

Beyond 6



THE POST-HIROSHIMA SYNDROME BY BERYL HENLEY

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BEYOND is now no longer available on a subscription basis. Individual issues may be paid for -- this one costs 1/6d -- and subscriptions already in existence will of course run out in the normal way, but no further subs. will be accepted. This and future issues will be available in response to a letter of comment or contribution, whether published or not. Sample copies are available on request for anyone who has not seen the magazine before.
BEYOND is of course still available as a trade in exchange for other fanzines.

EDITORIAL

CHARLES PLATT

"Fandom", that collection of individuals who are united first by the common bond of sf, later by friendship and other common interests, is a unique society; yet judged by everyday standards it has little to recommend it save perhaps the fact that its members are in the main of above average intelligence. To the outsider, there is no evidence that fans are of greater wisdom, insight or artistic ability (in the widest sense), than anyone else. Nor do they seem particularly different in any other way, apart from their peculiar dedication. Fandom has no record of having contributed anything to society as a whole; on the contrary, it is interested solely in contributing to its own, closed, society. In fact, taking the point of view of a prospective member looking at fandom as a 'club', there is little reason for joining it.

In spite of this apparent lack of distinction from other people, though, in many fans there is a feeling of innate superiority over so-called 'mundania', a certain amount of clannishness, and to a varying extent insularity.

My use of the word insularity can best be explained by an analogy. Were a person to discover science fiction at an early age, and read sf and literally nothing else throughout his life, his literary standards would not be based on the same criteria as those of a widely-read person. In fact, the science fiction reader would not be able to understand the other person's point of view, and vice versa; he would be living in a different world where good writing and bad writing are terms with entirely different meanings from when they are used in the outside world of general fiction.

There is a similar situation with regard to the person who has become immersed in the world of amateur magazines and fan activity, perhaps so much that fandom has almost become a way of life, and even interferes with his job. Such a fan has his standards for judging the worth of, for example, an amateur magazine, based on totally different criteria from those of everyday society. So that when a new fan comes along, his ideas on what is good or bad or boring or interesting based on magazines or books he has read previously, and picks up a copy of a fannish fanzine, he finds the situation is reversed against him; in spite of the fact that his standards of appreciation are 'normal' with respect to all the people he knows and the world at large, his opinion on a fanzine is regarded by fans as worthless. This in itself can be bewildering and putting-off.

To the new fan, the older fans have lost all sense of proportion; they indulge in the most pointless activities imaginable, produce the most boring and uninteresting pieces of crud. To the older fans, the newcomer is just another put-fandom-right merchant, who everyone knows will mature (ie conform and change his ideas) in time, but who can be relied upon to be irritating for the first year at least.

This conflict results in a general spate of bad feelings all round. It is not necessarily anyone's fault in particular; though older fans could well be a little more tolerant of the newcomer in some cases, or failing this ignore him completely, rather than be waspish or critical. (After all, if they have seen it all before, it should come as no surprise or irritation -- merely a bore -- to

see yet another newcomer try to stir things up). My point is that this conflict bound up with the fact that to the newcomer fandom seems a particularly worthless waste of time perpetrated by rather unexceptional people, is no inducement for people to become active fans themselves.

It is obvious that fandom needs new recruits. As older fans drop out, new ones must come in to replace them; and to a certain extent new ideas are needed to counteract stagnation. But at present all the circumstances are loaded against the new candidate.

One answer to this problem is a sharper distinction between the science fiction reading newcomer, interested in talking about, reading about and arguing about sf, and the older fan who finds fandom a source of friendship and interest in other topics. At the moment, the BSFA is an unsuccessful compromise; and this is well illustrated by VECTOR.* This fanzine is of little interest to the older fan, being too dull or too obvious or not controversial enough or too concerned with sf to the exclusion of everything else. Yet to the newcomer, it is very putting off. It appears confusing, in-group, and totally unlike a normal magazine. The newcomer's reaction often is, what the hell is THIS?

In this way VECTOR is not an inducement for the older or the newer fan to join the BSFA. I would like to see it run more on the lines of a normal magazine, totally acceptable to the outsider. And I would like to see the BSFA itself more of an official organisation than a chummy group; friendly, but none of this first-names-only business, for example, if it makes people feel uncomfortable. Certainly let the newcomer see that something called Fandom exists; but don't throw it in his face -- even in diluted form -- as soon as he shows interest in joining the BSFA. This can easily put off the people who might otherwise be interested in going beyond the sf-discussing stage.

