VECTOR 65

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Contents:
Lead-In
Gene Wolfe: An Interview 3
Lost Peoples 7
Pamela Sargent
The Fannish Inquisition 17
Peter Bukela
The Man Who Could Work Miracles 20
Brian W. Aldiss
The Infinity Box; Book Reviews 23
Malcolm Edwards
Christopher Priest
Malcolm Edwards 33
George Zebrowski
Ad Astra? 38
Bob Shaw
Notes on Contributors 41
Author's Choice 42
Roger Zelazny
The Mail Responses: Letters 47
B.S.F.A. News 54

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Copy deadline for VECTOR 66 is July 1st. This is a final deadline — please try to get the stuff to me earlier, fellas.
LEAD-IN

Having largely been typed beforehand, this issue is being completed in opposition to an insidious but strong feeling of post-convention lethargy. It is less than two days since we left Bristol, as I type this, and I'm not sure that it would be wise to attempt any sort of full convention report so soon after the event; at the moment the events of the three days are still jumbled and unsorted in my memory.

But it was, yes, a good Con. Up until late Saturday afternoon I was not at all sure it would be; everything seemed disjointed; the convention had not settled into any kind of pattern or rhythm (for me, at least). In my admittedly limited experience every convention has its own very distinct personality, but in each case the moment you really begin to enjoy yourself, though hard to pin down, comes when you stop feeling like a visitor and start feeling at home. If ONPAcon had a major fault it was in the way it began on Friday. The programme began too early, presumably in response to the increasing number of people who arrive on the Thursday evening. I think this was a bad misjudgment, and I hope future conventions should learn from it (are you listening, Ian?). I would think a 1 p.m. opening would be quite early enough (perhaps 4 p.m. when, as will happen next year, many attendees will be faced with very long journeys). We arrived at lunchtime, having come down on a train which didn't involve getting up too early and rushing; although we were there at what I expected to be the start, everything was apparently under way already. Another mistake was in not having any proper opening item. The programme drifted from some films straight into the opening panel. The net result of all this was a feeling of dislocation which persisted through much of the next day.

Oh well. That's enough of complaints. Once settled in I had a great time, which unfortunately seemed to flash by at about two hours per minute. I'd been looking forward to this convention for a long time, it being the first we'd been able to get to since the 1971 Newcon, and eventually I enjoyed it as much as I had anticipated doing, so that even Monday morning I was just ready for another week or so of convention. And I think Christine enjoyed it much more than she was really expecting to. The first vaguely familiar face I encountered was Newcastle fan Theo Pennan, who seemed to have grown up since I last saw him two years previously — but his initial impression soon proved wrong. Theo, who had surely sat some kind of record by issuing a long report on the 1972 Eastercon in the week before this one, had brought his water-pistol with him in order to give himself something to write about next year. Worse, he was not alone, having been accompanied by the well-known, sensitive, pre-adolescent poet Ritchie Smith. Anyway, I'm not going to go into that side of the convention very much, although it provided intermittent entertainment (i.e. when it was aimed at someone other than me) in any case, I preferred Pennan's (I think it was his) other strange device — a small pink object which did a marvellous cackling impersonation of John Pigott, right down to the battery you had to insert before it worked. No, I'll devote most of this to the more formal, or at least normal aspects of the weekend, because I wouldn't want to give any of you who may never have visited a convention the impression that it's somewhere where silly things happen. Gosh, no.

In the important area of making the Edwards family more famous, the Con was a reasonable success — in fact, a
striking one. We were sitting in the lounge on Saturday morning when I was approached by a reporter and photographer from the Bristol Evening Post. As it turned out, they didn't want to interview me on the Significance of Science Fiction in the Modern World and maybe put a photo on the front page — they were more interested in Christine, but instead of going through any of this modern nonsense about equality of the sexes they wanted to ask me if they could borrow her to take some photos in the Art Room. Once they had received my assent, they dragged her off without further ado. Apparently they were rather nonplussed when they asked her a few questions and discovered she didn't read science fiction. What was she doing there then? Christine explained to me, and Vector, and the B.S.F.A. Later that day we picked up a copy of the paper, which carried one of the photos, plus two articles — one done from an interview with Brian Aldiss, and one of the usual ho-ho of convention things ... "Time warps, interplanetary travel, monsters and invasions are likely to be among the casual chat at the Grand Hotel, Bristol, over the next few days ..." Part of the general article referred to "Mrs Christine Edwards, a publisher's wife from Harrow!" Well, I always believe what I read in the newspapers, so henceforth don't try referring to me as a librarian, or a fanning editor, or any of that stuff. I'm a publisher now — it's official.

For my own part, I was approached by Gerald Bishop on the Friday, asking if I'd mind being interviewed by Radio Bristol. About what?, I asked. Oh, just the B.S.F.A., you know, said he. I agreed, but nothing seemed to come of it so I'd put it out of my mind by mid-morning Saturday, and was just settling down with some extortionate (17p each) hotel coffee, when Gerald came and dragged me into another room (the plush lounge, where our science fiction layabouts weren't allowed) and left me with a friendly lady from Radio Bristol. We sat down, me all ready to give a few pithy comments about the B.S.F.A., and she turned on the tape-recorder. What exactly is a science fiction fan?, she asked. Zotzl, Gerbisch. Zotzl Worse still, after I'd stumbled through Everyman's Guide to Fandom in Three Easy Sentences, and staggered back to the lounge, my coffee was cold.

The formal programme was only intermittently interesting; there seemed to be too many panel discussions which were there solely because, what the hell, you gotta have panel discussions. The best of these I attended was that on time-travel on Saturday afternoon, with lightning attendees Phillip Strick in the chair and James Blish, Ken Bulmer and Bob Shaw on the panel. Even so, this was far from being a total success; too much of the hour was spent talking around different aspects of the subject without finding a really profitable area for discussion. This is a fault invariable in panel discussions unless they are both well-ordered (which this one was) and either rehearsed to some degree or very clearly defined and directed (which it wasn't). Nevertheless, many of the things which were said were very interesting, and I wished it had gone on longer.

Later on Saturday, Guest of Honour Chip Delany spoke, largely about the academic acceptance of SF. He spoke well, although not saying anything really new. One rather disturbing item came up in the ensuing discussion: there has been a lot of talk lately about holding more "fanzine" conventions, and this had given the impression to James Blish at least, that pros were not welcome at these gatherings. Not so, not so. All that's meant, I think, is more emphasis on talk and less on the formal programming at the conventions — much like many American regional conventions, I believe. I suppose I should mention the Fancy Dress Parade in the evening. Normally I dislike these events more than I can tell you, though some masochistic urge always drags me away from the bar to watch. However, on this occasion, proceedings were disrupted by a remarkable and entertaining robots' protest march, masterminded by Tony Walsh and the Liverpool group.

Sunday morning saw the B.S.F.A. A.G.M. (I have skated over the latter part of Saturday evening, because although in the that time I learned perhaps more than ever before about the real inside story of science fiction, I can hardly reprint any of that here!) Christine assured me that this was the
singles most entertaining item on the programme (although strictly speaking she shouldn't have been there). The minutes of the meeting should be going out with this factor, so you'll see from them what was resolved, and who was elected to the Council. I'd only been to one previous B.S.F.A. meeting, which was pretty chaotic; this time, however, with John Brunner in the chair and actually chairing the meeting, things were rather different. Still, one had to sympathise with poor Keith Freeman who couldn't finish a single sentence without being interrupted from a particularly vocal part of the audience which continually demanded elucidation on various points while denying Keith the chance to give it. One of the end results was that I was one of the three new members elected to the Council. Power! As I understand it, since the B.S.F.A. is a limited company, the Council counts as a Board of Directors of sorts. Which gave Keith the chance to deliver one of the best lines of the convention when he told me later that our Company Secretary, Graham Poole, wanted to see me because, as a new Council member, I had to list my other directorships.

Well, I never did see you Graham, so if you've got pencil and paper ready, I.C.I., Unilever, British Leyland ... After the A.G.M. I had to appear on Pete Weston's fan panel, along with Ian Williams, Peter Roberts, Jim Goddard, and of course the man himself. I forget what we were discussing, though I'm not sure we knew even then. "Be a bit extreme," Pete hissed to everyone before we began, no doubt realising that the five of us would probably be in substantial agreement on most things, despite his attempt to split us, both physically and philosophically, into two camps: the femnile fans (Ian and Peter Rabbit) and the gimlet-eyed screen fans (Jim and me). To anyone who's listening I'd like to make another complaint about the set-up of panels at conventions (like the Philip Strick panel above, this one I think had the virtue of being well-run and the defect of directionlessness); there are never enough microphones. Admittedly there ought to have been two between the five of us, but one was not working; nevertheless I think a convention ought to be able to get at least four together, so that people on these panes can speak when they have something to say rather than (as always happens at present) when the mike happens to perambulate in their direction. In this particular instance, I found that whenever the microphone was with Peter Roberts at the far end of the table I had something almost relevant to say, but by the time it had made its way across to me, comments made by the three between us had moved the discussion to an area where I felt I had very little to contribute. Was the same thing happening to the other panellists? Is it general in this kind of situation? If so, is it any wonder that however interesting they look on paper, panel discussions rarely generate anything really worthwhile. I know that if there were more microphones there would be the danger of everybody talking at once, but this might be preferable to the state of affairs when you can't talk when you want to.

Oddly enough, I suffered little or no fear before going on that panel, although the thought of having to appear in public always fills me with dread. Probably it was because I had been enjoying the B.S.F.A. meeting, which had overrun, with the result that I went more-or-less straight out of the meeting, into the Con hall, and onto the platform. It was different in the afternoon.

I suspect that the idea of a fun quiz show was Fred Hemmings' evil way of subjecting 16 innocent people to terrible public humiliation. There were four teams of four, representing different fan groups: one from Newcastle, one from Liverpool, one from Birmingham, and one from London. This last team, representing the Globe and the mythical entity known as Rai fandom, consisted of Bob Baldattock, Greg Pickering, Leroy Richard Arthur Teeth Kettle, and me. It would have been O.K. if it had been a simple quiz; but it wasn't — it was a 'Twenty Questions' sort of affair in which we had to guess the identity of obscure objects from sf and fandom, one team competing against another, and the two winners playing in the final. Fifteen minutes before we went on, there was a small, pathetic group clustered round one of the tables in the bar, united by sheer naked fear. Only John Brosnan, who was originally in the team but had dropped out, was happy. We had hoped that we'd be one of the
second pair, so we could get some idea by watching them in action. But no such luck: the first match was between Birmingham and us. It was terrible. We had no idea; God alone knows what the audience were thinking as the questioning went round and round without ever getting near the answer. But believe me, there's nothing more likely to make you feel really stupid than sitting in front of 100-150 people asking daft questions to try and find some answer they all know already (it having been written on a blackboard out of our sight). As it happens, we won both our games, more by luck than judgment, and became the first, and hopefully only recipients of the B.C. Wells' Mustache trophy. This was presented with due pomp and absurdity at the banquet on Sunday evening. I was sent to collect it, the others thinking it to be a box of chocolates. In fact, it turned out to be a bottle, but badly, though I made my exit on the other side of the room, Kettle caught me.

I didn't go to the banquet, of course; one can buy bad food at a quarter of the cost in a Wimpy bar, or reasonable food at about half the cost in any number of places, and furthermore it's served to you while it's still hot. The only disadvantage of missing the banquet is that not enough other people do it, leaving only a small dedicated bunch outside, waiting for the interminable affair to end so that they can go in and mock the speeches and the awards. A fair number of awards were made which I'll try to remember, though undoubtedly I'll win some. The Don Heir Award went to Ethel Lindsay. The Ken McIntyre Award for artwork went to a fantasy artist again — Dave Fletcher I think — despite competition from our very own Andrew Stephenson. The British Fantasy Society made a number of August Derleth Awards; some Robert E. Howard resurrection won one as best novel, and I forget the others (though I remember that another novel won the award for short fiction and a Conan comic won something). Ramsey Campbell won the special Pailing Over Award, for doing it best. There was no British SF Award, since insufficient votes were received. This is a sad state of affairs, but hopefully a proposal to reorganise the Award will be put to you all shortly. I'm not sure of the mechanism of this, but I believe it involves a final ballot listing maybe half a dozen novels, which will be distributed early enough to give people a chance to read them. You'll be getting details from another quarter, but just let me say, for God's sake support it — try to read the novels and vote next year!

Of course, a convention is no good unless you come away weighted down by a certain amount of printed matter which you didn't take with you. This year I managed not to buy a single book either in the auctions or in the Bookroom, but I nevertheless arrived home with a number of bits of paper, some of which deserve a mention here. One surprise was the eventual appearance of Foundation 3 (see the advert on p.30 of Vector 6d and shorties). It's a good issue though, with its 86 pages representing much better value for money than the previous two. The contents are better, as well. I have complained before that it was a (supposedly) academic journal which consisted mostly of fanzine material. This is no longer true. There are still a couple of fanzine pieces (by Van Vogt and James Tiptree, Jr.) but these show up as weakly in comparison with the other contents that I'm sure Peter Nicholls won't be letting this kind of stuff in much longer. With these exceptions the contents are interesting, varied, and go a long way towards achieving the journal's stated aim of providing good, serious, scholarly, but lively discussion of sf. Recommended. (You'll find the address in the news section.)

Another item of interest was Checkpoint 36, with the results of its 1972 Fan Poll. Peter Roberts' Egg was voted best fanzine, as last year. Vector came in 10th, which I suppose is an improvement on the 19th of last year but is nevertheless disappointing. I'm not arrogant enough to think of suggesting that it's the best British fanzine; but nevertheless I'm damn sure it's one of the best five. Matter matter. Anyway, Checkpoint, costing only 40p for 10 issues, is recommended. (Peter Roberts, 87 West Town Lane, Bristol, BS4 5DZ — he'll send you a free sample.)
Could you first of all tell us something about your background, how you came into writing, and why so?

I was born in Brooklyn, New York. This came home to me, to me who had always called myself a Texan and thought of myself as a Texan, when I read that Thomas Wolfe "warmed up" for writing by walking the night streets of Brooklyn. He was from the hill country of North West North Carolina and was my great, great grandfather — making us, at least presumptively, distant cousins. Hemingway sharpened twenty pencils and Willa Cather read a passage from her Bible, but Thomas Wolfe, bless him, swung his big body down Brooklyn streets and may have been thrashing out some weighty problem in Of Time and The River during the early hours of Thursday the 7th of May, 1931. I hope so. I like to think of him out there on the sidewalk worrying about Gene Cant and playing BWU.

At any rate I was born in that city at the southern tip of Long Island. My parents lived in New Jersey at the time, but they moved and moved. To Paoria, where I played with Rosemary Dietsch who lived next door, and her brothers Robert and Richard. To Massachusetts, where little Ruth McGann caught her hand in our car door. To Logan, Ohio, my father's home, where Boyd Wright and I got stung by the bumble bees that had nested in our woodshed. To Des Moines, where a redhead boy taught me chess while we were both in the second grade. Then to Dallas for a year, and at last to Houston, which became my home town, the place I was "from".

I want to Edgar Allen Poe elementary school, where we read "The Masque of the Red Death" in fifth grade and learned "The Raven" in the sixth. We lived in a small house with two very large bedrooms; the front room was my parents', the back one, with mint growing profusely beneath its windows, mine. I had no brothers or sisters, but I had a black and white spaniel named Boots, and I built models (mostly World War I planes, which still fascinated me) there and collected comics and Big-Little Books.

The thing I recall most vividly about Houston in the late thirties and early forties is the heat. Houston has almost precisely the climate of Calcutta, and until I was ready for High School there was no air conditioning except in theaters and the Sears Department Store. You went to the movies in the hottest part of the day to miss it; and when you came out the heat and sunlight were appalling. I remember my father wrapping his hand in his handkerchief so he could open the car door.

Our house stood alway between two mad scientists. Miller Porter, who lived in the big house behind us (his father was a brewing company executive), was my own age but much tougher and cleverer, and he built Tesla coils and similar electric marvels. Across the street a chemist for Humble Oil maintained a private laboratory in a room over his garage. If this was not
enough there was, only five sweltering blocks away, the Richmond Pharmacy, where a boy willing to crawl immobile behind the candy case could cram Planet Stories, or Thrilling Wonder Stories, or (my own favorite) Famous Fantastic Mysteries, while the druggist compounded prescriptions. Almost unnoticed the big, slow moving ceiling fans vanished from the Richmond Pharmacy and the barber shop. World War II was over and there was a room air conditioner in one of my bedroom windows and another in the dining room; Houston began to lose its mixed Spanish American and Southern character and I was in high school, where I showed no aptitude for athletics or most other things. I joined the R.O.T.C. to get out of compulsory softball. (I was one of the very few cadet who was not made an officer for the year before graduation.) And a year later the "pappy shooters" of the Texas National Guard became you got paid (I think $2.50) for attending drills.

To my surprise the National Guard was fun. We fired on the rifle range and played soldier, with pay, for two weeks during school vacations. When the Korean War broke out we though our outfit, G Company of the 143rd Infantry, would be gone in a week. It never went, and though I would gladly have waited around the armory for the order I found myself committed to attending Texas A&M instead.

A&M, which offered the cheapest possible college education to Texas boys, was at the time I attended it an all-male land-grant institution specializing (the A&M stands for Agricultural and Mechanical) in animal husbandry and engineering. For some reason I have forgotten — I suspect because someone told my father or me that it was a good thing to take until you made up your mind what to switch to — I majored in Mechanical Engineering. Only Diokens could do justice to Texas A&M as I knew it, and he would not be believed. It was, I suppose, modeled on West Point, but it lacked both the aristocratic tradition and the sense of purpose. I dropped out in the middle of my junior year, thus losing my student deferment and was drafted for (remember that?) the Korean War. So G Company never went, but I did. I was lucky and got my combat infantry badge during the closing months without even getting nicked.

The G.I. Bill allowed me to finish my education to B.S.M.E. at the University of Houston. Rosemary Dietz, whose mother had kept in touch with mine, came to Texas for a visit, and we were married five months after I got a job in engineering development. We have Roy II (after my father, whose real name, however, is Emerson Leroy Wolfs; mother is Mary Olivia Ains Wolfs) Madeleine, Theresa, and Matthew; and a three bedroom house.

How did I come into writing? Quietly. And late.

The lights were dimmed and most of the seats were filled. He edged down the aisle, dribbling popcorn and tripping over fat ladies. Eased into a seat and found that he was the picture.

Q: Why not? Okay, I'll level with you: it is the biggest market for short stories. In fact, sf and mysteries are almost the only short story markets in America today, and the sf market is several times the size of the mystery market. I have written a number of mainstream short stories and I have never sold (for money) one. I have written a number of mystery shorts and sold ten — for 1d a word. Let us add in passing that I don't believe in these rusty little fames; fiction is fiction and there are no fundamental differences between the supposed types. It would be perfectly possible to write a mainstream sf western about a murder with a strong sex element, if it sold it would probably sell as sf — because the sf audience is the last audience that can stand the psychic strain imposed by the short story form.

