

# ZENITH SPECULATION

review and comment on speculative fiction

APRIL 1966

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HEINLEIN'S  
NON-FICTION  
alexei panshin

1966 - THE HUGO  
CANDIDATES



- ★ Squares of  
the City
- ★ Dune
- ★ 3 Stigmata of  
Palmer Eldritch

& further criticism and  
discussion by moorcock,  
harrison, etc.

Vol 1. No. 12.





# ZENITH SPECULATION

review and comment on speculative fiction

April 1966

Vol.1. No. 12.

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## Harry Harrison vs. "Double Booking"

When I was writing BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO, I kept mumbling to myself that old-line, hard-core fandom wouldn't like it. When Brian and I were working up the first issue of SF HORIZONS, the same mumble echoed in my ears. Now that both of these projects have been completed and hurled naked and damp into the literary market place, it is time to look around and see just how correct these prognosticative mumbles were. I intend to take the look here in the pages of ZENITH SPECULATION, because this journal has worked hard to identify itself with stone-age science fiction, and makes vociferous defence of all it holds dear.

My first reaction has been one of happy surprise: the reception of both has been gratifying for the most part. BILL had the unique distinction of being on sale -- at roughly the same time -- in four different forms. Hardback books in the U.S. and Great Britain, serial versions in Galaxy and New Worlds. (I encourage the serious collector to buy all four, since each version is different from all the others.) Everyone seems to have enjoyed BILL, except the reviewer for Punch, Judy Merrill, and A. and B. Mercer. Punch and Judy -- and the coincidence of names is theirs, not mine, cannot be examined in great detail because they dismissed the book in equally brief and grumbling tones. But Archie and Beryl have laid it on the line to look at. I shall.

Please try to understand; I am not trying to defend BILL or to plug it (other than to encourage you again to rush out and buy all four versions,) but to examine the arguments aimed at its prostrate body, arguments that I feel are very representative of currently held attitudes among a section of fandom.

(A) is unhappy because he is not able to identify with Bill. I present this thought: is it absolutely essential to identify with a character in a story? Is this to be the only kind of character to be allowed in fiction -- which includes science fiction? Can he see that it is possible that the title of the book in question and the reactions of the protagonist are perhaps a small protest against the attitude inside SF, that this is the only kind of hero one can have?

(B) is unhappy because Bill is not as believable a character as Jason dinAlt. I take believable to mean "real" in this context -- and must a character be real? Is this the only kind of character we are to have in fiction? But don't both these characters have the same reality, figments of my hot and fevered brain? They are fantasies, -- can they both not be accepted as that, and an attempt made to discover just what sort of fantasy was intended? In the fantasy world of comedy there exists Chaplin's Little Man, who is quite real, and there exists Jerry Lewis's fumbling idiot, who is impossible of any real existence. Both are viable comedy figures. Can not this same latitude be allowed in fiction? It is. Then why not in science fiction?

In their review, (A) & (B) appear to be trying hard to understand the book and to find something to enjoy in it. But they try too hard, and in the wrong direction. They want to fit it to the accepted SF pattern of identify-withable

hero with strong muscles, noble heart, masses of grit who will reach Victory through Struggle. They find it unthinkable that an SF protagonist could have shoddy muscles, a quailing and empty heart, as much grit as a sheet of worn-out sandpaper, a man who gets nowhere by struggling, and only reaches what might be called victory by accident, who instead of "Gosh darn!" curses in the manner Kenneth Tynan made famous. If the above described character has any resemblance to Bill, the coincidence is not accidental.

I say this, Beryl and Archie, your minds are too closed. You are trying to fit things to a pattern you hold is the only acceptable one. The only thing in common that the "new wave" SF writers have is the feeling that SF is an open-ended medium, not closed and restricted to one type of narrative. I ask you to recognise this, and to try harder to find out what they are saying and how they are saying it. If they fail, condemn them for failing. But, please, do not condemn them for trying.

Harry Harrison.

## CAPSULED CRITIQUE

" ACTION FIRST " - C.C. McApp.

This new author has made his appearance in the resurgence of IF and the creation of WORLDS OF TOMORROW. His by-line conceals his real identity, which at present is unknown. McApp usually injects a high degree of verisimilitude into his stories, coupled with a welcome freshness and originality in concept. These assets are hitched to an unashamed 'action' style of writing, which is sometimes ideal and sometimes is a pity. His characterisation is not particularly good, and along with dialogue, tends to lack more than shallow depth.

One of his favourite themes would appear to be the reduction of man to a pre-technological of subservient state, and the prime agents of this subjugation are often empire-building aliens. McApp's series of "Gree" stories concern the Earth in bondage to alien (but fairly benevolent) rulers, and these stories exhibit McApp's flair for invention very well. The first story, "Slaves Of Gree" presents such novel and detailed descriptions as of the "space-bags", and the "Birds of Effogus", while the sequels continue with other details.

McApp was recently featured in Galaxy with a short novel, "The Mercurymen", which contained several original concepts wasted on poor writing and development of intra-person situations.

This author fails to reach his full potential, because his insistence on "action first" allows the innovations in his stories no time to stand and mature into full richness of development. If he would only slow down the pace and concentrate less on routine "formula" action, he would produce more than entertaining light reading.

# THE NON-FICTION OF R.A. HEINLEIN

alex panshin.

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ALEX PANSHIN recently wrote a book of critical essays on the writings of Robert A. Heinlein. Due to unforeseen difficulties too lengthy to go into here, the prospective publishers (Advent; Publishers) were unable to produce the book as was hoped. Before the work is published under another imprint, ZENITH SPECULATION is printing a small non-critical section of the book. This short descriptive article will form the Appendix to the final work.

Since the main interest of my book is Robert Heinlein's science fiction, I've made no attempt to discuss his articles, lectures, and speeches. However, it is quite true that a number of them are very interesting, and have a certain pertinence to his science fiction, and hence deserve some discussion, if only a very brief one.

In recent years, science fiction has been a staple item with the large professional publishing houses, but twenty years ago, this was not so. Science fiction was published by minor houses dedicated to digging out favourite stories from old magazines and putting them into hardcovers. In 1947, one of these houses, Fantasy Press, asked seven of its authors to contribute short articles to a symposium on science fiction writing. The book, OF WORLDS BEYOND, was out of print for years, and in great demand until recently reprinted by Advent: Publishers of Chicago \*

Robert Heinlein was one of the writers represented in OF WORLDS BEYOND, his article was entitled "On The Writing Of Speculative Fiction".

For all that the article was to be on science fiction in general, Heinlein quickly dismisses the gadget story and limits himself to stories about people. He says that there are three kinds; boy-meets-girl, The Little Tailor, and the-man-who-learned-better, and then discusses each of these. The first and last classes are self-explanatory; The Little Tailor is the story of the man who succeeds or fails spectacularly.

The main trouble with these classes, from my point of view, is that they are not exclusive. It isn't at all difficult to imagine a man learning the error of his ways, winning a girl, and succeeding wildly, all in one story. It also seems to me that it isn't likely that a story would ever be conceived of in terms of these categories; they strike me as descriptive rather than as prescriptive.

Heinlein then lists the conditions necessary for the making of a science fiction story; a respect for facts, a difference from the here-and-now essential to the story, and a human problem arising from the difference, or affected by it. And by-and-large, this seems a good prescriptive list to me.

Heinlein concludes his article by discussing professional work habits, and saying that the rules he lists have more to do with successful speculative fiction than anything he had said before. This, too, strikes me as sound thinking, since there is nothing quite so fruitless as an unwritten story.

In 1957, lectures were delivered by Heinlein, C.M.Kornbluth, Robert Bloch, and Alfred Bester at the University of Chicago on the subject of science fiction, and in 1959, Advent: Publishers collected and published these lectures in a volume entitled THE SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL, with a well-informed introduction by Basil Davenport. Heinlein's paper is entitled, "Science Fiction: Its Nature, Faults and Virtues"

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\* Reprinted in 1965 by Dennis Dobson Publishers, with an introduction by John Carnell, at 13/6d.

He begins by discussing the inadequacies of most definitions of science fiction, and by accepting one of Reginald Bretnor's which he summarises; "Science fiction is that sort of literature in which the author shows awareness of the nature and importance of the human activity known as the scientific method, shows equal awareness of the great body of human knowledge already collected through that activity, and takes into account in his stories the effects and possible future effects on human beings of scientific method and scientific fact."

I don't care for this definition myself, - I much prefer the prescriptive list Heinlein himself set forth in OF WORLDS BEYOND. It seems to me that Bretnor's definition would let in not only ARROWSMITH, as Davenport points out in his introduction, but Dr. Kildare as well, or almost any novel about a laboratory, or the new rash of stories written by people who have made a quick trip to Cape Kennedy and come back to write stories.

Heinlein then goes on to separate fantasy and science fiction. Fantasy stories, to Heinlein, are imaginary-but-not-possible, while science fiction is realistic and about the possible. Science fiction can go contrary to theory, but not to fact - which to me makes STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND clearly not science fiction - while fantasy is always contrary to fact.

Heinlein then proposes another short definition of science fiction; "Realistic speculation about possible future events, based solidly on adequate knowledge of the real world, past and present, and on a thorough understanding of the nature and significance of the scientific method." Heinlein says this is a definition of almost all science fiction, and to make it complete we simply need strike out the word "future".

While this definition strikes me somewhat more favourably than does Bretnor's, it seems to me that Heinlein's qualification puts us back in the lab. with Dr. Kildare, and without the qualification the definition eliminates stories such as Poul Anderson's THE HIGH CRUSADE, which has aliens landing in England in the Middle Ages.

Heinlein then goes on at length to discuss science fiction as it is. Except by accident it is not prophecy, and Heinlein gives examples from his own work to demonstrate this. He says that most of it is not very good as literature, partly because it is the most difficult sort of prose to write; and that much of it is not even entertaining - all points that have a large measure of truth to them.

On the other hand, Heinlein finds science fiction the most alive, most important, most useful and most comprehensive fiction being written today. He finds its importance in its attempts to deal with the future, the future being the only point of time we can affect at all. Science fiction's difficulty is in the body of knowledge it requires, and the amount of directed imagination it takes, but since it does deal with change, the most important fact of our world, it is the only form of fiction that has any chance of interpreting our world. He concludes by saying that science fiction will never be mass entertainment, but that it should increase in amount and quality



I don't fully agree with all of these points, but I won't quarrel with them. My summary alone, no doubt, is unfairly compact. Heinlein's arguments are interesting, and they do explain why Heinlein should spend his entire career writing almost nothing but science fiction. Feeling as he does, he could hardly do else.

On two separate occasions, - in the February 1952 issue of Galaxy, and in the April 1956 issue of Amazing, - Robert Heinlein has published articles that attempt to predict something of the world of 2000 A.D. The Amazing article is quite short, the article in Galaxy more detailed.

