about the columnist himself. ^{Who makes the last remarks.}

The whole has a neater appearance than did No. 45.

From Mr. Parker, 32 Millfield Rd., Deeping St. James, Peterborough:

Members should know that with the exception of Treasurer
and Secretary can be Committee Members (not now of course, because
the Public Relief Act affects Company Law). I thought Richard
Dale's comment about Davy was the main reason I printed Dan's
review in the first place! It certainly did liven up the pages of V.

From Peter Mason, 4 Taunton Rd., Swanage, Dorset:

The last Harrison letter was just too much to let go by
without any sort of comment. Admittedly it was a good letter,
easy to read and not requiring too much thought to understand it.
But there was not enough information on exactly what was discussed
at the convention and just too many names dropped. In fact the
whole affair sounded like a drunken orgy (I won't discount the
possibility that that is what it was), but not being a congoer

I wouldn't know how the cons work once they get going.

He gives me the impression that any waiter would just hate to have him on his station.

A comment on the Winged Men, reviewed by Tom Jones: There are two kinds of nuclear submarines and they are firstly the Polaris type and secondly the hunter killer type which carry only torpedoes. Their main job in times of war is to hunt down enemy shipping and sink it.

From Phyllis Eisenstein, 5521 Erdorf, Kalkstrasse 19, W.Germany:

The issue of WORLDS OF IF that you reviewed in V46 could not possibly have been the August 1967 issue.

[The issues of both GALAXY and IF that Phil reviewed were the British editions.]

From E.J.Eldridge, 26 St. Mary's Sq., Gloucester:

I must protest when the writings of E.R.Burroughs are held as good sf [in the editorial of V46]. Surely this is "space opera" of the very worst kind. His so-called sf stories portray a Tarzan-like figure, with all the trimmings (beautiful Princess etc.) thrust into a "Martian" setting with hardly any pretence at plausibility at all. Encourage tolerance by all means; but please, let us hear no more of this type of story.

From Gregory Pickersgill, "The Pines", Haylett Lane, Merlins Bridge, Haverfordwest, Pems:

I am surprised that the new NEW WORLDS has got such a reception as is evident from Phil Muldowney's review. I found that No. 173 was the greatest load of rubbish ever put on paper. But where your reviewer seems to think the magazine is deteriorating, I and all the others who have read the magazine locally think that with each issue it has got astronomically better.

The only thing which will really spoil it for me now is the continued printing of Ballard's rubbish and any like efforts.

From Chas Legg, 444 Hermitage Rd., Haringay, London, N.4:

Man, that Ballard sure does nothing to satiate my intellect. Still, I would agree that there is a need for authors like that. What does surprise me somewhat is the fact that sf has become so caught up in itself that it doesn't seem to realise that what may be a new technique to its own field is quite common in other fields. My room-mate picked up a copy of NEW WORLDS and commented "Oh, they've been writing like that for years."

[Really? Just who, lately, has been writing as badly as Ballard?]

Amongst his highly non-linear article Richard Foole has managed to sprinkle some highly pertinent facts, if not ones that are slightly axiomatic. Why should sf ever have any reason to restrict itself in subject matter anyway? [Why should sparrows not provide us with sausage?] Any subject is fair game to sf just the same as it is to all other forms of literature. [Like space travel is fair game to historical fiction?]

There is one unforgivable field where sf falls down badly, and that is in the range of human interactions. Not that there is no sf with good characterisations or such descriptions. But it seems that it is rare to find this quality linked with all that makes good sf as such. Which is a great pity.

I must come very much in on Phil's side when it comes to Mr. Ackerman's comments. I'm sure that Phil's dupering equipt. is not in the class of that of the editor of V44. I doubt whether Phil got as much aid in the actual mechanical production of the issue as the editor of the issue that is so highly praised.

Yet again, an innocuous fish. Alas that Charles Flatt has left the BSFA! A bit of healthy discussion and argument would, I think, help keep interest alive. [Which is my excuse for my rude interruptions. You ask for it, you get it.]

From Audrey Walton, 25 Yewdale Crescent, Coventry, Warks:

I would like to make some comments on the layout of V46 - white paper and black print are the best by far, but the coloured headings in a previous issue were most attractive, any chance of bringing them back? [Sorry, not a hope.] The front cover is very good, but would have gained by being enclosed in a frame; this would have given it definition and solidity and would have made it less like a fanzine but not so formal as some V's have been in the past. [I disagree, but what do other readers think?]