I have been squirming here trying to remember what books I liked as a child. The Ox books, which you do not, perhaps, read in Britain, and the best of which were written within a few miles of here (i.e. Barrington, Illinois). Alice. A series of books about a goat named Billy Whiskers who was always on the bum. When I was in school twelve years later, the head of the department, an old Brade who had been an officer in the American army in both world wars, asked our class who had read the BN books; and then who had read Miss Minerva And William Cream Hill; and I was the only one who had heard of either. A very early Disney book: Bucky Bug — because it was full of wonderful machinery the bugs had made.
from junk, tanks that were pilk boxes on roller skates and the like. The oldest
Disney was rich with this kind of mechan-anism, which made its last stand in
Snow White.

The dedication of *Fifth Head of Cerberus* implies a considerable
debt to Damon Knight, and in fact
you are one of a group of writers
closely associated with Knight,
Milford and Orbit. What effect do
you think these associations have
had on your development as a writer?

I implied a considerable debt to Damon
Knight in the dedication to *Cerberus*
because I owe him a considerable
debt in fact, more than I will ever
be able to repay. He was the first
editor to buy my work regularly, and
the first to pay me good rates. He
has given me invaluable advice and been
my steadfast friend when he owed me
nothing.

You ask about Milford. Read *A
Pocketful of Stars* if you have not
already. I knew no other writers and
no readers before I went to Milford for
the first time. In England where (so
I am told) things are better, you
cannot well conceive the climate of
anti-intellectualism that exists in
this country outside of a few places
like New York and San Francisco. And
though I was born in the former I left
it in infancy and have lived all my
life in Texas and the middle west.

But is the kind of criticism and
advice you get at a place like
Milford any better than what you
get elsewhere?

Yes, but sometimes it can be very
bad. In 1969 almost everyone said
(for example) that Richard Hill's
"To Sport With Anemomie" was bad —
they were like people biting into
cotton candy when they expected roast
beef. But you can't eat roast beef
on the Ferris wheel.

Your first novel, *Operation ARES*,
was published in 1970, although
differences from most of your other
work suggest that it is one of your
earliest stories. It's a very
leisurely book for the first 150
pages or so, but thereafter becomes
increasingly rushed and telegraphic.
Was it cut out for publication?

*ARES* was written in 1967, and the
original manuscript ran over 100,000
words. It was cut out about 80,000,
the earlier chapters by me and the
later ones by Dan Benson, then editor
at Berkley. At the time I began it
I supposed it to be possible to tell
the story of a war in a single novel of
not unreasonable length. I still
believe this, but it would take some
banding.

Are you satisfied with the published
version?

No, but I will never revise it, and
that for two reasons — first, because
with an equal amount of work I could
write a new book, and second, because
I regard that sort of thing as a
species of crime.

Crime against whom, or what?

Against Truth, for one thing; you will
say (or if you don't someone else will
— I shall use you because you're
handy) that a given book or story will
carry all sorts of disclaimers to the
effect that the author wrote at twenty-
five and revised at forty but in point
of fact it won't. The publishers won't
bother with them — not for long on a
book and not at all on a short story.
Secondly against Art. Assuming
that the writer has progressed (and if he
hasn't, of what use is the revision) he
will be using the techniques he has
developed by years of practice on his
own youthful ideas, much as though a
parent were to forge the child's home-
work.

I was fascinated by *The Fifth Head
of Cerberus*, but trying to put myself
in the author's place, I was unable
to see quite how you could come to
write the book in this way. How did
it come about?

How the book came about is uncompli-
cated. I wrote "The Fifth Head of Cerberus"
of example — The Gods Themselves.
Why didn't you call it one?

You seem to be asking why I published my three novellas as three novellas when I probably could have called them a novel and not been much or sent to prison. Why should I? Would they have been better received under that label?

All this suggests the problem of the theme anthology — you know, "Great Science Fiction About Bees". It is perfectly true (at least in most cases) that all the stories have something to do with bees; it is equally true that they have nothing to do with each other — they are linked by an external. Now I think the stories in my book are in the opposite situation: the internal linkage is there, but the external links are entirely omitted; the first story is told in the first person, the second in the third person; the third in a mixture of both; a minor character in the first story is the author of the second and a major character in the third; and so on. Now if the public is willing (as it clearly is) to accept "Great Science Fiction About Bees" as a true expression of its theme, what would it think of my book if it claimed the unity of a novel?

I should add that I rather enjoy theme anthologies because they force their editors to uncover good but shallow reprinted material.

Would it have been better received as a novel? Hard to say; but I think it might have been better enjoyed. As you say, the internal linkages are there, but by labelling it as it is, surely you encourage readers to overlook them? Put it this way: if someone were to read the third part first, then the first, then the second, would they get as much out of it as someone who read it consecutively?

I think I see what the trouble is in this novel-novella argument: you feel that if shorter pieces are in any way connected they should be called a novel. I don't agree, but granting your definition then Cerberus is, as you say, a novel. I did, of course, intend the

* No I don't. But let it pass. (MJE)
stories to be read in the order in which they were published; and it would, of course, be possible for some thick or eccentric reader to decide that "THF" was the most attractive title (I might almost agree with him there) and read that first.

Are there any writers who have particularly influenced you? Which writers do you especially admire?

Damon Knight once asked me what books had influenced me most, and I told him: The Lord of the Rings (which I found out later he loathed), The Napoleon of Notting Hill (which he loves), and Mark's Mechanical Engineer's Handbook. I still feel this is a pretty good answer, but would add: The Man Who Was Thursday, Darkness at Noon, The Trial, The Castle, The Remembrance of Things Past, the Gormenghast trilogy (magnificent, no matter how flawed, and it is terribly flawed), and Look Homeward Angel, which I feel is that "great American novel" people sometimes still talk about; very few people in this generation trouble themselves to read it.

I have read Bradbury, Ellison, Ditko, Lafferty, Buse and a few others with great respect, but I don't feel I have been influenced by them — their things are good things but not my thing.

I have read most of Maupassant and feel Maupassant and feel Max. Tellier's Excursion to be his story. I have read a good deal of Dunsany, Olaf Stapledon, and Wachman. And Lovecraft and Hunter Graze. If you haven't read them yet I recommend A Voyage to Arcturus (though I despise its philosophy), The Teachings of Don Juan and its sequel, and The Universal Baseball Association, Inc. J. Henry Kaugh, Prop.

I'd be interested to hear you enlarge on the flaws in the Gormenghast trilogy.

I don't want to do that. There is always something sneaking about trying to pick holes in a masterpiece, and this is doubly so when the writer is among the dead of our time.

So I'm going to try instead to talk about the three books a little, the good and the bad, but always with the reservation — which I think you already are willing to concede me — that they are great literature in precisely the sense that Hamlet (for example) is great literature. We may complain justly about the gravediggers' jokes or the absurd veler of blood at the end of the last act, but we are throwing stones at the moon and we know it.

A disclaimer first — it's been three years since I read the books. I'm sure it will be possible for you to catch me out on one or two of the things I say. I can claim, though, that I have performed the fundamental duty of a critic and read my author; I remember very well how eagerly I looked forward to my daily hour with Peake.

You asked if I read the Langdon Jones reconstruction of Titus Alone, saying that you understood it to be more faithful to the author's intentions.

So, and I confess to being very wary of "reconstructions". In any event, I think the second volume — Gormenghast — and not Titus Alone is the weakest of the three, and that by a considerable margin. The book (granted that it is great fun at times) is the worst thing in any of the books. After we have enjoyed the scene in which the Professor comes to Irma Prunesequallor's ball — in fact while we are in the very midst of it — we realize with terrible disappointment that we have left the castle and have been stranded instead in the middle of just such a nineteenth century English village as Pickwick might have visited. It is very jolly, and never jollier than when one of the teachers mistakes Irma's face, as she peeps around a corner, for an apparition of Death; but it is not the world of Steerpike (that magnificent creation) and Fushan and Barquastorne. It is not even the world in which Cruagurire the Aorhath crosses his apartment on his hands touching a pig in a green nightdress to-and-fro with his feet. It is not Gormenghast at all.

A few other points from the first two books: At one time we are told that there are rattlesnakes outside the castle. If you cannot understand why there cannot be, I cannot explain it. Those are adders. Play (his fight with
Swelter is the best thing in the first book save perhaps for Swelter's corpse floating in the trapped water on the roof with the sword a cross sticking out of it and eventually cascading over the seven like the body of a dinosaur going over a waterfall) has knees that click when he walks, which is good. When he comes to kill Swelter (I believe it is) he binds strips of blanket about them to muffle the noise, which is very good indeed. But later, when it is no longer convenient for the author that Swelter's knees click, we are told that they have stopped, which is just ghastly— I wanted to take Peake by the throat and shake him when I read it. The wild girl comes to nothing, when she promised so much.

The death of the twins is wonderful, unique. As is the very end of Titus Alone, when Titus hears the signal gun and turns away. Muskelbash, in the last book, is a fine character; as is Cresboif, who is surely a self-parody of the author. But nothing can console us for the death of Steerpike...except the knowledge (like Titus's) that Gormenghast is still there. I think that it is more or less the custom, when writing about a great book, to quote the opening paragraph, or at least a few sentences of it, at the end. I am not going to do that— they are quite undistinguished. Instead I would like to quote the sentence from Titus Alone that I copied out on the flyleaf when I first read the book: Behind him, wherever he stood, or slept, were the legions of Gormenghast— tier upon cloudy tier, with the owls calling through the rain, and the singing of the rust-red bells.

I came on it a few minutes ago while I was paging through the books in preparation to writing this letter, and the demons who stand behind my chair is still screaming (as he did when I first saw it) why not you? Why not you?

Most of your stories appear in the various original anthologies — Orbit, Universe, and so on — which now seem to be proliferating beyond all reason; for example I read recently that one editor had signed contracts with 19 different publishers for 42 anthologies! Do you think this will lead, fairly soon, to a collapse in the market? If so, what affect do you think it will have?

I too read that one editor (Roger Elwood) has signed contracts for 42 anthologies and it is hard to believe. But Roger has been buying an awful lot of material (I hear); and certainly he has been buying quite a bit from me, viz: "An Article About Hunting", "Beautyland", and "Going To The Beach", all of them paid for and some yet published. May he prosper.

This question of collapse you raise is an interesting one; it is tied, I think, to the replacement of sf magazines by sf paperbacks, and this in turn is tied to the general lack of understanding of the sf field by the upper management of publishing. To oversimplify, I would say that the proliferation of original anthologies will lead to collapse when and if the publishers decide that the public is so eager for this type of book that the books can be edited by their junior tradebook editors. When that happens (and I hope it never does) we will see entire books filled with really bad material — and the great mass of the sf reading public (which is much larger, as I feel certain you realize, than fandom) simply does not know enough to understand that a volume edited by (say) Harry Harrison is likely to contain quite a bit of good material while one edited by Norman Spinrad is probably a bad investment, particularly if his contents page is populated exclusively by unrecognizable names. There are a lot of reasons for this, and they all pull together; it is unlikely Norman knows or cares much for science fiction, and he will not be given much of a budget for his book. On the other hand, it is highly probable that he will feel confident that he knows what the public wants: he has (after all) seen two episodes of Star Trek, he has watched the sci-fi flicks on late TV, he has seen the covers of Ace doubles. Very little that is good will he sent to him, and most of that will be rejected.

In time his book ("Tales From The Void") will appear. How many bad books will his non-fan reader buy (at $1.25 each, I should say) before he stops buying anything? I suspect two to three.

I also suspect I am not answering the
question you want to ask, which is, I think, As things are now, is collapse imminent? No.

To answer a question you have not asked, I am much more optimistic about the future of print as a medium than I was five or ten years ago. Motion pictures, the great enemy of print in my boyhood, the popcorn monster that seemed an completely invulnerable when there was no television, and only the theaters were air-conditioned, and an adult paid 35¢ or 40¢ and a child 10¢ or 15¢, today is more than half dead. Television itself is noticeably weaker every year, and every year more inclined to occupy itself with completely non-literary material (i.e., sports). The loss of cigarette advertising has been a terrible blow to television, and it seems certain to be followed by others — soon, I think, there will be no more broadcast ads for tobacco in any form (natural wrapper cigarettes, which are legally cigars, are being advertised here now), no ads for wine or beer, either. Recently I attended a symposium sponsored by the American Business Press in which the effect of TV commercials was discussed. The publishers who hadn't tried them were (for the most part) enthusiastic. Those who had were grim.

How much contact have you had with sf fans, fandom, fansines? Have you been to any conventions? D.C. Compton said once that he was grateful to discover the existence of sf fans because it proved that there were people who read his books but had reservations because such activity tended to encourage the continuance of sf as a genre, while we should be tearing down compartments rather than building them. Would you agree?

I went to St. Louis, two Maroons, a week last year and Midwestern this year; in a few days I hope to be at Chambana. I have a feeling I'm leaving out something, but that's all I can think of now. I hope to go to Toronto; and while I was in Cincinnati I was a member of the local fan club, called, I believe, the Cincinnati Fantasy Group. I get Lucas, Vanda, SOTUL, Gas; SF Commentary, Richard E. Geis, Mote, EC, Starling, and a lot of other excellent magazines whose titles escape me now.

I certainly cannot agree with the Compton quote you give. It's one thing to take sf out of the ghetto; it would be another to deprive it of its individuality. Space travel and alien intelligences tend to encourage the continuance of sf as a genre today, but the way to break down those compartments is to have a great many very good books.

Would you describe your method of writing?

You want to know (I should say, seem to want to know) about my schedule; I suspect you're going to find this so dull you're going to have to cut the whole thing. On a work day I get up sometime between six thirty and seven, shave if I can beat the children to the bathroom, go down into the basement and write until Rosemary calls me up for breakfast, go back down, if there's time left, until eight. Besides writing I will have reviewed the carbons of any letters I wrote the night before, and decided whether to send them or revise them.

At eight I go upstairs, dress, drive to the post office, mail my letters and pick up the mail. At eight-thirty I am at my desk at work. At five I am back home (all this assumes I am not traveling, of course) go downstairs and try to deal with the mail between then and supper, which will be between five thirty and six. After supper I will shop if I have shopping to do, or write more letters, or fix something around the house. From seven to eight I watch TV about three days a week; after eight (if it is a TV day, after seven if it is not) I try to write until nine. From nine to ten I read. At ten (unless what I am reading is very good indeed) I watch the news and TV and the first half hour or hour of the Tonight show, then to bed. I usually get in about four hours of writing on Saturday and Sunday.

It takes me about an hour/page of finished copy — a half hour for first draft, another half for two or three revisions. As I said, I write in the basement, but I try not to yell at my children when they come down and want to talk to me. At least not the first time. I find that when I start a story
I had better know the ending. Sometimes I change it when I get there, but if I start without that I'm usually in trouble. I must have the characters and the end.

No, I don't voice my own opinions through my characters, because one of them is that each character should be true to himself or herself all the time; and if one of them isn't it hurts like a boil until I fix it. Obviously I may agree, from time to time, with something a character says, but that is purely coincidental and I seldom think about it.

It is very hard to say how much of my output I sell, because I continue marketing things for a long time — I once sold a story (I won't tell you the title, so don't ask) on the 36th submission. I have written three novels I am no longer marketing, so that is a considerable body of work which will remain unpublished. One is very bad, one fair, one, I think, good but badly dated as to content. Of my present output I would say that I sell 80%. Yes, I would like to write full time, and will do it when I feel I can support myself and my family that way.

You think I'm funny and Damon Knight and Virginia Kidd tell me I'm sloppy, and that gets me off on a tangent that might be interesting to any Vector readers who have followed this thing this long. In 1969 I took part in a sensitivity group program in which each participant was required to write a capsule description of all the others as the last exercise. I saved the ones I received (I have a stack of binders I call my journal — letters, jottings, etc. dating to March 1969; it now fills two shelves of a small bookcase), but have not looked at them since I received them, and think it might be interesting to copy them out for you — to my knowledge no one has published this kind of parlor analysis of a writer, but I should add that none of the participants knew I wrote. The descriptions are not signed (unfortunately) but I will indicate when the hand changes. You have to trust my honesty, obviously, but I promise to spare nothing.

Gene's humor is a key to his psychology. It is clever, cutting, deep, full of double meaning & can be readily sharpened to a keen edge.

(1) He is ego-centric to the point of excluding other people's ideas and closing his mind to opposing discussion.

When given leadership position he asserts himself in a "let's get lined up and don't dare challenge my position ((This has been crossed out, but is still legible — the kind of thing we do with slashes.))

He is a firm leader and tends to carry his authoritarian attitude as a leader into the discussion. He cuts off conflict as sharply as he can.

(3) Gene works just as hard as necessary to get the job done. step on toes, leaner — ((can't read)) — great guy facade

Bay: impatient, withdrawal, instructive, hardhitting, self-possessed doesn't search

In the face of conflict, he presents his position once, and then withdraws; typically "Here's the way it is boys, if you can't see this position now no further contributions by me will help understanding." If understanding is not reached, he is willing to compromise. His major contributions to the team are invaluable and instructive insights such as analogies ((sic)), case histories, and psychoanalysis. He does not search for alternate opinions and listens to them through unfiltered ears. ((I think he means or instead of and, but he wrote and — or maybe nor.))

He exerts informal direction throughout meetings & as a leader exercises excellent control. His humor is generous hardhitting, and sells his position. When withdrawing from meetings he exhibits disguise and pouting.

DK ((not Damon Knight)): He tends to be dictatorial and responds to conflict by defending, resisting, and counterarguments. He does not hesitate to step on toes to get his point across. His humor is hardhitting and aimed at convincing his opponents. Although he is very task-oriented, he has a strong desire to be liked and this basic personality conflict tends to cause him to withdraw when he believes that the job is not getting accomplished. He is a good leader because his intelligence commands respect. Only in the light of
very strong factual evidence against his position does he change his position without withdrawing from the team effort. He desires to obtain team results by traditional approaches such as timed agendas etc. and hence forces compromises to which he is not committed.

W (??): His skill in coping with conflict situations stems from in-depth probing and critique.

His humor is a candid and hard-hitting style that fits the situation. High performance is coupled with deep commitment, deep enough to cause a close-minded attitude in evaluating divergent points of view. He drives himself and others in an effort to produce quality results and meet stated deadlines.

O: The "sage". He is highly competitive, anxious for conflict, as he feels that he can sway the opinions of others. His humor is barbed and directed to winning his point. He is a forceful leader, an orator, and yet he hides behind a "good guy" facade. His contributions to team achievement, though many, are influenced by how they agree with his convictions to self.