The Galaxy article begins with contrasting looks at the world of 1900 and the world of 2000. Heinlein then says that his predictions - various gadgets, household nudity, etc. - are really quite timid, and that in actual fact we can expect changes in the next fifty years that are at least eight times as great as the changes of the past fifty years.

In light of this contention, Heinlein makes nineteen predictions, none of them particularly timid, justifying his lack of caution by saying that while some of these predictions will be wrong, timid predictions are certain to be wrong. His predictions include a solution to the housing problem through revolutionary technology by 1967; the disappearance of Communism; controlled gravity; and the discovery of intelligent life on Mars.

He continues with a list of things we won't have; travel faster-than-light, laboratory creation of life; a permanent end to war; and scientific proof of survival after death. (This last, in particular, reflects one of Heinlein's personal concerns.)

Heinlein concludes with a brief discussion of new areas of concern in science; and about science's greatest crisis; keeping tabs on the information we do have so that it can be used.

The Amazing article is a retrospective look from the year 2000, listing advances. His predictions include the use of telepathy and clairvoyance for military purposes; acceptance of man's nature as a wild animal, and the toughest creature in these parts (a favourite Heinlein notion); and - reversing the position taken in the earlier article - a certainty of survival after death.

In April of 1958, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy ran ads in a number of newspapers across the U.S.A. calling on the President to end our testing of nuclear weapons. On Sunday, April 13th, Robert Heinlein and his wife answered it in a full-page ad in the Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph, headlined: "WHO ARE THE HEIRS OF PATRICK HENRY ? STAND UP AND BE COUNTED! "

The ad. is laced with the following quotations in boldface; "Is Life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery ? Forbid it, Almighty God ! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death !! " "The Mice Voted To Bell The Cat", "'Will you walk into my parlour?" said the Spider to the Fly ?' "God grants liberty only to those who love it and are always ready to guard and defend it." "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither

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## SPECULATION

We always require articles of criticism and discussion on speculative fiction, and artwork to illustrate the magazine and brighten our pages. If you're keen to contribute, but aren't sure exactly what we want, a line to your editor will give you all the advice you can use. If you don't want to write at length, we have a constant need for small items such as are found under our Capsuled Critique and Stranger Than Fiction headings. It may delight your sense of the perverse to hunt up items we can use in the latter category. Finally, may we add that we always appreciate your letters of comment, whether published or not, and we do urge you to keep them coming. ZENITH SPECULATION is your magazine, if you want it to be.

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J.P.Patrizio's article "The Drowned Plot (of J.G.Ballard)" in the last issue called forth a varied and vociferous response. We are a little disappointed that factions of both "sides" reacted so hastily to the article; it was non-partisan in approach and was intended to evaluate both the faults and the virtues of J.G.Ballard's writings. Now in fairness we print a considered reply to Joe Patrizio, by Mike Moorcock, and then we hope to give the subject a well-deserved rest for a time.

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## The Drowned Plot (of J.G.Ballard)

a reply by mike moorcock

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Joe Patrizio's article on Ballard was a worthy -- and welcome -- attempt and, as he says himself, one of the first to try and present a well-reasoned case by someone who dislikes Ballard's work. What one reacts to with anger is the kind of thing that uses a string of insensate epithets ('gutter-scrapings', 'sewer-gleanings', and even 'pseudo-poetic rubbish') to describe Ballard's work.

What comes through strongly in Patrizio's piece is that Patrizio is unable to key-in to the symbols in Ballard's work. The thing about Ballard's work, -- particularly his more recent work -- is that they are symbolic dramas of ideas, -- they are total, economic, intense, -- codified dreams, if you like, -- as indeed is most good imaginative fiction. The difference between Ballard, say, and Aldiss, is that Ballard strips his stories of everything but the images essential to his fundamental ideas whereas Aldiss operates on a broader, less specific, level, and allows incidental detail into his work; -- observation of minor characters, landscape cameos and the like -- which does not detract from his work, of course, but which is not absolutely essential to his main theme.

As a writer, one can only admire Ballard's technique. If it has flaws or contains personal cliches, they can be excused, because Ballard is performing a difficult task -- one that most SF writers could not even begin to attempt, preferring to play safe and use the tricks of standard technique (tricks which are fine for telling a light, superficial story, but which only get in the way when an author is attempting something more serious.)

The flaws and apparent carelessness in Ballard's writing, -- and it could easily be argued that many of the examples quoted are not faults -- are inconsequential. There are certainly fewer in his work than in the work of 19th century novelists like Thackeray and Dickens -- and particularly Balzac. These faults do not detract from their work and they do not detract from Ballard's. There are no gross errors of style or essential plot construction. As for the split infinitive, look at what Fowler has to say in MODERN ENGLISH USAGE; it's a long article so I shan't quote.

As for the scientific "explanations", these are largely included by Ballard to satisfy his publishers, and are adequate enough to suspend disbelief in the average reader. Many of these bits and pieces are deliberate jokes as much as anything. These faults might irritate Patrizio, but they are, as he later suggests, unimportant to the reader interested in what Ballard really has to say.

Patrizio is happy when picking over the minor faults, but his intellect would appear to fail him in Part III. He makes no attempt to understand Ballard's outlook, and has a rather fuzzy idea of Ballard's metaphysics -- not to mention metaphysics in general.

Ballard writes about ideas, and these ideas are primarily metaphysical. His characters, while being adequate (and considerably subtler than the characters found in most SF) are essentially ideas rather than personalities, and should be regarded as such. They are personified ideas in much the same way that the characters in myths, many legends, and parables are ideas. They serve to symbolise and dramatise the abstract. As far as one can tell, Patrizio has no sympathy with, (or perhaps no understanding of) abstract philosophy, and believes that philosophy deals -- or should deal -- only with problems concerning the practical ordering of society. Fair enough. But if this is the case, then Patrizio should not pass judgement on Ballard's ideas. He should admit that he has no sympathy with them, and leave it at that. But he should not condemn Ballard for failing to do what he does not set out to do.

Patrizio reveals his incomprehension of Ballard's metaphysics when he dismisses the reason given for Ransom's broken marriage ('a failure of landscape') as meaningless. He then goes off at a tangent to say 'Certainly behaviour is dependant upon environment...etc etc.' To miss the point of Ballard's statement so completely is something of an achievement in itself. Ballard is not referring to environment in Patrizio's sense, but to landscape -- to the mood, atmosphere and stimulus to the psyche/imagination which a particular landscape creates and contains. He is talking about a relationship between Man and Nature, not Man and Society. Thus, the world of water and the world of desert in THE DROWNED WORLD and THE DROUGHT are the two sides of a coin; -- two attempts to investigate mankind's relationships with and attitudes towards his natural environment. Once this basic -- and surely obvious -- understanding of Ballard's work is reached, all the 'meaningless' phrases which Patrizio quotes immediately become clear, and Patrizio's comments, -- not Ballard's -- become somewhat laughable.

Ballard may, indeed, have missed communicating with a certain section of the public at which his stories are aimed. But there are as many people, if not more, who find Ballard's work immensely stimulating, both emotionally, imaginatively, and intellectually. Any highly individualistic writer will fail to communicate with some people. Neither he nor those readers can be blamed for that. It is not for him to condemn those readers nor for those readers to condemn those readers, nor for those readers to condemn him on that score.

Ballard is not unnecessarily obscure -- he is simply not writing about the things which interest Patrizio.

If Ballard overwrites (to go on to Part IV) then it can only be in comparison with Borges. In fact Ballard is specifically interested in saying as much as possible in as little space as possible ("The Terminal Beach"; the forthcoming "The Assassination Weapon" in New Worlds 161), but unless a proper understanding of Ballard's work is reached then both his descriptions and his plots will appear to be repetitive. In one sense, of course, they are repetitive, but he only repeats them in order to say something new about them.

If I am not mistaken Kerans does not walk out 'into the swamp' to die. He walks south, going back towards his psychic 'home'. If the answer is not implicit in the story I don't know what is. Patrizio shows a monumental failure to understand the essential theme of THE DROWNED WORLD. No wonder the end is meaningless to him.

As for Patrizio's remarks on "The Voices Of Time", I find them exasperating, and hard to pin down. One can't argue with Patrizio because one isn't sure what Patrizio is saying. Enough to say, for the moment at any rate, that the title of the story explains almost everything in it.

Although Ballard has admiration for the early Hemingway and has doubtless been influenced by some of Hemingway's techniques regarding characterisation and other elements, he is plainly not using the specific technique of objective reality in his characterisation. But he succeeds admirably in convincing many of his readers of the reality of his characters. To the point, in fact, where people will discuss Ballard's characterisation as if it were an important aspect of his talent; -- as if he dealt primarily in character and not in ideas. Ballard's protagonists are, by and large, Ballard. His subsidiary characters too, are aspects of himself or of his attitudes towards women as a sex. I have already said that his characters are personifications of abstract ideas, primarily, and his heroes represent Man as a force -- a natural force -- rather than Man as a social animal.

Nonetheless, Patrizio has at least attempted to present a reasoned argument, and for this reason, if no other, should be respected.

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....I have the odd job of writing the next Tarzan novel, with approval of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. To be published next spring by Ballantine, if they like it. My Tarzan has qualities of Sherlock Holmes, Tros of Samothrace, and James Bond - truly many of us are hopeless Anglophiles on this side of the world. ( And I could have put Hornblower in there, too !)

(from correspondence)..Fritz Leiber.

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# THE HUGO CANDIDATES - 1966

EDITORIAL by

PETER R. WESTON.

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Although no-one appeared to notice such a master-stroke of applied genius, last year's Winter issue of ZS (Issue 7) was remarkable inasmuch as it carried write-ups of no less than five of the then-possible Hugo Candidates for the Novel Award in 1965. (GREYBEARD, DAVY, FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD, ETHICAL ENGINEER, THE WANDERER). We cannot do less this year, and in this feature we present critiques of three of the books that we think will stand a very good chance of reaching the final stages of the voting. The next issue may well continue this feature by writing-up several other books likely to be contenders.

Until very recently indeed, one would have been hard-put to select any novel that seemed to be worthy of winning the coveted Hugo Award in this coming year. Now, almost overnight, four books have appeared seemingly from nowhere, ready garbed and ideally suited as prize-winners. With still six months of the year remaining, at the time of writing, other contenders may rear their heads; for the moment at least we will confine ourselves to comment upon the three books I have selected.

THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH, by Philip K. Dick, suffers from one of the most unbelievable titles to appear in our somewhat unbelievable field, though this has the advantage of being difficult, if not impossible, to confuse with any other title. Personally, I found the book unbearably difficult to follow, for my simple habit seeks to identify with the lead character in any novel, and to follow him through his trials and tribulations, to emerge victorious from the maze, in a grand finale of point-counterpoint and mission accomplished.