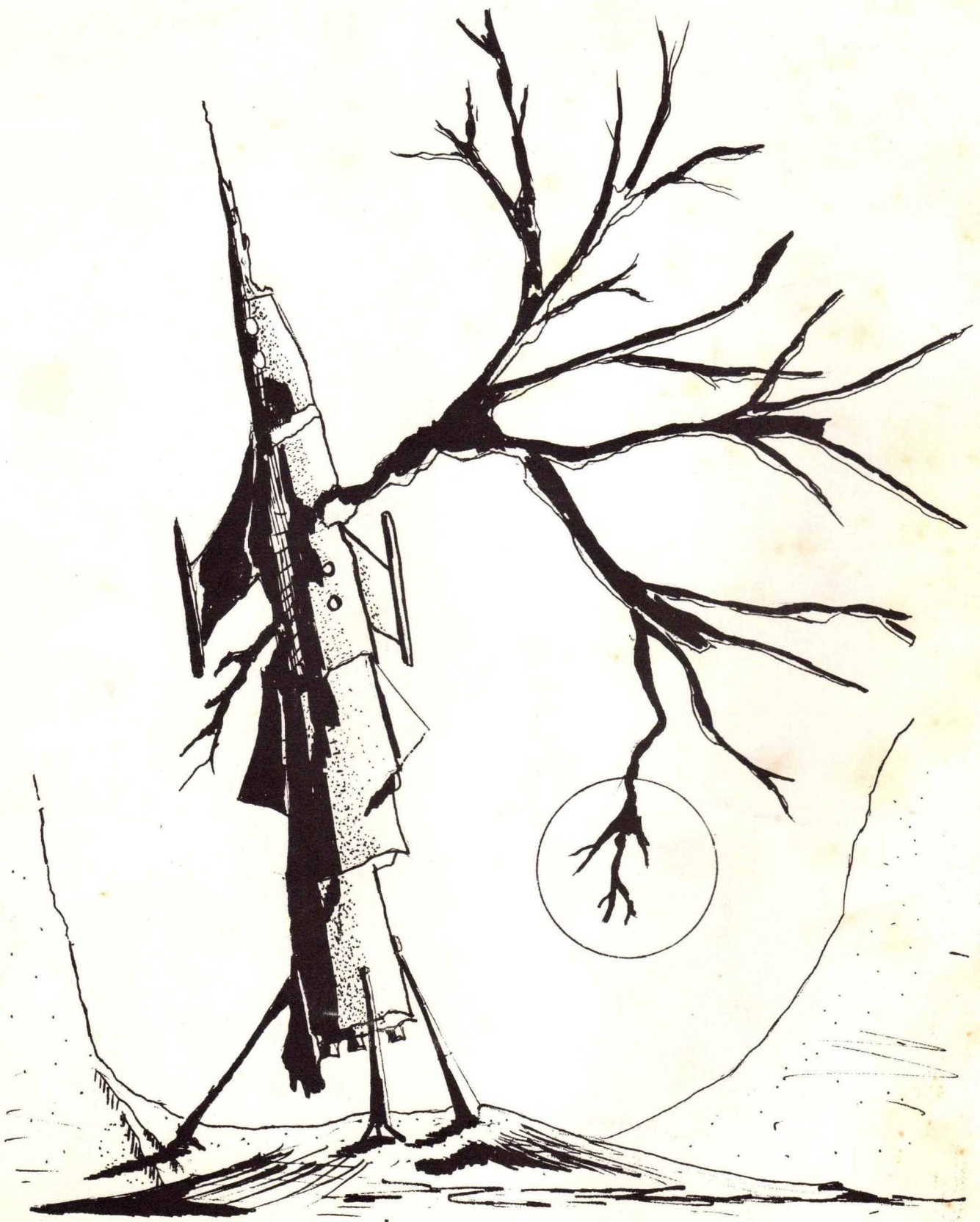
Phil Muldowney is so right, there is room for both old and new in sf. Sf may give off as many beautiful branches as it pleases, so long as they are grafted into the main existing body and do not try to kill off their host or exist on their own.

Chas Legg says that human beings are animals; my point is that we have no reason to accept this status any longer, our powers of reason give us the ability to be different. Many species of animals surviving today would, no doubt, be extinct by now if we had not kept them alive by artificial means of domestication and special protection. Future animals may never even see the light of day and I refuse to accept that my concern about this is hysterical. Nature may be cruel but man need not be unless he wishes to. Surely you believe that human beings do have a choice and can be almost anything they wish to be? Life does not shape us, we shape ourselves by our reactions to events.

There is another letter on p. 19.

Most of these letters have been mutilated and horribly disfigured by the editor. Letters of comment on this issue are eagerly invited and should arrive by December 10th. If you want your words not to be cut and shuffled, stipulate "all or nothing". Best of all, write concisely.

*****OTHER NOTES***** Mike Ashley's checklist of Otis Adelbert Kline, an impressive piece of scholarship, has had to be omitted for lack of space. Throughout this VECTOR, comments in brackets [like this] are by the editor, who initials himself, when he thinks of it, as AS. [Why not TS?] Sheer cussedness.



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