Wayne: Conflict is openly faced but generally managed by talking a position of superiority. He has a high level of commitment to goals he considers worthwhile but will withdraw completely when situations deteriorate. ([Next sentence crossed out but legible.]) He is a very opinionated person which results in taking and expressing strong stances on issues with little room for compromise. Situations are examined in depth yielding deep insights such as that the "Big Picture" approach is used in problem solving. Leadership abilities are excellent but he is more of a loner than a team man. Humor is hard-hitting used to make a point and shows deep insights of human behavior.

Finally, could you tell us something about work you have forthcoming or in progress?

I won't mention the stories sold to Roger Elwood, since I just did. Tom Disch has a 10,000 word novelette, "Hour of Trust". Unfortunately his book --- Red Moon Rising --- seems to have been delayed ((I believe it has now appeared. WP)), and I haven't heard from him for a time.

Terry Carr has "The Death of Doctor Island", which I understand has made the lead story in Universe 3. This is "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories" inverted — perhaps I should say reversed. Your image in a mirror (as I am sure you realize) does not lock in the least like you; in fact it would be completely correct to say that there is probably no one in the world who looks less like you than that image does. It is the reverse of you. Kate Wilhelm says that every story has a certain size and shape (and she might have said a color or colors too) what I tried to do here was to create the mirrored story as a new entity. About 19,000 words.

Orbit 12 will carry "Continuing Westward", the story of two aviators blown into the future while fighting the Turks in WWI.

"How I Lost the Second World War and Helped Turn Back the German Invasion" tells of Adolf Hitler's ill-fated attempt to market Volkswagens in Britain. Six thousand words, to be in Analog one of these days.

"Feather Tigers" recounts the difficulties of aliens whose speculations about the interdependence of that extinct animal Man with the other creatures of their planet embroils one of them in a little adventure. A very light treatment of a subject that interests us deeply — totemism. To be in Edge Supplement, a little magazine.

I've hopes of having what is called a young adult novel — a term I dislike — published this year. The Devil In A Forest.

There are two novels half or less complete which have been in that state for years — Frieda From the Fire and In Greyhame Prison. Sunday.

And I've 150 pages of Peace, the big thing I'm trying to do. I still don't know what it's about.

Just before beginning this I finished the second draft of "Forlesen", a largely autobiographical novelette; and as soon as I have finished I'll begin "The Dark of the June", the first story of a four-part cycle Roger Elwood has asked that I do for Continuum. And that's it.
THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS

Science fiction by

GENE WOLFE

“A complex, highly original and moving novel”

JAMES BLISH

Just published
PAMELA SARGENT
LOST PEOPLES
a review of The Fifth Head Of Cerberus

Orlando and Claudio Villas Boas are two brothers who have spent the past thirty years trying to help the indigenous Indian tribes of Brazil. In attempting to minimize the effects of so-called civilization upon these people, they have been responsible for saving many of the tribes. They sought out those threatened by the burgeoning Brazilian society and introduced them gradually to modern ways. But now the brothers are giving up. They see their cause as hopeless; the Indians have not been improved or helped by contact with outsiders, but corrupted. Their women become prostitutes, bought and sold by miners and engineers; they succumb to diseases to which they have no resistance and habits over which they have little control. At times, they are murdered.

It is an old story, perhaps as old as human beings are. We have learned little in the meantime. Indians in the United States and Canada still protest to anthropologists who ravage their burial grounds and mining companies who covet their holy places; they are still being robbed systematically by the government of their lands and waterways. One wonders how long the Tasaday people of the Philippines, only recently discovered, will be able to preserve their peaceful ways. The Tasadys, who gather food with primitive implements, have already been given knives by one member of the party which found them. The knives make their food-gathering process more efficient, but an ecological problem is in the making: the plants which feed them are now dwindling in numbers as a result. Perhaps in a few generations, if not sooner, these people will face starvation. It seems to make little difference in the end whether our motives are malvolent or benvolent as far as these people are concerned; eventually their cultures are mutilated by friend and enemy alike. As we have consistently acted thus toward our own species, there is little reason to believe we will act any differently when we travel to other worlds.

Gene Wolfe's three novellas in The Fifth Head of Cerberus deal with two sister planets, Sainte Anne and Sainte Croix, which have been settled by Earthmen. The aboriginal people of Sainte Anne have been wiped out by the settlers, and little about them is known as the book opens.

"The Fifth Head of Cerberus", the first novella, takes place on St. Croix. We see the cruel society of this planet through the eyes of a man looking back at his childhood experiences. He has grown up in a brothel owned by his father, a distant and seemingly heartless figure; he and his brother Sievid are looked after by Mr. Fillion, their robotic tutor.

The subject of the aborigines is raised by Mr. Fillion during a lesson; he asks the two boys to debate about the "humanity" of these people. It is hypothesized that the aborigines have been descendents of an early Earth
colony, one perhaps sent out by an ancient Earth civilization of which we have no records. David, during the debate, makes an interesting point:

"The abos are human because they're all dead."

"Explain."

"If they were alive it would be dangerous to let them be human because they'd ask for things, but with them dead it makes them more interesting if they were, and the settlers killed them all." (p.13)

The culture of St. Croix is evocatively presented by Wolfe in this novel-la. It is a society which deals in slaves, in which young women must wear a good marriage or sell themselves into slavery or prostitution, in which children must be guarded against kidnappers who would sell them. Yet St. Croix has its own peculiar beauty in spite of this, reminding one of old French cities, or New Orleans. A curious character enters this setting; he is Dr. John V. Marsch, an anthropologist from Earth. Marsch is seeking information about the abos of St. Anne and comes to the brothel, looking for Dr. Aubrey Veil.

Dr. Veil is the originator of an hypothesis about the abos; the theory states that the abos had the ability to mimic mankind perfectly. When the first Earth ships arrived, the abos supposedly killed all the settlers and took their places. This would of course make the human characters only abos who had forgotten their origins, and Wolfe suggests that the theory is only an explanation for the cruelty Dr. Veil has witnessed.

The appearance of Dr. Marsch, and the growing suspicions of the protagonist and his father regarding the anthropologist, play a minor role in this first novella, which concentrates on the story of the nameless character's growth and its bizarre circumstances. But Marsch is the thread that weaves the three novel-las into a unified whole in their depiction of the present, and possible past, of the world of St. Anne and St. Croix.

The second novella, "A Story", by John V. Marsch", depicts the alien society of the St. Anne aborigines. This is perhaps the most difficult of the three novel-las, as the reader views an entirely alien culture through the eyes of Sandwalker, an aborigine. The abo-

origines share their world with the mysterious Shadow Children, who might be the descendants of an ancient Earth expedition. Sandwalker is told by the Shadow Children that the abos once had many different shapes, but adopted human ones after the Shadow Children arrived. The novella, consistent with Veil's hypothesis, is a reconstruction by Marsch of what the aboriginal culture might have been like. It is haunting; the lost abos are made real for the reader and are no longer only a long-dead, decorated culture. Wolfe makes one care about these people as people rather than simply as representa-

The third novella, "V.R.T.", deals with the imprisonment of Marsch on St. Croix. We learn of his journey into the unsettled wilderness of St. Anne in search of a remnant of the abo culture in the company of two unusual individuals: Trenohard, a man who claims to be an aborigine, and his son, a strange boy whose mother has disappeared. The story of Marsch's journey is told in parts, interspersed with accounts of Marsch's arrest and torment in prison. Trenohard is quite obviously an old faker and no aborigine; his son, however, quite possibly is one. Marsch finds hints of the continued existence of the abos on his journey and remembers burying the boy, who died in an accident. Yet he is arrested upon his return by the authorities, who doubt that he is in fact Marsch. And as the novella progresses, we find that Marsch himself is unsure of his identity. Has the mysterious boy taken his place, so expertly imitating his that he is sure, at times, that he is Marsch? Is it Marsch who died in the wilderness? Or has Marsch so fallen under the spell of the culture he seeks that his mind has become unmingled? One cannot be absolutely sure.

Wolfe's book, with its ambiguities and its beauty, haunts one long after reading it. Underlining it is a plea for understanding these whose cultures are unlike our own, yet it is far from being a tract. The world it creates is rich in characters and details and the book stands as a major work in science fiction, whatever its message. It is a spell-binder, drawing expertly on science-fictional concepts and using some of the best writing I have seen in recent years.
Perhaps, with luck and determination, the cruel colonies Wolfe writes about will never come to pass. He might work for that, and might also consider the possible ways in which a threatened alien race could seek our destruction.

— Pamela Sargent


The Gollancz/Sunday Times
£1000 Science Fiction Competition

Two prizes are offered, each of £500, for (1) the best unpublished science fiction novel and (2) the best volume of unpublished science fiction short stories. The conditions are as follows:

1. The competition is limited to authors who have not previously had science fiction published in volume form. Established authors who have not written in the genre before may therefore enter, and so may writers who have had science fiction stories published singly in magazines or as part of an anthology. Entrants must, however, be free of any publishing commitment that would preclude either publication by the Sunday Times or a contract with Victor Gollancz Ltd.

2. Victor Gollancz Ltd shall have first offer of publication of any of the entries submitted, and in the event of a contract being entered into between any writer and Gollancz both the advance and royalties offered shall be additional to the prize money. The Sunday Times shall be free to publish any story from the winning volume without further payment, or from any runner-up at their usual rates.

3. Pseudonyms are acceptable, but real names must be given when submitting entries, and will be treated in confidence.

4. Entries should be addressed to

Science Fiction Competition,
Victor Gollancz Ltd,
14 Henrietta Street,
London WC2B 8QJ

and should arrive not earlier than 1st October 1973 and not later than 31st January 1974. Scripts should be typed (preferably in double spacing) and postage enclosed for their return. They should not be less than 50,000 words or more than 100,000 words in length.

5. The competition will be judged by Brian Aldiss, Kingsley Amis, Arthur C. Clarke and John Bush (Chairman of Victor Gollancz Ltd). The judges' decisions shall be final and no correspondence will be entered into with regard to them.

6. The names of the prize-winners will be announced in the Sunday Times on 30th March 1974.
Any devotee of fandom knows too well the frustration and gnawing worry caused by their prolonged absence — has fandom disappeared? Was the whole thing a dream, a temporary delusion? Am I the victim of some vast and evil hoax? Are the Secret Masters of Fandom displeased with me? Only the arrival of a fannish sense of quelling that all at once, like a downpour after a drought; at times like these even a messy and noxious mudslide is welcomed.

There are, however, ways to avoid fannish-starvation, to ensure that the sight of a distant postman is something better than a mirage. I bring you The Frequent Fannine (thus spake Zarathustra), the regular fortnightly or monthly products which will guarantee you a steady supply!

Robin Johnson's Norstrililin News is one such, the Australian equivalent of Britain's Checkpoint and America's Locus (reviewed a few issues ago). It's a monthly newsletter, just four or so pages per issue, which covers most of the fan and sf world Down Under as well as the more important items of international news. The latest issue gives details of forthcoming Aussie conventions (the Melbourne Eastercon and the Adelaide National Con), plus a variety of personal news (for example, Aussie-fan Ron Smith has been raided by the Victorian Vice Squad — an appropriately named force, it would seem), and sundry other items (Lee Harding reviewing the film Solaris, the annual Novus Nobis awards, and so on). With the Australia in '75 worldcon bid, the creation of the Down Under Fan Fund, and the general growth and vigour of Australian fandom, Norstrililin News brings you information from a centre of fan activity and not some curious colonial backwater; it's useful, entertaining, and recommended.

More entertaining still, but of no known use, is amoeboid Lounge from Seth McEvoy and Jay Cornell, Jr. Produced fortnightly by a collective entity known as 'abner', Lounge contains a medley of fannish news and a great deal of spontaneous idiocy. The eleventh issue gives details, amongst other things, of new films (Bambi Meets Godzilla) and authoritative fannish definitions ("A pealot is the opposite to a kivi. Always glad to answer questions."); there's also a flier from Aljo Scobida, one of the best of the new fannish writers, and this is apparently to be a regular feature. I enjoy Amoeboid Lounge immensely, but would hardly recommend it to the serious of reader. Holy Moly, Roncool! You're not one of them though, are you? Goddammit, it's free, anyway.

In the last Vector I reviewed Bill
Bevers' Outworlds, an impressive publication and a 1971 Hugo nominee. Bill has recently started a smaller monthly fanzine as well; it's called Inworld and is largely dedicated to fanzines, which it reviews and brings news of. The third issue arrived recently with plenty of current reviews, details of forthcoming fanzines, and even a letter column. The reviews are too short to be ideal, but, as I've found myself, that's the only practical way to handle them when you're trying to be regular and all-inclusive. Interesting and recommended.

Moving right away from these small, frequent fanzines, we come to something like Andy Porter's Algol, a large and rather stunning magazine which appears twice a year. The latest issue is the nineteenth and describes itself as a magazine about science fiction; this subtitle indicating its move into the semi-professional world of news-stand sales (though I doubt whether your local newsagent stocks it, unless you have the good luck or misfortune to live in New York). Algol is printed throughout with good use made of artwork, from a wrap-around, coloured D-plate cover, to full page interior illustrations from Edie Jones, Dany Frolich, Joe Staten, and Terry Austin, plus a variety of "fillers". Photos are also used, including a two page survey of contributors past and present — it surprises me that more American fanzines don't include similar photos, especially since they're quite frequent in British, continental, and Australian fanzines. Most of the material within comes from professional authors and, with the exception of Bob Silverberg's "Traveling Jiant" account of a visit to the Sciams, is concerned with science fiction in one form or another.

Marion Zimmer Bradley starts off with "Experiment Perilous", a long look at the state of SF using the Old Wave/New Wave concept; it's heavily related to and illustrated by her own work, with which I must admit I'm unfamiliar, but it's interesting and puts forward a fairly middle-of-the-road approach to science fiction which must be common to most writers and many fans; basically it's the 'no extremes' stance: "Like sex and character, style is all very well when integral to the story, when used and cultivated as an end in itself it becomes a gimmicky game for the benefit of the writer's ego." Marion Bradley's ideal would seem to be a good story with strong (but not overly so) characterisation. Ah well. It isn't my ideal, anyway; it sounds like the mimetic ideal of classic mainstream realists with its emphasis on character rather than form and authorial absence rather than authorial control or presence — and a sprinkling of of doesn't absolve this kind of theory from its drabness. Ray Bradbury, no less, follows this with a very short piece with a blunt, but well-said message: don't burn books. Fred Pohl then looks at "Science Fiction as Social Comment", emphasising its useful predictive role. That's fair enough, but any attempt to write a novel with a committed social intention usually ends in tedium — certainly some of the stuff he cites is wretched enough (Bellamy's Looking Backward, for instance). George Turner follows with a survey of SF, which, as he admits, is rather too general (it was originally written for a non-fan audience), though it's interesting enough. Finally, Dick Lupoff reviews books, Ted White has a column wherein he suggests the SFMA should publish books, and there's a good letter column.

Altogether, then, Algol is an excellent magazine for the serious of fans; it's attractive, interesting (even to a non-addict like myself), and doesn't waste much time examining totally worthless hack-writing (a grave fault of Riverside Quarterly and sundry other 'serious' fanzines). Highly recommended.

James Goddard's Cynher, the only British fanzine reviewed this time, has, I'm afraid, the very fault I just ascribed to EQ: it too frequently devotes its pages to rubbish; delving into the midden of the pulp magazines and coming up with a survey of some atrocious scribbler. Cynher 9 is the latest issue and bears a fine cover by Kevin Cullen which, together with a mass of interior drawings, illustrates the fiction of Harry Harrison. There's a reason for this, namely that the lead article is an interview with that author, taped by Jim Goddard and including various comments from Brian Aldiss and Leon Stover. It's fairly interesting and also amusing, though the tran-
script might have been edited somewhat more strongly — it's pretty incoherent at times. I should quickly note that I wouldn't include material like this in my initial condemnation of Cypher, though the book reviews in this issue give more space than is necessary to various hack writers. Following the interview there's a cartoon strip by D. West and John Constantine, a regular feature and not a good one (either in terms of art or humour). Jeff Clark then examines the three short stories of James Tiptree Jr., apparently with the idea of uncovering a new SF writer. The only thing is, I can't help feeling it's a put-on, a rather clever hoax; the criticism and extracts from the supposed stories are nicely, but pleasurably, olished, and I found the whole piece wryly amusing. If James Tiptree Jr. actually exists, however...

The rest of Cypher consists of a reprint of a humorous Brian Aldiss piece from the Grauniad, some adequate film and book reviews (though Mark Adlard's review of Chris Priest's Pugne for a Darkening Island is particularly good), and a fairly good letter column (including a marvellously inept letter from Phil Harbottle, the arch-exponent of grubbing around in the pulp). Cypher is not, I'm afraid, a fanzine that I find particularly interesting. It appears regularly, however, and draws strong support from many of its readers, so it may possibly interest you.

The final fanzine in the pile is one of my personal favourites: Escoho, the sixteenth issue in fact, from John D. Berry and Ted White. It's a fannish fanzine of some long standing (this is the fourth annual) and seems to have outlasted the recent spate of similar fanzines — Rats, Potlatch, and so on.

Heavily disguised as an issue of Cypher, with an Atom cover and the lighthouse emblem on the back, Escoho contains long, rambling editorials and two very fine personal columns: Calvin Daemon's "Whole Hog" and Bill Rotsler's "Stuff", the former representing probably the best fannish writing currently being produced. The latter column is excellent and the whole thing is duplicated on high-quality fannishly Sensitive paper, impregnated with SMOF (forgeries can be detected by holding copies to the light and looking for the initials 'SF' — should any be found, chuck it). Escoho is an Intelligent Fannish Fanzine and one that I highly recommend. The dollar price-tag is designed to discourage subscribers, by the way — they'd rather receive a letter (and that's true of all similar publications).

— Peter Roberts

Alcool — Andy Porter, PC Box 4175, New York, NY 10017, USA. (UK Agent: Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey, SW6 6QJ), 4/$3 or £1.25

Amoeboid Slump — Seth Meiby & Jay Cornell, Jr, 105 E. Wilson, MSL, E. Lansing, MI 48823, USA. Free.

Cypher — James Goddard, Woodlands Lodge, Woodlands, Southampton, Hants. 20p per issue.

Esocuo — John D. Berry and Ted White, 15 Dunsberry Rd, Bronxville, NY 10708, USA. £1 per issue.


Norstrilian News — Robin Johnson, GPO Box 4039, Melbourne, Vic. 3003, Australia. (UK Agent: Peter Roberts, 87 West Town Lane, Bristol. BS4 5DI). 12/2p or 6/50p (airmail).
BRIAN W. ALDISS
THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES

There have been many books written about Herbert George Wells, but only one really good one, and that he wrote himself: *Experiment in Autobiography*.1

Here is the passage, from Chapter 6, in which Wells describes the London he knew, and the housing constructed early in the nineteenth century:

"Private enterprise spread a vast quantity of extremely unsuitable building all over the London area, and for four or five generations made an uncomfortable incurable stress of the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

"It is only now, after a century, that the weathered and decaying lava of this mercenary eruption is being slowly replaced — by new feats of private enterprise almost as greedy and unforeseeing. To most Londoners of my generation, these rows of jerry-built unalterable houses seemed to be as much in the nature of things as rain in September and it is only in retrospect that I see the complete irrational scrambling planlessness of which all of us who had to live in London were the victims. The multiplying multitude poured into these mounds with no chance of escape. It is only because the thing was spread over a hundred years and not concentrated into a few weeks that history fails to realise what sustained disaster, how much massacre, degeneration and disablement of lives, was due to the housing of London in the nineteenth century."

