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ALDISS, SILVERBERG,
LE GUIN & BLISH
analysed

PHILIP JOSÉ
FARMER
interviewed



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this trilogy, tells of Ged's schooling as a mage, of his tragic error and his struggle to rectify it by reversing the harm. As such it is a straightforward quest, but the tale is also symbolic of Ged's struggle to conquer himself. In Goethe's words: "In self-imitation the Master is first known".

Ged learns that the essence of a thing is its true name. When a man learns the true name of a thing he possesses that thing. In Earthea this is the basis of all magic, but it is also a complex metaphysical truth.

"As their eyes met, a bird sang aloud in the branches of the tree. In that moment Ged understood the singing of the bird, and the language of the water falling in the basin of the fountain, and the shape of the clouds: it seemed to him that he himself was word spoken by the sunlight."

(1988; page 46)

Earthea is an ordered world, very much in the mould of the romantic, medieval ideal: a literally fragmented continent consisting of numerous small island kingdoms. We do not see the greed of merchants and callousness of rulers, nor the plight of clerks and peasants, but this is no real fault (unless you query the whole raison d'être of fantasy). The focal point of the first book is the individual, Ged. His views form the child's perspective; there is reward in hard study, though the tasks may seem arduous and pointless:

"Ged sighed sometimes, but he did not complain. He saw that in his dusty and fathomless matter of learning the true name of each place, thing and being, the power he wanted lay like a jewel at the bottom of a dry well. For magic consists in this; the true naming of a thing. He had never seen a man who had done this. They first night in the Tower, he never repeated it, but he did not forget his words. They were words of great power, he had said, 'has great life what life it finds out the name of the single thing.'"

(1988; page 48/7)

But the message is far from being purely didactic. Le Guin involves her reader (child or adult) in Ged's growing problems, and his first confrontation with genuine evil loses his shadow upon the Earth; the antagonistic he.

The unleashing of his shadow is a set-back from which he almost never recovers, and the death of the Archmage in saving time is but a further reason for him to despair. In spite of quick and easy learning, a period of slow, arduous re-learning follows for Ged. The simple things have become hard, but within Ged there has been a change for the better. He has made his mistake and has learnt from it - now he must ensure that he does not err again in acquiring his true powers. And more, he is determined to meet the evil he has loosed and defeat it, even if in that struggle he loses his own life.

He becomes a sage (ultimately he will be the Archmage) and is sent to the small island of Low Turning. The post is a modest one for a wizard, and Ged (known as Sparrowhawk) begins to display those qualities and characteristics which become more apparent in the two later books. He has learnt to shun riches, to shun any abuse of his power. He is in possession of both modesty and kindness, and so when he encounters and overcomes the great dragon, Yevaud, this victory has an added sweetness.

Thus far the story could be seen to be very much within the original Christian ethic. Ged has done some evil and has repented. He now seeks to redeem himself, but avoids temptation in achieving that goal. This is all easily understood by child and adult. But Le Guin is already moving beyond this simplistic child, and leading us carefully with her.

Ged is now hunted by his shadow and lives before it, fearing to touch it and be transformed. He has a dream where the shadow is destroyed if he is present in the dream. He is waiting for the full moon.

of his powers. But in fleeing he gives the shadow strength, for it feeds on his fear. After a long flight, he turns and faces the thing he fears and pursues it. He gains strength from this action and ultimately, at the farthest reaches of Earthea, beyond all lands, he meets and defeats his shadow:

"Now when he saw his friend and heard his speak, his doubt vanished. And he began to see the truth, that Ged had neither lost nor won, but, naming the shadow of his death with his own name, had made himself whole: a man: who, knowing his whole true self, cannot be used or possessed by any power other than himself, and whose life therefore is lived for life's sake and never in the service of ruin, or pain, or hatred, or the dark."

(1988; page 100)

Ged loses his fear of death and with it becomes a whole man. Later, in the last book of the trilogy, this encounter with "himself" is crucial in that it provides Ged with the strength to overcome the greatest of evils. We are given a brief taste of what Le Guin intends eventually to lay before us in full, Yin and Yang, the precarious balance.

The Tombs of Atuan continue the story several years on. We are introduced to Ahar, the eldest one, young High Priestess of the Nameless Ones. Atuan is the home of the ancient gods, savage and evil. There is something almost Lovecraftian about the mood created, yet Le Guin dilutes this with her description of Ahar's reluctant perversion. A gay young child becomes a cold, inhuman killer in the service of the gods. But her spirit is not entirely subdued, and in her investigations of the Tombs she displays inordinate courage and resilience. Her passive, sullen opposition to Kossil and Thar, her mentors, later turns to open defiance when she meets Ged who has entered the forbidden tombs to recover a potent treasure.

"Ahar brooded awhile and said, 'They must have been very brave men, or very stupid, to enter the Tombs. Don't they know the powers of the Nameless Ones?'"

"No," Kossil said in her cold voice. "They have no gods. They were magic and think they are good themselves. But they are not. And when they die, they are not forgotten. They become what the gods are, and their ghosts shine on the wind a little while till the wind blows them away. They do not have immortal souls."

"But what is this magic they were?" Ahar asked, enthralled. She did not remember having said even that she would have killed any one who would touch the things in the Inner Lands. "How do they do it? What magic is that?"

"Tricks, deception, jugglery," Kossil said.

(1988; page 63)

Ged is trapped in the Tombs, encountering the powers of the Nameless Ones. His strength is sapped in the process of fending them off and so it seems to Ahar that his powers are small. She toys with him at first, giving him enough water to live, waiting to see what magic he will evoke if left there long enough.

"The truth was that she was afraid to touch him. She was afraid of his power. The only he had used it when the Sunburst, the gateway that kept the light burning and hot, had that he used it to feed her. The power that ruled in the dark places were on her side, not his."

It is in this book that the story moves from the world of the first two books, Earthea and Atuan, to the world of the third book, The Tombs of Atuan. The story is now told from the perspective of the young High Priestess of the Nameless Ones, Ahar.

"He bowed his head. His long hands, copper-brown, were quiet on his knees. She saw the fourfold scar on his cheek. He had gone farther than she into the dark; he knew death better than she did, even death ... A rush of hatred for his rose in her, choking her throat for an instant. Why did he sit there so defenceless and

growth, then death must be its antithesis: purposelessness and stasis.

"Instead of fear, then, great pity rose up in Arren, and if fear underlay it, it was not for himself but for us all. For he saw the mother and child who had died together, and they were in the dark land together; but the child did not run, nor did it cry, and the mother did not hold it, nor ever look at it. And those who had died for love passed each other in the streets."

(TFS; page 182)

It is not a vision to instill nightmares in the child or the adult. Rather, it is a sad, convincing image that genuinely involves and moves the reader. Yes, that is how I would think death to be, was my own reaction. No hellfire, no pain, no passion; those are of life. Death must be as Le Guin sees it here, or it is nothing.

God triumphs and Arren becomes the One King who can unite all the fragmented lands under a benevolent monarchy. This is still fantasy, and has its own laws; Equilibrium is tenuously restored and God, tired, returns home to his mountain island of Gont.

I have missed such: the Children of the Open Sea, the numerous small incidents that form the meat of each book, the care and consistency with which Le Guin constructs her world, her characters, her themes. I had thought also to compare *Earthsea* to Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, but any comparisons are the superficialities of all such fantasies: dragons, fantastic kingdoms, wizards and allegory. The basic difference is in emphasis. Tolkien seems to wish for stasis and a return to simplicity, and whilst Le Guin shares this vision, hers is a progressive, not regressive, viewpoint.

I began by stating that children need examples, and we should take care to ensure the seed we sow is the best we have if we expect the ripening of healthy adults. *Earthsea* is the best seed we could offer our children. I also began by invoking the words of Schopenhauer on women, who have shared the historic fate of blacks and children - to be denied the virtue of intelligence:

"More fittingly than the fair sex, women could be called the unesthetic sex. Neither for music, nor poetry, nor the plastic arts do they possess any real feeling or receptivity: if they affect to do so, it is mere mimicry in service of their effort to please."

("On Women": Arthur Schopenhauer: *Parerga und Paralipomena*)

It is only recently that this popular misconception has been dispelled (and, indeed, in some quarters it still exists). It is a pity then that we must still treat the child in the manner in which Schopenhauer would have us treat such as Ursula Le Guin. *Earthsea* is a hopeful sign and should be embraced as a model of what juvenile literature can aspire to.

After all, why should juvenile remain a term of derision?

Earthsea by Ursula K. Le Guin; March 1977; Gollancz; London; £4.25; ISBN 0-575-02274-4; comprising: *A Wizard Of Earthsea* (181 pp); *The Tombs Of Atuan* (160 pp); *The Farthest Shore* (206 pp)

A GALACTIC SYMPHONY

AN EVALUATION OF THE
CITIES IN FLIGHT
NOVELS OF JAMES BLISH

by

Martin I Ricketts

"... this is rightly woolly talk, without doubt, but it won't do you any harm to think for a moment about writing as an art that exists in the same universe with other arts."

--- William Atheling Jr. (James Blish)

Whether or not they represent his best work, the *Cities In Flight* novels will perhaps be James Blish's most enduring contribution to the field of science fiction. In all they utilise more or less the whole of orchestra from near-future socio-political speculation through hard scientific extrapolation to out and out space opera. Yet their beginnings were small. In one of his introductions Blish admitted that the germ of the series was a single short story in which he foolishly

"set out to throw away in 10,000 words an idea of Wagnerian proportions". In the event, it took him fifteen years properly to realize the concept of *Cities In Flight*.

The above quote is revealing of what may perhaps be the most significant outside influence on Blish's work: that of music. Indeed, the first novel of the series, *They Shall Have Stars*, has a prelude, an intermezzo and a coda - terms normally associated with only music. It seems not unreasonable therefore to suppose that the series as a whole could be considered



in terms of a musical clock rendered as literature
Cities in Flight is a classic symphony in four movements,
each movement exploring its own themes and moods. Not
all of them are equally successful. The most successful
them of the "Cities" - the flying cities (2)

Bliss himself claimed that They Shall Have Wings is a
prologue to the series as a whole - and indeed it
is. If Cities in Flight is viewed as a whole but it
is almost perfect example of "music as literature"
It is in opera-form. In which two of four but
contrasting ideas are developed as length and to
their logical conclusions, each one aided by the
right the other came an 1st (2) The can never names
are drawn from Bliss's early stories "Bridge" and
"At Death's Door". In the prologue the direction is
which they will be developed in further, especially
in its closing sentence, which might be regarded as
an elegant epitaph of the series as a whole: "We
was thinking about us (immortal) and also from star
to the faster than light" This theme the Development
in a company called Parsons & Hope in developing
an anti-gravity (a longways drug). In one section
explains a "bridge to nowhere" is being built and tested
unknown in most of reader writing on it. It is part
of a search for an anti-gravity device. The leading
characters of each theme are thoughtful of the need for
such of what is happening - doubt sustained by the
evidence that covers everything. Although the world
war still exists between the Soviet bloc and the west.
In each bloc the secret police have become an strong
that the two blocs are now almost identical. Several
Bliss suggests realizes that soon the Soviet bloc
will take over the West, and that the only chance for
freedom any man will have is to escape. Hence the
need for an anti-gravity device and a longways
device and independent means of travel to space
Headlines in news of reader writing on it. What might
he called the first "Cities" (this name seems to
apply equally well to the flying cities or their
inhabitants) begins to depart, Pogorel decides to
stay behind. Near the end of the recapitulation is
a moment that is both sad and beautiful: Pogorel
now faces almost certain death, and as a side effect
it would probably have been written to a reader:

"Why - did you do it, then? Paiga said
"Why? Pogorel said. "You know the answer to that
you tell me what it is. . . ."

It's the thing that jumps out of the cage
I suppose that I'd call it Cynicism

Pogorel looked startled. "Is that really what you
want to call it?" he said. "Cynicism is a nasty in-
sensitive. I should have given it another name.
Perhaps you'll amend it later, somewhere, someday
out by Aldebaran."