Not so here. I lost my precarious footing on the narrow trail through the Mountains of Confusion, and like a falling stone, plummeted into the eternal depths where light has never shone. And blessed with mental agility as I may be, I could not climb from my canyon. I could not determine whether the lead character in the novel was blundering through his 'real' world, or through a dream-within-a-dream-within-a-dream. Somewhat the same sensation used to come over me when ploughing through some of the more abstruse vanVogtian works, and a conditioned reflex has long been established. Carefully, I laid PALMER

ELDRITCH down, and carefully I picked up something I could enjoy. You'll gather the book did not greatly please my taste.

Subsequent developments indicate that this quality of confusion has penetrated to many other readers. But other reviews and opinions make it clear that some readers must like to be confused! In Galaxy, Algis Budrys, a critic whose work and opinions I greatly admire, was probably most frank. He chose the book as his own, personal, 'Best of the Year', although saying in language not one whit less flowery than mine, that he too lost bearings in narrative mid-stream. Such opinions make it plain that the book cannot be ignored, that it will carry much weight in this year's list of candidates. It is quite likely to be very much to the liking of a sizeable number of readers, and has the added advantage of having been published at a time of year that has ensured a wide distribution and an equally wide reading of the book.

DUNE is the composite Analog serial, DUNE WORLD - PROPHET OF DUNE, and is as mammoth a novel among novels as we will see for many a year in science fiction. The first portion placed high on last year's Roll of Honour, and it is fortunate for Frank Herbert that the timing of publication enables him to tilt lance for a second crack at the Award. Once again, I found this book hard to get into, but the sheer weight of adulation it has received from so many gives me to conclude that it too will command many votes.

SQUARES OF THE CITY is the new book by John Brunner, and is one that I have not as yet had the pleasure of tackling at first hand. Advance reports from independent U.S. critics have enthused remarkably on the quality of the novel, while its publishers, Ballantine, nominate it cautiously as 'One of the 10 Best SF Novels to be published this year' - and they are rarely wrong with such modest praise; they said exactly the same about DAVY in 1965. John Brunner is one of the few British writers to be widely known and read abroad, and his standing has recently been increasing in leaps and bounds. Last year's book, TELEPATHIST, was a potential Award-winner that just failed to attract sufficient attention. His own comment on SQUARES OF THE CITY is that it is the most ambitious work he has yet tackled.

These are necessarily the editor's brief comments on three of the books chosen. On the following pages you will find more detailed evaluation of each of these works. Next issue we hope to present critiques on several other potential 'winners', including THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS by Robert A Heinlein, and perhaps THE ALIEN WAY, by Gordon R Dickson.

#### AN EXPLANATION OF THE HUGO VOTING PROCEDURE

The World Convention in power in every individual year issues nomination papers to fandom in general. These may be completed by anyone, and must be returned to the address shown before a given 'deadline'. Some months before the Convention, all nominations are totalled, and the three or four contenders in each category with the highest point-scores are then named as the official Candidates for that year. Voting on this choice takes place by ballot of registered World Convention members, and results are announced at the World Convention.



# THE 3 STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH

CRITIQUE by RICHARD GORDON

Away from his home in the north of Banffshire, Richard Gordon is presently reading for a degree in architecture at the University of Newcastle, writes limericks for Private Eye, articles for ZENITH, and is working on a piece entitled "Dylan & SF."

Two things from the London World Convention stick in my mind concerning Philip K. Dick. The first is Ted White's somewhat energetic championing of him as the American Ballard, in a talk which was quite as controversial as anything else at the convention. The other was meeting a woman in some room-party, who apparently knew him slightly. She said he was a charming person, but also slightly eccentric.

One might be able to deduce both of these conclusions from his novels, especially his later ones, those written during the last two years. Ted White's contention that Dick is America's answer to Ballard is indeed valid, so much so that I am surprised that it isn't a general point of contention among fans desperately seeking someone other than Ballard and Heinlein to argue about; especially since the only two American writers appreciated by the "in" people at the moment seem to be Vonnegut and Cordwainer Smith. Not that I want to knock these two writers; I'd certainly rank Vonnegut as among the most important SF writers in the world. But then, I'd rank Dick as his equal or perhaps superior.

I suppose that part of the reason why Dick has been ignored by the intelligentsia, despite a



a Hugo Award three years ago, is his somewhat traditional methods of writing - he has been compared to Van Vogt, and this is also a valid comparison. Yet, especially after having read STIGMATA, it seems more than ever to me that Dick adopts a Van Vogtian style for no other reason than that of convenience. Having read this book, which, I'm pleased to announce was more gloriously incomprehensible in parts than even THE TERMINAL BEACH, I'm convinced that Dick could out-Ballard Ballard if he were so inclined.

Dick only returned to writing SF some three or so years ago, after several unsuccessful years in a mainstream wilderness, and since then novels have been pouring from him steadily - eight in two years, that I know of. They all have a common factor, one which was present even in his earlier stories such as EYE IN THE SKY, which is the exploration of various kinds of human madness and also of the validity of subjective and objective realities. Of late, his stories have been getting more and more confusing, to anyone who tries to stay rooted to conventional reality while reading them, for they switch from apparent reality to hallucination with dream-like ease. His heroes are usually psychotics, often suicidal, and it is rare indeed to come across a Dick novel in which the first five pages do not contain at least one specific reference to a psychiatrist or to some form of mental illness.

Half a dozen Dick novels, such as THE SIMULACRA, THE MARTIAN TIME-SLIP, and so on, are all excellent and inventive novels in their own right, yet which begin to pall, in the same way as THE DROWNED WORLD was an excellent book the first time around, but was slightly tedious when repeated in THE DROUGHT and EQUINOX. Approaching THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH with caution, I felt this caution justified when the very first page introduced the robot psychiatrist Doctor Smile, in the hero's bedroom, with hero's girlfriend in loving attendance. A familiar Dick scene, especially the canned sex, which seems designed to satisfy any stray mainstream reader who may have slipped in by mistake.

But it wasn't long before it became obvious that Dick had written something out of the ordinary this time, even by his own standards. The basic elements are familiar, the technique is complex Van Vogt, with a dash of Pohl in the social details, along with dozens of sub-plots thrown in for good measure; mostly inessential but perfectly drawn and each adding to the verisimilitude of the book. At first it seems poorly constructed in some of the details, but looking back, one can see that the plot is considerably more complex and worked out than one would have supposed at first. And once the basic scene has been set and interest stimulated, one begins to get irrevocably mixed up in all the paradoxes which begin to appear.

Any condensation of a book of this variety is virtually impossible, but a synopsis of the first half of the book, which will be comprehensible in normal terms, can be attempted. Briefly, the action takes place on Earth and Mars and various unspecified localities - mainly hallucinatory, one suspects, - about a century in the future, though one can't be sure about this, either. Average daytime temperatures have risen to the 180° Fahrenheit mark, despite which society functions much as it does now, though slightly more efficiently. The UN is trying desperately

to stem the advancing catastrophe, sure to be brought about by the heat, and operates draft laws to ship people out to Mars as colonists, where they eke out miserable existences on the UN dole.

At the same time, Big Business, as mercenary and Machiavellian as it ever was, is trying its damndest to cash in on this state of affairs, and there are only two, interconnected, factors which make life bearable for the colonists. These are the Perky Pat lay-outs, and the hallucinogen drug, Can-D, which are only effective as an escape when used in conjunction with one another. The layouts are incredibly detailed models of the apartments, analyst's offices, hang-outs, etc, of two miniature dolls called Perky Pat, and her lover, Walt. All colonists own these sets, and spend all their skins - the economy being based on truffle skins, which are the only uncounterfeitable currency - on adding new pieces and increasing the verisimilitude of their models.

These layouts, worthless on their own except as models, provide a nearly perfect escape from reality when used in conjunction with the officially outlawed drug, Can-D, which is tolerated on Mars as being the only alternative to complete boredom in the colonist's lives. Taking this drug allows all men to identify with Walt, and all the women with Perky Pat, in a close approximation to a perfect world, real in every detail. Since so many people share the same two characters in each layout, mass orgies are possible such as never dreamed of by the rakes.

Dick has obviously taken the basic theme of his novel (which is the impossibility of distinguishing between "real" reality and hallucinated reality, perhaps suggesting that the one is as real as the other), from the recent research into hallucinogenic drugs, such as LSD, which drug the subject into a state of dissociation from reality, providing a world where hallucination is equally as subjectively "real" as is so-called objective "reality". Although other SF authors have touched upon this subject, no-one else has devoted a full-scale novel to the subject, which also ties up with deeper philosophical questions posed by such people as Berkeley, (when everyone leaves a room, does the furniture cease to exist, with no-one there to see it ?), Spinoza, Nietzsche, and others.

The colonists, half-believing that the Perky Pat layout is as "real" as their own world, half believing in it in a semi-religious sense, are also dissatisfied with the subtly negative effects of the drug. It wears off quickly, one is always slightly aware of the other existence outside the drug's influence, and also a layout is essential to the "reality" experienced, at least to begin with.

Leo Bulero, the businessman and entrepreneur who heads both the Can-D and the Perky-Pat layout firms, is in a vulnerable position, and knows it; he protects himself with precogs against possible dangers in the future. The action starts with the return of a rival businessman, Palmer Eldritch, from the Proxima system, ten years after his disappearance and presumed death. He returns with a new hallucinogen, Chew-Z, which, as Bulero discovers to his cost in an early encounter, is both more powerful than Can-D, and requires no layout to be effective. Bulero is

warned by one of his precogs that he will attempt to kill Eldritch, and attempts to find him, without success. In the meantime, Eldritch has achieved UN sanction for Chew-Z through devious means. Soon after, Bulero contacts Eldritch, and finds himself trapped. It is at this point that the hallucinatory complications begin.

Part of the effect of Chew-Z is that it completely disorganises the subjective time-sense. A second of objective time on Earth can be perhaps a thousand years in the reality that the drug creates. Another complication is that Palmer Eldritch appears in everyone's hallucinations, whether they like it or not, as the hero and God of their universe. Since Eldritch is equipped with artificial eyes, plus stainless steel teeth and right arm, he is quite unmistakable. The complications of Chew-Z multiply as the story goes on; by the end - if that is what it is - everyone has developed Eldritch's artificial limbs, which are the three stigmata of the title. Yet another complication is that the hallucinations apparently time-travel; people keep meeting their ghosts from the future and the past.

Even when Eldritch forces Bulero to take Chew-Z and enter a hallucinatory reality, Bulero knows he will kill Eldritch. In one hallucination, he meets two people from the future engaged in guarding the monument declaring him to be a hero for killing Eldritch. When eventually he does get around to contemplating destruction, it no longer matters, because like everyone else, he has developed the three stigmata. It is as Palmer Eldritch that he kills Palmer Eldritch, - who was not human even at the time of his return from Centuari.