How much of Wells, his negative and positive sides, reveals itself in this passage! His hatred of middle, his hope for something beyond the profit motive, his sense of melodrama, his irascibility, his dramatic feeling for the organic flow of history — all are here, as well as whispers of that didacticism which rose up and choked off his great creative ability.

The passage tells us much about Wells’ background. Life for him was a battle for health and success. Whereas most writers of the England of his time lived in large comfortable country houses, Wells was a poor man’s son and made his way without any assets other than his genius.

He was born in his parents’ little china shop in the High Street of Bromley, Kent, in 1866, a year after the birth of D.H.Lawrence, another of the dynamic but tubercular poor.

Wells’ mother had been in service when she met and married H.G.’s father, then working as a gardener. The shop was their first hopeful matrimonial venture together; it failed by degrees, year after year. Wells wrote with love and exasperation of his mother, "Almost an unquestioning as her belief in Our Father was her belief in drapers."

After some elementary schooling, his first job was in a draper’s shop in Windsor. He was no good at it, and they told him he was not refined enough to be a draper. He got the sack.

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Wells became a teacher, educating himself as he went along; and so moved into journalism and authorship. His great book appeared in 1895, when he was almost thirty. Around him, a raw new London was emerging, conscious of the Heart of Empire — an expanding capital trapped in the contracting houses Wells described with such bitterness. The central figures of many of his early novels are chirpy Cockney "little men" with whom he was entirely familiar — their accounts came to him through the flimsy bedroom partitions of his various digs. Wells exhibits them for inspection rather than admiration. 3

In this submerged metropolitan world, taking lessons from Thomas Hardy, thinking great thoughts and struggling with great illnesses, Wells lived and survived. In 1895, he got one hundred pounds from W. E. Henley for his short novel The Time Machine. Its sceptical view of the present, and its pessimistic view of the future of mankind — and of life on Earth — challenged most of the easy ideas of progress and the new imperialism then current.

Except for a collection of essays, The Time Machine was the first of Wells' one hundred and twenty odd books, and it is very nearly his most perfect. It was an immediate success. 4

As Bernard Bergonzi has stressed in his excellent study of Wells' science fiction, The Time Machine is very much a fin de siecle book. One glimpses in it some of the despair of Hardy's vision; while the Eloi, those pale, decadent, artistic people that the time-traveller discovers, derive a flavour from the atmosphere of the eighteen-seventies, and are echoed in those pale lost ladies of people who haunt Beardsley's and Walter Crane's drawings and Ernest Bowson's poems.

The Eloi live above ground, in idyllic surroundings. Below ground live the dark and predatory Morlocks, appearing at night to snatch the helpless Eloi. The innocence and laughter of the Eloi are only an appearance below the surface lies corruption. The theme is a familiar Victorian one: it has vivid meaning for urban generations striving to install efficient modern sewerage under their towns. One finds it, for instance, in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray, published in 1891, where the sinner stays young and fair; only his portrait, looked away from by prying eyes, ages and grows dissipated and obscene.

But the Eloi and Morlocks have historically deeper roots. They are a vivid science-fictional dramatisation of Disraeli's two nations. Wells tells us as much in a later book, The Soul of a Bishop:

"There's an insurmountable misunderstanding between the modern employer and the modern employed," the chief labour spokesman said, speaking in a broad accent that completely hid from him and the bishop and every one the fact that he was by far the best-read man of the party. "Disraeli called them the Two Nations, but that was long ago. Now it's a case of two species. Machinery has made them into different species ... We'll get a little more education and then we'll do without you. We're pressing for all we can get, and when we've got that we'll take breath and press for more. We're the Morlocks. Coming up."

This "submerged-nation" theme, coupled always with the idea of retribution, is essentially a British obsession, occurring in writers as diverse as Lewis Carroll, S. Fowler Wright, and John Wyndham. The essential American obsession is with the Alien — also coupled with the idea of retribution.

Wells in his thirties was prodigious. Most of his best books were published before his fortieth birthday: The Island of Dr. Moreau, The Invisible Man, The War of the Worlds, When the Sleeper Wakes (later revised as The Sleeper Awakes), Tales of Space and Time, The Food of the Gods, and the two novels before which the Master was prostrate, A Modern Utopia and Kipps, as well as such non-fiction works as Love and Mr. Lewisham and Anticipations.

Still to come after that first decade of writing were many good things, among
among them Mr. Polly, The New Machiavelli, The War in the Air; Ann Veronica, and a number of lesser and later books which would have looked well in the lists of a lesser writer, as well as his excursions into popular education. Wells is also remembered for a number of remarkable short stories; indeed, he was one of the forgers of this genre of England, following the example of De l'Eile Adam, De Maupassant, and others in France. Among his short stories are some that won immense popularity in their time. Most of them belong to Wells' early creative phase.

In many of these stories, Wells proved himself the great originator of science fictional ideas. They were new with him, and have been reworked endlessly since. He seems to have been the first fiction writer to use the perspectives of evolution to look backwards as well as forwards. His "The Grisly Folk" (1896) is a tale of human-kind struggling against the Hændonthals at the glaciers retreated. "Great Paladins arose in that forgotten world, men who stood forth and drove the grey man-beast face to face and slew him."

Tales of prehistory have always remained a sort of sub-genre of science fantasy. Wells also wrote "A Story of the Stone Age" (1897), and Jack London dealt with the confrontation of human with prehuman, but it is not until William Golding's The Inheritors that this theme yields anything like a masterpiece. Wells' mind is the first to venture so far into past as well as future.

Among science fiction writers past and present, Wells, with Stapledon, is one indisputable giant. His debt to Hawthorne, Poe, and Swift, which he acknowledged, is apparent; he mentions also the novels of Holmes and Stevenson in this context. It is true that Wells lacks the Invariance we perceive in Mary Shelley; but he has an abundance of imagination as well as inventiveness -- the two are by no means identical. Wells has his weaknesses, among which his inability to create any psychological depth of characterisation must be conceded. But it seems to this critic that the virtues which lift Wells above his successors (and above Verne) are threefold. Firstly, he inherited something of the enquiring spirit of Swift -- and science is, when all's said, a matter of enquiry; and from this spring the other two virtues, Wells' ability to see clearly his own world in which he lived (for without such an ability it is impossible to visualise any other world very clearly), and his lifelong avoidance of drawing flat characters with which readers will uncritically identify and thus be lulled to accept whatever is offered.

To see how these virtues work in practice, we may examine two of the early novels, The War of the Worlds and The Island of Dr. Moreau.

The War of the Worlds was published in serial form in 1897 and in book form a year later. It describes what happens when Martian invaders land on Earth. The story is told by an English observer, who sees the invaders move in on London against all the army can do to hold them off. London is evacuated before the invaders die, killed by common microbes.

Even this brief outline shows that The War of the Worlds is part of the literary lineage which includes Chesney's The Battle of Dorking. But Wells makes a twofold progression. This time the invader is from another planet. This time, the invader is effortlessly more powerful than the invaded.

These two steps forward are not merely a development of wandering fancy; they form a development of the moral imagination. For Wells is saying, in effect, to his fellow English, "Look, this is how it feels to be a primitive tribe, and to have a Western nation arriving to civilize you with Maxim guns!"

This element of fable or oblique social criticism in Wells' early work is worked, from the novels to such short stories as "The Country of the Blind" and "The Door in the Wall". Yet it remains always subservient to the strong flow of his invention; only when invention flagged did moralising obstruct and the tone become shrill.

In The Invisible Man, one is not intended to identify with Griffin in his strange plight. The moral beneath the fable is that scientific knowledge should be shared and not used for selfish gain (as Moreau uses his knowledge for personal satisfaction and so is
demned just like Dr. Jekyll); but this moral is so profoundly part of the fabric of the story that many reviewers and readers missed the point, and complained that Griffin was "unsympathetic". Similar obtuseness confronts a science fiction writer today. His audience is accustomed to powerful heroes with whom they can unthinkingly identify. A mass audience expects to be pandered to. Wells never pandered.

Of course, Wells provides plenty of sensationalism in *War of the Worlds*. There is the carefully detailed destruction of the London of his day, followed by the horrible appearance of the Martians. Cunningly, Wells refrains from describing his invaders — we have seen them only in their machines — until over halfway through the book. They are then as ghastly as you please.

After a description of their external appearance comes an account of their internal anatomy when dissected. Wells' manner is cool and detached. From description, he turns to a discussion of the way in which the Martian physiology functions in matter-of-fact detail, going on to consider Martian evolution. The telling stroke, when it comes, lifts the whole remarkable passage to a higher level. "To me it is quite credible that the Martians may be descended from beings not unlike ourselves, by a gradual development of brains and hands ... at the expense of the rest of the body." It is this linking of the Martians with humanity, rather than separating them, which shows Wells' superior creative powers. At the same time, he prepares us for the surprise and logic of his final denouement.

C.S.Lewis was later to attack Wells for peopling our minds with modern hobgoblins. But it was Wells' successors in the pulp magazines, the horror merchants with no intent but to lower the reader's body temperature as fast as possible, who imitated that. Wells' non-humans, his Martians, Morlocks, Sel-nites, and Beast-People, are creatures not of horror but terror; they spring from a sophisticated acknowledgement that they are all part of us, of our flesh. It was the later horror merchants who made their creatures alien from us, and so externalised evil. Wells' position is (malgré lui) the orthodox Christian one, that evil is within us.

His non-humans are not without Grace but are fallen from Grace.

In *War of the Worlds* we can distinguish Wells using three principles to produce this masterly piece of science fiction. Firstly, he begins by drawing a recognizable picture of his own times, 'the present day'. While we acknowledge the truth of this picture we are being trained to accept the veracity of what follows. Secondly, he uses the newer scientific principles of his times, evolutionary theory and the contagious and infectious theories of micro-organisms, as a hinge for the story. Thirdly, he allows a criticism of his society, and possibly of mankind in general, to emerge from his narrative.

To these principles must be added Wells' ability to write effectively. There are few openings in science fiction more promising, more chilling, than that first page of *War of the Worlds*, including as it does the passage, "Across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us." How beautifully underplayed is that adjective "unsympathetic!"

Yet Wells' early readers were puzzled over the question of his originality. How original was he? This question of originality is bandied about with regard to today's writers, all of whom stand in Wells' portly shadow. Wells himself has an amused word to say on the subject in his autobiography.

"In the course of two or three years I was welcomed as a second Dickens, a second Bulwer Lytton and a second Jules Verne. But also I was a second Barrie, though J.K.B. was hardly more than my contemporary, and, when I turned to short stories, I became a second Rudyard Kipling. I certainly, on occasion, imitated both these excellent masters. Later on I figured also as a second Diderot, a second Carlyle and a second Rousseau ... These second-hand tickets were very convenient as admission tickets. It was however unsafe to sit down in the vacant chairs, because if one did so, one rarely got up again."

The *War of the Worlds* enjoyed an imme-

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distally favourable reception from readers and critics. Yet many of its aspects were ignored or misunderstood. It was felt in some quarters that the novel was not very nice. The reviewer in the Daily News declared that some episodes were so brutal that "they cause insufferable distress to the feelings." The Island of Dr. Moreau had the same effect two years earlier.

Despite its merits, The War of the Worlds contains at least two aspects of Wells' writing which tell against it increasingly as time goes by. They turn out to be aspects of the same thing. Wells as a delineator of "the little man", I mean his penchant for humour, particularly Cockney humour, and the general scruffiness of his characters.

An old man is rescuing his orchids as the Martian invasion force draws near. "I was explainin' these is val'hyble," he says. Wells' London is populated by shop assistants, cabmen, artillerymen, and gardeners. There is a curate, too, but he, like most of the clergy in Wells' works (and in his disciple, Orwell's), is used as a comic butt and talks nonsense. "How can God's ministers be killed?" he asks. There are no characters in The War of the Worlds, only mouths.

In Wells' best book this fault does not obtrude.

The Island of Dr. Moreau, published in 1896, contains for all practical purposes only three human beings: Moreau, the scientist ahead of his time; Montgomery, his assistant, a drunken doctor in disgrace; and Prendick, the common man, the narrator. Prendick has none of Bert Smallvays' or Mr. Polly's or Kipps' cocky chippiness, while the Beast-People hardly crack a joke between them. If the characters are in part cliché, this is in part because they serve symbolic roles, and there is a symbolic quality about the whole that gives it a flavour of Poe or the French writers.

Moreau begins in a businesslike way, in the manner of Gulliver's Travels, with a sea voyage and a shipwreck. Prendick survives the wreck and arrives at an unnamed island, owned by Moreau. A mystery surrounds the place, there are strange shrouded creatures, cries in the night. If this is Prospero's island, it is peopled by Calibans. In the way Prendick's mini leaps to terrible nameless conclusions, we come to that nervous playing on unvoiced things which is the essence of science fiction.

Incident flows smoothly on incident, each preparing us for the next: Prendick's unwelcome arrival; the mystery of the natives; Prendick's suspicion that Moreau experiments on human beings to bestialise them; and then the revelation that Moreau is in fact creating something like humanity from animals by the extreme application of vivisection techniques; then we meet the grotesque population of the island, the fruits of Moreau's surgery, the Ryano-Swine, the Leopard Man, the Satyr, the Wolf Bear, the Swine Woman, the faithful Dog Man. Then we have the death of the Leopard Man; the escape of the female puma on which Moreau is operating; the death of Moreau himself in the ensuing hunt through the forest; Prendick's shaky assumption of control; Montgomery's drunken carouse with the Beast-Men, in which he is killed; the destruction of the stronghold; and the whole awful decline, as Prendick is left alone with the Beast-People while they slowly forget what language they have learned, and lapse back into feral savagery.

Nobody has quite decided what Moreau is, apart from being a splendid and terrifying story. But it is clear that Wells has something more in mind, something larger, than a thrilling adventure.

In the main, Wells' first critics and reviewers expressed shocked horror at the whole thing, and would look no further; in short, he was condemned rather than praised for its artistry — a reception which was to have its due effect on Wells' future writings. Yet it is not difficult to see what he intended.

For some time, we are kept in suspense with Prendick about the nature of the island's population. Is it animal or human? This is not merely a plot device; as with the scientific hinge on which War of the Worlds turns, Moreau's experiment links with the entire philosophical scheme of the novel. And even after we learn the true meaning of the

* Just as one of this novel's descendants, Golding's Lord of the Flies, is more than a thrilling adventure.
Beast-People, Wells carefully maintains a poignant balance between animal and human in them. At their most human, they reveal the animal; at their most animal, the human.

The point may be observed at the moment when Prendick, now in the role of hunter, catches up with the Leopard Man in the forest:

"I heard the twigs snap and the boughs swish aside before the heavy tread of the Horse-Rhinoceros upon my right. Then, suddenly, through a polygon of green, in the half darkness under the luxuriant growth, I saw the creature we were hunting. I halted. He was crouched together into the smallest possible compass, his luminous green eyes turned over his shoulder regarding me.

"It may seem a strange contradiction in me — I cannot explain the fact — but now, seeing the creature there in a perfectly animal attitude, with the light glancing in its eyes, and the imperfectly human face distorted in terror, I realised again the fact of its humanity. In another moment others of its pursuers would see it, and it would be overpower and captured, to experience once more the horrible tortures of the enclosure. Abruptly I slipped out my revolver, aimed between his terror-struck eyes and fired."

It is clear that Moreau, at least in one sense, speaks against transplant surgery, the consequences of which are revealed in the ghastly Law which the Beasts chant (a Law which some critics have seen as a parody of the Law of the Jungle in Kipling's "Jungle Book", though the dry, sublimated humour of Swift is also present):

"Not to suck up Drink: that is the Law. Are we not Men?"
"Not to eat Fish or Flesh: that is the Law. Are we no Man? etc.
"His is the Hand that Wounds. His is the Hand that Heals."

We are put in mind — not accidentally — of liturgical chant. "For His Mercy Is on Them that Fear Him; Throughout All Generations." We recall that Wells labelled the novel "an exercise in youthful blasphemy". Moreau is intended to stand for God. Moreau is a nineteenth-century God — Mary Shelley's protagonist in his maturity — Frankenstein Unbound.

Furthermore, Moreau's science is only vaguely touched on; the whole business of brain surgery, on which the novel hinges, is none of Wells' usual clarity. We can infer that he wanted to leave this area sketchy, so that we no more know what goes on in Moreau's laboratory than in God's. This vagueness, by increasing our horror and uncertainty, is a strength rather than otherwise.

When God is dead, the island population returns to savagery, though he hovers invisibly above the island. Prendick tells the Beasts: "For a time you will not see him. He is there — pointing upward — where he can watch you. You cannot see him. But he can see you."

Blame for the wretched state of the Beasts is set firmly on Moreau. "Before they had been Beasts, their instincts fitly adapted to their surroundings, and happy as living things may be. Now they stumbled in the shackles of humanity, lived in a fear that never died, fretted by a law they could not understand."

At this moment, Wells is trying to create a synthesis between evolutionary and religious theory. Not to put too fine a gloss on it, he does not think highly of the Creator. Nor does he of the created. Moreau says it for Wells, declaring that he can "see into their very souls, and see there nothing but the souls of beasts, Beasts that perish — anger, and the lusts to live and gratify themselves." There is that Biblical phrase which echoes in the opening of "War of the Worlds": "beasts that perish". As for the two real human beings, Prendick and Montgomery, they also are poor things. Prendick is certainly not there for us to identify with, any more than the Invisible Man is. His shallowness, his lack of understanding for Montgomery, his lack of sympathy for the Beasts, is perhaps a mark against the book — the darkness of any painting can be enhanced by a highlight here and there. Or perhaps it is just that Prendick is a commonplace little man, as Gulliver was a commonplace little man and Alice a commonplace little girl.
Morau stands in an honourable line of books in which man is characterised as an animal. Gulliver's Travels is one of the best-known examples of the genre, and the one to which Wells paid homage, but such stories stretch back to the Middle Ages and beyond. Wells, however, revived the old tradition, gaining additional power because he and his audience were aware of evolutionary theory. They are the first generation to understand that it was no mere fancy as hitherto to regard man as animal; it was the simple, betraying truth, and formalised religion began to decay more rapidly from that time onwards.

Prendick eventually returns to "civilisation", rescued from the island by a boat with dead men in it. His fears pursue him back to England. "I could not persuade myself that the men and women I met were not also another, still necessarily human, Beast People, animals half-wrought into the image of human souls; and that they would presently begin to revert, to show first this bestial mark and then that." The Leopard Man, g' est moi.