This novel has, to me, a snagging And a term "foes an
hand" - he has the other three. That is characters
also in at a minimum simply because the characters
are developing as the action of the flying cities and
so the development of that action. At times we
can't help feeling that such as a prey: there are
easy (all) moments in Cities in Flight that some
faded characterization might have followed. But
the reader who likes his science fiction to be traditional
and highly intelligent will not be disappointed

The next movement is undoubtedly the odyssey - the
light aircraft. Like For The Stars as a juvenile
advent reader without have to his enjoyment of the
series as a whole (Generally, it can be enjoyed
as a novel on its own, he can still be advised in the
sequence.) It concerns the apprehension of a mission of
a boy - Chris deFord - equally improbably man-ganged
into the crew of Scroton as it is novel to go "Cities"
At length he finds himself transferred to New York

where he meets Roger John Ashby, the protagonist
of the next two novels, and becomes New York's
city manager. After a life For The Stars ending in
board of defense in Cities in Flight ends its clear
reference to the fact that the City Fathers - a network
of the city's work centers each a planet called Epoch

The weight of the work is sustained by Barthens Case Home
Although the theme goes of particular incidents
are relevant to the series as a whole, it is another
not satisfying as a novel in its own right. It comes
to a close in a manner that is a mixture of
tragedy - which is exactly what it is. Though such
is Bliss's skill (but only area is as readily apparent
only because of, as it were, a natural break. Apart
from the fact that all the episodes follow the
adventure of New York and its inhabitants, the theme

That V, a vague Christian, remains a veritable anxiety.
This report is mentioned in passing several times through
out the novel. But only towards the end does the
apparently - and the realization - come for New York
to confront that V. It cannot therefore claim to have
satisfactorily, more really than in parts with an issue,
but just give another one on top of it - this being
exactly the procedure of all the novel's episodes
from Cities to "Shinnahovich". (3) Thus Bliss himself,
comparing science fiction writers to composers. It
might just as well be put up one's overall impression
of Barthens Case Home. The greatest fault of this

intriguingly, the (repeated) age and intent do not become
of action whose purpose and intent do not become
of the light of the light of the light of the light
fully mysterious. Light is a superior being the

in their actions at any time even telegraphically,
the reader at least knows that they are about. In
Barthens Case Home - and, to a lesser extent elsewhere
in Cities in Flight - he often does not

and humor, but the narrative grips only intermittently,
and because of the and predictability - even by Bliss's
size controls some moments of gratuitous violence -
something unusual in itself. Of all the novels it is
the most difficult to think of as a work of science fiction.
It is more like a novel than a moment of a symphony.
It is a collection of
classical then it is

However, much of a flash of Cynicism - the right word -
is cynicism. Here is the true recapitulation:
the full theme of immortality and unlimited space

the end of the universe (and the start of several new
ones). It starts slowly, with a philosophical quest of the
type we have become accustomed to with Bliss and
concerning from the Warrior of God (withstanding
Bliss's comment in the author's Note, the judgment
of the editor who wished to cut from it all) each
novel was bound (and the current page is stretched,
however, so are carried more or less straight through

to reach James Bliss for giving us a series starting in
its power here, the logical extrapolation of present
knowledge and probability so that the reader perceives
through a quiver from the known to the unknown - was the
New York Herald Tribune's reviewer on They Shall Have
Wings: It is even more appropriate for Cities in Flight.
What makes that the characters tend to believe each

ever written. But the idea is not all: James Blish's talent is too subtle for that. Amalfi - and to a lesser extent the other characters (notably Des Hasleton, a woman who has featured so far as more or less only a romantic interest) - become slightly more rounded:

"The end of time was certainly sizable enough as a problem ... but it provided him with nobody with whom to negotiate and, if possible, swindle a little."

Amalfi is a schemer and a plotter - these novels are indeed picaresque. But in this novel he suffers a slight come-uppance, which seems to carry the moral - if there is one - of the whole work:

"I know well that you are fabulously inventive; but human lives should not hang upon the success of a work of art..."

Two Jobs, "telling the whole story of Amalfi's life".

The unknown ends in *Clash of Cymbals* - no saying whether for Blish (Clash is Flight as we know from *First Man*). But there is money here too: in another review of *A Clash of Cymbals* it has been pointed out that "Clash of Cymbals" was presumably the date (the legend according to the *Scientific* magazine). (8)

The subtlety and power of *A Clash of Cymbals* is insidious, and I would guess that it has been the inspiration for at least one other novel. (6) Blish once wrote that the solution of a story should be surprising or inevitable but preferably both. That maxim is here beautifully achieved: *Cities in Flight* ends in a crescendo of fabulous invention, and its sound is unmistakably the creation of James Blish.

(1) Writing as Wm. Atheling Jr., James Blish emphasized in an essay in *The Issue At Hand* (Advent; Chicago, 1964; p 38) the virtues of symphonic development and

explained why it should be applied to literature. Nor is the idea of the symphony rendered as literature new. The most recent example is probably Anthony Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony*.

(2) & (3) *The Issue At Hand* (p. 38)

(4) Too much should not be made of this "fault". Scientists discussing their work would in my mind be more likely to lecture one another than would "ordinary" people engaged in "ordinary" conversation, especially if one of them did not know too much about the topic under discussion and wished to learn (or, of course, if the one speaking happened to be a bore - which could apply equally well to "ordinary" conversation). It seems to me not to be as "unnatural" as some other critics have implied.

(5) *J'n Goddard 14 Cyber 4* (March, 1973) published in *Science Fiction*

(6) *An Age* by Brian W. Aldiss. Though admittedly circumstantial, the evidence is strong. *An Age* is dedicated "for James Blish whose cities fly words too", and is prefaced by a quote from St. Augustine who is also quoted in *A Clash of Cymbals*. Consider, among others, a passage on p 71 of the Faber edition of *A Clash of Cymbals*: "... If there were worlds and galaxies of anti-matter, they existed only in some metaphysical separate existence where time and the strange gradient ran backwards, and as a result they were running down, as losing energy with each transaction. Though the two arrows of time seem to be pointing in opposite directions, they probably point downhill, like fingerboards at the crest of a single road".

CULTURE, ANARCHY AND SF

A FEW LATE THOUGHTS ON FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND

by
Brian Griffin

In 1973 100 books were published which might not be considered to have any direct connection with the novel, but a very accurate survey of what might be called the State of the Language, by a lecturer in English (Language at University College, Swansea) with the title and a slightly fantastic piece of self-education to *Frankenstein Unbound* by Brian Aldiss, and the *Survival of English* by Dr. Leavis's moral assumptions and cultural elitism, while Aldiss's background is, of course, mainly of me, apart from the coincidental fact that Robinson holds the post vice head of Swansea by University Act, that seems appropriate in these late 1970s. For me, marks the point at which these two widely opposite opinions met, with revealing consequences. I'd like to sketch out some of the implications, which I think are pretty vast. First, then, the Robinson's *The Survival of English*. Robinson's message amounts to this: that while we in this country still go on speaking Latin, we are losing our language, which is a way of conducting events in the world and thereby making sense of it. So is (unfortunately) coinciding, too, especially since he produces examples from the press, the television, the poets and the New English Bible. It's only when he produces his unimpaired passage in the last chapter that Robinson lets us know badly. For this (surely not to be far from *Our Old Friend*, Ltd. Cork. (Frankenstein) *Unbound* by Brian Aldiss, 1973) is the message that we're in danger of ending up like the heart-man of Dr. Moreau's tale, after the doctor's double "I had you imagine language, into clear-cut and easy, definite and guttural, loving shape and import, becoming more (and of itself again) --- I realized here suddenly that ever that Moreau had told me about the "crippled heart flesh". They were rearing, and growing very rapidly ---" I like to think of Professor George Stinson as the Morley was the goal to "big break" but never actually gave anything. *Moreau*. Robinson says that this is the result of a crossing of our "instinctual value-forming elite", and the lack of a convincing replacement.

For Moreau's Joe Bonanza, the hero of Aldiss's *Frankenstein Unbound*, disappeared on a bright and very-fine February, and talking with Lord Byron in the Villa Medicea, near Geneva:

"What a spellbinder he was! We sat and drank before a smouldering fire while he conversed. I have tried to convey a pale memory of our meeting, but further than that I cannot go. The range of his talk was beyond me -- even when not particularly profound, it was filled with allusions, and the connections he drew between things I had hitherto regarded as unconnected were startling."

They are joined by Shelley:

"The two poets talked together, the dogs slunk back into the room and fought under the window, the fire flickered. The rain fell. The room seemed very small."

human imagination and human culture, not necessarily bearing any relation to absolute truth: time is nothing but a tissue of inter-relating fictions, constantly changing; and all the authors are human - Mary Godwin, Shelley, Byron, and whoever it is who's supposed to be writing Joe Bodenland into the myth. And this is, again, a very Leavisite thing to happen; for according to Leavis, his precious cultured elite will "create possibility". God is out of it. Every time I read a Leavisian dictum like that it seems vaguely insane; and I suppose it is to Brian Aldiss's credit that, in Frankenstein Unbound, he reveals the insane implications of the Leavisite position, developing them with science-fictional logic. Likewise, the Leavisite confusion of Life and Literature is her bared to the skies for all time. ("The graves image of reality had been destroyed for me, so that I no longer had difficulty in apprehending Frankenstein and his monsters, Byron, Mary Shelley, and the world of 2030 as contiguous. What I had done - so it seemed - was wreck the fatalism of coming events. If Mary Shelley's novel could be regarded as a possible future, then I had now rendered it impossible by killing Victor (Frankenstein).") "Somewhere there might be a 2030 in which I existed merely as a character in a novel about Frankenstein and Mary" -- etc. etc.)

Still, Aldiss is wise enough, or agnostic enough, to ward off the final despair. Somewhere in those memorable but desolate final pages, with the protagonist entrenched before the City of Dreadful Light at the far end of time, there remains a spark of divine potential within the mythic being who was once called Joe Bodenland. "Trembling, I set the swivel-gun to rights. If other attackers came for me, they should meet the same reception as the monster before I set my Maker ---." All he needs is a Maker, a Divine Author, like Ransom in C. S. Lewis's Perelandra. Yet the Author is tardy in showing his presence; seems, in fact, to have lost interest. Perhaps Myth, after all bears no relation to Cosmic Fact; and because there is no Fact - no Logos - even the Myth is falling apart into fragments, like the structure of space/time. It begins to seem as if Frankenstein Unbound were an uncreation

Myth as senseless as some of the old Creation Myths; which is an uneasy thought.

I don't think I need to emphasize the relevance of all this to sf as a whole, in which the human mythopoetic faculty reigns supreme and unfettered. I certainly don't want to introduce a note of moral earnestness into the discussion. Olaf Stapledon's works, for instance, are examples of Myth regressing from a steady vision of cosmic absolutes, back into an inchoate Nordic despair; but Stapledon is nevertheless a maker of great and noble myths, and anyone who cannot enjoy his must be a very dull dog. Likewise, I sometimes like to revel in Moorcockian anarchy. I've even been known to enjoy Ballard. But the fact remains that all the sf I like most - from Aldiss's Non-Stop through Wyndham's Chocky to Rob Shaw's The Palace Of Eternity, somehow connects up with certain beliefs which I hold to be objectively, universally true; and sometimes - especially when I've just finished an issue of New Worlds - I get the jumpy impression that this kind of sf is being swamped by the other kind. Whatever happens, of course, the human mythopoetic faculty will persist to the end. But the question remains, like in the song: Is that all there is?

SILVERBERG OLD SILVERBERG NEW

by
Chris Evans

Robert Silverberg has received his fair share of attention in the pages of this journal, and the present writer has been more guilty than most of extolling his virtues. The elements which I admire most in Silverberg's work are his inventiveness, his portrayal of character and his narrative skill. Many of his books are superbly crafted, textbook examples of how to use of concepts to enhance the human interest of a story. Barry Malzberg has called him the most technically gifted writer in sf, and this strikes me as an astute appraisal, for as well as expressing his strengths as a writer, it also gives a hint of his limitation - limitations which I hope to touch on herein. The four books under examination offer the opportunity to study Silverberg in action in two different phases of his career. Master of Life and Death and Invaders from Earth were first published by Ace in the late fifties when Silverberg was still a young, relatively inexperienced novelist; The Masks of Time and The Man in the Mass belong to the late sixties, a period when, by his own admission, Silverberg was beginning to make a conscious effort to improve the quality of his fiction.

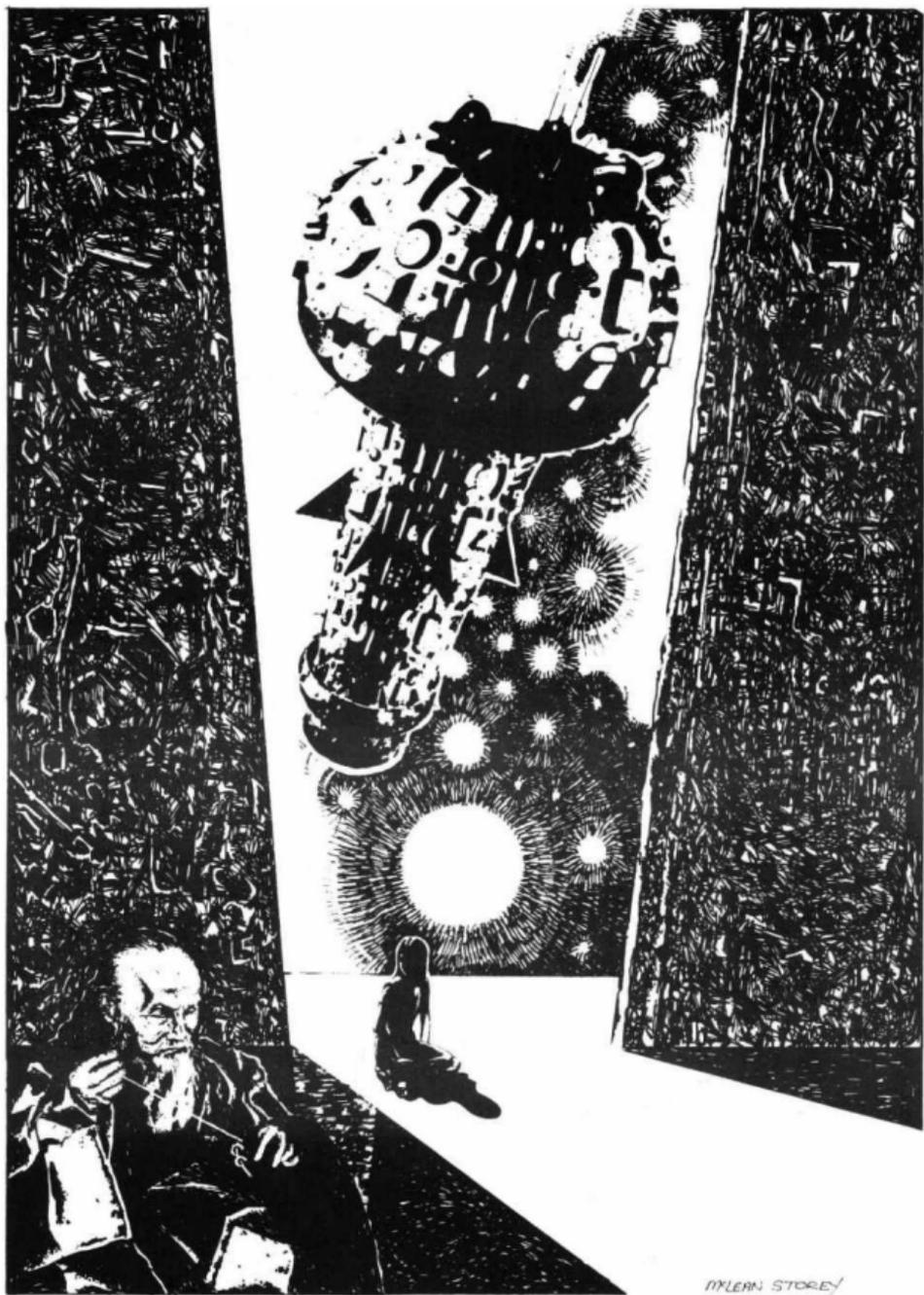
Starliner series 1968

My initial reaction to these two hardbacks was to wonder why Sidgwick & Jackson had seen fit to publish them separately. Culled from the parent volume, A Robert Silverberg Omnibus and dressed in tawdry dustjackets, at £3.50 a time they seemed a rather blatant attempt to cash in on the author's current popularity. To my surprise, however, I found that both books were much better than I had expected - not neglected classics by any means, but competent, entertaining adventure stories. (Still, I would advise even Silverberg completists to wait for the paperback editions.) Naturally, there are instances of sloppy writing and the plotting is somewhat jerry-rigged in places, but overall the Mesmerizing abilities of the young writer outweigh the flaws of inexperience.