But by this stage, it is in any case impossible to tell whether the particular scene is "real" reality, or whether it is still part of Bulero's original hallucination - at one point he appears to leave the influence of the drug, and a good many pages pass until the appearance of an impossible monstrosity shows him that he is still under the influence of it. As he says later on, it seems as if he's out of the influence, but he cannot be sure. Or, for that matter, whether the whole book isn't part of Eldritch's hallucination on Proxima, as a result of his discovery and first shot of the stuff; or even whether everything, including the book and you and me, isn't part of the hallucination - a form of ultimate solipsism in literary form.

The book must sound impossibly confusing from this approximate description. It is easy enough to describe the first quarter of the book; then I'd defy the most adroit of literary technicians to describe exactly what does happen thereafter. It has to be experienced by the individual rather than described to him; it would hit different people in different ways.

Such description as this only gives a vague idea of the complexities unravelled and not quite unravelled. Yet the wonder about the book is that Dick does it so neatly; it is up to the reader to stay with him. If he stays firmly rooted in apparently firmly solid "reality", then he'll be hopelessly stranded before he's halfway through. The point of the book is that reality is subjective. There are other points as well, and some slight explanation of the plot at the end, which does little enough to unravel the paradoxes. Eldritch, it turns out, isn't human -

he's been taken over by some unexplained alien life-form. Chew-Z is its sole method of reproduction, through the creation of hallucinations of such elaboration that they are reality. Dick has deeper purpose than mere alien take-over in mind, however; near the end, Barney Mayerson, one of the main characters, thinks:-

" After all, the creature residing in deep space which had taken the form of Palmer Eldritch bore some resemblance to God; if it was not God, as he himself had decided, then at least it was a portion of God's Creation. So some of the responsibility lay on him. And, it seemed to Barney, he was probably mature enough to recognise this."

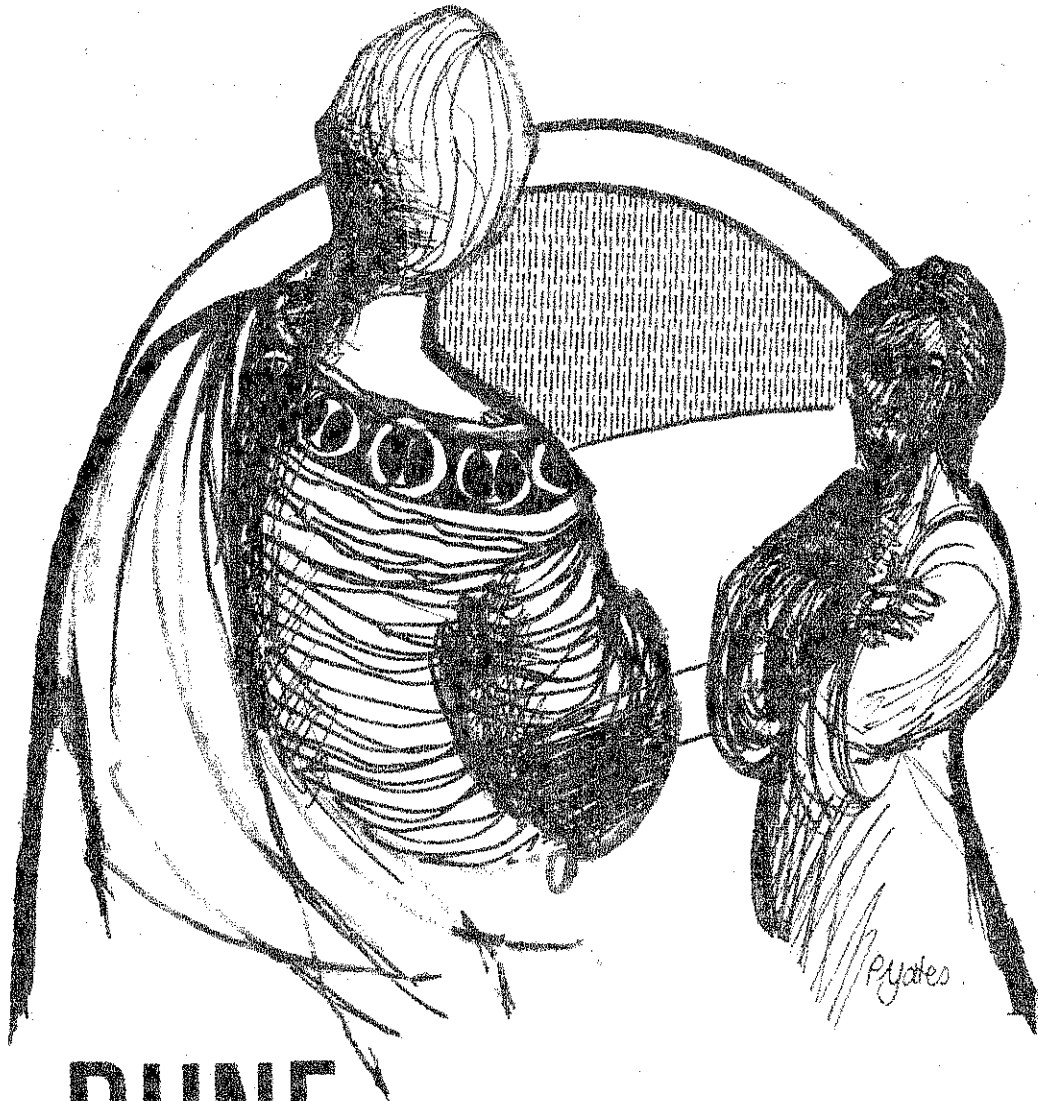
The point of this is that after 250 pages of meandering in and out of circle after circle, Dick suddenly shoots off in an entirely new direction previously unsuspected, adding to the complexities of the situation enormously. Quite what the purpose of this latter part, (which is ultimately integral to the whole book) is intended to be is difficult to say. Algis Budrys, reviewing the book in Galaxy, in many ways as confused by the endless twists; hardly surprisingly, says in his review about this section:-

" ...STIGMATA could easily function as a holy book in itself, since in Dick's logical system, it is entirely possible for a \$4.95, 1965 commercial publication to publish accurate, mystically revealed word of events which not only have not yet occurred, but might not ever, but nevertheless prove the beliefs which are the only true Salvation."

STIGMATA could perhaps thus be said to be fundamentally about religion, a kind of mystical religion of reality, which in its own terms is entirely logical in a mind-twisting fashion, but which by any normal standards is entirely mad. The apparent confusion is complete, yet it must be noted that the plot never once leaves the rails - and in a crazy sort of way one derives a kind of logic from it; an emotional rather than intellectual logic. The plot loops the loop in ultimate fashion; the end equally well being the beginning, the beginning perhaps being the end. At times the middle section is both pre-beginning and post-end. It gyrates and twists in and out of itself endlessly and leaves one a long way from "reality".

This book leaves most SF at the starting post, even Dick's other books. The basic story is relatively unimportant, although nicely enough done, I suppose; it won't be that I shall remember the book for. The ideas brought up and developed are what count in this book, and it turns out to be among the few SF books I've read that go beyond the merely superficial. It could be in danger of starting up another cult, I suppose; I hope it is spared this fate, for it deserves more. For those who keep crying for more adult SF, well, here is a first rate example. The pity is that it probably won't see general publication in this country for some time, for as Budrys says in his review, it's impossible to tell whether it is a good or a bad book, you have to read it, and even though you still might not know after finishing it, it's been an experience.

*Richard Gordon.*



# DUNE

*Archie & Beryl Mercer*

Archie & Beryl Mercer occupy the first floor of a large and rambling residence in Bristol, complete with duplicator Caractacus and a window visible from outside yet non-existent from within the house. Both spend a slightly incredible amount of time writing for fan-publications, both are excellent writers, and Archie has already produced one highly-specialised and immensely enjoyable novel, *THE MEADOWS OF FANTASY*. Both will probably appear professionally before long; both could prepare a better foreword than this.

(B) After reading this story, I began to wonder which had come first in Mr Herbert's imagination; the world or its people? Then I read (in AMRA V.2 No.34) "How to Build A World", a transcript of a speech which Mr Herbert gave at the Pacificon II. This made it clear that he had first created "Arrakis", the waterless dune planet, and had then peopled it with characters.

(A) Yes - this is as good a point as any with which to start. A story about an alien environment involves two distinct though interwoven elements - the environment, and the story. Which, when set down like this, looks perhaps like a glimpse of the over-obvious. Still, separate consideration of these two elements is a valid way of appraising such a story.

To my mind, the environment in this case deserves a considerably better story than it's been given. The Arrakids (to coin an obvious derivative) and their planet I find a thoroughly believable lot. Ringing in a vast and complex network of galaxy-wide intrigue only serves in some measure to diminish the believability of the planet. Ringing in a protagonist who turns out to be a sort of super-being, with messianic properties thrown in for good measure, renders the whole just slightly ridiculous.

(B) Both parts of the story (both magazine serials) are slow-moving, for the people of this arid world (and is the word "arid" implicit in the planet's name, "Arrakis"?) plan with grim single-mindedness for forests instead of deserts, blossoms instead of dunes, and that most awesome of wonders, abundant water. These plans, however, are not destined to become reality for many generations.

It is perhaps difficult to envisage a world entirely without natural water; Arrakis has no seas, no rivers, no rainfall. It is even more difficult to visualise how humans could possibly live anything approaching a normal life on such a planet. The first question one asks, therefore, is: why? Why should anyone wish to live in such a dreadful (to humanity) place? This may be reduced to the cynical demand, "What's in it for me/us?" And of course, there is a mighty bait which makes Arrakis a world over which nations and even whole races will fight. The answer is; the spice. Melange, a rare geriatric spice which can be found only on Arrakis.

(A) Arrakis, incidentally, is only one of the planet's two interchangeable names, the other being simply Dune. Precisely why this double-standard should apply is by no means made clear. It is manifest that the author knows the nature of a dune, and much of the planet's surface does indeed consist of dunes. Much, on the other hand, consists instead of naked rock. Perhaps he thinks that by switching the nomenclature around a bit he can add another modicum of depth to his locale.

(B) The first, shorter part of the story ("Dune World") features almost exclusively two of the three main groups of characters. These are the Harkonnens, who may be classed as the villains of the piece,

and the opposing House, the Atreides. The former consists of the cunning evil-minded Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, his nephew and heir-designate, Feyd-Rautha, and various toadies. The House of Atreides, is naturally much more attractive; Duke Leto is a man of both strength and tenderness and his courageous Lady, Jessica, is fully deserving of the inalienable love and devotion he gives to her.