This is the final triumph of Morau; that we are transplanted from the little island, only seven or eight square miles in extent — say about the size of Holy Island — to the great world outside, only to find it but a larger version of Moreau's territory. The stubborn beast flesh, the beast mentality, is everywhere manifest.

The ending has a sombre strength. As with the climax of War of the Worlds, it comes not just as a surprise but as a logical culmination. Wells has subtly prepared us for it, so that it is revelation rather than punch line, for instance in his Hardyesque remark that "A blind fate, a vast pitiless mechanism, seemed to cut out and shape the fabric of existence."

In this early novel, Wells amply fulfilled his conscious intentions. The exercise in youthful blasphemy worked. It is apparent that he also exercised some—

*Not least, one would imagine, for George Orwell, who may have found in the passage last quoted inspiration for what was later to become Animal Farm.*

thing that obsessed him during that period. Although Morau is the darkest of his novels, it is not strikingly different in attitude for its companions. We find a horror of animality, an almost prurient curiosity about flesh, and the cultural shock of evolution stamped across all Wells' early science fiction. As the Beast-People are our brethren, so the Martians could be us at another stage of our development; while the Morlocks, that submerged nation in The Time Machine whose rank flesh of Eloi — they are descended from us, our flesh could grow into such nocturnal things. "I grieved to think how brief the dream of human intellect has been," says the time-traveller.

The cannibalism practised by the Morlocks is paralleled by the flesh-eating of the Beast-People. Although the Invisible Man divests himself of flesh, he does not lose a vicious competitive streak. The Selenites of The First Men in the Moon are one long nightmare of distorted flesh; like the Morlocks they live underground. They are forced into arbitrary shapes by social usage almost as cruelly as if they came under Moreau's scalpel. In The Food of the Gods, flesh runs amok — like Moreau, this novel, too, is in part an allegory of man's upward struggle.

With a frankness remarkable for its time, Wells has told us much about his early sexual frustrations. He was a sensuous man and, with success and wealth, found the world of women open to his. It may be that this gradually assuages his old obsessions; though he never achieved peace of mind, his later books do not recapture that darkly beautiful quality of imagination, or that instinctive-seeming unity of construction, which lives in his early novels, and in his science fiction particularly.

The rest of Wells' career must be looked at briefly, bearing in mind the question of why the hundred books that followed do not share the brilliance of the early handful.

As soon as Wells' public became accustomed to one Wells, up would pop another. There was A Modern Utopia, the last of the great utopias and the first to realise that from now on, with im-
proved communications, no island or continent was big enough to hold a perfect state — it must be the whole world or nothing. Later, he developed the idea of a World State. This was H.G. flexing his Fabian and political muscles. Tono-Bungay, a social novel full of autobiographical material, and Ann Veronica, which roused a great storm because the heroine practised free love, saw publication in 1909. There were two gorgeous and sensible books for children before the Great War broke out, Floor Games and Little Wars.

In 1914, just before the outbreak of hostilities, The World Set Free was published. It contains some of the most amazing of Wells' predictions, in particular of atomic warfare, but also — more accurately and horribly — of trench warfare. His speculations on tank warfare had already appeared in a short story, "The Land Ironclads". We have seen how Wells' warfare books were written very much in the Battle of Dorking tradition — yet he was remarkably successful in predicting what actually happened than his rivals, perhaps because he was no reactionary (as were most of his rivals), and therefore tended less to view the future in terms of the past; and also because he actually hated war (though with the ambivalent feelings many people experience), unlike such men as Le Queux, who pretty clearly longed for it.

The World Set Free is full of shrewd premonitions, exciting home truths writ large, and radical diagnoses of human ills, all of which made the book (novel it hardly is) exciting and immediate at the time.

Here's Karenin in the future, when London is being cleared up after extensive bombing. He is looking back and talking about a 1914 which bears resemblance to the 1970s.

"It was an unwholesome world," reflected Karenin. "I seem to remember everybody about my childhood as if they were ill. They were ill. They were sick with confusion. Everybody was anxious about money and everybody was doing ungenial things. They ate a queer mixture of foods, either too much or too little, and at odd hours. One sees how ill they were by their advertisements ... Everybody must have been taking pills ... The pill-carrying age followed the weapon-carrying age..." (Chapter 5, 4)

The World Set Free is successful in every way but the ways in which the early Wells books were successful. It is full of lively ingredients; it has no organic life. Wells the One-Man Think-Tank has burst into view. His books are no longer novels but gospels.

After World War I, this more solemn Wells developed further into the Wells who produced solid and effective works of scientific popularisation and started the vogue for one-volume encyclopaedias. Wells was on the way to becoming the most popular sage of his day.* And he was still producing novels every year.

During the thirties, Wells the Novelist faded out before Wells the World Figure. He was a famous man, busily planning a better world, chatting with Lenin ((In the thirties? Must have been a one-sided conversation, MJS)), arguing with George Bernard Shaw, flying to the White House to talk to Roosevelt, or to the Kremlin to talk to Stalin. Remembering the middle of the London of his youth, he hated middle, and saw a World State as the tidiest possible way of governing men for its own happiness.

Unlike Verne, he was never in danger of being blessed by the Pope.

Wells proved himself one of the few men capable of spanning the great gulf between the mid-Victorian period when he was born and our modern age. He had grasped the principle of change. He was a visionary and not a legislator, yet he worked for the League of Nations during World War I and, during the Second, helped draw up a Declaration of the Rights of Man which paved the way for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN after Wells' death. He died in 1946, having witnessed the dropping of an atomic bomb he had predicted many years earlier.

To the Establishment, the idea of change is always anathema. It never took Wells to its lordly bosom; just as it has never taken science fiction.

* An edition of The World Set Free published by Collins in the twenties heralded Wells, on the cover, as "The most widely read author in the world".
possibly for the same reason. It disliked him for the things he did best, and thought him a cad. So did the literati, perhaps with more reason, for Wells' ill-timed attack on his old friend Henry James in Ucan (1915) was a poor thing, and most orthodox writers sided with James.

The literati still do not accept Wells to the sacred canon. In a volume such as Cyril Connolly's The Modern Movement (1955), which claims to list books "with the spark of rebellion", there is room for Norman Douglas and Ivy Compton-Burnett but none for Wells, except in an aside. However, some real writers, like Vladimir Nabokov, appreciate his true worth as an innovator and creative spirit.

The current received idea of Wells seems to be that he began modestly and well as an artist (The Time Machine and all that) and then threw it all up for journalism and propaganda purposes. There is a grain of truth in the charge. Many of his books were hastily written or scamped; he says himself, "It scarcely needs criticism to bring home to me that much of my work has been slovenly, haggard and irritated, most of it hurried and inadequately revised, and some of it as white and pasty in texture as a starch-fed nun." What humility and honesty! Lesser writers today would not dare admit anything of the sort.

For all that, the facts do not entirely bear out either the received idea or Wells' own declaration (what writers say of themselves always should be greeted with scepticism). Wells began as a teacher and continued as one. He had a strong didactic example from his teacher, Thomas Huxley, one of the great controversialists of the century. For a while, in those earlier novels, Wells followed the doctrine of art for art's sake (then in favour with those writers and artists who were, like Wells, against the "done thing"); in that period he took care to incorporate his central point into the imaginative whole. When he did so, when his point was so well integrated as not to be obvious, his audience misunderstood him or failed to get the point, as was the case with Morceau, Invisible Man, and War of the Worlds.

Wells hated muddle and misunderstanding. He took to making the message clearer and clearer. His characters become mouthpieces, the fiction becomes lost in didacticism. The amplifiers were turned up. Wells gained volume and lost quality, but he was always a man with an amplifier, not content to whisper in corners. Indeed, the controversial nature of science-fictional themes is such that only careful control — the control Wells found and lost — reflects the fantasy from the sermon.

Moreover, despite his fearlessness and his joy in producing a different-coloured rabbit from his hat with each performance, Wells was consistent in his career. As early as 1912, he turned down an invitation to join the Academic Committee of the Royal Society of Literature. However much we may regret it, he wanted to deal with life, not aesthetics. Perhaps he failed to recognise that he was a creator, not an administrator. He could exhort but not execute. Eventually, the exhortations took over from the imagination.

Wells did not change the world as he would have liked to do. He did alter the way millions of people looked at it. He was the first of his age to convey clearly that our globe is one, the people on it one — and the people beyond this globe, if they exist. He helped us understand that present history is but a passing moment, linked to distant past and distant future. It was Wells who said, "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." As the human race struggles and sinks beneath its own weight of numbers, we see how his words remain contemporary.

Perhaps a writer who views history as a race between anything and catastrophe is doomed to write hastily and carelessly, as Wells often did. Yet Wells was loved by men and women far beyond his personal acquaintance, far beyond the normal readership a novelist gathers if he merely has staying power. He was witty and honest, he spoke for his generation — and for more than one generation. George Orwell conveyed something of what a symbol H.G.Wells became.

"Back in the 1900s it was a wonderful thing to discover H.G.Wells. There you were, in a world of ped-
nants, clerks, and golfers, with your future employers exhorting you to get on or get out; your parents systematically warning you not to use bad language and your dull-witted schoolmasters sniggering over their Latin tags; and here was this wonderful man who could tell you all about the inhabitants of the planets and the bottom of the sea, and who knew that the future was not going to be what respectable people imagined."

Orwell was speaking of the beginning of the century. Thirty years later, as this writer can vouch, the same state of affairs held true. Wells was still at it, stirring everyone up. He saw that the one constant thing was change, and the dynamic for change that he found in the world about him was echoed in his own being; this accounts for his turning from one role to another, and from one woman to another.

He spread his energies widely. To regret that he did so is hardly profitable, for it was in his nature to do so. Much of his activity has been dissipated. His novels remain. The science fiction is read more than ever.

Wells was born in the year lignite was invented; he lived to witness the birth of the nuclear age. Inaccurately, Orwell characterised Charles Dickens' novels as "rotten architecture but wonderful gargoyles"; it is Wells' gargoyles, his Martians, the Selenites, the Morlocks, the Beast-People we must relish today, when Wippa and Polly grow faint. He may no longer accept Wells's faith in the improving potentialities of education, but we long ago conceded his point that we show "first this bestial mark and then that".

It is undeniable that if we compare Wells' novels with Dickens' most Wells-like novel, Great Expectations (assuming Great Expectations to be about Pip's escape from a mendicant life at the forge into the wider world of London), then we are confronted with Wells' shortcomings as a novelist. But such a comparison would be unfair to almost any writer. Within his own wide domain, Wells was sui generis. Within the domain of scientific romance, he managed three unique achievements. He elevated the freak event — a visit to the Moon, an invasion from another planet — into an artistic whole. In consequence, he greatly extended the scope and power of such imaginings. And he brought to the genre a popularity and a distinctness from other genres which it has never lost since, despite the blunders of many following in his wake.

Wells is the Prospero of all the brave new worlds of the mind, and the Shakespeare of science fiction.

--- Bryan Aldiss

Notes


3. A fair example is Bert Smallways, hero of The War in the Air.

4. For a thoroughgoing account of the reception of Wells' books as they were published, see Ingvild Bakken, H.G. Wells and his Critics, Oslo, 1962.


6. Experiment in Autobiography, Ch.6.

7. Mention should be made also of the good psychological timing of War of the Worlds. The new journalism was bringing word of the solar system to Wells' public, while Mars in particular was in the general consciousness. It had been in close opposition in 1877, 79 and 81, and Percival Lowell's first book on Mars, containing speculations about the "canals" and possibilities of life there, had been published in 1895.

8. Wells does not mention himself as a second Camilla Flammarion, the parallelism between whose novel La Fin du Monde and Wells' "The Star" are striking.

9. Experiment in Autobiography, Ch.8.

10. This assumption lies behind the otherwise sympathetic biography by Lovat Dickson.

11. Experiment in Autobiography, Ch.1.

Dying Inside
by Robert Silverberg
Scribner's; $6.95; 245p.
Reviewed by George Zebrowski

Someone once said that it is hard to
write intelligently about good books,
and even harder about the very best.
One may say, "This is a great book",
and naturally anything you say is not
up to the work itself — and can't be.
The literary essay can be great litera-
ture in itself, but then it becomes a
showpiece for the critic-as-author,
taking away from the work which is up
for examination. We then say, "That
was a fine essay on the work of so-and-
so." The problem is obvious. In any
case, I'm going to try to ask the hard-
est questions about the best books which
I will write about in these pages, as
well as try to find constructive things
to say about less than perfect works.

Now what is the prime interest of
Dying Inside? It seems that it is not
the psi power of the protagonist. And
this raises the question, why is the
psi there at all? Do we need it to help
us round out the portraits of the other
characters? Or to understand the moti-
ations of the people around the hero?
So-called mainstream writers have man-
eged to get inside any character without
recourse to psi. They've done this with
the conventions of fiction — point-of-
view changes, direct thoughts, etc.
Silverberg, it seems, has made psi stand
for these conventions. It is the means
of contemporary fiction made reality.
The protagonist is something like the
omniscient author of fiction.

Come to think of it, that is all
pretty inventive and clever. But even-
tually we see more. We see the limita-
tions which are peculiar to a one-way-
receiving telepath as he gradually loses
his powers (much in the same way sexual
prowess or talent may decline with age).
Eventually the hero becomes like the
rest of us, shut up in himself. He is
the extreme case gradually approaching
the norm, and it is a unique realiza-
tion to identify with his loss and know
that one is exactly what the hero is
becoming.

Silverberg so cleverly walks the line
between being of two minds about the
materials of his story — i.e. the bio-
ography of a New York Jewish intellec-
tual growing old (almost a cliche in the
mainstream) and the powerful theme — a
tragedy really — of a superman losing
his abilities in a world of closed-up
mortals, that I am tempted to call this
ambivalence a form of complex genius.
Things such as this are so much more
clear-cut in science fiction. In fact
I'm tempted to say that Silverberg is
deliberately mining ambivalence as a key
clement in his recent work. Those of us
who are readers might learn something
from this, transforming this attentiv-
ness to ambivalence through our own
concerns and themes. It makes for
richer fiction.

The end page of Dying Inside leaves
the main character merely human, ready
to explore a new set of limits when and
if he recovers from the silence he has
arrived at. He has become another kind
of man, dying away from his previous self. I don't think he matured as a telepath, and now he has to grow up as a normal, and die again when his normal physical abilities decline toward death.

Come to think of it, writers and artists are telepaths. We use point of view in fiction as we were telepaths, receiving. We invade the minds of people who lived in historical times, the present, and in the shadows of the times to come.

Silverberg has taken a science fiction idea, a mainstream literary convention, and made the result real and concrete in a true science fictional sense. As a result he has revitalised mainstream fictional materials in a manner which will startle those unfamiliar with ef. Dying Inside is Robert Silverberg continuing his science fiction preoccupation with people, to paraphrase Brian Stableford ("The Compleat Silverberg", Speculation 31), and with the human characteristics of beings not specifically human.

Dying Inside is Silverberg doing better than Beth, in a book which will be read with new eyes years hence, long after The Beast is buried and empty of all nourishment.

**++ No, I'm not about to adopt Pete Weston's practice of including postscripts to reviews in which he contradicts everything his poor critic has just said. But there are a couple of things I'd like to add to George's review.**

Firstly, if you have read this novel as serialised in Galaxy, I urge you to get hold of the book and read it again, whatever you thought of the serial. Having read both versions, I was amazed at the cumulative effect of a series of small alterations. Many of these are intended to 'tone down' the novel for family consumption, and include a very amusing shift in the hierarchy of curses. I don't recall it exactly, but roughly: 'shit' in the book becomes 'crap' in the magazine; 'crap' becomes 'iamm'; 'iamm' becomes 'oh, bother' or something. But more important is the apparently random excision of at least one sentence from practically every paragraph of five sentences or more.

It means you're reading the sketch for a novel rather than the novel itself. And then there's the matter of all the switches in the order of the chapters...

Aside from this, I think that Silverberg's two 1972 novels, Dying Inside and The Book of Skulls, mark an important new high point in his career. Over the last few years, Silverberg has continually been experimenting with different methods of constructing fiction — using different tenses, different persons, either separately or mixed. All of these have been interesting although not all have been equally successful.

Now, in these two novels, he seems to have entirely assimilated these techniques, with exciting implications for his future work. It's therefore a little saddening to realise that, certainly for the first time since I've been in fandom, there's no new Silverberg novel in the offing. ++

**Heart Clock**

by Dick Norland

Faber; £2.35; 213p.

Reviewed by Christopher Priest

There is a kind of science fiction which English writers seem to do very well, and that is the sort where something very daft happens to the population as a whole. The best example of this I can think of is Brian Aldiss's The Primal Urge, in which the national aberration was a metal disk implanted in the forehead which glowed rose-pink whenever the owner became sexually aroused. Dick Norland has adopted a similar motif in his first science fiction novel Heart Clock, but unlike Aldiss he doesn't play his book for laughs. His bizarre development is the implantation of an alarm-clock into the heart. The time when the alarm goes off is set by the government; reach a certain age, determined in the light of whatever economic crisis is going on at the time, and you are turned off. No exceptions ... and no appeal.

This pleasant little gadget has, as might be expected, brought several dir-
ect and indirect changes to English life. It is in describing these sociological changes that Morland’s book works brilliantly, because in the manner of all the best of this sort the world he draws is at once very like our own and horribly different. The London that Matt Hatlock, the protagonist, moves about in is recognizable, so long as one doesn’t take too much notice of the Birthday Unions, the Scottish Embassy and the prowling circuit-wagons.

This is the science fiction content, and the author describes it as to the manner born. The book is filled with tantalising details, the more tantalising for being woven expertly into the background with the implications and ramifications left for the reader to fill in for himself.

Where the book goes slightly astray is in the matter of its plot, and I think it’s worth going into this in some detail. Dick Morland, in one of his other manifestations, has written several thrillers, and he has brought the action, structure and plotting of the thriller to science fiction. In the first few chapters he sets up his scene and, as I say, he does it brilliantly. Unobtrusively, the background is filled in as the story proceeds. But then, quite abruptly, the emphasis shifts.

The protagonist, a 69 year old ex-cabinet minister, becomes involved in all manner of standard devices: capture, escape, shootings, betrayals, blackmail. He is a pawn in three hands: the government of the day, which wants him to return to the fold and stop attacking the heart-clock system which he himself was instrumental in introducing; a religious sect known as The Seek, who are against the system anyway and need him for their own purposes; the rising clamp beyond Hadrian’s Wall (now a sixty feet high metal-plastic structure), who want him to lead an armed insurrection. At first cajoled and persuaded, later threatened and blackmailed, finally kidnapped, Matt Hatlock reaches a point, about two-thirds of the way through the book, when he doesn’t know where he is. And neither does the reader. Lost in a maze of motives and counter-motives (wheels within wheels I think this is called) all that can be done is to en-trust ourselves to the author who, we can only hope, will get us through the complexities to the end. In fact he does, but I believe that this is a tactical error on the writer’s behalf. By reducing his hero to the role of a manipulated dummy, he takes away the action from the central character and places it in unknown and unseen hands. Matt Hatlock totes his handgun in self-defence, murdering some and knocking others unconscious because he has to in order to survive; how much better it be if the slayings were carried in pursuit of his own destiny? Perhaps a less moral, but more of a satire on political ambition? Like the last act of Julius Caesar, one can hardly move for corpses at the end of this book ... and like Julius Caesar, it has all been in the pursuit of political power.