Fandom, as it stands, is 'queer' to the outsider; there seems little reason to indulge in any of its activities. So to obtain new recruits, a more normal organisation that can provide a gradual introduction to fandom is essential. If organised more on the lines of a normal club or society, the BSFA would be likely to attract -- and keep -- new members; and while only a small percentage of these would ever go on to immerse themselves fully in fannish activity, this increase would make such a change in the BSFA very worthwhile.

*This is not, of course, a criticism of the present editor's policy in particular; it is a criticism of the type of magazine that VECTOR has become over the years -- something not radically different from the type of magazine it was when first conceived.

THE END

--CHARLES PLATT.

GUERRILLA WAR^③ IN HEAVEN

BY ARCHIE MERCER

I have been asked to say something about the spate of hard words currently passing among some of the younger element in 'fandom'. I was chosen, apparently, on the grounds that I'm a BNF -- meaning Big Name Fan, to whom reverence from lesser mortals is due -- and universally loved and respected to boot. (I have proof of this, too, I may say, in the shape of the Doc Weir Award).

But this state of affairs was not always the case.

When I first made contact with fandom, I was a 25 year old teenager.

I was living in London at the time (I don't recommend it), and the particular aspect of fandom that I made contact with was the old London Circle, meeting in those days every Thursday evening at the White Horse, Fetter Lane. For sundry reasons that I will not go into I was not particularly impressed. Nor were they.

Then I left London for the wilds of Lincolnshire -- and found myself involved in correspondence with some of the London fans and others. I'm more at home writing than I am talking -- always have been -- and had very definite ideas about what was wrong with fandom-as-I-(hardly)-knew-it, and expressed them in no uncertain terms. Some of my correspondents responded with good-natured tolerance, others less so, and I succeeded for a time in making at least one bitter enemy. (Whatever did happen to Stuart Mackenzie?)

So what happened?

The answer -- mainly -- is that some fourteen years have since elapsed. It doesn't always take that long, but more than one fan has risen to BNFdom after starting out as not much more than a pain in the neck.

Now. When somebody -- particularly somebody young -- discovers organised fandom, he or she is liable to find fault with it in two distinct ways: a) in that it doesn't pay enough attention to science fiction itself, and b) in that there are organisational faults that require urgent attention.

At this point, with relation to a) above, it is necessary to attempt to define the relationship between science fiction and fandom. For one thing, sf is part of the larger category of fantasy, and the devotee of sf probably finds stimulation in visions of the couldn't-be as well as of the might-be. So there, immediately, is an extension of the field. But there's more to it than that. Sf deals with what may possibly happen. Although one tends to think of it as being restricted to technological matters, this is very far from being the case. Anything that exists in the present -- or has existed in the past -- is liable to have its counterpart in the future. Thus an sf story may legitimately concern itself with absolutely any aspect of existence -- religion, sex, sport, domestic life, crime with its detection and punishment, entertainment, social structure, clothing, politics, warfare -- the list is almost endless. All these are grist to the mills of sf. A knowledge of the present and/or past of what one is writing about helps a writer to produce a more convincing picture of its future equivalent, and a similar knowledge on the part of the reader gives him a deeper appreciation of what he's reading.

Ethel Lindsay, in HAVERINGS, argues that the older-established fans dis-

④

cuss "those other subjects plus sf". I'd tend to say that it's more a case of them discussing sf including these allegedly 'other' subjects.

An sf enthusiast, then, has legitimate reason for cultivating an interest in a great many things not obviously related to sf. Sooner or later, most of them do.

As for b) on the previous page, an sf fan is (almost by definition) something of an idealist. If he was satisfied with "things as they are", he would (one would expect) be perfectly happy in whatever company he happened to find himself, and would not need to go searching out other people with minority interests akin to his own. The fact that he does search out others is proof that he is not satisfied with things. When he meets up with fandom, he may well decide that it, too, is less than perfect and should be altered to chime more with his ideas of what he's looking for. Some of his ideas may be excellent, requiring only the availability of someone like himself willing to put them into effect. Others may have been tried out on more than one occasion in the past and found in the cruel light of day to be unworkable. But they're his ideas, and he fights for them with all the tenacity of the traditional cub-defending lioness.