Their son, Paul, heir to the Dukedom, is the central character of the saga. Hints of his unique qualities are given in "Dune World", and they, together with Paul's fantastic destiny, are brought to a strange and complex maturity in "The Prophet of Dune".

(A) Paul is, it occurs to me, a singularly appealing type for a super-being. There are, of course, super-beings and super-beings - at least in fiction. With many such I find it very hard to identify more than cursorily - but Paul manages to wear his potential with an engaging sort of air, and thus makes an acceptable enough protagonist. Amongst his various felicities is that of inspiring loyalty and devotion in men and women who by all the rules of stereotyped fiction would have good cause to hate him. The woman Harah for instance, - not only does he kill her man (albeit in a fight provoked by the latter), but then, having by his victory won her body, he spurns it in other than a purely menial capacity, yet she becomes the trusted and trusting nanny for his son. And then there's... but I don't think I'd better say anything about that.

(B) The third group of characters, the Fremen, are human, but have lived the grim life of Arrakis for so long that they might almost be classed as indigenous to the planet. Mention of a world where "water falls from the skies" reduces them to the silence of almost superstitious awe. Their existence is touched upon but briefly in "Dune World", and one or two of them make mysterious appearances, but it is not made clear (probably deliberately) whether they are some kind of aboriginal-equivalent, nomads engaged in a constant, grim struggle for existence, or thieving marauders.

The Fremen emerge into prominence in "Prophet..", and it becomes clear that the fate of the Harkonnens, Atreides, and indeed of Arrakis itself, is inextricably bound up with the lives and plans of these dedicated people.

(A) Dedicated, yes, - and desiccated too ! These "Fremen" (the word is equally singular and plural) live an extraordinary life the depiction of which is the work's great glory. They are not, however, the only legitimate human inhabitants of the planet. The dwellers in the towns lack the same romantic image - 'twas doubtless ever thus - but are nevertheless a part of the world they inhabit, and it's something of a pity that the author found no time to show the reader more of their lot.

(B) There are several sub-plots, each of which has its notable characters. The Lady Jessica is a member of a religious, all-female order known as Bene Gesserit. Her training in this Order has given her powers which, although they cannot be classed as actual psi powers, cause her to be dubbed by the Duke's enemies as "his Bene Gesserit witch". The old Reverend Mother, who raised and trained Jessica, turns up in the story from time to time, first as a being of terrifying strength and power, and later as a human who has limitations and makes mistakes like everyone else

Jessica secretly trains Paul in Bene Gesserit methods, and in addition to this training, he has other mentors. There is Thufir Hawat, the Mentat, whose specially-trained mental powers have served the House of Atreides for many years. There is Gurney Halleck, warrior and troubadour, equally practised with sword and nine-stringed baliset. Duncan Idaho, the Duke's Scout and a kind of Ambassador to the Fremmen. And the strange, inwardly tormented Dr. Wellington Yueh.

There are some memorable characters among the Fremmen, too; Stilgar, who combines strength with wisdom in his leadership; Chani-Sihaya, Paul's beloved concubine and mother of his first-born (in this connection history repeats itself; for reasons of state, Leto never married Jessica, although he never loved any other woman); the Shadout Mapes who, in serving Jessica, sets a legend on the road to reality; and, on the fringes of the Fremmen race, Liet-Kynes, planetologist appointed by the Emperor.

(A) As well as the characters of the various Arrakids, the ramifications of interstellar power-politics are involved. The Padishah-Emperor has his superbly-disciplined Sardaukar soldiery but lacks absolute authority. The Great Houses, separately and in council together, also wield immense power, as does the mysterious Spacers' Guild (another entity that could have done with a bit more in the way of explanation) which controls all interplanetary travel. By ploy & counter-plot amongst these is the galaxy ruled.

(B) I enjoyed "Prophet" considerably more than "Dune World", and not only because it was longer. It was as though the author grew gradually more and more absorbed in the world and the characters he had created, and this absorption communicated itself to the reader. Motives which are hidden in the first part become clear in later chapters; loyalties are more sharply defined. The purposes of the mysterious Bene Gesserit order manifest themselves as Paul's weird destiny (the 'Terrible Purpose') unfolds, and gradually all the ambitions and machinations of the various factions are woven more and more tightly together until the inevitable climax is reached. Mankind needs the spice-drug of Arrakis; in the hands of those who realise fully its potential, this need becomes a weapon of tremendous bargaining power.

Like an insistent, recurring strain of background music is the ever-present aridity of Arrakis, the ever-desperate need to conserve water, and Fremmen dreams of a green and fertile world of the future.

(A) I too found the work overly ponderous and slow-moving to start with, beginning to catch and hold the interest more and more as it gathered momentum. The arbitrary division into two "novels", done I gather by or at the behest of John W Campbell Jr to suit his editorial purposes, is entirely artificial and I prefer to think of the whole as the one book it was intended to be. The "break", though occurring at a temporary climax in the action, is a psychological miscalculation - not only does the story carry straight on across the gap, but has only just got into its stride at the time.

And even so, the story is not a patch on what it could have been. But this is where we came in...

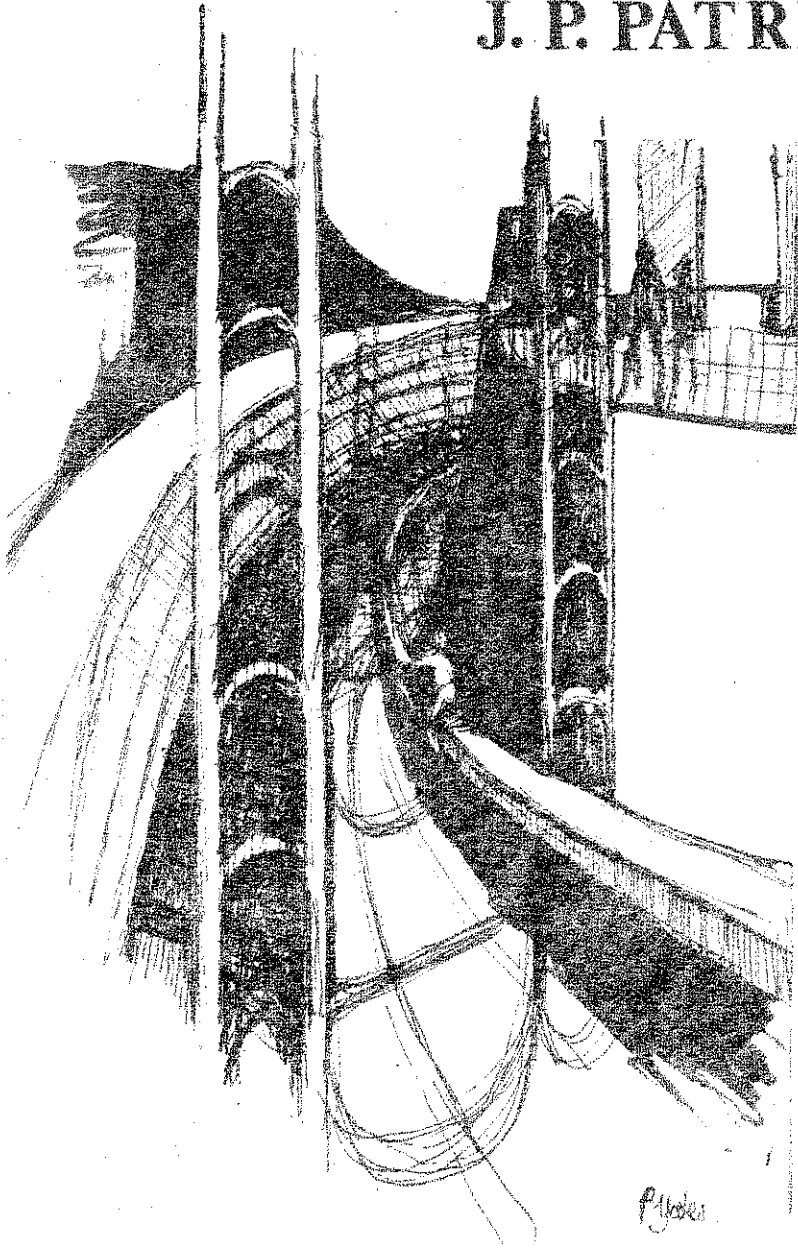
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DUNE is published in the USA by Chilton Books, and is to be published in the U.K. by Victor Gollancz Ltd, at 25/-



# SQUARES OF THE CITY

AN EVALUATION BY  
J. P. PATRIZIO.



This, Brunner's latest novel, is set in Ciudad de Vados, capital of Aguazul, a South American country located about where you find Venezuela today. The city has been built to impress the world -- and this it does -- but to help him build it, the President (Vados) has had to buy, with special privileges, the services of foreign experts. As the country is poor, many people think that the money which has gone into the city could have been better spent, and there is a great deal of resentment towards the foreigners, the majority of whom despise the natives.

Boyd Hakluyt, traffic control expert, is hired ostensibly to deal with a traffic flow situation caused by an influx of peasants into the city, but finds himself the unwilling bone of contention in a fight between political factions. He later discovers that he is merely a piece in a chess game, involving real people, which is to decide the fate of the country. Pieces are 'moved' by the use of the Press, radio and TV (which uses subliminal techniques to get its points across); they are 'taken' by making them ineffectual - imprisonment, killing, etc.

The story plot is based on the World Championship game of 1892 between the Austrian born Steinitz and the Russian Tchigorin, and the various characters have powers in direct relationship to the chess pieces they represent.

Despite the story taking place 25 years in the future it is not SF; THE SQUARES OF THE CITY is, as I've tried to describe above, a story of political intrigue. Now this is not a criticism, it's a statement of fact -- and as it is not SF I feel that Ballantine have treated Brunner a little unfairly in saddling him with a restricted audience when the story in question does not fit into the slot it has been allocated. It may be argued that because it is set in the future and it is to some extent an investigation into the manipulation of people by means of mass media, THE SQUARES OF THE CITY does fall into a category defined by a classic SF plot (e.g. 1984, or THE SPACE MERCHANTS); but this story could have taken place today, and the control of the characters is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Using an existing chess game as the plot basis for a story is, as are most other mechanical plot-constructors, a double-edged sword. Restrictions are imposed and probably the greatest of these is inflexibility; the various moves demand an equivalent situation in the plot, and it is not always possible to unobtrusively contrive these situations and smoothly fit them into the story-line. On the other hand there are positive advantages in using a chess game on which to build a story. Having the game theme gives a logical sequence of events; there is a ruthlessness overlying the story, and this always helps to create tension. Characters are 'taken' whether or not they have become established and liked, which tends to portray a sense of realism.