Master of Life and Death has the following introduction by the author: "I have, I think, a great deal of contact with aliens. They are a fantastic army of energy for my writer's tactics, and Silverberg has-

CONT. P. 22





KYLEA STOREY

WORLD THE OTHER (1974) (1975)
[DIP] PHILIP (com. Adam 9.20)

PJF: Sam Mines bought that. It was going to be the first serial published in *Startling Stories*. But *Startling and Thrilling Wonder*, so I published, so I took some years later I sold it to Ballantine as *As to the Riverworld*. In *The Year Scattered Bodies Go* was not actually *One for the Fish*, because that had been a manuscript for \$100,000 written in the greater years after the general resurrection. When I dug it up out of the trunk and sent it in to Fred Bohn, who edited *Galaxy* at that time he said it was too big a subject to put in one book and suggested I write a number of stories to be published in magazine form and then collected and put in book form later on. So I started before the resurrection in this case, and then I used various parts of the original, so it's greatly expanded. I've just finished the final draft of the *Starworld* novel. That's about 250,000 words. I hope to cut it down. But I know when I do it'll also be adding to it, so it'll probably come out 300,000. I'm afraid it's going to be a big one. Every week I get about twelve to twenty letters wanting to know when it's coming out, telephone calls from all over the country... There's a great interest in it.

PJF: Oh, I think it is. After all, you have the entire human race at your disposal along a river which may be ten to twenty million miles long. I could go on forever writing on that, but I won't for the simple reason that I'd get tired of it and so would the readers eventually. It's a combination of adventure, philosophical/theological, social. The funny thing is that Betty Ballantine turned down *Four Scattered Bodies Go*. She said it was just an adventure novel, which to me was a catastrophe. She wasn't reading very deeply into it.

DIP: What's the *IBSF* about? Is it a quantum?

PJF: *The Magic Laboratory*. It's a quotation from Burton's poem, the "Kamal-Dah of Hajj Abu al-Yaxdh". The poem forms a sort of backbone for the whole series. I became very much interested in Baffin, and that came out in the third novel very strongly. Before I started the third novel I reread the first two and suddenly realized how many questions had to be answered. It's really tremendously complicated. I wanted to do more character development than I did in the first two, so that takes room. I've introduced new characters people who either don't appear in the first two or appeared only briefly. The first two novels I think read fast and cheerfully because you have the single-eye viewpoint. You see the first one through the eyes of Burton and the second one solely through the eyes of Mark Twain. But in this one there is going to be a multiple viewpoint. There's a 55,000 word section that's concerned only with the story as seen through the eyes of an Australian woman who happens to have been first mate on a future airship transport system. Then there's a long section dealing with Herman Goering. In the first two to develop Cyrano de Bergerac and a number of the other characters that appeared in the first two novels. Besides that I'm working out what's going on behind the scenes all the time. It's been rather difficult.

PJF: Well, that's somewhat justified. I'm reworking that a great deal in the third novel, and I plan some subsidiary ones in that are pre-emptive as well. In the first river, encounter various artists, scientists, philosophers, economists - including Karl Marx - and we will not only find out how they lived and what they believed on earth, but also what they were doing there. The conditions under the conditions are so different. How are they adapting to it? The trouble with *Rottensteiner* is that he expected everything in the first two novels. The first one is the tuning-up of the instruments, the second one is the first two novels. The third one is the symphony. That's my attitude.

PJF: He doesn't know anything about human nature. One of the things about the Riverworld - a thing which I've never read if I haven't said it is so many words - is that certain people are capable of change, and that people will react in different ways and there's bound to be a certain amount of violence. All I have to do is point to the history of mankind itself right up to today. You find out in the third novel that there's a great deal to deal that's still violent. It's a great deal less, because now, after thirty years, societies have been established and they were basically preached through to establish a certain pattern. Of course, you have your inflexibles, those who still try to change by violence. In the Riverworld the things I'm trying to show is the meaninglessness of violence.

DIP: I believe that Rottensteiner is a Marxist, and it's basically the Marxist attitude that human nature is OK. What people have always fought about are economic things - food and money and so on. But in the Riverworld you've put everyone in a situation where they don't have to fight about these things...

PJF: But he's overlooking the human desire for power. Although there's enough for everybody in his particular grid, there are people who like to eat and drink to excess, and there are who like to control people - and you can find in the capitalist and Marxist countries today. In my opinion, all the things that the system of capitalism, socialism and Marxism with the kind of technology we have today with the barbarian technology we should be driving toward a different social system - one which I've called "Riders of the Purple Wage", for instance. But in order to do that you have to do away with nationalism, you have to do away with fanaticism who believe that their system is the only one that's reasonable...

DIP: So "Riders of the Purple Wage" is your utopia?

PJF: No, it's not a utopia. What I was doing was showing that even if you had a much better system you're still going to have a great many human problems. If you've done away with the need to work for a living, you're still going to have personal problems. Of course, the hero there was having trouble with freedom, getting restless, and I think there's still that drive to power. Now, in order to agree with the Marxist idea that I think the baby is in a tabula rasa, a blank tablet, with potentially for good or for evil, but our societies everywhere seem to prevent us, to twist our human nature, to drive us into channels which we shouldn't be in. What Rottensteiner is saying is that people in the Riverworld, the great majority of them, are fully-formed adults. They're not children who are already formed. If you remember, nobody that died before the age of five was resurrected. The children who were resurrected and raised in the Riverworld culture. That set-up would be fine for a Marxist or a socialist, but actually there are so real economic. Economic man is out, except for a drive to get more territory, to get more goods, but that can only be done on a limited scale. I thought all that out carefully before, but Rottensteiner tends to see things only through the Marxist lens and he doesn't, I don't think, realize what I'm doing.

DIP: Your career appears to have progressed in a rather peculiar fashion. It looks like you were a matter of finding an amenable new publisher every few years. For instance, *Galaxy* was published by Doubleday, *World* by Knopf in 1960, then there was another breakthrough in *Galaxy* when it started publishing your highly original sci-fi novels...

PJF: Well, these occurred when people came to me and asked me to write certain things. I didn't volunteer to write them. Horace Gold became the editor of the *Galaxy* magazine line. He wanted a series of somewhat sci-fi. I had sent a novelette called "The Screaming Godhead" to Bob Mills at ZANP. He returned and said I was trying to compress too much into too small a space and he suggested that I expand it into a novel. Right after that Horace Gold wanted a novel from me, so "The Screaming Godhead" became *Galaxy*. It was a science fiction into most of the books that were submitted to him. My book was the only one that was not to be deleted or revised. By the way, the French edition contains the foundational parts. Again, Brian Kirby, whom I met at the New Apple, came to me and wanted *Beers House* and he wanted to raise the question of whether or not I would do pornography has no plot, no characterization, just one sex scene after another. He wanted to see a bunch of authors who were doing pornography, as he called it. I was kind of tickled at the idea, because I wanted to write that kind of Gothic romance. I wrote *Worship/Amplify* story - and also on the same line, the *Beers House* and *Beers House*. At the same time - nobody seemed to catch it - I was also parodying pornography. So I wrote it. I had to do fun. It was very fast, but by the time I was writing *Beers House* I was beginning to get tired of writing sex scenes.

DIP: What happened to *Beers House*?

vJF: They went bust, for the simple reason that their distribution was to pornography stores, and the people who buy pornography books weren't interested in that sort of thing. The editor found out about it too late. As a result, the *Beers House* had some very valuable ones they're rather rare. A *Beers Unknown* first edition is bringing in \$50 now in the second-hand stores.

DIP: What sort of reply do you normally make to someone who accuses you of writing evil, sadistic or corrupting books?

PJF: I just tell them I'm doing it for fun. They don't realize what I'm actually doing. I never would have done any of that had it been asked. It just didn't occur to me, but soon after that I was talking to Brian Kirby all these ideas clicked out. They must have been lying fallow.

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DIP: Don't you feel bad about total self-censorship?

PJF: Not really. If I'd been compelled to censor the *Knex House* books I'd have felt bad to it. I was not as Joseph Campbell. I like writing adventure stories. These again, sometimes in my books which are regarded as adventure stories there are deeper currents. I was very much disappointed at the reception of *Lord Tyrer* - it's usually sloughed off as another *Tyrer* novel, but that's not true. The structure is based on Joseph Campbell. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, and anybody familiar with that book, reading *Lord Tyrer*, can trace Joseph Campbell's right on through the cyclic adventure, the heroes of classical mythology, primitive religion and so forth. There's a hell of a lot more in that book than most people realize.

DIP: Do you intend to continue the *Grandtrih/Caliban* series?

PJF: Yes, I have a contract to do one. I'll continue it until the Nine are all killed off. I might kill off Doc Caliban too. My relations with Ace were discontinued for a number of years because we were having a disagreement over the payment of royalties. As you know, Ace got into a tremendous amount of trouble with a lot of authors on that, but we finally straightened that out. I have a contract to do the fifth *World of Tiers* novel - *The Lavallite World*, it's called.

PJF: I was just reading them for fun and for entertainment. They enormously attracted me, like the old *huddler* and the other things. It wasn't until recently that I published them. I was reading them to you know, Ace got into a tremendous amount of trouble with a lot of authors on that, but we finally straightened that out. I have a contract to do the fifth *World of Tiers* novel - *The Lavallite World*, it's called.

DIP: In many areas of the popular art world was considered trash in earlier decades of the century. Do you have any feelings and regard over the past few years. You get criticism like Lewis A. Fiedler praising popular literature and advising serious novelists to turn to pop images if they want to be read and remain relevant. Any comments?

PJF: I think what Fiedler says is essentially true. Of course, a lot of it was trash, but then so was a lot of mainstream literature. What he's saying is that there is a lot more to pop lit. than critics have either thought. Now they're looking at it and seeing it as a sort of sociological expression of the times, and perhaps a reflection of universal traits in humanity. You also have to remember that the criticism of the past was a lot more back - which he was. He was a great hack. I mean, he wrote things fast, and there were a lot of them. I mean, Dickson said he was tremendously popular, wasn't highly thought of by the critics. To me, the stuff that's really good is the stuff that no one else had the critics' opinion is still being read a long time after the fact. *Burroughs*, whatever his literary faults, has outlived the rest of his contemporaries. At the time he was writing other authors were being praised right

clear. (But don't read them too soon after each other or the repeat editions.) As more of the intricacies of Amber are revealed I'm inclined to believe that the completed work may surpass Borge's previous work, *Lord of Light*. And that is high praise indeed!

BIG PLANET and SHOWBOAT WORLD by Jack Vance; Coronet; London; 1977; 354 & 166 pp respectively
Reviewed by Mike Dickinson

For many years, knowing people, on hearing that I liked Jack Vance, would say "Ah, but you should read *Big Planet*" and so on. I have written against its unavailability. Now Coronet have corrected this, and published a much more recent one which makes an interesting comparison.

Writing in 1953 (reprinted in the *Issues of Hand*) James Bligh predicted "prodigies" for Jack Vance when he learnt something about plotting technique. *Big Planet* certainly shows that meant. For it is "just a journey across Big Planet itself, with an extremely rickety rationale about an earth-born interplanetary dictator. *Showboat World* also takes place on Big Planet and concerns a journey up a major river system to be representative in a theatrical competition held by a distant monarch. Here the plot is even less filmy (disappearing in a half hour), concerning the feud of two rival skippers to be the gulf representative. From then on the journey in *Big Planet* it seems, then, that far from mastering plotting as such, Vance has ignored it in favour of *Blue World* and his Maruse Alator books. It is not to be said that *Showboat World* compares with his related concerns as well as dealing, witness the fact that he separates the background of Big Planet from a stark, stark comparison instead of making some poor jerk hold up the narrator to tell it so ignorant native, as in the earlier book.

Curiously, another failing implicit in Vance's linear narrative is the lack of a sense of the progress he is working in. It has been said fairly, of course, that *Showboat World* matters, that it could be set conveniently in a familiar *Showboat* hall, and that many things happen on the journey. But the succession of incidents is so telescoped that it could be a journey for a week or a fortnight (allowing for slightly more eccentricity and the inebriations of Plaster). Similarly the *Showboat* is the narrative basis for *Showboat World* but there is no suggested relationship to the rise of Big Planet, and even the river itself seems oddly slow.