But all this said, I grant Mr Morland with some pleasure. His is a fresh vision, and a deftly-written vision. A few less “thrills” next time though, please.

Mrs Frisby and the Hats of LINW
by Robert C. O’Brien
Collins; £1.40; 191p.
Reviewed by Malcolm Edwards

Mrs Frisby, a widowed fieldmouse, is in a difficult predicament. Spring is almost here, and it is time she and her family moved from their winter home in the Fitzgibbon’s field before it is ploughed up. But her son, Timothy, is too ill to be moved down to the damp river bank. There seems no solution until a crow she has befriended takes her to see the wise old owl who lives in the middle of the wood. He tells her to go to the rats who live under the rosebush by Mr Fitzgibbon’s barn. Like all the animals, Mrs Frisby is wary of rats, and these are a very unusual bunch — almost a match for Dragon, the farm cat. She has seen them, about in broad daylight, unafraid:

“There were a dozen of them, and at first she could not see what they were up to. Then she saw something moving, between them and
behind them. It looked like a thick piece of rope, a long piece, maybe twenty feet. No, it was stiffer than rope. It was electric cable, the heavy, black kind used for outdoor wiring and strung on telephone poles. The rats were hauling it laboriously through the grass, inching it along in the direction of ... the rosebush."

Perhaps this all sounds unpromising: a suitable book for quite young children but no more. To an extent this is true; the first third of the book, delicately and observantly written though it is, does not present us with anything very special. But now are Frioby goes to visit the rats, and we enter a different world, one which works with the same kind of magic as illuminated such dissimilar stories as Gulliver's Travels (and T.H. White's delightful sequel to it, Mistress Masham's Repose); James Blish's "Surface Tension", and the various stories of the Borrowers - the miniature equivalent of our own world:

"Ahead of her stretched a long, well-lit hallway. Its ceiling and walls were a smoothly curved arch, its floor hard and flat, with a soft layer of carpet town the middle. The light came from the walls, where every foot or so on both sides a tiny light bulb had been recessed and the hole in which it stood, like a small window, had been covered with a square of coloured glass ... The effect was that of stained-glass windows in sunlight.

"Justin was watching her and smiling. 'Do you like it?' ..."

"'It's beautiful,' Mrs Frioby said. 'But how?'

"'We've had electricity for four years now.'

"'Five,' said Mr Ages."

The rats are fugitives from a laboratory where they were the subjects of experiments into artificially-induced intelligence. The experiments were far more successful than the scientists of NIH had realised — the rats became so intelligent that they were able to conceal the extent of their intelligence from the scientists and thus to contrive a means of escape. Now, hidden beneath the rosebush, they are working on a master plan — to move lock, stock and barrel to a small, hidden valley nearby, where they will set up their own, self-sufficient rat civilization, freeing themselves from the need to scavenge on mankind.

Mrs Frioby's problem is solved, but the rats face a much greater one of their own. A dissident group which left the rosebush managed to kill themselves in an accident sufficiently suspicious looking to bring the men from NIH, who are now scouring the area for them, flushing out any rats they find with cyanide. And the farmer is well aware that there are rats in his rosebush...

Mrs Frioby and the Rats of NIH is a triumph of children's writing: a worthy winner of the Newbery medal. And, like all the best children's writing, it reaches far beyond the confines of any specific age-group. It will appeal to any reader willing to approach it without condescension. It is distinguished throughout by the luminous simplicity of the writing, and while it's obviously an exercise in anthropomorphisation it subtly recognises the differences between the various types of animal. The novel ends with a victory for the rats mixed with a tragedy of uncertain extent. It's complete in itself, but there is obvious scope for a sequel. Sadly, the author died recently, too to it seems there will not be one — all the more reason to treasure the fine book he has left us.

Books received:

From Gallimard: The Early Asimov, by Arthur C. Clarke, £2.75 (Massive — 540p. — collection of pre-1950 Asimov stories. The introductions are generally better than the fiction, and sometimes are nearly as long. Required reading for Asimov fans.); A Science Fiction Anthology, edited by Simon Knight, £2.90 (Together with the Asimov, this could be used to make a decent set of barbells. 528p., including two complete novels — The Demolished Man and More Than Human, plus 26 other stories which aren't all too well known, although keen readers will probably have come across most of them); The Farthest Shore, by Ursula
Le Guin, £1.60 (I've promised myself that I can read this after I finish the 5,000 word essay I have to hand in on May 21st. Possibly to be reviewed next issue the one after, if not. Final volume of the Earthsea trilogy. Need I say more?) Impotent Moon, by Larry Niven, £2.20 (collection culled from the two American collections, The Shape of Space and All The Myriad Ways. I was disappointed that the funny "Man of Steel, Woman of Klenea"—about Superman's sexual problems—was omitted; otherwise it's an impossibly well-chosen selection); Tomorrow Lies in Ambush, by Bob Shaw, £2.00 (Bob's first collection and very entertaining too. To be reviewed.)

From Sidgwick & Jackson: The Probability Man, by Brian W. Aldiss, £1.60; New Writings in SF 22, edited by Kenneth Bulmer (Impressive contents list. Brief snippets from Brian Aldiss and Arthur Clarke plus, among others, Harrison, White, Tubb and a long Chris Priest story. So far I've only read Lawrence James' story, which is amazingly bad. Impenetrable introduction. To be reviewed by Tony Sudbery. £1.75, by the way.)

The Best of John W. Campbell, £2.25 (Five long stories, thankfully omitting the dreadful "Twilight"; intro by James Blish. May be reviewed next time, if God gives me strength.)

Earthlight, by Arthur C. Clarke, £1.75; The World Shuffler, by Keith Laumer, £1.75 (Misadventures of Lafayette O'Leary, star of much other Laumer stuff in The Time Benders and The Shape Changer. Extremely silly but quite fun. I read this a couple of years ago and can't recall a single damned thing about it. Features a mushy wench called Swinbild. It's that kind of book.) A Choice of Gods, Clifford D. Simak, £1.75 (A Hugo finalist, and supposedly Simak's best book for some years. As an old Simak fan I very much hope it is; but thus far—about 30p. I find it rather soporific. Stand by for further reports.)

The Far Out World of A.E. van Vogt, £1.95.

From Panther: All the Sounds of Eeky, by Harlan Ellison, 30p. (The first 8 stories from Alone Against Tomorrow, now out in paperback, and containing three times as much for twice the price. You have been warned. The first story is "I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream"—probably Ellison's most effective story; and a certain inclusion in my projected theme anthology, Great Science Fiction About Pus. Nice Christopher Priest spaceship on the cover.)

At the Mountains of Madness, by H.P. Lovecraft, 40p (Reprint of the Gollancz collection with the two decent stories removed. In: Shub-Niggurath, Cthulu Stagna, Plaid Cyru, Aiit, Yog-Sothoth, Scopan fech, and the rest.)

From Mayflower: Count Brass, by Michael Moorcock, 30p. (Yes folks, he's changed the name and sold his sword-and-sorcery trilogy again)

From Arrow: Solaris, by Stanislaw Lem, 35p. (Sorry, Mike Conen—nearly clipped there!)

From Sphere: Beyond Bedlam, by Wyman Quin, 35p. (originally titled Living Hay Out); Captive Universe, by Harry Harrison, 30p.

From Coronet: Transit, by Edmund Cooper, 30p.; Sleepers of Mars and Wanderers of Time, by John Wyndham, 30p each. (Two collections of early stories.)


From Penguim: Cat's Cradle, by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., 30p. (New edition of this brilliant book—one which I assume you've all read anyway. If you haven't...what are you doing wasting your time reading this? Go. Buy.)

From Texas A&M University: A Dream of Other Worlds, by Professor Thomas D. Clarkson, no price given. (Offprint of a lecture. Short—15 double-spaced typewritten pages—but interesting.)
At the age of 14 I decided to become an astronomer.

As a first step in achieving this ambition, I read every book on the subject in the public library at the rate of one or two a week. This second-hand stargazing was satisfying enough for some months, but, as time wore on, it became apparent that a telescope of one's own was de rigueur for up-and-coming astronomers.

The concentrated reading course had taught me quite a bit about astronomical instruments and I was able to decide at once that the best one for my purposes would be a five-inch telescope, which, in non-technical language, is a telescope which measures five inches across the flat end. Unfortunately, although the library books had dealt very thoroughly with matters like focal lengths, chromatic aberration and alt-azimuth mountings, they had been completely mute on the subject of prices. There was, as I was later to learn, a very good reason for this omission. A first-class five-inch telescope with accessories can easily cost several hundred pounds, and as the theme of most of the authors was, "How foolish it is to waste money going to the cinema when you can survey the limitless space of the Universe for nothing!" they were understandably reluctant to descend to the vulgar financial details. However, I was unaware of all this at the time, and in the absence of guidance estimated a price by myself. The calculation was quite simple.

I had once owned a telescope measuring about one inch across which had cost me three shillings; the one I wanted to buy was five times thicker and therefore should cost three shillings multiplied by five, equals fifteen shillings. Allowing a bit extra for inflation I reckoned that if I raised eighteen shillings I would be in a position to put up a serious challenge to Armagh Observatory.

Some weeks later — slightly weakened by total abstinence from regular items of diet such as Butty Nibbs and Jap Dessert, but filled with an unbearably delicious sense of anticipation — I cycled downtown on a brisk Saturday morning to purchase a telescope, with almost a pound safely buttoned in my hip pocket. Saving the money had been hard work so I decided not actually to go into the first instrument maker's shop I came to in case he hadn't got a five-inch telescope in stock and talked me into buying a less powerful four-inch, or even a miserable little three-inch. Accordingly, I went round all the instrument makers and after hours of studying their window displays and peering in through their doors began to feel slightly disappointed. None of them seemed to have any decent-sized telescopes, and I could hear in my imagination the familiar phrase, "Oh, we'd have to send away to England for that."

Finally dusk began to fall and, as it was bitterly cold and lunchtime was several hours past, I decided to com-
promise. One of the shops had a shabby little thing of not more than two inches diameter in the window and although it was a pale imitation of what I wanted it would at least get me cracking on the limitless splendours of the universe that very evening. The money left over after buying it, I consol ed myself, would be a good start towards the price of a proper telescope.

The thin, meticulously neat, severe-looking man behind the counter did not seem particularly pleased to see me. He jerked his head inquiringly and went on polishing a row of expensive cameras.

"I'm interested in the telescope you have in the window."

He stopped polishing and fixed a cold gaze on my cycle clips. I withstood the scrutiny confidently, knowing the cycle clips were as good as money could buy. I decided to let him know that here was a fellow expert on precision instruments.

"It's got an object glass of about two inches," I said, realising it might be a good idea to chat about technical details for a while, and only after he had seen that I knew something about telescopes bring up the subject of price.

"It's thirty two pounds ten," he said with a complete lack of finesse or preamble, and went right back to polishing the camera.

The blow did not hit me right away. I sneered at the back of his head a couple of times, then dashed out of the shop with two objectives in mind — to buy a telescope before closing time and to spread word around the trade that one of its members was trying to sell six-shilling telescopes for thirty two pounds ten. Half an hour later I was slowly cycling homewards, sickened by the discovery that they were all in it together. It seemed I was shut off from the stars as effectively as if huge steel shutters had sprung up from behind the Cauteragh Hills on one side and the Black Mountain on the other and had clanged together overhead.

The despair lasted several days, then, with a resurgence of hope, I realised what had to be done. It was all so simple. If the people who sold second-hand instruments from some friendly old junk dealer who had no idea of its current market value. Within a week I had developed a deep and impalpable hatred for friendly old junk dealers — obviously somebody had told them what the telescope makers were up to and the unscrupulous rogue had pushed their own prices up to within shillings of the brand-new prices. The stars would have to wait, but this time the situation didn't seem quite so hopeless. I couldn't believe that junk dealers would be as well organised as instrument makers and there was always the chance that one day one of them would make a mistake.

Then began a phase of my life which lasted several years and gave me an unrivalled knowledge of Belfast's second-hand shops, even those in distant quarters of the city. On Saturdays and lunch times and holidays I spent my time checking the dingy little shops, going in hopefully each time a new telescope appeared, coming out in renewed despair on hearing the price. Not once during those years did a friendly old junk dealer make a mistake. They maintained the price barrier which separated me from the distant untrodden reaches of the universe as though it was all part of a gigantic plot.

Fruitless though the search was, it produced an occasional memorable experience. One Saturday afternoon I was prowling through the darker corners of Smithfield Market when I discovered a tiny brass object which I immediately recognised as being the eye-piece of a fairly large telescope. It was completely useless to me, but out of sheer force of habit, I asked the price from the old woman in charge. After sizing me up cheerfully she announced that it was seven and sixpence. Her business sense must have been remarkably good for I had about eight shillings in my pocket at that moment, and immediately said I would buy. There was absolutely nothing I could do with the eye-piece of course, but it was the first thing in the telescope line that had come into my price range, and I had to have it. I had come a long way from that first morning when I set out to buy a five-inch telescope.

The old lady knew the object was
only an eye-piece from an instrument perhaps six-foot long but she had no
way of knowing that I too fully under-
stood this, and, when she saw my
obvious delight at the price, seemed to
feel a pang of unprofessional remorse.
She stood for a while as greed battled
with guilt, then slowly handed the tube
over and took my money. As I was going
out through the door she emitted a
faint strangled sound which made me
look back, and I realised she was going
to speak.

“You know,” she finally ground out,
“there’s a piece missing.”

I nodded. Having gone that far she
had made peace with her conscience and
we parted in a glow of mutual satis-
faction. Surprisingly enough, my money
was not altogether wasted because I
began to pick up other vaguely telescop-
ico items in the form of magnifying
lenses and spectacles lenses, and dis-
covered that it was possible to make
telescopes — after a fashion, that is.
My first one was constructed from a
piece of lead piping, made stars look
like little balls of illuminated candy
flats, and was so heavy that when I let
it fall from the bedroom window one
night it woke half the street and threw
one of my father’s dogs into some kind
of fit.

That was the first occasion on which
I became aware of a rather strange fact.
Astronomy was presumably the quietest
and most respectable pursuit any teen-
ger could be expected to take up, but
every time I got into my stride people
and small animals kicked up hell.
There was the time I built a telescope
with a wooden tube and made the marvel-
lucent discovery that some of the tiles
on our roof could be alid out of the
way, leaving a hole big enough to poke
the telescope through from the attic.
I began work on a suitable telescope
mounting right away but during the
first half hour our front door was
almost pounded down by panic-stricken
passers-by coming to warn us that our
roof was collapsing. So great was the
consternation caused by my private
observatory that one of the first people
to call was an old lady who hadn’t
spoken to any of us for years, not
since the day my younger brother, with
the ruthless ease of a Japanese sniper,
had annihilated her row of prize tulips

with his air rifle. (From her back
garden she had seen the flowers fold
over, one by one, apparently without
reason, and had given such a heart-
trending scream that my brother vowed
never again to shoot anything but
birds and cats.) Anyway, I was forced
to abandon the enterprise.

In between tours of junk shops I
paraserved with telescope-building and
in the process learned a lot about the
science of optics. I learned to cal-
culate the magnification obtained by
even the most complicated lens systems,
but preferred the simpler method of
direct measurement. To find out how
strong a telescope is, one looks through
it at a brick wall and keeps the other
eye open, with the result that large
bricks and small bricks are seen super-
imposed on each other. A count of the
number of small bricks that fit into a
big brick gives the instrument’s magni-
fication.

The snag with this method was that
every now and again the brick would be
blotted out by a sudden flurry of move-
ment and I would find myself staring at
the vastly magnified and outraged face
of a fat middle-aged woman. Sometimes
the fat, middle-aged woman gathered an
excited knot of other fat, middle-aged
women who stood around, arms crossed
protectively over their bosoms, mutter-
ing among themselves and staring in
disquiet at my bedroom window. I
always cringed back, appalled, wonder-
ing what I could say to my parents if
the police or a deputation from the
Church arrived at the door.

Finally, after about five years, I
acquired a reasonable telescope. Not
the five-inch job I had set out to buy
on that fateful Saturday morning —
that was still beyond my pocket — but
a reasonable telescope, nevertheless.

Anybody who has even a superficial
understanding of the workings of the
human brain inside the human bones will
guess what happened next. I was disapp-
pointed. During those five years the
anticipated pleasures of owning an
astronomical telescope had multiplied
themselves in my mind to a point which
could not have been satisfied by all
the resources of a modern observatory.
Prolonged re-reading of the poetic
astronomy books of people like Garrett
Awards.

Universe

P. Service (remember his early science fiction?) had convinced me that putting my eye to a telescope would transport me to another plane of existence in which the grey realities of mundane life would be replaced by a wonderland of celestial jewels, multi-coloured and mind-striking; clusters like fire-flies tangled in silver braids; glowing nebulae among whose filaments the imagination could wander for ever and ever.

Of course, all I saw were quivering and meaningless specks of light, and I got rid of the telescope within a few weeks.

And yet, the years-long search was not wasted. Now, twenty years further on, I still occasionally dream that I have found a friendly old junk dealer who doesn’t know the price of telescopes. I smell the dust in his shop, I see the uncomprehending chimps dogs; I experience the limits of intellectual delight as I carry the solid, heavy instrument out into the street — moving towards a beautiful future which can never exist.

You couldn’t buy dreams like that.

— Bob Shaw

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

George Zebrowski lives in New York, and is a full-time writer. He has had stories in many magazines and original anthologies, including New Horizons Quarterly. His story “Heathen God” was a runner-up in the 1971 Nebula Awards. He is the author of two sf novels: The Omega Point (Ace) and Necrolife, a reportedly massive book forthcoming from Scribner’s. He has lectured on science fiction at University level. He is editor of the Bulletin of the Science Fiction Writers of America. All in all, he is a busy man, apart from writing reviews for Riverside Quarterly and Vector. And he is still quite young.

Pamela Sargent is another New Yorker about whom I know very little, save that she writes a very good review. She has had stories published in EQM, F&SF, Universe, etc., and has a novel called Cloned Lives to be published in 1974.

Peter Roberts is the name given to a substance which fills a colourful set of clothes. May be observed at conventions looking somewhat above it all, except when taking embarrassing photos. Has a reputation as a fannish fan, but is a Secret Intellectual. Has been letting his mask slip a little of late. Professes an unhealthy interest in aardvarks, possibly due to a slight resemblance.