Which of the above states of affairs predominate will depend on the author, and to a much lesser extent on what game he has selected. I would be interested to hear why Brunner picked the players he did and why a game as long as 38 moves. Steinitz is generally thought to have been a rather stolid player who ground his opponents to defeat; I would have thought that the flamboyance of, say, Capablanca would have been better for plot making, and although 38 moves isn't long for Championship chess, I would say it was too long for Brunner's purpose.

In order to fill his quota of moves, Brunner rather laboured at times, having to create situations that were either contrary to the flow of the story, or necessitating someone doing something out of character.

For example, where Dalban visits Mayor at the TV centre to ask him to stop broadcasting the heavily-biased government propaganda; it seemed to me that Dalban would never have gone there as he would have known that there was no chance of success, and it was risky for him to go anyway. Or the TV centre burning down - I couldn't accept that such a modern building wouldn't have hyper-efficient automatic fire-fighting equipment which would have prevented the centre's complete destruction. Then there was Hakluyt's visit to other cities; this was obviously to conform with one of the chess moves, but it was completely unnecessary to the plot -- in fact it was detrimental as it relieved tension and slowed the pace at a crucial point in the story. However, most of these faults didn't intrude to any great extent in the reading of the story.

There was also too much soliloquizing by Hakluyt and this slowed down the action. To justify a particular turn of events Brunner too often indulged in long pedestrian explanations which should have at least been shortened. In fact this is what dominated the story for me; its long windedness; and I blame this on Brunner's choice of, and rigid adherence to the game he had selected.

On the credit side, Brunner did a good job of characterisation, even the minor characters coming over as real; and having real people ensured that the action was believable. He also did an excellent job of conveying the ruthlessness (and childishness) of politics, showing the leaders playing their game of chess without thought that the pieces were human beings. And here Brunner was saying something worthwhile. By taking an extreme example of politicians directing the actions of individuals, without their knowing, he forces us to ask if we think things are really very different here and now.

Ballantine have said that they consider this to be one of the ten best SF novels of the year, and already there has been talk of Hugo nomination. Ballantine may well be right, and this book is better than either of the last two Hugo winners, but whether or not it gets itself a Hugo depends on whether or not readers can convince themselves it is SF and how much the fascination of the plot construction is offset by the dullness which too often intruded.

*See Review*

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### Stranger Than Fiction

"It looks as if science fiction has grown wide enough to reach the point that ordinary fiction reached long ago; where it divides into highbrow and lowbrow, into popular and esoteric, or into sheep and goats, however you care to phrase it."

- Brian Aldiss, Introduction to BEST SF STORIES OF BRIAN W. ALDISS

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# DOUBLE BOOKING

ARCHIE & BERYL MERCER

## PAINGOD & OTHER DELUSIONS

by Harlan Ellison; Pyramid PB, 1965, 157 pages, 50¢

Seven stories, as follows :- "Paingod" (10 pages)  
"Repent, Harlequin, said the Ticktockman" (13pp)  
"The Crackpots" (39 pages)  
"Bright Eyes" (14 pages)  
"The Discarded" (13 pages)  
"Wanted in Surgery" (30 pages)  
"Deeper than the Darkness" (30 pages)

each with a highly subjective introduction by the author, besides an overall introduction to the collection in similar vein.

(A) There's no doubt about it - these stories are good. Not magnificent, perhaps, but good. Not only do they contain some excellently colourful writing, but I found all of them gripping - which from me, of short stories, is praise indeed.

Although they are by no means all of a mood, they do seem to have one underlying characteristic in common - each expresses some philosophical point. Unpalatable philosophical points for the most part, though such is the continuum we live in that most of them are probably true. I do not, therefore, thank Mr Ellison for pointing these various matters out to me. I must nevertheless commend the readable manner in which he does it.

As far as the introductory matter is concerned, I find myself with a somewhat more favourable impression of the author as a person than I had before I started the collection.

(B) On the other hand, I approached the stories with a good deal of caution, having ploughed resignedly through three pages of introduction which explained why there was no introduction, and describing, with a good deal of cynicism, what had happened to seven previous attempts to write one...

The stories are well-written, but I can't honestly say that I enjoyed them. Even in the few that have up-beat endings, there is too much (for me) of pain and pessimism, despair and distress, misery and madness. I am not naive enough to demand the conventional "happy ending" to every story I read, but it is possible to write tragedy with tenderness - a quality which, to my mind, is very rarely featured in Mr Ellison's stories.

(A) Yes, there is that, of course. Myself, I like happy endings. I guess Mr. Ellison isn't a happy man's writer.

## NO MAN ON EARTH

by Walter Moudy. Whiting & Wheaton, 1966. 18/-, 176 pages.

(A) This is not an easy book to sum up briefly. The opening chapters read not unlike unmitigated rubbish, but the story covers considerable ground as it goes, and as a whole manages to redeem itself satisfactorily before it's done.

The book begins with a hillbilly girl of the future (on a reservation, yet), giving birth to an unusual child. The baby - a boy - is entirely hairless, and (it soon turns out) of positively super-colossal intelligence. His father was an alien, of some humanoid race, who simply landed, raped a local female, and took off again for parts unknown. The story develops into a description of the boy's galaxy-wide search for his missing father in order that he can administer to said father what he considers to be his just deserts.

Passing over the implausibility (to say the very least) of interfertility between two apparently unrelated races from different planets, we have the very faint bare-plausibility of such a union producing offspring whose mind outstrips those of his contemporaries everywhere as does, say, a human's outstrip an insect's. He is, in fact, (we are told) the most brilliant individual to be born for 100,000 years. It doesn't actually say whose years, but Earth-yeras are (one gathers) implied.

The book's great strength, however, lies in the description of various facets of a multi-racial galaxy. For the most part, it falls into the category I dub "The Grand Tour", wherein the movement passes rapidly from locale to locale, giving the reader a quick guide to a varied assortment of cultures. Some of the protagonists planetfalls are written-up as short stories, neatly embedded within the larger framework, and make for extremely chucklesome reading.

(B) Despite this, there is an underlying theme of sadness running throughout the story. The sadness of the "loner", the misfit, the odd man out. Thad's massive intelligence sets him apart from "ordinary" people, some of whom fear him as they always fear those who are "different". Even love for Thad, is followed swiftly by tragedy, the tragedy of waste. His quest among the stars is not only for his errant father, it is also for some place, some race, where he can feel that he "belongs".

"I plan to let my line die out", he says. "I do not wish to see children born who might one day divide the Earth among themselves. Nor do I wish children who must remain apart from mankind."

The book ends on a downbeat note. Thad's search for his father was only part of his greater search, and, having successfully completed the lesser, he is wearily free to set out on the greater mission. "He was alone ... he was the last dinosaur, the last bald eagle, the last saber-tooth tiger - the last of his kind. On some distant planet in some other galaxy, he might find what he hungered for..."

We have not heard of Mr Moudy before, but he writes with humanity and warm understanding, and we hope to hear more of him.

## THE LOST PERCEPTION

Daniel F. Galouye. Gollancz 1966. 16/-, 190 pages.

(A) I suppose this could be classified as SF rather than outright fantasy - but only very marginally. Those who dub it SF will no doubt claim that this theme represents an entirely valid branch of what-iffery. To my mind, it's more a case of wishful thinking.

The perception of the title is not simply common-or-garden (to those who read the right books) esp. It is instead an entirely new sense which bears much the same relationship to the sense of sight (as exercised by the average human) as does the sense of sight to any other of our recognised senses. This new sense is equally superior to esp (or would be if the book recognised such an institution.) because it works equally well on inanimate objects - one can sense the entire galaxy at one swell foop, or any portion of it as may be required.

The vehicle in which this idea is paraded before us is no more than a run of the mill adventure story, with secret agents and chases and conveniently nubile females, and so on. I found it readable, but if I didn't have to review it I doubt if I'd consider it worth a single mention, taken all in all.

(B) I must say that this book is a great disappointment after COUNTERFEIT WORLD and DARK UNIVERSE. Most of the time the hero doesn't know whose side he is on, doesn't know whom to trust and whom to reject, who is telling him the truth and who is lying. The trouble is, the reader doesn't know, either, and this doesn't make for excitement and suspense, as it should do. It simply creates confusion upon confusion. The hero is a key-man as regards a certain, vitally important course of action; one side is urging him to carry out this course, the other side is begging him to hold off for a little while. Both sides have what appear to be commendable motives for their diametrically opposed policies of action, and it seemed to me that the obvious method of denouement was for the two sides to negotiate a solution to what is basically a common problem. Instead there is a descent into violence and once again the reader is witness to the tragedy of waste.

I guess every author has an "off-day" occasionally - or, more precisely, an off-book. I hope this will be Mr Galouye's only one.

## THE WORLDS OF ROBERT E YOUNG

Robert F. Young. Gollancz 1966, 18/-, 224 pages. With an introduction by Avram Davidson.

(B) Sixteen stories, making up a most worthwhile and acceptable collection. Some of the stories have really brilliant titles, too; "Flying Pan", "The Stars Are Calling, Mr Keats", "A Drink of Darkness".

As Avram Davidson says in his introduction: "Robert F Young writes with love. Calm. Compassion. Rational imagination. Laughter. Sense. Excitement. Scorn. Integrity. And hope. "

There is some facet of love in nearly every one of these stories. "Emily and the Bards Sublime" begins with calm, which is ruffled and almost lost in a miniature disaster. But it ends with a new kind of calm, in a new setting.

Scorn and hope alternate in "The Stars Are Calling, Mr Keats"; "Promised Planet" features compassion. "Goddess In Granite" tells of a man's bitter awakening to full maturity through ordeal, while "Written in the Stars" supplies humour in vignette form.

"The Courts of Jamshyd" and "Little Red Schoolhouse" are both tragic in implication, yet even here hope is not entirely absent. And hope lifts "A Drink of Darkness" out of incipient horror, and carries it almost triumphantly to a climactic conclusion - post-scripted with a "but...."

Mr Young writes from a deep understanding of, and compassion for, people - their loves and hates, courage and fear, greed and sacrifice, triumphs and failures. In this case the result is a collection of stories between covers which (in my case at least) will grow worn with constant handling. The stories themselves, though, will never "wear"; every reading will supply renewed pleasure.

(The other stories: The Girl Who Made Time Stop;  
Added Inducement;  
Hopsoil;  
The Dandelion Girl;  
Romance in a 21st Century Car Lot;  
Production Problem;  
& Your Ghost Will Walk;

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#### OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED.

The Watch Below by James White. 192 pages, 18/-, published by Ronald Whiting & Wheaton, 1966. (to be reviewed in the next issue.)

The Canopy of Time by Brian W Aldiss. 220 pages, 18/-, reprinted by Faber & Faber Ltd., 1966.