So what does Jack Vance offer in these, which are undoubtedly two of his best books? Firstly entertainment: these books are like a particularly exciting outburst when you feel that that form of contentment only produced by a really satisfactory event. And, unusually in these cases, they are memorable. *Showboat* also it is sociological detail which stands out. In *Big Planet* this occurs with his cross-planet character Charlie and the *Showboat* that of Birtendale - where people achieve a desirable aristocratic life-style for part of the time by acting as another's servant for the remainder. An usual both of these are used to their most effective application. In *Showboat World* the mixture is denser as the *Showboats* play to different river port societies. In one town, Langie, the sound of the letter "r" is considered to be an offensive obscenity (page 28); in another, Rhod, yellow is a "sexual excitant", red a challenge (page 42). The theatrical performances are described in all their fantastic detail. The result of these, and other, features is a rich, fascinating mixture with more explicit wit than in the earlier book.

The characters are painted in with a disapper brush: larger than life; exuberant and exhilarating in *Showboat World*, interesting at least in *Big Planet*. Some of them, like the *Showboat* crew, are treated warmly; they are not the stuff of grand drama, but fit Vance's light-comedy well.

Both books show Vance's fecund imagination. He led to a logical working out of the societal structure. I can imagine people both of these, but I couldn't treat both people of these with equal respect and interest for reasons. I identify, one of the reasons I have slight doubts about *Big Planet* is its shortness and, as a result, that this is because Coronet have chosen to reprint the truncated *Amber* rather than the original *Amber* edition.

CHARISMA by Michael Cowley; Pan; London; 1977; 230 pp. 60p. 120p.
Reviewed by David Wignrose

"Man is a plural being. When we speak of ourselves ordinarily we speak of 'I'. We say, 'I did this'." "I think this." "I want to do this" "I am in this."

There is no such 'I', or rather there are hundreds, thousands of little 'I's. Every one of us. We are divided in ourselves but we do not recognize the division. We are defined except by observation and study. At one moment it is one 'I' that acts, at the next moment it is another 'I'. It is because of this that we ourselves are contradictory that we do not

function harmoniously."
(G. I. Gurdjieff: "Views from the Real World")

Gurdjieff's philosophical statement of the plural nature of human existence has frequently been echoed within it in that small, but significant, of the genre that takes as its theme the parallel world. Usually this takes the form of "what if" situation. Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* hypothesizes what would happen had the Axis triumphed in World War II. Keith Roberts' *Danger* describes a world in which the Church retained its hold on Man. Both concentrate on the event, not the individual - quite natural in a genre which is so much concerned with the *Charisma* is a parallel world tale, but not in the usual world of such stories. His vision is not so much that of Gurdjieff and his pupil, Duspenski. Conroy's strength is in depicting an individual placed in unusual positions, a character that varies in the circumstances. I hypothesize myself, perhaps? He in essence remains the writer, Conroy, telling us how he himself would react gives the circumstances. I hypothesize myself, perhaps? I have made the comparison to Heinlein before, and it struck me again here. Conroy is not attempting to write socially-relevant fiction. In essence he is a right-wing liberalist, delightful but reactionary - a rare breed indeed! He is like Heinlein but without the didactic and the attention to sociological streak Heinlein possesses. He is concerned solely with people existing in society as it is.

So why is Conroy writing it?

What Conroy's strength is in his characterization, he is no genius appearing in handling it's reputation for every character. Indeed his parallel world story - as I shall demonstrate - and Conroy uses the strengths and attractions of his characterisation. Late Heinlein, in her introduction to *Showboat World*, makes the comparison between *Amber* and *Showboat* one that was given in validity as the genre has matured.

"In the alternate universe story we are trying to cope with the concept of infinity... For example, every character is placed in one universe comes into being. If a choice is negative here in another universe it is positive. The changes can be great or, in another universe born only minutes ago, very slight."

Charisma differs slightly from this formula, but Conroy's had just through the labyrinth of possibilities that make the past:

"Theoretically I had just been into the past. Yet Stratton was dead in World Minus 8, and was dead. Where was the pattern? Maybe it had been a mistake to assume that the individual character was of prime importance in shaping events. Maybe if one man died, another would be born, and the history would keep history on the right track. Maybe the average of a mass of consciousness would control the course of events."

Maybe it was the crowd that averaged out, not the individual.

(page 127)

This uncertainty, a constant factor until the very end, allows Conroy to lead his central character, John Waine, through a number of personal crises that illuminate his character. Waine is the first-person narrator. It is with him that we travel to the nearby alternatives, and they are his reactions and conclusions that we share.

"And I was thinking of the disapproval I'd had with Mellors in his room when I'd stated that I was not able to be his big man. I was against Pable, and I'd known that he was had to fire me, and I'd thought that if I had not been at that moment, I'd have shot him without compunction..."

Stratton was right. It was the same me. Given circumstances sufficiently adverse, I would certainly have done the same thing. (page 200)

Charisma allows Conroy to pose moral questions. When are certain actions excusable, and is it within one person's nature/character to act in a certain way? The character that we share the same basic set of circumstances each time? It is Gurdjieff's philosophy illustrated in the simplest and most logical way. The emphasis on people rather than events, that surrounds the character, that we share a sense of possibility to the answers given. We judge John Waine. We judge the other characters, the provocations, the reasons and the excuses and that either accept or reject Conroy's conclusions. Waine is well aware of his strengths and weaknesses, a common trait in all of Conroy's protagonists.

"I do not like to admit that another man scores over me. I am dramatic. Or that he has a better personality. Maybe we say that he is aggressive, or that he is predictable, or that he is cold, or smooth. What we say is that he is aggressive, or that he is predictable, or that he is cold, or smooth. We are scared that he will be our superior. We are afraid that we don't like to say so, in an easy words."

(page 74b)

Waine recognizes his own fear and at least does not delude himself by giving it a euphemism: he is a bastard, he concludes without modesty. Conroy does not make the di or so Waine's favour when all is said and done. We are made to prefer Waine's honesty to the subterfuge and insincerity of the other characters. Waine's Conroy achieves this not only through Waine's calm and strong self evaluation, but through the widest of all sympathy towards the low interest.

"And when she looked at me, when out gases looked that was something else again. This was how I had come to feel the love that I had. I was just eyes - optical instruments evolved over thousands of years to give a person's soul through their eyes. All the organs, when Susanna's blue eyes looked into mine, something hollow and flutery happened inside my chest."

(page 37)

Conroy knows well how to choreograph the delicate dance of romantic encounter, and Waine's search for Susanna through several alternate worlds - one strand of a quite complex, but coherent plot - is genuinely moving and touches deeply.

I was inclined to mimic the reactions to the protagonist, something that always indicates to me that the writer is doing his job properly. Conroy's emphasis is on emotion rather than intellect, and even his philosophical detours emerge more from gut-feeling than deep consideration:

"Then I wondered how many men had died in the best world, and the best. And I imagined a father saying to his favourite, spoiled child, 'You are the best of the best. You are this little boat.' How will you and watch. I'm going to make a storm. How the blue blow, see the waves, the little men frightened, look they're going the wrong way. Hey, see that, don't you, what a smash."

How you go it.

And again, and again, and again... There's plenty more, a plenty of men, plenty of boats. We've got all of infinity, you and I, all of eternity..."

(pages 49/8)

It is simple and yet challenging. Waine's character is a good one, and allow such a lottery of worlds in a reaction we sympathize with.

I have said little of the story itself - giving only the vague hints contained within the characterisation. The *Showboat* is simple and immensely readable. Any plot summary would lose the being legend, spoil that aspect of the book. I have given a very brief summary of *Showboat* which is called from familiarity, with the word *Showboat* in the title. *Showboat* is a worthy member of the small sub-genre that deals with "the concept of infinity" in the sense of the *Showboat* of these books if not perhaps, the most moving. That is certainly something for Mike Conroy to be proud of.

WAINERS

David Wignrose - 4 Holmead Court, Nightingale Lane - Grants Hill 4E

I saw that the other Wignrose (the other one ... the one things happen to) has sent you a first-draft article again (no wonder you were so excited). I have a copy of it. I must correct the fellow on several points. Tristan et Isolde is a romance, not a medieval love story (although the title is on the cover). As for the opinions of the Reid, Arthur Brown and David Bedford are serious faults (thanks Andy and Alex...)

And what is this form doing suggesting that neither report did the album of *arguing the Right and Magicians* list. Any fool knows it was *No Hanson*.

(Yeah, OK, Dave, don't rub it in - I know I dropped a line there when typing up...)

Metaphor "figure of speech implying but not explicitly stating a comparison between two objects or actions." Might I add "or situations" never be they include the whole of "what is" which must never be the subject of a metaphor. Far from Arthur Tansman is talking bullsh*t again. I sometimes believe he objects that. Far from writers not being able to "add significantly" to this basic vocabulary I feel they are displaying that broad usage and developing a far finer set of images (for example see, "the blue" which are very much ahead to get a sense of why not use as a metaphor early help ad). I would be very adverse to give a sense of why not use as a metaphor something more than a tentative link with the present active direction of the genre. How would Wainberg, argue the right of the right of the right of the right on well in writing of "bits" if the pulp vocabulary were not a default and moribund vessel.

Fucking hell, though ... Orwell never wrote of No. not letters! Go out and buy the four volumes of his collected essays, journalism and novels (Penguin Books) and read them. They're tiny. 1984 was the culmination of nearly thirty years of political and social alliance within the genre. (Orwell's socio-political criticism in the early 1940s preannounced the vision of 1984 (written in 1948), which is the fictional expansion of that evil, totalitarian society that merely might engulf all his troubled life).

I agree with the comments upon Bainsberg's work even if the rest of the piece was simplistic and aesthetical (and, frankly, intelligent). Objective comment? I think you hamstring yourself in your previous reviews by making them too much of an exercise in personal intellectualism rather than direct person-to-person communication vehicles.

I'm glad Roy Gray is encouraged to write reviews for VECTOR. May I state from a personal viewpoint that I write "philosophical" reviews merely because philosophy is a personal interest and because strongly coloured my critical perspective. I hope some day VECTOR should express a multitude of critical perspectives.

I was sorry to read Dennis Tucker's concluding paragraph. My feeling is that it is the basic instinct (as manifested in the early 1980s) which prompts that lends evil to the World. Genuine honesty is only the expression of a lack of fear.

I'm glad however to see that Phil (S-P) has had time and patience to clarify himself. I would not admit that my opinion of Phil has soared (it never low, I'll add) since meeting and working with him. It is a pleasure in reassessing to know that the committee members you work with are sympathetic and especially aren't afraid to air their views. Sincerely,

Which all leads to recent criticisms of the art work in the last few issues of VECTOR. This was raised by Phil briefly, and more thoroughly in the Council meeting before the AGM at the Easterson. I believe that both pro- and anti-views will be expressed and that we should like to make my own comment. There are two points of discussion

- (a) Were the pieces by Judy Watson and Dave Munn within the context?
- (b) Were they necessary/relevant?

As to the first point, my criterion for decency merely is that the piece is honest. I don't see any straight up then that I have found anything that is more honest than Judy's. ... On argument is that a 14, 15 year old reviewer in VECTOR would be a disgrace. I'm not sure by what artwork because of strict parental supervision. An argument that says magazines like ALIEN are harassed until it is out of the bubble. This prompts several lines of my own. Primarily my own majority of our readership is a slowly decreasing majority. I'll admit it is adult enough to exert its own judgement. From personal experience (correspondence is the course of doing the "art" piece) I think that the majority of our youngest members are probably the most independent and expressive/progressive in their views and express this to me quite strongly.

What is being expressed in this argument, then? The argument is simply that the visual representation of the sexual organs is indecent. It is reduced to a question of whether or not the intent. My perspective sees nothing wrong either with the provocative comment on the "art" piece or the "sex scenes" in the cutting irony inherent in Judy's cartoon. I'm sure that the cartoonist who drew the "art" was, incidentally, also perfect illustration for an art of rock album, the word "rock" itself being an euphemism for "sex", "sex", "sex", "sex", "sex", "sex", "sex" and "sex" ...

I do object quite strongly to racist cartoons (Graham Wilson's occasional "racist" cartoons which I have reviewed) and I think that you would quite effectively with the wicked irony of his subject matter) and to those of a highly racist nature (for which I send glowing compliments).

On to the second of the original questions. Were they necessary/relevant? The "anti" piece here is not a question of whether or not it is with or not. In Council, Chris described this as "sexual" and whilst I don't agree with that label entirely, I do not want to publish surreal/modern art which is in a personal opinion and. I'll admit, highly-coloured by my view of the genre. What I want to know is whether our members think there is a limit to the eclecticism of the genre... I have had an experience in the past where the Association have maintained a silence because they believed their individual opinion would receive more attention. I think I would like to see any form of censorship erected with this in mind. I would agree (readily) to debate surrounding this question in advance. For God's sake write if you have any sort of opinion on this regard.

I'll agree almost 100% with what you say, Dave. I do add is that I have no objection to editing VECTOR for the middle American parents who are not "middle class" readers. I think the intelligence of the readership to do that. (S-P)

David Clarke, 38 St Chad's Road, Bilston, W. Midlands

David Wingrove's study of rock music and of in VECTOR 80 was a well written and full account of the historical/cultural field. However, I must take issue with him on one or two points.