Brian Aldiss, Chris Priest, Bob Shaw, and Roger Zelazny are all famous.

Malcolm Edwards is a well-known publisher from Harrow.

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From:

Malcolm Edwards
75A Harrow View
Harrow
Middx HA1 1RF

There’s room here for an advert, a few words of wisdom, or a funny fannish interlineation. Unfortunately I can’t think of any of those. Not that there’s any room left if I could.
I like all of them for different reasons, because I wrote all of them for different reasons. I dislike is equally unanimous, for all the same they did not achieve. I never, sure in the most general, conversational terms, say what I was attempting to do in a particular piece, because I have really said all that I was able or cared to say about it in the piece itself. If it requires explanation then it is not effective, and for this reason not worth wasting time over. If it is effective then the act of explanation becomes an exercise in redundancy.

So much for the ideas and intended affects.

This leaves then the purely subjective impulses themselves which stirred my thinking and feeling equipment into motion along the lines that led to the books. I am not at all desirous of sharing more than a few of the outer circles of my spirit with my readers, and with this proviso in mind I will tell you some of the things that helped to poke various book-shaped holes in my consciousnessness in times by. I will mention three items per book:

This Immortal/...and Call Me Conrad. 1) My first book. At the time of its inception, anything over 25,000 words in length seemed next to infinite.

Question: What could I do to be assured an ample supply of material? Answer: Have lots of characters representing different attitudes, so that the narrator would always have someone to talk to or talk about. Question: Who does this very well? Answer: Aldous Huxley. Decision: Bear this in mind in constructing the cast of characters, including a monomaniac scientist as a note of thanks for the assist, but take nothing else. Do not lean too heavily on anyone. 2) The particular Mediterranean afflatus I wanted came very close to my feelings as aroused by Lawrence Durrell's Prospero's Cell and Reflections on a Marine Venus. I felt this in the opening sequence and tried to avoid it in the later ones, as I was aware of my susceptibility at that time. 3) I reread Cavafy and Seferis as I wrote, to balance the influences and to keep things in Greece while I was about it.

Dream Master/He Who Shapes. 1) I wanted a triangle situation; two women and one man, as I had never written one before. 2) I wanted a character loosely based on a figure in a classical tragedy — exceptional, and bearing a flaw that would smash him. 3) I have never been overfond of German shepherds, as there were two which used to harass my dog when I was a boy. —I prefer the shorter version of this story, by the way, over the novelization.

Lord of Light. 1) I initially intended to destroy Yama partway through the book, but was subsequently taken by a feeling that he and Sam were two aspects of one personality. In my own mind, and I suppose there only, Sam and Yama stand in a relationship similar to that of Goethe's Faust and Nephi...
I 2) I wanted a triangle situ-

ation of sorts here also, only this time
involving two men and one woman. Sam,
Yama and Kali served. 3) It was in
writing this book that I came to re-
 realize the value of a strong female figure
or presence in a novel, to balance and
add another level of tension, apart —
or rather, abstracted — from the purely
sexual.

Isle Of The Dead. 1) The situation
of the main character in my novellette
"This Moment of the Storm" served as
the point of departure here, with the
pervasive sense of loss involved in
in living past or outliving what could
have been monumentally significant,
along with the uncertainty as to the
present moment's worth. 2) A beginning
consideration of the fact that the
psychological effects of actions per-
formed are often more significant than
the motives for those actions. 3) A
desire to relax after the narrative
line in Lord of Light.

Creatures of Light and Darkness.
1) A further desire to relax. This
book was not really written for public-
ation so much as my own amusement. It
achieved this end. 2) The Steel General
came first, as a character in a vacuum,
born of an early morning viewing of the
film "To Die in Madrid". 3) I wanted
to write a piece in which my feelings
for my characters were as close to zero
as I could manage.

Damnation Alley. 1) I wanted to do
a straight, style-be-damned action
story with the pieces fall wherever.
Movement and menace. Splash and color
is all. 2) A continuing, small thought
as to how important it really is
whether a good man does something for
noble reasons or a man less ethically
endowed does a good thing for the wrong
reasons. 3) Had the No play buried
near the end of the book-length version
been written first I would probably not
have written the book.

Nine Princes In Amber. I will re-
frain from saying anything about this
one, as the entire story is not yet
finished.

Jack of Shadows. 1) Macbeth and the
morality plays were on my mind here, as
were 2) 17th cent. metaphysical poetry,
in the soul & body dialogues and 3)
Jack Vance.

There you have three impulse-items
per book, with no assignment of rank
intended. Three seemed as good a
figure as any. I like ... And Call Me
Conrad because I was satisfied with my
central character. I dislike it be-
cause of the contrived nature of
several of the conflict scenes, which
I juggled about so that there would be
highpoints of action in each portion
whether it was serialized in two parts
or three. I like He Who Shaped for the
background rather than the foreground.
I thought it an effective setting for
the Rougemont-Wagner death-wish busi-
ness. I dislike it because Bender
turned out too stuffy for the figure I
was trying to portray and Jill was far
too flat a character. I like Lord of
Light for the color and smoke and folk
tale effects I wanted to achieve. I
dislike it because I unintentionally
let my style shift. The first chapter
and the final chapter, which succeeds
it temporally, are farther apart in
terms of tone than now strikes me as
appropriate. Everything that came
between caused me to drift from an
initial formalism. If I had to do it
again, I would rewrite the first chap-
ter though, rather than the rest of the
book. I like Isle Of The Dead because
I like Sandow, I like his world and I
was pleased with the course of the
action in it. I dislike it because I
was so pleased with the way it was
moving that I fear I clicked it over-
much in maintaining the pace and trying
to make everything fit neatly. I like
Creatures of Light and Darkness for the
sense of power the verfremdungseffekt
granted me in dealing with everything
and everybody in the piece. I dislike
it because I employed it only for that
purpose. I like Damnation Alley for
the overall subjection of everything in
it to a Stanislavsky-Boleslavsky action
verb key, "to get to Boston". I dis-
like it for the same reason. I like
Jack of Shadows for Jack, Rosalie,
Morningstar and the world in which they
act. I dislike it because I now think
I should have telescoped the action
somewhat in the first third of the book
and expanded it more in the final third,
producing a stronger overall effect.

Basically, coldly, I cannot single
out one of these books as preferred above the others, now. I like and dislike all of them, for very different reasons. These reasons have tended to alter as the world grows older and doubtless will continue to do so. I write to learn how to write. Therefore, the dislikes are more important to me than the likes, while the impulses involved are either totally frivolous or an angle-shot of the way my mind works, or both.

— Roger Zelazny

continued from p.6

During Philip Strick's brief visit he was handing out masses of leaflets concerning the Russian film *Solaris*. This opens at the Curzon Cinema, Curzon Street, London W.1 for an extended run from May 3rd. (Probably it will be on by the time you get this issue.) Whether or not you've read the novel on which it is based, this is clearly a film you're going to have to try to get to see. Don't try waiting a few years for it to appear at a Convention — their film facilities aren't generally too good on Cinemascope. The film, which is directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, won the Special Jury Prize at the 1972 Cannes Film Festival. I'll quote just a short section from the leaflet:

"The film is epic in length as well as appearance — it is 2½ hours in its Western version, edited by Tarkovsky himself. Its pace is calm, methodical, and hallucinatory. Few people will be able to forget its vivid, beautiful and disturbing images, or its unique story of a planet where nightmares come true..."

Because Philip's company is handling the U.K. release of *Solaris* he is unlikely to be reviewing it in his column (missing this issue, but hopefully back next time). If I can get along to it I'll try to say something about it next time.

I notice that in all the preceding stuff about OMPacon, I somehow managed to omit any reference to next year's Eastercon. It's Newcastle in '74. The bidding session on Saturday morning ended triumphantly for the Gannet mob, with the alternative London bid, headed by Bram Stoker, foundering and being effectively conceded (and certainly lost) in a very bitter-sounding speech from Bram, in which he accused us all of not really being interested in an sf convention, because we didn't want the kind of convention he wanted. The majority in favour of the Newcastle bid overreaching. And good luck to them. Advance registration is 50p, and I presume should go to the Treasurer, Hub Jackson, 21 Lyndhurst Road, Benton, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE2 9HT.

Although there's a little nervous about it all, the Gannets should be able to put on a good convention. I hope we'll be able to afford to go.

The first lot of awards for 1972 have been announced, and just for once it isn't the Nebulas. With few apologies to Cy Chauvin, who doesn't think I should put this kind of thing in an editorial column, these are the results of the first John W. Campbell Award for the best science fiction novel of the year, sponsored by the Illinois Institute of Technology and decided upon by a committee consisting of Brian Aldiss, Professor Tom Clareson, Barry N. Malzberg, Professor William McNaught and Professor Leon E. Stower:

**First Prize:** Beyond Apollo, by Barry Malzberg (Random House)

**Second Prize:** The Listeners, by James Cunn (Scribner's)

**Third Prize:** Fugue for a Darkening Island, by Christopher Priest (Faber)

**Special Awards:** Dying Inside, by Robert Silverberg (Scribner's)

As you might predict, being a jury award, this differs pretty radically from the lists in the other awards (only Dying Inside made the finals of the Hugo and Nebula). But it's a interesting list for all that, not least because it actually includes not
This is the special King-Size issue of Vector, containing about half as much again as any of the others I’ve done. This is not to be a regular thing; however. It happens this time because we have found another printer whose quote for a 56-page Vector is about the same as that of our previous printer for a 40-page issue. Assuming that this one turns out O.K., we have now switched from the old printer.

I’m not quite stupid enough to want to do six 56-page issues as a result; but it will result in a greater operational flexibility. Until now, the 40-page format has been both the minimum (from the point-of-view of a reasonable range of contents) and the maximum (from the point-of-view of cost). It will remain the standard size. But now, if the range of material won’t fit into the 40 pages, instead of having to leave out the reviews or the letters or something I’ll be able to increase the size a little. I don’t know quite why this issue has grown in the way it has partly it’s because Brian Aldiss offered at quite short notice to let me print another section of Billion Year Spree, and with the American edition looming (although the British one is now set for November 1st) it couldn’t very well wait. Apart from this, I’m afraid that with the unaccustomed opportunity to expand, this Vector just groved.

It’s time to say a few things about this issue. The interview with Gene Wolfe is constructed, as you probably guessed anyway, from a series of letters. I’ve done my best to give the whole thing, rather ramshackle when I started, a reasonable flow and continuity. I think it’s O.K., but if it isn’t it’s my fault. Another thing: I soon found that the possibility and ease with which one can be misunderstood when asking questions over 3-4000 miles meant that questions were spilled out in rather more detail than was really desirable in the finished article. I’ve therefore pared the questions down and omitted parts of them which are obvious by implication from the answers. If, on occasion, Gene Wolfe seems to be referring to something I’m supposed to have said when I don’t appear to have said it, this is the reason.

“The Man Who Could Work Miracles” is taken from the chapter of the same name in Billion Year Spree. Thanks to Brian Aldiss I’ve now had the opportunity to read the bulk of the book in galley proofs, and can say without any hesitation whatever that it is a book which every B.S.F.A. member is going to want and need in their collection when it appears.

Bob Shaw’s piece this time is reprinted from an Irish fanzine, George Charters’ The Scare. In answer to one or two enquirers, yes, Bob’s humorous writings are to be a regular feature of Vector in future, as long as our common tendency to do things at the last possible moment doesn’t interfere. They won’t all be reprints; Bob promises some new material as we go along. But I believe these articles will be new to the vast majority of B.S.F.A. members — they’re certainly new to me — and are well worth reprinting.

Next issue, something I’m unable even to contemplate at this precise moment of time, should be out in the first half of July — probably a little more than two months after this one; but then, this one is, of all outlandish things, a little early. No.66, in addition to all the regular stuff, will have an interview with D.G. Compton, plus an assessment of his work by Mark Adlard. If I can persuade Harry Harrison to send that article on Maker's Rock! Maker's Rock! he’s been promising for nearly a year now, that may be in there too. Otherwise, who knows? Whatever I say will probably turn out to be untrue, so I won’t say it.

Maybe there will be a supplement on house decorating after several months touring round hovels of various kinds we have finally found a flat which seems O.K. So unless something goes wrong (which of course it may, but we keep our fingers crossed) the next Vector may come from a new address. It’s not ideal by any means, but is rather less extortionate than other places we’ve seen, and we can just about afford it. See you next time. Please write!...
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GEORGE HAY and material from

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enquiries to

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Mike Coney
10827 Bowerbank
Sidney, B.C.
CANADA

Dear Malcolm: Many thanks for the plug on page 5 of Vector 63. I'm glad you enjoyed Mirror Image; I had my doubts about it as I knew I had crammed too many plots into too short a novel, and so all the time had to economise on words instead of being able to take the thing leisurely. When I re-read it, I got the impression that most of the book was devoted to hurried disposal of points arising before they threatened to take up too much space. I am sure I am my own severest critic but I did like the way the action moved along and was genuinely interested in some of the characters. Les Flood tells me Gollancz have now bought it — so at last I will be represented on the U.K. bookstands. It has been frustrating recently, DAW having bought three novels from me and Ballantine's one, but not a sale in the U.K. And I have heard mutterings of complaint in the U.S.A. because my stuff is too British, they say...

And as to No. 63 which was without question the most interesting issue of Vector that I have ever read. Brian Aldiss is a man whose stories I always seek out, rather than happen on by accident. Not only is he good, but he is recognised to be good — so much so that critics will take the trouble to defend his failures rather than ignore them entirely. I mean, I though Earthworks and An Age were poorly characterised and plotted, and lacking in any kind of interesting SF content. But the critics will go to lengths to say what they consider wrong with these books — they don't dismiss them in a word. And neither would I, because I read them both twice, which proves something... But it's easy to say that a writer is good and then to point out where his faults lie, so I will leave that angle. Here are my positive feelings about Aldiss' books.

Nonstop I picked from a shelf in Digit form ('Haunted by peril, he Found Himself') having never heard of Aldiss, as that was a long time ago. I have since read the thing about six times. I have thrust it on friends and told them to try it, and the ball with Digit's cover. Even if they have never read SF before, they have enjoyed it to a man, or woman. Not only have they enjoyed it, but they have been amazed by it; the old sense-of-wonder thing. In all my reading of SF there are three books that I would class above all others, and Nonstop is one. (The others are Ponzo and The Chrysalids, but I have a suspicion you will not agree with me there.) ++ Well, no. For one thing, I couldn't possibly pick just three books (though if I did they'd probably all be by Philip K. Dick). But I wouldn't argue with you. It's a good trio. ++

Naturally I was hooked on Aldiss from then on and have read everything since with varying degrees of delight and disgust, but always with interest. Novels or short stories, the man is always worth reading. The last time I was in England I bought The Hand-Reared Boy, took it back to Antigua, and it was the sensation of the island, and made me, socially. The plots and the
characters of all his books stick in my memory even now, years after I read some of them. (Even Earthworks and An Age...) There are vivid images still there; the Trapper's wedding in Bothes; Poyly and Gren; Soames and the declara-
tion ceremony; the Utods and their ex-
crement; the pig that had its insides
dissolved and smoked out...

And many others. Aldiss has a knack
with these scenes. But above all, he
compels me to read on... Which is
the mark of a writer and distinguishes him
from the over-publicized boxes which
surround us from every shelf, like
Bailey, and Metallicus... and Lem...
(Some time ago I made a pact with my-
self that I would never mention his name
in writing, because he received quite
enough undeserved mention without me
adding to it — but it's no good, I've
got to speak out. There the name is
again in Vector 63; just like it was in
62, and 61, and we didn't use his Christ-
ian name any more; we just call him Lem.
Everyone has heard of Lem. He's as well
known as Ballard, and Aldiss, and Delany,
and Simak. Except that the last four
made their names by virtue of a string
of excellent novels which gave enjoyment
to a hell of a lot of people, whereas
Lem's fame is based on stuff nobody's
read, apparently. But never mind, we
are soon to be inundated. And human
nature being what it is, the critics will
join in sheeplike bursts of praise. And
being what I am, I will refuse to read
this works, and steadfastly condemn them
as crap. Prejudice is the most honest
and satisfying of emotions.)

The excerpt from Aldiss' book was fas-
cinating. How a man can be a good crit-
ic and a good writer at the same time I
can't understand, but Aldiss manages it.
The other articles were all interesting
although I would liked see more; several
novels were hardly mentioned while Bare-
foot and Probability I received more
than their share of space, I felt. This
is not a valid criticism of the issue,
however; what I am really saying is that
Vector 63 ought to have been twice the
size.

++ I really think you ought to try and
have a go at Solaris — you never
know, you might like it (it has cer-
tain affinities with Mirror Image).
Franz Bottensteiner tells me, "The
trouble with you English and American
fans is really that so few of you

have any idea of what is going on in
the literatures of other peoples and
other countries." It's a criticism
I feel open to, which may be why I'm
prepared to give a respectful ear to
many of the things Franz and others
have said about Stanislaw Lem. It
seems unjustifiably xenophobic to
to dismiss the man as an unknown no-
body just because his work hasn't
appeared in English to any great
extent. And I hate to tell you
this, Mike, but had it not been for
your letter the dreaded name would
not have been mentioned anywhere in
this issue! (Bah bah, /// God
forbid that Vector 63 should have been
twice the size. I've started counting
my grey hairs as it is. But I'm
glad you enjoyed it. Speaking of
which... ++

Brian Aldiss
Beath House
Southmoor
Abingdon
Berksh.

Dear Melcolm, There wasn't a real chan-
ce at the recent festivities in the US
Embassy to tell you how
much I enjoyed the special surprise
packet of Vector 63. Great to see a
creative editor working on Vector, as
in Archie Mercer's day! Have I really
been twenty years in business? I'll
give you the same answer I gave Moorcock
and Ballard when I had to phone them on
my last birthday and they both asked me
why I sounded so cheerful about having
another birthday: "I'm just thinking
of what I've got away with all that

time!"

Thanks too, and a tear in the eye and
all that, to the friends who lied so
staunchly for me throughout the issue,
especially Andrew Stephenson, Jim Blish,
the incredible Philip Strick, who must
produce his own book on sf as soon as
possible, and of course my old mate
Harry Harrison, who gives as good as he
takes when it comes to friendship.
(Excuse — difficult letter to write —
quick blow of nose...) Actually, I feel
awful about 63, recalling the words of
Max Beerbohm, another man with a small
talent, who begged, "Do not by dith-
ranks hasten the reaction against me!"