New Writings in SF-7. ed. by John Carnoll. 190 pages, 16/-, published by Dennis Dobson Books, 1966. Contents:- Invader by James White; Coco-Talk, by William F Temple; The Man Who Missed The Ferry by Douglas R Mason; The Night Of The Seventh Finger by Robert Presslie; Six Cubed Plus One by John Rankine; A Touch of Immortality by R.W.Mackelworth; Manscarer by Keith Roberts.

Best SF 6. ed Edmund Crispin. 252 pages, 18/-, Faber & Faber Ltd., 1966. Contents; Judas Bomb, Kit Reed; A Work Of Art, Blish, A Life And A Half, Pohl; The Star Ducks, Bill Brown; The Waitabits, Russell; The Fly, Porgos; Weapon, John Christopher; Kaleidoscope, Bradbury; The Nostalgia Gene, Roy Hutchins; Camouflage, Kuttner; Letter To A Phoenix, Brown; Death March, Budrys; Billeonium, Ballard, Old Hundredth, Aldiss.

The Rest Of The Robots, Isaac Asimov, collection. Pyramid PB, 1966, 50¢.

Waldo & Magic, Inc., Robert Heinlein, Pyramid PB, 1966, reprint, 60¢.

Conditionally Human, Walter M Miller. Panther Books, 1966, 3/6d. (50¢).

# THE MELTING POT

## READERS LETTERS

All letters must be received before June 5th, 1966, in order to be considered for publication in the next issue.

Dear Pete

....Your book reviews seem to suffer from a confusion of purposes. There are two logical purposes for criticism; first, to acquaint the reader with a book and help him decide whether or not he cares to read it; second, to add to the reader's enjoyment of work already read. Your reviews seem intended to inform the reader about current UK SF, but their style isn't really suited to that purpose. The review of SLEEPING PLANET is a case in point. For almost two pages your reviewers discuss the tiny details of characterisation, in the novel -- details so tiny and specific that the whole thing is no more than blank space to one who hasn't read the book. For that matter, I read SLEEPING PLANET in Analog, and can't remember enough about it to appreciate the discussion. The "dialogue" style of discussion seen here is much more suited to books which (a) most of your readers may be expected to have read and (b) are important enough that they will be interested in a discussion of the minor details rather than or in addition to the important points of plot and theme. The idea of different viewpoints on current books is good, but the reviews would better achieve their purpose of information if written independantly instead of in the conversational form which Beryl and Archie have been using. What would also be excellent would be a long discussion in this conversational form of something like FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD or THE WANDERER, or DUNE. (except that the first two have already been discussed to death.) Both your reviewers have pertinent and interesting points to make, and their comments on such books would be much more interesting than what you have now.

John Boston,  
Mayfield, Kentucky,

---



Dear Pete,

....I think DOUBLE BOOKING is an excellent idea. When I wrote to you about criticism I said - I'll look it up; that a critic should not assume that just because he does not like a book, no one else should - or would; and that a critic's responsibility does not extend only to those who are likely to agree with him.

I was not merely putting words together. A collection of reviews of a book reveals some rather startling divergencies of opinion. One critic will say that the characterisation is superb; another will sneer at the cardboard that parades through the book. And the bewildered writer asks himself, well, --- which is it ?

Unfortunately, few readers will see many reviews of a book. It is interesting to see divergent opinions side by side in one review. I think this a valuable experiment.

Lloyd Biggle Jr.  
Ypsilanti, Michigan.

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Dear Mr Weston,

....There are several kinds of criticism one can use as a basis for writing on literature; there is literary, i.e. technical criticism, there is criticism in a historical context, there is biographical criticism. Any one of these can be interesting and valuable. The trouble with fan articles appears to be that they never stick with one of these, but always degenerate into mere synopses of the writing being considered, with whatever else occurring to the writer being casually thrown in. Gordon's article remains an example of this; though not as bad as some, it is still primarily a bunch of summaries of stories that Russell has written. (RUSSELL: AN EVALUATION, ZS 11, Pp.4-9). I think that we need to distinguish between criticism and review. The purpose of a review is to give the reader some idea of whether or not he would like the book. To serve this end it will usually be desirable to give some indication of the plot; and the writer of the review will do little other than give his personal opinion. In giving his own reaction to the book, he may find it convenient or relevant to include some judgement of merit based on more universal standards for good literature, but this is not the essential part of the review. It remains essentially personal and a subjective guideline of the reader's most likely surface reaction. -- and for this reason it is much more useful if the reader is familiar with how his tastes compare with the reviewer's. Criticism tries to go deeper. Broadly defined, its function is to give us greater understanding and appreciation for that writing which is technically, emotionally, and in every other way superior. It tries to analyse the merit of writings on the basis of universal standards for good literature. Let's not confuse criticism with opinion; we all liked DAVY better than TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC BEANIE, or its equivalent, and that implies some personal standard of judgement outside of taste. Agreed, two equally intelligent critics occasionally give directly opposing judgements on the same piece of writing, but this is so noticeable only because it contrasts so sharply with the much greater frequency

of agreement. Homer is as highly regarded today as he always was; the total amount of agreement surely outweighs the occasional disagreements.

I think these are valuable contrasts to keep in mind, because the majority of the articles appearing in ZENITH appear to be aspiring toward criticism, but in actuality have not gotten enough away from the review context.

Willem Van den Broek,  
Ann Arbor, Michigan.

+ Your letter, along with that of John Boston, has made me stop and think deeply about the material appearing in ZENITH SPEC. I will certainly agree with most of your points, and will do what I can to steer future material into the right channels. I'd suggest that your letter may have the most value to readers likely to be contributors to the magazine in the future. +

---

Dear Pete,

....Your editorials in ZS 10 & 11 have been interesting, comment-provoking, (which of course was their purpose), and each with a big fat fallacy in the middle. In Issue 10's editorial, of course, the fallacy was that your comments could equally well apply to any sort of hobby, particularly "collecting" hobbies, like stamps coins, guns, (there may not be many gun collections in Britain, but there are a lot of them here), and so on. While very few hobbies can be proved to have any material value (nobody but the professionals makes a profit on stamps or coins, despite what you may read in Sunday supplements), their value as recreation is affirmed by any psychology textbook you want to pick up. SF fandom is just as "healthful" as any other sedentary hobby; no more and no less.

The fallacy in the ZS 11 editorial is that failure must be measured against what was being attempted. You are equating "success" with commercial success -- large organisation, lots of money floating around, etc. As it has been at least 15 years since any major segment of fandom has tried to achieve commercial success, the cry of "failure" is simply irrelevant. People join fandom for their own amusement, not in order to build it up. (I believe this is largely because there is very little profit in fandom in relation to the work done. People who build up vast numbers of followers generally expect to make a profit from them, in one way or another.) Of course, there are recruiting efforts made by organisations such as the NSF and the BSFA -- I know nothing of the British recruiting, but the NSF's efforts have been, on the whole, half-hearted and sporadic because only one or two people have ever been interested in the project. The major object of fandom has been to provide enjoyment for fans, and in this it has been eminently successful. So, not as many people enjoy participating in fandom as enjoy collecting stamps? What difference does it make? As long as I am having fun, I don't demand that everyone else have the same kind. I'm afraid you're guilty of Creeping Conformity.

Also, when you state that this is the "wrong field for creativity", I think you had better look up the meaning of the word in a good dictionary. There are at least 10 times as many stamp collectors as there are science fiction readers; how many of them have created anything? (Unless you insist on stretching the definition of the term to include "Creating" a collection.) What mountain climber ever

created anything? Fandom maintains over 300 amateur publications, produces God knows how much written matter every year, induces several hundred people to write and illustrate themselves, instead of merely reading (or ignoring books altogether.) That's more creativity than I've seen in any other hobby. It may not be high quality, but there are no minimum quality standards in creation.

Robert Coulson,  
Hartford City, Indiana.

+ Sometimes it's fun to be shot down in flames. I run ZS very largely as a clearing house for my own thoughts, where I may weigh what writers and readers have to say, and make my own evaluations, and where I may set down in concrete (and sometimes logical) form some of the conclusions I have independantly reached. It is refreshing to have unconsidered factors thrown back at one. Perhaps I should explain that in THE SOLITARY HOBBY I was putting down the reasons as I saw them, for the lack of a central permanent body in fandom. No opinion as to the good/bad implications of this were intended to be conveyed. Questioned, I might admit to liking things this way; it is more interesting, but I still maintain that fandom needs a semi-official, semi-commercial body, for reasons of recruitment if for nothing else. British fandom was allowed to run down pretty low a few years ago - we still feel the lack of activity. Only now are fresh faces appearing, mainly from the ranks of the BSFA. Obviously, if we're to have a commercial body, it would be well for it to be successful. And in reply to your unspoken query; the BSFA is doing a magnificent job, and I regard it as being a really worthwhile institution. I still hope the BSFA will last for ever, or at least, a good long time.

---

Dear Pete,

....It has been forcibly brought home to me that all was not well in the article I wrote about J.G.Ballard in the last issue. The arrangement of words which I called a "split infinitive" was no such thing, and in stating that Ballard's grammar was deficient in this respect I did him great injustice. I must apologise to him for any inconvenience or harm this stupid mistake has caused, and can only assure him, and your readers, that I will not let this sort of thing happen again.

Joe Patrizio,  
St Albans, Herts.

+ This apology will cause an end, I hope, to the vast volumes of correspondence that have resulted from Joe's, and my own, carelessness in allowing a major mistake to appear in Joe's essay in the last issue. Thank you John Brunner, Brian Aldiss, Archie & Beryl Mercer, George Scithers, Mike Houghton, Roger Clegg, Ian Peters, Richard Gordon, Chris Priest, and all the other readers who wrote in to complain about that blunder. We both regret that error, in that it probably took away most of the impact that the remainder of the article should have had. The points made in Part I (of The Drowned Plot of J.G.Ballard) were probably less important than the opinions expressed in the rest of the article. We are happy to say that a revised & corrected version of the piece has been accepted for professional reprinting. +

---

Dear Pete,

....The Ballard article was on the whole a reasonable attempt to attain some degree of objectivity about someone who has been granted too little, although in the course of it, the article got a bit pedantic, that was perhaps inevitable in trying to get at the roots of the problem. It was certainly rather a better analysis than one usually sees, even if it was not entirely objective, and perhaps slightly anti-Ballard, despite the foreword stating it to be impartial.

I'd agree that there are a lot of faults in Ballard's writing, as would anyone not entirely blinded by his "reputation". But no-one, to my knowledge, has started jumping on other writers for tiny points of grammar which the average reader will never spot anyway. As for Ballard's scientific accuracy and so on, it surely depends on just what one is expecting when reading a novel such as THE DROUGHT. If you are a straight conventional-type SF fan, nurtured on a diet of Heinlein, then naturally you're going to find a lot of faults with the science. But as far as someone like me is concerned, with a complete lack of knowledge of any form of science - it doesn't matter a damn! As far as I'm concerned, many of these laid-down scientific 'truths' are highly suspect anyway, and I can't admit to being particularly worried about Ballard trampling all over them.