Firstly, he complained about bands who begin by producing album with a strong flavour and who later on produce music of a more ordinary and less "flavoured" nature. I think that it would undermine groups who do this. After all, it is not the "flavour" which is the most important to produce w-flavoured music and may find that they can widen their scope by straying into other areas. I think that it is possible to be able to produce an album containing varied sorts of tracks (e.g. The Moody Blues and Love) and still be popular. I think that it is an artist should feel himself free to write and record whatever he wishes in accordance and not stick to any rigid pattern.

The only thing that I really found objectionable in David's article was his conclusion that Magma are the best of band that I list. If it seems obvious to me that he was just taking the opportunity to give his favourite band a plug. A more general conclusion would have sufficed. Nevertheless, all in all, the article was probably about as complete and fair as it could be.

Richard G. Smith 10 Robertson Crescent, Lewisham

Although Dave Wingrove's article was of great interest, very comprehensive and thought-provoking, it suffered in its attempt to cover too much in too little time. This is the major criticism by section (a) Who Was Your Big Brother, in which the career of David Bowie is compared to a few personal sections of his music. It is obvious that Mr. Wingrove's music fan is just content to say that he writes: "I wince at his abuse of the genre". Surely this is returning to the old ghetto situation that we all deplore (or do we?). Another point - have not all writers, musicians, artists, etc. who are writing, composed or created the genre in as much as they are creating an individualistic piece of art and only using it for their own purposes of Broadway, Broadway?

But back to the points of the article. Mr. Wingrove states "His original intention, which is to highlight his uniqueness, his own personal style". This is the right way to become a complex that Bowie has never been able to shake off. As Bowie stated in a Sunday Times interview "I've always been a puma". He has become a "sex man" (20/7/79). Bowie killed Jimmy Hoffa and became the appearance of James Earl Ray. Aladdin Sane (Jimmy's pale shadow) in that same year, the dominating alter ego has never been his head space. Except that it is from reviewers and critics. Granted, Bowie does have an almost alive air about him, clearly not the "dead" one the BBC's documentary "Bowie" this greatly influenced how to select his for the post of Tomorrow.

Concerning Bowie's philosophy, Mr. Wingrove writes "He sees the mass of human beings as a mass of people to be manipulated by the talented few who will attract them and give them an example to follow". Sorry, but this is a basic misunderstanding of the eclectic qualities of the artist. His music covers almost all subjects social comment - Fame, straight of "Space Odyssey", fantasy "The Supermen", love "The Moon", traditional rock "Fragile City"... the list is endless; may even begin to categorize like "The Thin Red Line". I would seriously advise Mr. Wingrove to look beyond side of Diamond Dogs to even attempt to understand the artist's philosophy.

Mr. Wingrove also states: "He makes scant use of electronics and generally leans a heavy burden on the lyrics which must carry the only message across". I've never seen an agreement with Mr. Wingrove (although Rick Wakeman played on three albums: Space Odyssey, The Man Who Sold the World and Aladdin Sane). In his latest work appeared, Lax, an electronic album which is the only one that I have seen in a review of the LP wrote: "Lax is the only contemporary rock album (NME 29/7/77). This may or may not be true but it is a very interesting and another facet of Bowie's talents, as his credits show vocals prearranged percussion, piano, guitar, vibraphone, xylophone, synthetic strings, sax, AMP, tape cellon, pump bass and harmonica". Close listening will also reveal the album the idiot (co-written and produced by Bowie) may give further clues to his latest work.

In conclusion I would claim the closest connection between Bowie and I lies with what Wendy Mass calls: "His fascination with ideas rather than music" (NME 22/7/77). The Man is varied as say anything more definite.

Andy Sawyer, Children's Library, Borough Road, S.W.16

I'd quarrel with some of Dave's judgments - I think he overrates the Moody Blues - and I'd like to see his reasons. I don't know why not the Byrds - but on the whole I think he does a good job, especially through his writing. Perhaps too complicated for one article? What he's given me a whole lot of sounds to think about. I found his article on the Hamill in KIPPLE more satisfying, treating

as it did one artist in depth rather than throwing out lists of names. I still believe that the connection between music and rock music is in a parallel growth in relation to the "mainstream" of the creative arts - and that the more sophisticated experimental work, often, I have to admit, less successful, is more interesting than some would claim. I suspect that I like art and rock for pretty much the same reasons, but perhaps I'm wrong. I don't know what you think of the genre interlock. I expect that David Wingrove's article is more of an eye-opener and "cosmic" lyrics do not good of music make?

Andrew Timewash's letter: If I can phrase this as a direct response: Andrew, it is difficult to work up an adequate response to your articles and reviews. I think you are revealing a tendency to be about yourself rather than say particular "ideas". Claims are made for films and books which are made, simply not people like yourself who review them (and of course by the people who make them) if it is not the job of the critic to simply repeat what the artist has to say). Your review of "The Blob" meant little to me because I hadn't seen the film; if you change your mind - OK, that's your privilege. Were you wrong? Perhaps not - but I think you are revealing a tendency of the prevailing mind rather than the thing itself. I think you are revealing a tendency to be about something other than its quality.

You are unsure about S-P. So am I (my approval of Barry Malberg, expressed in my last letter to VECTOR, has been criticised as revealing the Destruction of the Temple, which I found boring and shallow). But you express your own criticism of Malberg, and you suggest that they seem to drift from point to point, ever so sharply retracing their steps, often returning to a similar conclusion. If inconclusive is your point, fine; but your letter suggests you are not sure about S-P. I think you are a hypocrite. Without wishing to be unkind, I would suggest that the weakness of VECTOR as a readers' response is that it is in the difficulties raised by the articles themselves in a situation which I personally regret, because I feel that, despite yourself, you do have a great deal to say; the ability to dissent is a book which is not a book. I think you would do more discussion. Review more King Kong than Forbidden Planet.

... I want to finish by saying I was glad to see another critic of Max Carter (I'm not ... I say) - to take your choice of comments) I liked it. The young lady on the inside cover was lovely.

Can prove your "non-existent lead-in" sounded bitter and rather snide; actually I thought your lead-in's were rather good. I'll be glad to see your review of the next issue, I hope you aren't going to let Things Get Too Much For You...

(Frequently, Andy, Frequently...Ed)
Andrew Muir, 11 Devon Gardens, Bishopton, Glasgow

I was delighted that David's article finally made the mistake of not being a personal thing, a personal thing. I disagreed with much of the article. I won't go through each personal ground, though it is tempting, but will restrict myself to the bits which were most irksome.

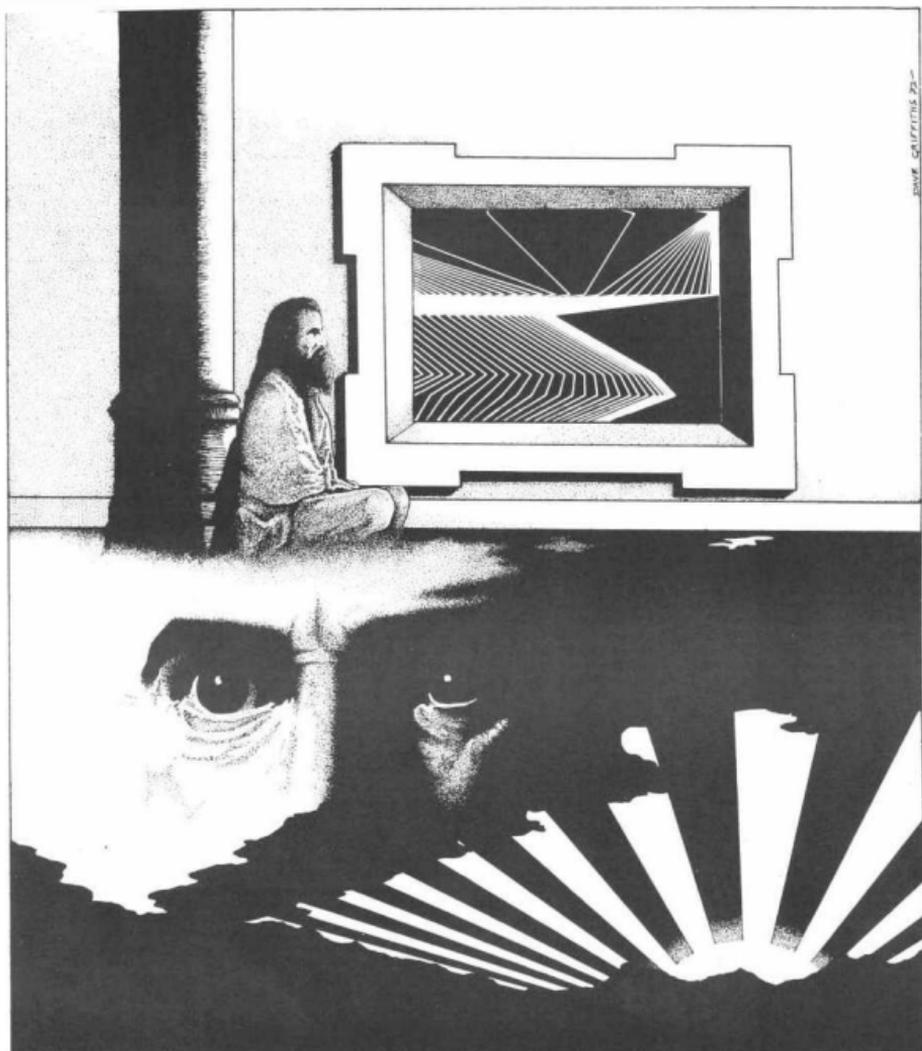
Despite forwarding, I was disgusted with the drive on Bowie; Bowie does not "abuse the genre" or make the statement "I've never seen an agreement to forget that Bowie is a rock singer, first and foremost, a musician entertaining music fans who are not interested in his work as a rock singer; it just so happens he has a genuine interest in (and a mastery for) matters". However, I think that it is appropriate in the context of his music.

Also I doubt very much if "Big Brother" is the "core of Bowie's philosophy" - how would this be related with the "Boy of the Year", "Pretty Things" and "Cypriot Committee" in relation to the "art" piece? I think that the "art" piece is not mentioned with two lines of tracks in "Drive-In Saturday" and "Panic in Detroit".

It is when he is talking about Bowie that he makes the statement "The artist and the divergent" with his overall medical view. "He makes scant use of electronics". So what? I think that the "art" piece is a work of the article - anything making weird/erotic sounds by fiddling with electronic gadgetry is defined as "art". I think that the "art" piece is a work of the article - anything making weird/erotic sounds by fiddling with electronic gadgetry is defined as "art". I think that the "art" piece is a work of the article - anything making weird/erotic sounds by fiddling with electronic gadgetry is defined as "art".

Furthermore, groups who was pretty amusing phrases like "burning, billowing, blustering" forth with the power of ten million batteries are not at all "artistic" or "creative" or "metaphysically inclined". It is so difficult to find something in the spirit of You and The Good Times which is not "artistic" or "creative" or "metaphysically inclined". I think that the "art" piece is a work of the article - anything making weird/erotic sounds by fiddling with electronic gadgetry is defined as "art". I think that the "art" piece is a work of the article - anything making weird/erotic sounds by fiddling with electronic gadgetry is defined as "art".

(You'll have to ask Dave that, Andy, Ed)



his task even more difficult by confining them within an intricate network of plots and counter-plots. Walton, the protagonist, works for the Bureau of Population Equalisation, whose task it is to kill off all but the totally healthy by selective euthanasia, in addition to forcibly transporting groups of people from over-populated regions to the wide-open spaces of Patagonia and the like. Walton is a corporation man, faithful to his duties but occasionally (though not often) troubled by the moral implications of his decisions. It is the twenty-third century and a group of scientists are working on Venus, attempting to make the planet habitable and hence provide more living space for the crowded denseness of Earth. Walton, inheriting the top job at the Bureau following the assassination of his predecessor, discovers that an ftl ship has secretly been perfected and is on a year-long jaunt about the cosmos in search of further habitable worlds. Hot on the heels of this revelation he learns that a method has been developed for counteracting the degeneration of cellular tissue, thus indefinitely extending the human life span. But the world is overcrowded and immortality would only make things worse. Walton scarcely has time to ponder the import of this discovery before his brother Fred, a member of a group who oppose the principles of Population Equalisation, steals the secret and tries to blackmail Walton into resigning in favour of himself. The starship returns to Earth, bringing good news: they have discovered a planet suitable for settlement. However, a race of aliens inhabiting a gas giant in the same solar system are opposed to any colonisation. Then Walton is informed that the terraforming experiments on Venus have backfired, initiating an atomic chain-reaction in its atmosphere. They need the new planet.

The above outline would provide enough material to see most authors through several novels, but Silverberg wraps it all up in under 150 pages. Dilemma follows dilemma in a manner which would be farcical were it not for his ability to keep the plot moving at such a frenetic pace that the reader is steamrolled into swallowing his incredulity and keep turning the pages. Of course the book is rushed and under-developed, but it is not the product of a naive imagination. The ideas in the book are present simply as motifs, or narrative hinges - Silverberg lacks the experience to extract the juices from the fruits of his inventions - but he demonstrates considerable skill in weaving together the various threads of his narrative. The book is entertaining in the same way that a juggler's act is entertaining: the dexterity and fluidity of movement are what impress, even though ultimately the entire exercise is frivolous.