All the same, may I say how much I
admired Dave Rowe's and Andrew's efforts
on your behalf? Andy has mentioned something of the story behind his power-
ful interpretation of my Frankenstein novel. He worked tremendously hard, and
that stunning illustration encapsulates many of the themes of the novel. All
the same, his other illus strikes even
der deeper. By God, it's Marston Street,
viewed from the kitchen door! Margaret
did and Harry and Jim will experience
the same pang I have. Marston Street
it is. And the ocean streaming above
the old church is a fine imaginative
effect. There Greybeard and Sali
Tree and many other terrible things
were written, there the Oxford Univer-
sity Speculative Fiction Group was born
— the beer stains are still on the
carpet. It makes you feel like a living
fossil, doesn't it?

You're a bit inaccurate about 80-
Minute Hour. It was written over a
long period, and includes covert refer-
ces to both Denmark and Mexico, which
happened to be flashing by at the time.
It was a slow write. Then came Frank-
enstein, a quick write, and clearly a
by-blow of my labours on Billion Year
Spree.

P.S. Both 80 Minute Hour and
Frankenstein Unbound will be published
by Jonathan Cape. As you probably
know, Billion Year Spree is coming from
Weidenfeld and Nicolson. I have been
weaned at last from the bosom of Faber,
after seventeen years and twenty books.

++ I had hoped to be able to hang on to
the originals of Andrew's two illus-
trations. But unfortunately he
prised them out of me. /// This is
the first Vector is quite a while to
carry a letter column, so this one
is going to be something of a grab-
bag. The next few letters all bark
back to Vector 62, which some of
you may still remember dimly. ++

Mark Adlard
22 Ham Lane
Lenham
Nr Maidstone
Kent

Dear Malcolm, Joanna Russ wasn't much
more than a name to me,
tenuously associated with the small but
increasing number of American writers
who are disenchanted with the pulp trad-
ition. Her article, however ("The
Wearing Out of Genre Materials") is a
specific and valuable contribution to
current argument.

I don't think Joanna Russ actually
says a single thing which stands on its
own as something new. But she has as-
ssembled a number of ideas which float
around in general debate, and placed
them in a useful frame of reference.
Discussion about whether, for example,
Niven has injected fresh blood into the
main stream of sf, or whether he is
merely a late flower on stock already
dead, is given greater clarity if one
has Joanna Russ' analysis in mind.

It is worth reminding people (or, to
be less kind, telling them for the first
time) that "third-stage" sf was being
produced in some volume by English
writers outside the genre, at precisely
that time when "second-stage" sf was
enjoying its heyday in the American
magazines. I think of Stapledon (Last
and First Men '31, Odd John, '35, Star
Maker, '37, Sirius '44); Huxley (Brave
New World '32; After Many A Summer '39,
Ape and Essence '43); Lewis (Out of the
Silent Planet '39, Voyager to Venus '43,
That Hideous Strength '45). Of the
three it seems that only Lewis was aware
of the American magazines.

In many ways Stapledon provides the
most instructive contrast with the "sec-
ond-stage" writers in the pulp tradition.
In Star Maker, for example, he constant-
ly tells the reader that he is not going
to describe such-and-such a thing:

"I must not tell in detail of the
heroic struggle by which..."

"It would be wearisome to describe
the insane warfare which ensued..."

On the other hand he constantly warns
the reader that he is going to describe
certain things in detail:

"Leaving all else unnoticed, I must
try to describe this crisis..."

"This change that had come over us
deserves to be carefully described
...

And so on, again and again. The
interesting point arising out of this
stylistic device is that the things he
says he won't describe are those things
by which the contemporary pulp writers
were earning their living — galactic
warfare and imaginary technologies. The things he insisted on describing were those things which the pulp writers left out — the nature of good and evil, of pain, of man's relation to the cosmos and to God.

It seems important to me that we should re-direct out attention to this other tradition of non-pulp sf. In the course of time genre sf may seem no more than a temporary excursion upon a mainstream of tradition which had no relationship with the American magazines. A few of the best writers who started in the pulp magazines have made the transition. Blish is one of the most eminent examples.

Unfortunately the effects of the pulp tradition on discrimination are still very strong, and help to account for the lack of interest in what I have called the "other tradition". This can be the only explanation why the sf shelves in the bookshops are currently overflowing with reprints from those two pioneers of the pulp tradition, E.R. Burroughs and H.G. Smith, whilst Stapledon can be obtained only through specialist or second-hand sources.

++ This letter, of course, was written before Penguin brought out their mass Stapledon reprint, making available all his sf except Odd John — it's incredible to think that Star Maker has taken over 35 years to reach paperback in this country. But I don't think it's fair to blame this neglect on the growth of genre sf. In the long run I suspect it will be fairer to thank the genre for cultivating a readership to give Stapledon the recognition he deserves. I think there are obvious parallels between his case and that of Mervyn Peake, another genuinely original talent whose books remained in almost complete obscurity until the public caught up with him. Maybe the time is ripe for somebody to launch the kind of rehabilitation of Stapledon's work as Mike Moorcock, Anthony Burgess, and a few others, managed for Peake in the late sixties. And it could just be that Billion Year Spree will provide the necessary first shove. Then, who knows? Last and First Men in Penguin Modern Classics? Could be...

Now back to Mark again, and another letter. ++

I cannot resist following my earlier letter with a couple of specific references:

Asimov (speaking on film recently shown at the American Embassy):

"The sf written in the 40s became fact in the 60s. When Armstrong stepped onto the moon it was justification of the work done by the writers in Campbell's stable."

C.S.Lewis (essay "On Stories" republished in Of Other Worlds):

"If some fatal progress of applied science ever enables us in fact to reach the Moon, that real journey will not at all satisfy the impulse which we now seek to gratify by writing such stories."

It seems to me that this paraphrase and quotation illustrates very succinctly the difference between second- and third-stage sf, and also between the American pulp tradition and the British non-pulp tradition.

James Blish
Treetops
Woodlands Road
Harpenden (Hemley)
Oxon.

Dear Malcolm, Philip Strick is far too kind to Silent Running.

Why put plants that need Earth-intensity sunlight in orbit around Saturn, a minimum of 740 million miles further out, with all the attendant extra energy to get them there, let alone maintain them and their crew after they arrive? How could Bern's ship survive plunging through the rings of Saturn, which the film shows as no worse than running head-on in a heavy gale? The rings are at least a mile thick and consist chiefly of what appear to be chunks of ammonia ice, and not in convenient cube sizes, either. How does it happen that when three of the domes are blown up in space, the observers in the fourth
hear the explosions? In fact, I can't recall a single scene in the film, right down to the smallest, that doesn't require some explanation which is never forthcoming. Even the score — not counting the songs of Joan Baez, which seem to be there only to further reinforce the Lesson — shows that however good Peter Schickele may be at burlesquing Mannheim-school composers it's unsafe to turn him loose on his own. ... Tony Sudbery ignores my careful limitation of my introduction to More Issues At Hand to the technical critic (I took two long paragraphs to mention some of the many other kinds, and rules them out of my discussion), who like it or not does address himself primarily to the writer and editor. Reviews are aimed primarily at the reader, and anybody who wants to bother comparing the Athing books with F&SF book columns will see the difference at once.

++ Couldn't agree with you more about Silent Running, which compounded all its scientific idiocies by committing the cardinal sin of boring me. If I'd paid to see it I'd have felt really cheated... Sorry, Jim, but you have committed a cardinal sin yourself — that of offending our man in Austria. ++

Franz Rottensteiner
Felsenstrasse 20
2762 Ortsmann
AUSTRIA

Dear Malcolm, I really don't understand James Blish: is his memory failing him, is he fishing for compliments in a very curious way, or has his dislike for me reached such heights that his reasoning powers have suffered? (++ Puzzled readers are referred to Vector 62, p.34 ++) I could answer him that he underestimates me: he has no idea of what expressions of contempt I am capable when I think I have treated him with the utmost contempt "up to now". But such flippancy probably isn't necessary. Besides, what he says simply isn't true; for one thing, James Blish hardly is in a position to pass any judgement on all I have written about him, for the simple reason that there undoubtedly is much that he has never seen; and while most of it is unfavourable, not everything is unfavourable. As to the specific case of Solaris, I have quite explicitly commented (in a letter to him) on several points of his F&SF review that I thought especially perceptive; so why should Blish now be "stunned" to find his name included in an enumeration of people who liked Solaris? or indeed, why should he think such a mere listing has any special significance either for him or me? And that makes me the devil who would quote Scriptures?

I must also deny that my favourite word "for the rest of us" is "dishonesty": my favourite word probably is "book". I may have used "dishonesty" one or two times, and if Blish wants to assert that I used it more often than that, or more often than hack, he is invited to count it. It seems to me that Blish may be allergic to this word since he himself likes to apply it to such journals as Time Magazine or Partisan Review; but I certainly once accused him of literary cheating.

What I'd like to know of Mr Blish now is whether he includes the fact that I translated his "Cathedrals in Space" in my German language fanzine, or that we made him a German offer for A Case Of Conscience among the alleged "expressions of utmost contempt"? It's of course Mr Blish's privilege as an author to prefer bad translations to good, a paperback deal to a combined hardcover/paperback sale, and the publisher of Lewis B. Patten, Dorothy Eden and Poul Anderson to the publisher of T.S. Eliot, Hermann Hesse and James Joyce; but the fact that we made him an offer is hardly evidence for his claims and I should also think that offering somebody a contract is of somewhat greater significance than a few remarks in the most ephemeral of publications, the sf fanzines.

Gee, do they really have Dorothy Eden in Germany too? (Totally irrelevant editorial comment.) ++

Ursula Le Guin
3321 NW Thurman
Portland
Oregon 97210
U.S.A.

Dear Malcolm, I was glad to see your
discussion of the last Hugo awards, disseminating the information Locus gave us. I have felt extremely unhappy about the whole thing, ever since I read that Locus. It is almost impossible to say anything about it, though, and I don’t know who to say it to. I do immensely appreciate the honor — it is a real honor — of being nominated and voted for by all those people, all those strangers who have “set” one only in one’s book — it gives a pleasure that no nomination or award from a selected jury could give. But this “Australian ballot” (my conviction is that it’s called that because it turns everything upside down) spoils it all. My novel, which clearly placed a poor third, comes in second; Anne McCaffrey’s, which are clearly placed first, comes in third! Well, all that juggling and recounting is supposed, I suppose, to insure justice. But it doesn’t. First place is first place, and when people vote for it that’s what they want — and that’s the only place the business end of science fiction, the editors and publishers, are going to pay any attention to at all. They wouldn’t care less who makes second, third, and fourth; all they care about is The Prize. I think the book that received the most votes for The Prize should get the prize. And, if justice or consolation is what the Hugo committee are after, then perhaps they could designate all the second-third-fourth-fifth people, the runners-up, as “Hugo Honor Books” or something, as the Newbery Awards committee has recently taken to doing.

As it is, I haven’t been able to bring myself to vote on the Hugo nominations at all yet this year, because I have this feeling that however I vote they will add it up to come out to just the opposite of what I meant!

Your reply to Christopher Evans’ letter in No. 62 is absolutely right — for England; but alas, not for America. There are a few excellent reviews (Horn Book for instance) and reviewers, but in general writing for children puts one in a ghetto just as writing of dogs; and people say to me with hearty camaraderie, “I know you write for children, do you write real books too?” In fact, to put it rather crudely but I think accurately, literature for children here is considered woman’s work — in every sense of the word.

I think the only answer with the Hugos is just to vote for first place and leave the rest blank. That’s what I eventually decided to do last year, after concluding that it was hard enough to pick winners in each category without having to rank the also-runs as well. Of course, by the time I’d reached this conclusion the deadline for ballots had passed...
make people accept your viewpoint on a book as the most logical and correct one. If someone adopts the above attitude, however, he can only alienate the writer and reader; I've yet to see anyone convinced by an insult.

Having done something to remedy those omissions, we get back to the vicinity of 1973, and Vector 63. Rev. L.S. Hinch comments on Philip Strick's article therein: "Perhaps it was too obvious to have mentioned, but the painting (++, i.e., Holman Hunt's 'The Hiring Shepherd' ++) was obviously inspired by John 10, 12 & 13, 'He that is a hiring, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep. The hiring fleeth because he is an hiring, and careth not for the sheep' (A.V. which Holman Hunt would have used). I always took it that the point of the painting was that the Church was becoming too much involved in other things to care properly for the sheep. Compare Hunt's painting with Breughel the Elder's in which the wolf is devouring one sheep and the shepherd is running away. I may be wrong and I can't check as I have not been able to put my hands on a copy of Hunt's work, but I always believed that a wolf was shown hiding in the far corner of the picture, watching the sheep. This is part of the 'chill in the afternoon' and five minutes later not only would the hiring shepherd 'have' the girl, but the wolf would 'have' the sheep ..." Archie Mercer thought it seemed hardly right for the author of Report on Probability A to condemn anything, even Clark Ashton Smith, as unreadable, though he added that Brian Aldiss was one of the few authors around whom a special issue could profitably be based. Gene Wolfe thought "To Barsoom and Beyond" was "wonderful,— truth and twaddle, but always delightful. I'm going to get Aldiss's book." Ah well, that's another one sold!

On to Vector 64, and first of all a word from the star of the piece, Philip K. Dick: "Above all, I would like to express to you my amazement at the illustration on page seven — it's by Hunter, is it? The android and the human locked in battle. When I saw it, I realized that the artist had caught in his drawing so much of what I had tried to convey in the speech that I could not believe my eyes. Although over many years I have had many, many of my stories illustrated, I don't recall ever being so astonished and delighted. The illustration was indeed by Alan Hunter — in one of my characteristic moments of stupidity I once again forgot to credit the artwork. The cover was by Ames, whose style you'll probably recognize by now anyway. Incidentally, Philip Dick is particularly interested in getting reactions to "The Android and the Human", so if you were thinking of commenting and then didn't, please think again. Among those who did comment were Richard Cotton and L.O. Evans, neither of whom was in agreement with the actions advocated in the article. I don't think Philip Dick would advocate them, either, in a normal situation — I think the point is that in an extreme situation you have to make what counteraction you can, even if it is entirely negative. Tony Sudbury, not noted as a Dick fan, thought I should have cut the article to make room for the letter column, whose omission, he said, Ought Not To Be Done. He didn't help it, though, by writing at brief and non-quotable length. E.R. James, one of the more regular correspondants, never fails to cheer me up with his kind comments. He seemed to enjoy everything, although the other items paled a little beside the Dick article. He also wonders how I find the time and application ... well, there's not much else to do in the asylum, I'm afraid ... And finally, there was Andrew Wainer, who writes rock criticism for Cream and has the odd distinction of having his only short story published in Again, Dangerous Visions. He's another raving Dick fan, liked the reviews and layout, but spoiled his record by not finding Bob Shaw's piece funny. He's doing some es-orientated articles for Cream, by the way — but more of this later.

And that's all for this time. Do write. I look forward to hearing from you.
BSFA news

edited by ARCHIE MÉNAGER

GRAND REOPENING OF LIBRARY Our Book Library, containing a reasonably vast amount of SF and fantasy in both hard and soft covers, is alive and well at the M.E. London Polytechnic. The address is:

Peter Nicholls
Science Fiction Foundation
North East London Polytechnic
Dorking Precinct
Longbridge Road
Jagenham, Essex
RM6 2AS

Borrowing fees are 2p per paperback and 3p per hardback, plus postage both ways. Members may borrow up to three books at a time, no more than two of which may be hardbacks. A recent addenda/deletions list is available from the library address. Previous catalogues are still available from the BSFA Treasurer, though a reshuffle of such holdings is in the air. Good reading!

...AND A FEW Fanzines The Association's Fanzine Foundation (Keith A. Walker, 3 Cromer Grove, Burnley, Lancs) also claims to be back in business, and catalogues are promised for the near future, if not before. Watch this space for further news from this department.

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT it might as well be mentioned that the magazine section of the Association's Library remains in the far-flung custody of Joe Bowman, Balnake, Ardgay, Ross-shire, Scotland, IV24 3DJ.

Dr. Norman Cockburn Members will be sorry to learn that the Rev. Jr. Norman Cockburn has felt impelled to resign from the Association owing to ill-health. He has recently undergone several operations on his eyes, and we can only hope and trust that they will prove successful.

JAC. G. LINWOOD (39): 125 Crickwennock Rd, Laleworth, Middx. "Other" interests: Cinema, Military Modelling, Wargaming. Geographical preferences:

anywhere.

David C. Donielow (36): 27 George St., Conssett, Co.Durham, DH6 5LN. Ice-skating, motoring.

Hanna M. O'Hara (37): 8 Shirley Drive, off Knutsford Rd, Grappenhall, via Warrington, Cheshire. ESP, Sociology, Reading. USA, Commonwealth.

Allan J. Over (21): 5 Bresbyne Rd, Wyke, Chesh. Postal Diplomacy, Climbing. UK, USA.


David F. Tillotson (27): Flat 1, 96, Burning Rd, Liverpool, L7 5NH. Electronics, All Art Forms, Peace & Unity, DIY lego. Russia, USA, etc.

Alan E. Woodruffs (29): 19 Twentywell Rd, Sheffield, S1 4PU. Music, Wine & Beer Making, Photography. UK, USA.

Christine Ogien (Miss) (37): 35 Keswick Drive, Cullercoats, North Shields, Northumberland. Astronomy, Drama, Classical Guitar, Ancient History. UK, USA.


Jennifer Elson (29): 16 Stafford Drive, Wigginton, Leicester, LE1 2TA. Ancient Greek History, Writing, Travel. USA.

SF ART A spread of sheets concerning THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION ART EXHIBITION has drifted onto your News Editor's desk. They concern, amongst other things, the exhibiting of artwork at this year's World S.F. Convention, in Toronto over the August/September weekend. For full particulars, contact the ISFYE Art Show Directors; John & Bjo Trimble, P.O.Box 74666, Los Angeles, CA 90004, USA.

S.F. FOUNDATION REPORT The S.F. Foundation (which is looking after our book-library for us) has issued a Report on its activities. Dated January 1973, the Report is in fact a well-written and interesting resume of the Foundation's aims, organization and activities. Peter Nicholls (address above under "Grand Reopening of Library") may possibly have some to spare for those who are interested. This Department recommends it as well worth reading.
SMALL-ADS

Britain's only magazine of speculative fiction is now in print! Copies of the latest issue are available for 15p each, or 40p for 3 issues, from:

Kevin Smith, Oriel Coll, Oxford

Stories and artwork would also be gratefully received by the editor:

Allan Scott, New College, Oxford

GRANFALLOON The U.S. Hugo nominee fanzine now has a British agent! Copies available for 30p each, 3/85p, from:

Philip Payne, Longmead, 15 Wilmerhatch Lane, EPSOM, Surrey

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POSTCODES would you believe:

3 Mercer, Archie: please add TR13 8LE

CORRECTIONS In the "Correspondents Wanted" section last issue, Belgian fan Simon Jouke was credited with an interest in the fictitious science of 'phiology'. It should have been philology, of course. He adds: "More in particular, I like 'artificial' languages, like Tolkien produced in LotR. And we got his address wrong too (powers—that—be please note): it's not Haantjelslei; it's Haantjeslei.