But on the other hand, one can't help feeling that Ballard is obsessed by his ability to coin a phrase which sounds so beautifully meaningful - without actually having any content. But this again is surely a matter for the individual reader. He isn't the first or the only writer to turn out the seemingly obscure stuff he does. The point, surely, is this :- that if someone chooses to see something in a piece of writing, then as far as he is concerned, it has achieved its purpose, whether the writer intended that particular interpretation or not. It doesn't matter a damn if other people don't see anything in it, or merely think that the first person is merely being pseudo-intellectual. If it means something to him, like Ballard does to a lot of people, that's fine. It'll give them a lot of pleasure. If it doesn't, it's just as fine. But that's no reason for trampling all over people who do get something out of him. Live and let live should be the order of the day where Ballard's concerned. Too many people seem to be bottle throwing, on both sides. I personally, and there must be a lot of others like me, enjoy his books, some of them are very fine, but don't particularly consider him anything out of the ordinary run of better-class SF authors. He could be - but at the moment I don't think he is.

Richard Gordon,  
c/o University of Newcastle.

+ I find myself pretty much in agreement with you throughout, except that I don't personally enjoy much of Ballard's longer work. I'm quite happy to accept your grading of him as one of the better-class SF authors. My only contention has been, all along, that I will not accept Ballard as the universal saviour of science fiction, and I will not accept that all other, so-called "traditional" writers of SF are his inferior. // Now that everyone has had their say, differences have been aired, and I hope, answered, let's close the subject. I promise to resist the temptation to fill the magazine with pro- or anti- Ballard articles, and the subsequent large numbers of pro- and anti- reader's letters. +

Dear Pete,

....I'm afraid it depresses me that you should devote a long two-part pseudo-scholastic article to such a writer as Anvil, whose only memorable story, as far as I'm concerned, was one you don't mention, which appeared in Galaxy. This one showed that he/she could write quite a lively and intelligent tale for the right surroundings. The hallmark of Anvil's writing, (or 90%) in Analog is, to me, dullness. I usually have to give up halfway through. Sorry, but I found the article inherited that dullness. You know, be serious about SF by all means - I am myself - but you don't have to be so damn solemn !

Mike Houghton,  
Leyland, Lancs.

+ Sorry; being immensely interested in categorising Anvil myself, I guess I hoped everyone else would share that enthusiasm. I thought I tried to make the piece fairly lightweight & interesting; obviously I didn't, chalk up one failure. The story you're thinking of in Galaxy is probably "Mind Partner", which at the time was unclassifiable. I've given that anomaly some thought, since; if anyone was interested I could probably now fit it into my system. But it's unusual in many ways, agreed. +

---

Dear Pete,

....The very fact that Anvil is, as you say, a hack, prevents most of us from remembering much of the fine details you discuss. For example, on the "Colonist" theme, you spend  $2\frac{1}{2}$  pages on "Star Tiger". Those of us who lack eidetic memories and have better things to do than re-read "Star Tiger", are left cold by your long synopsis of the story, and your probing into minute detail. The discussion would be much more effective if you would discuss half a dozen stories at shorter length to show how the "colonist" motif is varied. You say your purpose is to show the influence of certain criteria on Anvil's work. You will never show anything about Anvil's work if you confine yourself to such a small portion of it.

John Boston,  
Mayfield, Kentucky.

+ I thought I gave all the relevant details in my synopsis of one example of each major plot - and it wasn't really a synopsis either, it was an account of my going through each story, picking out the weak points as I found them. You only had to tag along; even if you hadn't read the piece you should have got something out of my mild ridicule of the plots+

---

Dear Pete,

....Your own article about Christopher Anvil was possibly one of the best articles to have appeared in any issue of ZENITH. The conclusions you drew were logical and perceptive, and amply supported by well-chosen quotes. I would have liked to have read the piece in one go; a three-month serial wait can be dangerous. Anvil has never been a particular favourite of mine. His work has been average, almost determinedly so. His best story has probably been "Mind Partner", which was recently collected in a Galaxy

Anthology. This demonstrates a true piece of science fiction plotting; something which his Astounding/Analog stories have been without. He has been guilty of self-plagiarism many times; his biggest fault.....  
....The second part of your Anvil evaluation was a great disappointment after the first half.. I felt you didn't go into half the detail you should have done.

Chris Priest,  
Brentwood, Essex.

---

Dear Mr Weston,

....The first half of your Christopher Anvil article was the best criticism I have ever seen in a fanzine. It narrowed its topic down and stuck with it. When an example became convenient, it was used only as it related to the topic. Praise be ! - you didn't even reveal the endings of the stories! It showed a lot of insight into the techniques of writing and it was valuable because it brought increased awareness to the reader, something which a review cannot, and does not attempt, to do. You can be sure that I will be very attentive indeed the next time I read any Anvil. It may be that I was just in a different mood, but the second half of the article seemed to deteriorate. It seemed to become much more of a summary of Anvil stories, and less an analysis of the writing techniques of a hack, possibly because you had already made all your points in the first half of the piece. It was still an excellent article, and it was too bad you had to run it in two parts.

Willem Van den Broek,  
Ann Arbor, Michigan.

+ Thank you for your kind words. The different tone of the two pieces of my article was probably due in part to the reason you suggest; that I made most of my points in the first installment. Another important reason was probably that I allowed some time to elapse before finishing off the writing of the piece; thus I was in a different mood to that before. One day when I'm old and rich, I should like to rewrite and update that article; it was a lot of fun to write, and put my own ideas into a coherent form in my own mind; that latter point is a very good reason for the continued existence of this magazine, of course.+

---

Dear Pete,

....I have two bones to pick with Richard Gordon on Russell; 1) his inability to reconcile Russell's professed rationalism (which Gordon defines in rather a singular manner) with his humanitarian beliefs, specifically his belief in man & his love for Life (in all its forms). Of course that is exactly what rationalists inevitably do concern themselves with, and you will find that great humanitarian reforms, e.g. contraception, female suffrage, abortion law reform, etc, are spear-headed by rationalists, and a reverence for life is a necessary concomitant of any rationalist philosophy. 2) To compare Russell's "Leeming" character(s) with Mike Hammer is ludicrous, surely. There is no sadism or brutality in Leeming or Lowry. The resemblance completely escapes me.

Ian Peters,  
London.

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## the bibliography of fanzines

A complete reference work is in preparation, which will list all fanzines ever published. It will be available at a modest cost, and will be invaluable to all collectors, librarians, and readers interested in fan magazines.

Much information remains to be handled, and inevitably, queries will arise. May we ask all who have an interest in fanzines to contact the address below. Your assistance will be welcome, no matter what you know nor what you live. This request is especially addressed to current & lapsed editors, and to collectors.

The FANZINE INDEX has already been reprinted as a prelude to the Bibliography.

Harold Palmer Piser, 41-08 Parsons Boulevard, Flushing, New York 11355, U.S.A.

# R.Q.

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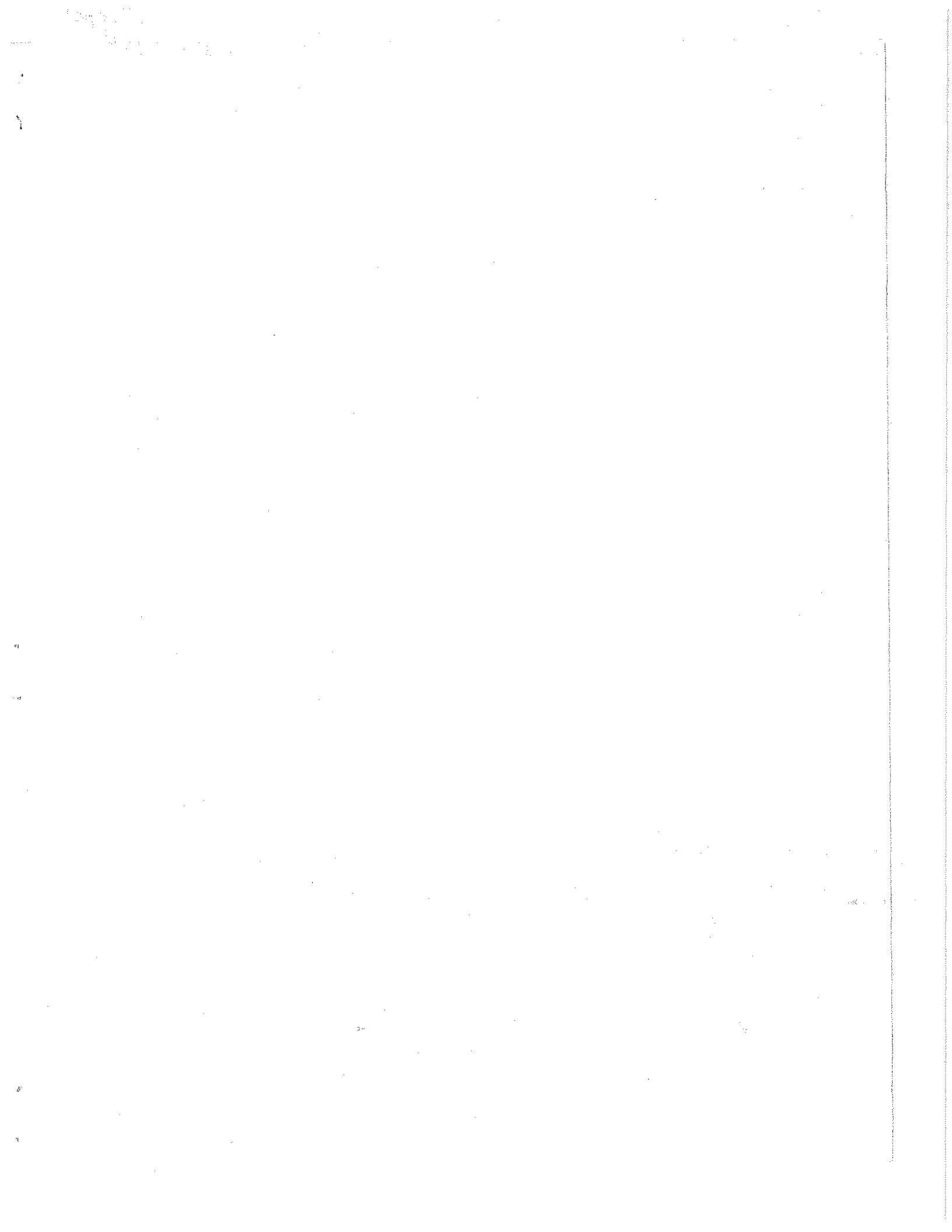
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