Invasaders from Earth has, thankfully, a much simpler plot. Kennedy is a public relations man and his company are hired to fabricate details of a human colony on Ganymede in order to stir up public support for the extensive mining rights which their clients hope to secure on the moon. The native Ganymedeans are naturally concerned at the infringement of their territory but are placid, non-aggressive people. Kennedy is successful in creating a hostile climate of public opinion towards the natives by inventing a story of their attack on the fictitious colony. At this point he is shuttled off to Ganymede (Silverberg's scanty rationale for this move scarcely hides the fact that it is simply a plot necessity) where he meets the natives and discovers that they have an advanced, non-technological civilisation and that the corporation's designs on the moon will mean their eventual genocide. He gathers information with which to denounce his employees, but his notes are discovered, he is captured and deported. During the descent to Earth, however, he forgoes the gravanol pill which puts the rest of the crew to sleep and protects them from the stresses of deceleration. They land in a deserted field and he is able to escape before the others awake by the simple expedient of walking away from the ship. I found that a bit hard to swallow - a blatant example of hasty composition.

Invasaders from Earth is basically a thriller, less ambitious than Master of Life and Death, but not quite as successful. I sensed that Silverberg would have liked to have spent more time with the Ganymedeans than the one brief chapter which the limitations of

space allowed him. But all the seeds of his future growth are visible in this book. Viewed from the cosy armchair of retrospect one can see the signs of a developing talent: the gift for characterisation, an awareness of the complexities of human relationships, an instinctive grasp of the possibilities inherent in the concepts which he employs. But, at this early stage, everything is subservient to the demands of the plot.

Silverberg Circa 1968

Ten years on, and the occasional awkwardnesses of style have been eliminated, the loopholes in the narrative neatly ironed out. Silverberg is the master of his material now, giving his characters more time for reflection, pausing to admire the scenery before introducing the next plot-twist, using irony, metaphor and symbolism to assist his aims. His books are longer, although his plots are simpler, and he is all together more relaxed - a choreographer rather than a puppet-master. All is not perfect, however. The excesses of youth have been replaced by the indulgences of maturity: in his effort to make his characters psychologically plausible, there is the occasional tendency to overwrite, to repetition, especially evident in the opening sections of The Wake of Time (first published in this country as Vorman-19).

Vorman-19 materialises in Rome on Christmas Day, 1998, claiming that he is a time-traveller from the 2999. After spending a short time travelling through Europe and attracting considerable publicity, he is eventually taken to America as a guest of the US government. The authorities cannot decide whether or not he is a fake: his behaviour is strange and he seems to possess considerable physical prowess, but he is elusive when questioned on the world of the future. Leo Garfield, the narrator of the novel, is a physicist who has been investigating the time-reversal of sub-atomic particles and when he is enlisted as a member of Vorman's cortege, the question of Vorman's authenticity is naturally of utmost importance to him. His initial scepticism soon wavers under the elfish, charismatic spell of the stranger. Vorman is a non-conformist, in his attitude to the cultural conventions of the time, that Garfield, after some vacillation, reluctantly concludes that he does indeed hail from up the line. Vorman has arrived at an opportune time, for with the approach of the year 2000 an Apocalyptic movement has arisen, dedicated to debauchery in the face of the approaching Armageddon. Vorman, if genuine, is proof that the world will continue beyond the second millenium.

Silverberg's characterisation of Vorman - wry, elliptical, playful, amoral - is masterly, so masterly that in a sense it works against his aim for it eventually dispels the carefully nurtured ambiguity with which Silverberg seeks to present him: he simply cannot be a fake. Here I could be accused of quibbling, though, for the central aim of the book is not the elucidation of Vorman's lineage, but an examination of the effects of his presence on those around him and on the world at large. These effects, in short, are devastating: amongst the masses, a cult of Vorman worship arises, and amongst his attendants - Garfield and five other - he creates all sorts of emotional upheavals. Here Silverberg has taken a single idea (essentially The Alien amongst '80s) and meticulously explored its ramifications. The Wake of Time is the product of a controlled and cultured imagination.

The Man in the Maze initially struck me as curiously atypical of Silverberg, for it has a hesitant, almost rambling approach in the first few chapters which was oddly refreshing. Because Silverberg has become so adept at plotting, because the reader knows he is going to be led by the hand through a carefully undeciphered fiction, there were occasions in The Wake of Time where the overweening inexperience of the plot progression induced a kind of blaseness in me so that I positively searched for signs that he was not totally in command of his material (this, I believe, is what Malsberg was hinting at when he paid

Silverberg the double-edged compliment of calling him the most technically gifted writer in sf). The Man in the Maze has a faint air of diffidence about it as Silverberg opens the narrative, holding the promise that perhaps the author will surprise himself as well as the reader.

So we find Muller at the centre of a deserted alien city, surrounded by a maze which has been designed to keep intruders out. Outside the maze are Boardman, an old friend of Muller's whom he now hates, and Rawlins, the son of another of Muller's former friends. Nine years previously, Muller was enlisted by Boardman to contact a race of aliens on Beta Hydri. The Hydrans, at the time the only other intelligent species known to man, did not respond to Muller's overtures, and after leaving their planet he discovered that they had tampered with his brain so that he radiated unwholesome emotions which made his presence unbearable to other people. Filled with hatred and bitterness, Muller has exiled himself on the planet Lemnos, somehow avoiding all the death-traps of the maze and finding sanctuary inside the city. But Muller is once again needed by humanity. Another race of aliens have been discovered who have been enslaving humans on the outer planets, apparently unaware that homo sapiens is an intelligent species. Muller, capable of transmitting the raw energy of emotion, is the only person who can possibly breach the communications gap. Rawlins and Boardman must penetrate the maze and then persuade Muller to leave.

Muller, Boardman and Rawlins are the only significant characters in the book, and all three are well drawn. I felt that Muller was slightly less convincing than the other two, since his festering hatred of humanity seems rather extreme, even acknowledging the profound trauma which he has experienced because of his affliction. Boardman is a schemer, a wily old man who operates on the principle of the greatest benefit for the greatest number and to hell with the individual, whilst Rawlins represents the idealistic young man, faced with the odious task of coercing Muller from his sanctuary.

The symbolism in the book is overt, the maze representing the barriers between individuals, and the bulk of the narrative, which charts Rawlins and Boardman's progression through the maze, is a direct embodiment of the theme of the novel, that of the problems of communication with others. For once, Silverberg lays all his cards on the table and plays straight with the reader. But the book fails to satisfy completely and once again I think the reason for this is that the author is simply too dominant an influence over his work.

At a critical juncture in the narrative, Rawlins rebels against Boardman's instructions and confesses to Muller that he has lied to him. For a moment we sense that this is a wholly unexpected development, but then Silverberg reveals that Boardman has anticipated this contingency and uses it to his advantage.

Thus Silverberg maintains the integrity of his plot but denies his characters the right to an independent life. Perhaps I am being too critical here, but it seems to me that Silverberg's expertise in manoeuvring his characters within the framework of the plot is precisely what prevents his work from being truly inspirational; the reader is subtly made aware that he is witnessing a carefully constructed tableau rather than being allowed to eavesdrop on the characters' activities. We are reminded that it is all a fiction rather than a slice of life.

Before I close this article, I'd like to touch briefly on a dominant theme in all of Silverberg's books. Silverberg is obsessed with power and its use as a tool of manipulation. This concern is common to all four books discussed here. Walton, in Master Of Life And Death, is the most powerful man on Earth, arranging for the purchase of a popular news-sheet in order to influence public opinion to suit his aims; Kennedy in Invaders From Earth, derives his livelihood from constructing realities with which to feed the masses; Vornan transforms the world by his sheer presence in The Maze Of Time; both Muller and Rawlins are pawns in Boardman's gambit in The Man In The Maze. As a result of this preoccupation, mass-movements often figure strongly in Silverberg's work: the Berserchelites, extreme supporters of the Equalisation measures in Master Of Life and Death; the Apocalyptists who

cavort insanely through the pages of The Maze Of Time. Silverberg's world is one in which the forces of coercion constantly do battle with those of irrationality, where the fate of the world may depend on the whim of an individual. It is also indubitably a man's world, for his female characters are described in terms of their sexuality (David Selig's sister in Dying Inside being a notable exception to this premise).

Silverberg has demonstrated time and again that he is an impeccable craftsman and one of the finest writers in sf. And yet he has by no means achieved a complete mastery of his art. Am I being greedy if I say that I would like to see him whet his jaded appetite on a novel which features a female protagonist and a cast of characters who are thrown together and left to their own devices? Perhaps such a challenge might be the impetus he needs to rouse him from his retirement. Meanwhile he has left a body of work which is thoroughly impressive and, yes, shows great promise.

Master of Life and Death Seligman & Janover; London, 1977; 146 pp; £3.00. ISBN 0-283-06276-1

Invaders From Earth Seligman & Janover; London 1977 146 pp; £3.00. ISBN 0-283-06275-3

The Maze of Time Vornan; London; 1977; 242 pp. 60p; ISBN 0-452-08414-2

The Man in The Maze Tardos; London 1977 192 pp 70p. ISBN 0-452-08162-2



ICAROMENIPPUS OR THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE FICTION

by
Brian M Stableford

In 1923 the publishers Kegan Paul, Trench & Trubner released an essay by J. B. S. Haldane entitled Daedalus, or Science And The Future, which became the inspiration for a whole series of speculative pamphlets collectively entitled "Today & Tomorrow". All kinds of specialists were invited to contribute predictions regarding the future of their disciplines. Most, like Haldane, adopted a symbolic figurehead from mythology as a title. James Jeans offered Eos, or the Wider Aspects of Cosmology; Vernon Lee wrote Proteus, or the Future of Intelligence; F. C. S. Schiller chose Tantalus as the character who best might represent "the future of man"; E. E. Fournier d'Albe set out to analyse Hephaestus, or the Soul of the Machine. On a lighter note, Andre Maurois contributed a cautionary fantasy entitled The Next Chapter, or the War with the Moon, and Robert Graves prepared a text called (rather misleadingly) Lars Porsenns, or the Future of Swearing. The total number of the booklets, issued during a period of some nine years, came eventually to over a hundred.

The would-be prophets varied widely in their ambition and their actual predictive success. Few, in fact, were completely misled as to the direction the world was going, and one or two were uncannily accurate, including the author of Aeolus, or the Future of Flying, who reproduced a newspaper report of the future detailing the victory of the Royal Air Force over an armada of enemy bombers forming the vanguard of an attempted invasion. Special credit is perhaps due to the writers who undertook to deal with touchy subjects of the future of marriage and morality, including Norman Haire (Hymen, or the Future of Marriage), C. E. M. Joad (Thrasymachus, or the Future of Morals), C. P. Blacker (Birth Control and the State) and Vera Brittain (Halcyon, or the Future of Monogamy), all of whom measured trends with some insight.

Only two of the pamphlets, however, were as ambitious or as outspoken as Haldane's initial offering. One - J. D. Bernal's The World, The Flesh and The Devil became a minor classic and remains in print. The other was Icarus, or the Future of Science which, as its title suggests, was a reply to Haldane's vision of the future, challenging its fundamental assumptions.

The advance of science was going to cure all the world's ills and bring about Utopia. Science had given to the intellectual climate of the day a growing dissatisfaction with the way technology was reshaping the world and a concern of anxiety about the kind of people scientific progress would ultimately lead to. It began his essay with the statement of these doubts:

"Was mankind," he asked, "released from the womb of nature to be used as a mere instrument of its own destruction, and may at any moment hurl his tiny but terrible voice of protest against the very power that has created him?"

horrible vision correct, in which man becomes a mere parasite of machinery, an appendage to the reproductive system of huge and complicated engines which will successfully usurp his activities, and end by ousting him from the mastery of this planet?"

His answer to both of these questions was, of course, no. The choice of Daedalus as the figurehead of science derived from Haldane's distaste for the fact that the role of the scientist in society was all too often likened to that of Prometheus, stealing the fire of the gods for use by mankind. Daedalus, claimed Haldane, was a better symbol, because Daedalus "was the first to demonstrate that the scientific worker is not concerned with gods."

Haldane was particularly interested in Daedalus as the architect and creator of the minotaur, the man/bull hybrid. Haldane named Daedalus as the first experimental genetic engineer, and it was to the geneticists that Haldane looked for the salvation of mankind.

He argued that all infectious diseases could and would be wiped out where the public were willing to co-operate with the state in programmes for their annihilation. He predicted that plants might soon be genetically designed for the purpose of increasing crop yields, and that this would be so successful as to result in a food glut. He looked forward to the day when children would be produced ectogenetically, and predicted that despite religious opposition this would become the norm ("the biological invention," he noted, "tends to begin as a perversion and end as a ritual supported by unquestioned beliefs and prejudices"). From test-tube babies he went on to consider the sensitive subject of eugenic selection and interference with embryos developing outside the womb in "hatcheries".

All of these predictions were, of course, rather controversial. Expressions of pure horror were common, and the best-known emotional reaction to the picture of the future painted by Haldane is Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, in which the world foreseen in Daedalus is incarnated as a species of temporal hell.

Bertrand Russell, however, disagreed with Haldane on grounds which were rather more fundamental than the issue of whether the future Haldane saw would be pleasant to live in. He challenged the assertion that science ever could or would be used in the manner Haldane suggested, for the "betterment" of the general human condition.

"Dr. Haldane's Daedalus," Russell began, "has set forth

(through the use of scientific discoveries as premises) a very plausible, such as I should like to do with

only has made us somewhat sceptical. I am compelled to fear that science will be used to promote the

happy future, having been taught to fly by his father Daedalus, who destroyed by his father. I fear the same fate will overtake the population when made use of science were taught to fly." (This, we must remember, was written twenty-two years before the advent of the atomic bomb.)

The advance of science was going to cure all the world's ills and bring about Utopia. Science had given to the intellectual climate of the day a growing dissatisfaction with the way technology was reshaping the world and a concern of anxiety about the kind of people scientific progress would ultimately lead to. It began his essay with the statement of these doubts:

"Science has not given men more self-control, more kindness, or more power of discounting their passions in deciding upon a course of action. It has given communities more power to indulge their collective passions, but, by making society more organic, it has diminished the part played by private passions. Men's collective passions are mainly evil; far the strongest of them are hatred and rivalry directed towards other groups. Therefore at present all that gives men power to indulge their collective passions is bad. That is why science threatens to cause the destruction of our civilisation."

It was while the "Today & Tomorrow" pamphlets were being published in Britain that science fiction was first designated as an independent publishing category in the United States. The pioneering Amazing Stories first appeared in 1926, although a special all-fiction issue of Science & Invention had appeared in 1923. The man who provided the prospectus for the new genre, Hugo Gernsback, was a would-be inventor who had emigrated to the States from Luxembourg in 1904, and had since been involved with a number of projects to do with the advancement of science and, in particular, popularizing science.

Like Haldane, Gernsback had a great deal of faith in the potential miracles which might be wrought through science for the betterment of mankind. He was a confirmed Utopian. His manifesto for the new literature argued as follows:

"It must be remembered that we live in an entirely new world. Ten hundred years ago, stories of this kind were impossible. Science, through its various branches of mechanics, electricity, astronomy, etc., enters so intimately into all our lives today, and we are so much immersed in this science, that we have become rather prone to take new inventions and discoveries for granted. Our entire mode of living has changed with the present progress, and it is little wonder, therefore, that any imaginary situations - impossible 100 years ago - are brought about today. It is to these situations that the eye roams and finds their greatest interest."

"Not only do these amazing tales make tremendously interesting reading - they are also always instructive. They supply knowledge which we might not otherwise obtain - and they supply it in a very palatable form ... New inventions pictured for us in the scientific of today are not at all impossible of realization tomorrow."

Gernsback envisaged a fiction which would play the same sort of social role as mechanical invention: an inventive literature intimately involved with technological impact and advance. And though it quickly became no more than another sub-genre of romantic pulp adventure fiction its content remained infected with Gernsback's optimism.

There were a few stories in the fiction produced under the science fiction label in the twenties and thirties which seemed to doubt the essential virtue of scientific advance. But these tended to fall into the category defined by the question with which Haldane had opened his essay. Briefly, they queried about the possibility of his becoming an evil and dangerous through over-education or machines that he would use as a perverse. Haldane's subtle emotional reaction to the attack that a scientific "Utopia" would be indefensible or Russell's consideration of the basic problem that scientific knowledge would be applied for the good of the race as a whole is evident in the sf of this period.

It was not until the late thirties, when John W. Campbell Jr. became editor of Astounding Stories, that the character of science fiction began to change. Campbell co-opted the philosophy of science into the philosophy of science fiction, asking that the authors who wrote for him should consider their imaginative ideas as hypotheses and should use their stories to work out the logical consequences of such ideas. His aim was to create a form of literature which was not prophetic or inspirational, but which would provide a medium for the methodical exploration of possibilities. Change was at first slow, in that most of the hypotheses favoured by the authors tended towards the incongruously implausible, but the effort of self-discipline was perceptible in the work of the best of Campbell's writers.

The thesis advanced by Russell began to invade science fiction, at least in Astounding, after 1938, but the explosion of the atom bomb in 1945 caused a sudden change of perspective which brought Russell's concerns very much into fashion and destroyed the last vestiges of Utopian complacency. The emotional reaction against the very notion of a hyper-organized Utopia, typified by Brave New World, was sidestepped by the main current of science fictional thought.

Science fiction in the fifties became less predictive and more analytical. The typical science fiction novel of the period featured a hypothetical society (set in the future or on another world) in which power is concentrated in the hands of a particular social group, whose priorities are maintained at the expense of all others thanks to manipulation of the masses by the methods provided by science and technology, from high-powered advertising to brainwashing. The Space Merchants, by Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth, was probably the archetypal exercise along these lines. Other novels saw the world run by hedonists, the medical profession, lawyers, insurance companies, schizophrenics and all manner of religious movements. Collectively, these novels bear eloquent witness to the now-general acceptance of the Russell argument that the questions which were important were not concerned with what science might do, but with what various power-groups might seek to do with it.

In the sixties the theme of science against man - that is to say, science being used by individuals and groups to the ultimate detriment of mankind - became dominant in science fiction. The focus of the science fiction story tended to fall much more on the present than the future. Instead of the future as playground or as experiment in thought, we find in the sf of more recent times the future as metaphor for the present, the imminent future which is today, but more so.

There have, in fact, been three major phases in the evolution of science fiction: the use of the future as an imaginary milieu, followed by its use as an imaginative, but logical, construction, and finally its use as a non-satirical metaphor. The older types have persisted but the focus of activity within the community of sf writers has changed.

The time when science fiction could claim any kind of kinship with the kind of exercise represented by the "Today & Tomorrow" essays is now long past. Few people associated with the genre would make such a claim today - even the situation has indeed changed. It is apparent that the futuristic aspect of the science fiction was generally written in the limited time available, and it is certainly true that the futuristic quality of science fiction written today is not the counterpart of the primary science fiction story has always been purely hypothetical, and the handling of the milieu as "the future" or "another world" or "a parallel universe" is merely a conventionalized procedure and procedure and the outcome of prophetic, not writers of fiction.

The intimate connection which has grown up in post-war sf between the imaginative construct and the perceived reality has been seen by some as a sign of "maturation" and by others as a process of decay in which the romantic adventures of the pre-war days have been gradually drained of their "sense of wonder". Both perspectives are valid according to the precepts of the people involved but what has happened is perhaps best regarded as an evolution stimulated by historical change.

The Utopian Hugo Gernsback looked forward, as did J. B. S. Haldane, to a better world brought about by the increased power which scientific knowledge would deliver into human hands. Gernsback referred to this golden future as the "Atom-Electronic Age", or the "Age of Power-Freedom". That era began in 1945, and we have lived it since then. The power is free - the power of the atom, the power of the electronic media, the power of the genetic manipulator. But it is free only in the sense that it is at large in the world. It has not, as Gernsback and Haldane anticipated, made us free - and while the problems of control and administration of the power remain unsolved it holds us under threat. It is this threat which is the primary force shaping science fiction today.

Although the last year of the war constitutes something of a historical breach in the evolution of the continuity of the publishing category, and the continued activity of a great many of its authors (especially

those promoted by Campbell), made certain that the new science fiction would lose nothing of the legacy of the old. That legacy was a vocabulary of symbols - an index of ideas - which provided writers with a way of talking about the new historical situation. The old sf delivered into the hands of the new a whole imaginative system for use in the analogical analysis and metaphorical interpretation which became its chief concerns.

Because of the genesis of the publishing category within the mass-produced culture of the pulps science fiction has been slow to win any sort of recognition - let alone acceptance - by the literary establishment. Perhaps it never will, in that it serves needs which are not primarily aesthetic. But the science fiction of today - that component of it, at least, which is not mass-produced pulp adventure - provides the only authentic mirror to the predicament of contemporary man in the whole literary spectrum. Perhaps it is time for the priority of aesthetic concerns in the study of contemporary science fiction to be challenged, and even set aside.

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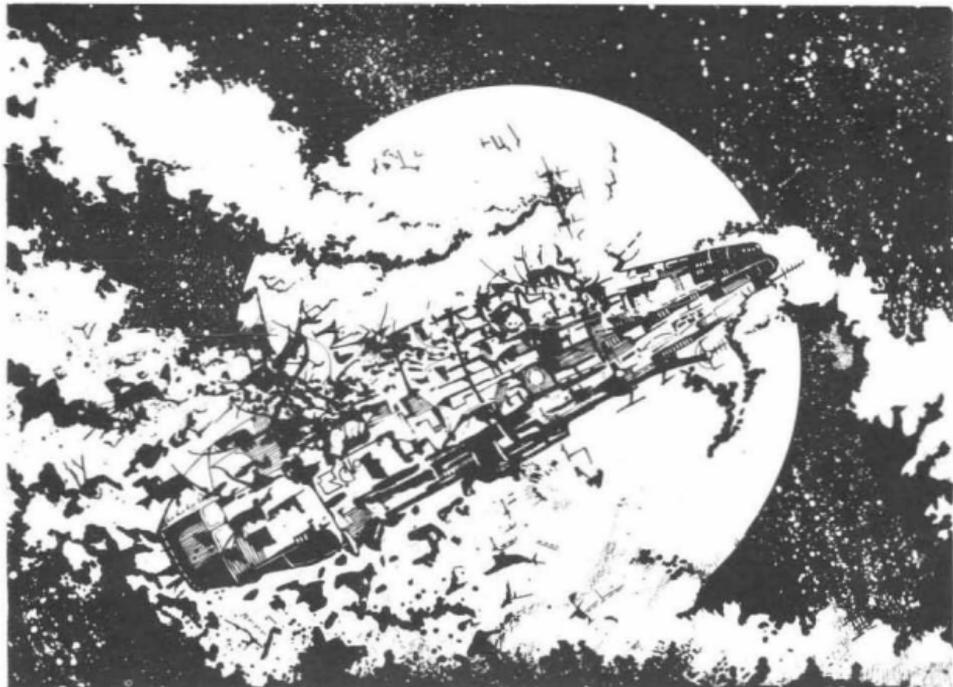
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pulp species will not die, and may, indeed flourish as we face a social climate of economic depression and uncertainty which is already renewing the demand for escapist fantasies. There will, however, also be a trend towards the greater acceptance - by the public if not by the literary elite - of the use of the science fictional vocabulary of symbols as a structure of metaphors. This is already becoming noticeable in the work of some authors in the literary "mainstream" and more and more authors are beginning to escape the sf label which has hitherto possessed them. The one variety of science fiction which may pass out of fashion is the mid-range - the science fiction of the Campbellian ideal, with its pretensions to scientific method and logical rigour. Those pretensions were always an illusion, and they are now fast becoming an unnecessary illusion.

It is almost impossible to find any realistic hope that in the future the problems of administration and control of the power granted by scientific progress will be solved. Technology is, and will remain, a medium of exploitation, providing the means by which men may compel or persuade other men to do their bidding. The sf which retains the label will continue to be a medium reacting against anxiety - an assembly of escapist fantasies. It is equally certain, however, that the other sf - the sf with respect to which the label will become redundant - will continue to reflect and dramatise that anxiety with considerable intensity. Science fiction, in this sense, provides the most explicit examples of today's literature of alienation, and the most effective of today's horror stories. It may also provide one of the most important and useful keys to the understanding of the world.

W. H. Stubbins, February 1978



BRITISH SF: AN AMERICAN VIEW

by
Cy Chauvin

Written in - during the New Wave period, 1964-1968 - science fiction was perceived to have a profound effect upon the American scene than it appeared to have today. If you asked the typical American for what he thought of the genre of present-day British SF, you would probably only get a blank stare in reply. Since the 1940s and 1950s, speculation has ceased to register as significant, there seemed no strongly focal points on the British horizon, and it is to hope for the overseas reader to get a cohesive picture, and it is distressing.

The picture we see is a fragmented one, a patchwork of isolated novels and even more isolated short stories, published by American firms and discussed in American magazines and American newspapers. Even today, in an article in *High Fantasy* "Science Fiction as Empire", pointed out that such writer works independently, and that we should examine and judge them on individual merits, and not on the basis of a common British "empire". This leads to the way American readers treat it of from Britain: simply as the work of another writer. It may be that the field has grown too big (even in Britain) for there to be any cohesive picture or view to be seen.

When Lewis wrote in 1968, he was referring to the fact that the American scene was so fragmented, and that the British scene was so isolated, that we should examine and judge them on individual merits, and not on the basis of a common British "empire". This leads to the way American readers treat it of from Britain: simply as the work of another writer. It may be that the field has grown too big (even in Britain) for there to be any cohesive picture or view to be seen.

Mark Adlard brought up one in a letter to *Yester*. He compared two quotes, one by C. S. Lewis in *Other Worlds*, and the other by Isaac Asimov in one of the University of Kansas SF Film Lecture series. The quotes he felt showed the contrast between the different attitudes toward SF - the "pulp" and "highly original" tradition of Asimov, and the "Other" and "British" tradition of Lewis.

Adlard said: "The SF which in the 40s became fact in the 60s, when *Asimov* stepped onto the moon, it was justified of the work done by writers in John Campbell's circle".

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

In Lewis of the science fiction of the 1940s and the 1950s, and perhaps even into the 1960s, called it a "real" distinction. Most of the SF of that time was written as an end in technology, and not centered around human beings. In Britain, Edward Elton Stapledon, Lewis, Emyr and Orwell) in comparing his "Other" tradition,

Adlard didn't mention: American SF of the 1940s and 1950s was largely minor stories, while the science fiction of the few writers listed mentioned are all novels.

I do have some objections to this idea of an "Other" tradition, however. Tradition, to me, implies influence; one writer changing the course of another's work. I really don't believe that there was such (if any) influence shared between the writers Adlard mentions. The science fiction they produced was isolated; individual mutants, freaks, and not the beginning of a new tradition in literature. Huxley undoubtedly influenced Orwell through *Brave New World*, but this was a one-shot deal (not a continuing influence), and Orwell was just as influenced by other anti-utopian writers (e.g. Zamyatin's *We*) - and while such of is anti-utopian, that hardly takes in the whole field. There were alternatives to the pulp magazines in Britain, but hardly a whole other "tradition" - and the same alternatives were present in the US (e.g. George R. Stewart's *Earth Abides*, published 1948). And Stapledon was more widely recognized at first in the US - Forry Ackerman is quoted as praising Stapledon in Warner's *All Our Yesterdays*, a fan-based publishing house brought out one of his short novels along with stories by two other writers, and Dover Books has kept his four most noted novels in print (in a quality paperback edition) for years.

There were some real differences in the attitude and manner in which science fiction was approached to Britain as the US being what has been called the "New Wave" period (1964-1968). During this period, writers began to look outside of new for the source of the dissatisfaction they felt with the science fiction of the 1940s, and solutions differed radically in America and Britain.

In the US, writers looked toward fantasy-myth. Hugo Blyden and Samuel O. Delany published major works, and seemed to be at the peak of their popularity. Other writers like Ray Bradbury, Robert Silverberg, Steven Dickman, R. A. Lafferty, Jack Vance and Cordwainer Smith were active. In the UK, Tolkien, though a British writer, had his first wave of popularity in the US - and Orson Scott Card's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, with its long trek through the wilderness, its tiny villages, princes and noblemen, probably owes as much to William Morris as it does to Hugo Gernsback. Harlan Ellison said that it was "the new mythology".

In Britain, on the other hand, writers turned toward contemporary realistic and avant garde fiction for material with which to invigorate their SF. Realism was idea, rather than myth or fantasy. It is this attitude which led Brian Aldiss to suggest, in a speech given in Rio de Janeiro in 1967, that "locations like Mankai Island, Anguilla, Vietnam, Berlin and the Negev" might be "less stale" than other used in SF - such as the corridors of a giant space-ship. It led John Brunner to remark: "I have found that writing about the arbitrarily far future is too damned easy ... The closer you get to the present, the more difficult it is to write." The evidence of one's own reason. - ("The Obsession of *Brave New World* and *Brave New World* into the History of its Production") *Science Fiction*, May 1970, p. 40

This tendency to think contemporary realism was the solution to the problems of originality and significance in SF was particularly strong among those writers who were frequently published in *New Worlds* (including such non-Britons as John Sladek and Thomas M. Diach). Michael Moorcock went so far as to say in an interview in 1969 that: "... the new wave has to do with science fiction (while *New Worlds* has not to do with science fiction. New wave science fiction is ... traditional science fiction written with more gusto ... perhaps it's more colourful, perhaps it's more sophisticated in some of its characterizations - but it is still essentially science fiction ... Whereas, what *New Worlds* (writers are) trying to do is ... to write something that is essentially different." (*Science Fiction Review* 34, November 1969, p. 11) Later, in an editorial written in *New Worlds Quarterly* 2, Moorcock went even further: "... SF ... is written within what is at best a minor artform. It would be foolish to claim more than that." And: "Reasonably of readers accept the fact that SF, as such, can never by its very nature offer the richer,

more profound pleasures of the best novels". (p 10). Alexei and Cory Panahin analysed the general attitude of New Worlds writers - which was that the devices of sf were stale, and the fiction poorly written or juvenile, all of which was true. "But the conclusion ... reached was that sf was juvenile and badly written because of its devices. Rocket ships and robots were inherently juvenile". (*Fantastic*, July 1973, p 103)

This is an attitude that never gained wide acceptance in the US, but seems to have been a major force in the shaping of British sf, 1964-1969. Science fiction is not inherently an inferior - or superior - artform, but simply another branch of fiction, with its own peculiar characteristics, faults and virtues. In contrast to the quote from Moorcock above, John Barth said that "What my favourite writers ... share (except for Robbe-Grillet) is a more or less fantastical, or as Borges would say, "irrealist", view of realism; and this ... is all that I would confidently predict is likely to characterize the prose fiction of the 1970s. I welcome this (if it turns out to be ... true) because unlike those critics who regard realism as what literature has been aiming at all along, I tend to regard it as a kind of aberration in the history of literature". (*New American Review* 15, p 136)

There is another factor that should be mentioned here: who a writer (or group of writers) turn to for recognition. In the US, a large percentage of sf writers seemed most interested in the reaction of scientists, sociologists and futurists, with the literary establishment running far behind (so in this sense, Mark Aldridge may be right). In Britain, the ties between the outside literary world and the sf community seemed to be closer; New Worlds even received several grants from the Arts Council to continue publication. Writers in the UK also seemed to value the Hugo and Nebula awards less than did their American counterparts (probably because they both seemed largely American awards, and went mostly to American writers), though it's hard to say if peer recognition was less important in the UK than the US - if the influences outside science fiction were stronger than those from within it.

the UK than in the US - Poul Anderson has quoted Heinlein's remark on how he must compete for the reader's "meat money" and this explains that we be interesting

It is semantic nonsense; every writer wants to entertain (though each has a different means by which he/she believes it should be done, and most have other motivations, as well), and while I drink beer, I find myself attracted more to the work of the literary-minded writers (American or British) than I am to the ones like Poul Anderson, who seem to equate writing with the brewing of beer. It is nothing more than a put-down of writing as art - yet you'll find that Poul Anderson wants to be taken seriously, too. It is a matter of "pretension", and what a writer in America, or England, is willing to pretend his work accomplishes. The goals he or she sets; their aspirations.

During 1964-1969, the aspirations of science fiction writers were tested, twisted and redefined. Technology could not solve everyone's problems, because not everyone's problems are technological. The elimination of pollution will not put a smile on everyone's face. Joanna Russ's "Nobody's Home" (*Universes*, 1971), is a succinct statement of the problem. How does one solve unhappiness? Is a labour/technology intensive society best? We have to restructure goals.

The thematic aspirations of sf were not only tested, but also the evolutionary development of the field as a whole was swayed. In "What Do You Mean - Science? Fiction?" Judith Merril discussed this. In particular, she commented on an earlier article by Reginald Bretton published in 1952, in which mention was made of a new form of fiction emerging out of the interaction of science and literature. Merril quoted Bretton: "To say that science fiction holds within itself the seed of an entirely new literature does not mean that science fiction as we know it is that literature. Nor does it mean that we can foretell the exact forms that

literature will take when it evolves from science fiction..." (*SF: The Other Side Of Reality*, p 185) This passage echoes what I quoted from Moorcock earlier, on the direction of New Worlds, and the writers around it. How do you use the techniques of science fiction to write about the present day? Until recently, it has mostly been a British phenomenon - in Ballard's Crash, for instance, the psychological impact of the automobile is the subject of the novel. Only it is not a sociological novel, but a personal one (the protagonist having the same name as the author), and it deals with aberrations, rather than banal normalities (the general complaint of the sf writer when asked why he doesn't write about the contemporary or "real" world). Science fiction is obsessed with the effect of environment upon man - exotic, changed, and frequently technologically generated environments. Crash, and its thematic sequels The Concrete Island and High Rise, deal with the same thing. They resemble the "old" literature more than they do sf, however.

The influences had drifted east to America, and is particularly evident in Robert Silverberg's Dying Inside and Joanna Russ's The Female Man (1975) Dying Inside, telegraphically substituted in place where another might use literary connotations, such as changing point of view, stream of consciousness, etc - it is the device of literature under read. In Russ's

personnel, each from alternate worlds. The novel is highly fragmented and disjointed, the latter two revealing change continually. The reader barely gets time to focus and it changes. Both novels focus on very contemporary problems: alienation, and the feeling of alienation and problems of communication between people (and contrary to what would seem

to Dying Inside rather than making the life support) (alternately are presented, some very savage and violent). The novels are filled with the driving pain (and some strange joy) of the individuals. They developed out of

And the novels are sf; they are inspired by a wider viewpoint. The writers are willing to accept the bizarre as possible, even useful - Samuel R. Delany gave a good example: "He turned on his left side. That doesn't mean he's twisting and turning. No, in science fiction there's a little switch." (*Shogun*, Summer 1964) It is not possible. It is not (only) a symbol; but has literal possibility. We can accept a world like Whiteaway, where there are no men. The advent of technological and accelerated cultural changes opens new areas for the writer to explore most of which fit the definition of sf. As the protagonist says in Chris Wareing's The Golden Rulebook "I don't want to be told that I make up, because by a dream of total nihilism; because of the R-hom expanding, that people felt that way about the creature. It isn't true. There is something real in the world." (p 172)

and thoughts, how "politics. Change in environment

There have been more concerns than their American counterparts in depicting this "something real", and the British writers have influenced American sf writers (as a best selling example) far more than the reverse. There no longer seems the disparity there was in the past; the radical goals and techniques have become accepted. We have landscapes as well as landscapes.

PHILIP JOSE FARMER

Interviewed by
David Pringle

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14th June, 1978)

I'd like to start by asking a few biographical questions in line with *Phantasm*. Sam Moskowitz says that you were born in 1918, had a happy childhood, and your parents were very religious. He adds that, though you were good at football, etc., you "suffered from a certain inferiority complex and an extra-religious spiritual neurosis". Any comments?

You have to be rather cautious about what Sam Moskowitz says. I sent him forty typewritten pages single-spaced - a detailed biography - and he made quite a few errors of fact and interpretation. My parents were Christian Scientists, but they weren't fanatics. It's a little difficult to define - I was a rather receptive or sensitive child - but I believed literally in the things they told me. So there was a puritanical streak in our family, just as there was in most

families in the Midwest at that time. However, at the same time I had a sort of disbelief operating - a disbelief in the things they told me, which resulted in a tension...Not a schizophrenic attitude, but an alternation between what I'd been taught and what I tended to disbelieve. My sense of incredulity dominated at times. But I did read the Bible religiously when I was very young. At the same time my parents gave me access to any books I wanted to read. I read Homer's *Odyssey* at a very early age, Robert Louis Stevenson... *Gulliver's Travels* had a tremendous influence on my mind at about ten. Of course, Peoria, Illinois, in which I was chiefly raised, had a very good library - a lot better than many bigger cities - and I had access to books of all kinds. I could take my choice. So I would modify Moskowitz's statement somewhat in that my parents were not religious fanatics - it was just that I was inclined to take seriously what they professed. They had professed to be Christian Scientists, but they didn't practise it too much until they got old. I don't like Christian Science. I could never get them to explain it to me satisfactorily, mainly because I don't think they could explain it. Now I share Mark Twain's attitude toward Christian Science. He was pretty vehement about it, and wrote a book denouncing it.

Did you actually have a break - some time in your teens or early adulthood when you ceased to be religious - or was it a slow process?

When I was about fourteen I think I became an atheist. I was about nineteen when I really broke free. Of course, these emotional issues were still operating, because when I was about twenty I went to a revival meeting and became momentarily reconverted to a fundamentalist sect. But that didn't last more than about five days.

Why do you think religion has played such a large part in your fiction? Are there anything to do with your background?

like that. You might say that I was genetically a religious person - a philosopher, anyway. These religious issues really distressed me when I was young, because like all imaginative juveniles I did a lot of thinking about space and time, the contradiction between the limited and the unlimited, between time and eternity, immortality, sin - all that sort of stuff. So that thread has continued through most of my writings... Most human beings are religious in the sense of either being religious or anti-religious, and if they're violently anti-religious you know definitely they're very much concerned about these issues. It's people who become indifferent to the whole thing who've more or less freed themselves - or at least they think they have: I still think there's something operating down in their unconscious. We never really get free of our childhood.

Perhaps that's a good argument of what your fiction is about. It seems to be so rooted in childhood, in a way. *Adventure*, *Phantasm*, *Images of the Apes*, and so on. It seems to be trying to carry childhood wonder on into adulthood...

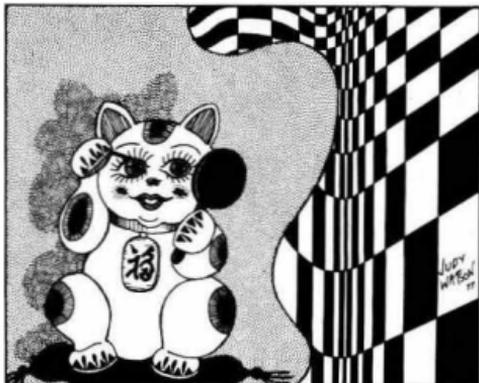
When I was young I read Burroughs and Doyle and the pulp magazines - the pulp heroes: the Shadow, Doc Savage, G-8 and all that. I hated to come to the end of these stories, so in a sense I'm fulfilling a childhood ambition by continuing these stories, but not as the original authors did. Now I can see the dark side, or even the humorous or ludicrous side, of my heroes, and so I write that. It's really a form of therapy.

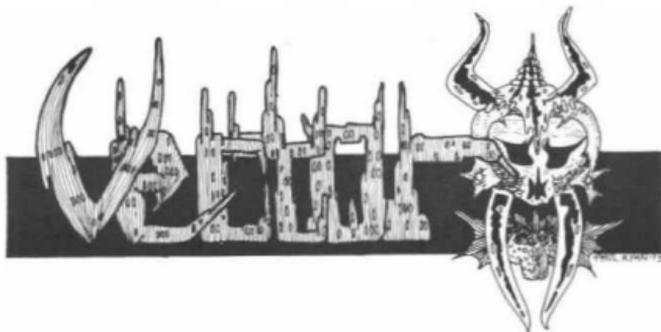
Can you get back to the beginning again? You were a bit of a late starter, since your first sf story didn't appear till 1952...

I had a non-sf story published in *Adventure Magazine* in 1946, and actually when I first started to write I didn't write sf. I wrote stories that I sent in to the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, and magazines

like that. They had rather a frank sexual content, which I was naive enough to believe they would publish. I soon learned different. I didn't write too much of... I think I wrote about three stories which I sent in to John Campbell. Those were rejected. There was a long period when I didn't write anything at all, because I went back to college and I was married and raising a family, working very hard, doing a lot of reading. I just didn't attempt anything. Then about the early part of 1952 I got this idea for "The Lovers" and I decided to sit down and write it. Of course, you know the story - it went to Campbell and he was nauseated by it, and then it went to Gold and he was somewhat sickened by it, and then it went to Sam Mines and he realised he had something new.

(continued page 13)





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