So the brash youngster, with heaps of ideas and no time for anything that isn't concerned with sf in the narrowest sense, comes upon a scene where people who claim to be interested in his favourite literature seem to talk or write about photography or history, play cards, tell jokes, drink tea/coffee/beer/vintage Oxo, and so on. Worse than this, possibly, is that a lot of their talk or writing seems to be couched in some weird jargon that makes no immediate sense to him -- full of terms like BNF, TAFF, and egoboo. So he wades right in. This Needs Altering, he says. If they won't talk about sf, then, By Heaven, I will. And why don't they appoint somebody to do such-and-such a thing, raise the subscription to their club, lower the subscription to their club, abolish their club altogether or start one of they haven't already got one? And so on.

And when he gets the odd snarl or two, he wonders why.

Sf fans can be divided into three broad categories those who are new to fandom, those who are fairly well established, and those of BNF status. There is no hard-and-fast division between categories, of course, but they represent a convenient means of classification. Generally speaking, the newcomer is more likely to receive snarls from the intermediate group than from the BNFs. Tolerant good humour is probably almost an essential qualification for BNF status, but those who are still (as it were) working their way up, and who are not all that much older than the absolute newcomers, tend to be a bit sharper in the tongue. It's tempting to visualise a pattern whereby this year's brash youngster becomes the one who slaps down next year's equally brash youngster, but that's not quite it. Not all newcomers are equally brash, and some who are may never change. And a little slapping, perhaps from one or two hands only, may go a long way. The youngster is hurt, and shows it. Bitter words ensue. And here we go again.

What, then, can be done to prevent this?

In an absolute sense, I think, the answer is nothing. So long as fandom remains accessible to all comers (and it can hardly be conceived of as being otherwise) some are virtually bound to drop in like a ton of razor blades. Exactly how many depends on circumstances. In general, if a newcomer makes sustained social contact with one or more older-established fans who take an interest in him, and encourage him to take an interest in fandom in its wider aspects, then he is a lot less likely to start making himself unpopular. He will be shown the relevance of things in general to sf, learn about previous activities in the organisation field, and understand that a certain amount of in-group jargon is inevitable in any society.

But the net of established fans isn't spread anything like wide enough to catch everyone -- and presumably never will be. Besides, some people -- partic-

ularly among the younger element -- are reluctant to accept advice until they have had a chance to find out for themselves what happens when they ignore it. These things go in waves, too -- a "generation" of youngsters going off at ½ cock produces a reaction in their elders so that the next "generation" is deliberately caught and indoctrinated with the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages. Then the impetus flags, and up comes a ½-cock generation again.

In general, this isn't really all that bad a business. The newcomer who can survive a certain amount of hostility and unpopularity -- or simple ignoral -- in the early stages and still retain some of his enthusiasm is likely to be worth keeping. (Well -- look at me, for instance). Equally, the young fan who causes no trouble to anybody may prove to be of negative value to the continuum. Or equally, he too may blossom when he's ready. And so on.

Where things can become vicious is where two fans rub each other up the wrong way, and make sure (or at least one of them does) that everybody else knows about it. But this is not, and never has been, a phenomenon confined to the younger element, and is in fact a different question altogether.

-- ARCHIE MERCER

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FROM :-

Christopher M. Priest, "Cornerways", Willow Close, Doddinghurst,
BRENTWOOD, Essex.

⑥ a journey to al araf

BY DAVID J. ORME

Al Ar af: 'Mid Heaven' of Mohamedan religion, where those who have been neither very good or very bad are sent after death. (Koran).

Death came like the gentle passing of a summer breeze, and the soul detached and fell, as an autumn leaf, whose usefulness is transferred from the tree to the enrichment of the soil, so once again to form life.

A pit there was, despair growing from its walls like grey ferns hanging, binding the sepulcher of dark, undignified destruction. And at the bottom? Re-birth! Life was there, fresh, uncontrollable, sparkling ice crystals of a frosty night. The source of life it was, streams and fountains of pastel green and blue, shining motes of love and hate. And death's form was dispelled like midnight terrors that, with the herald's warning, whisper and are gone.

Emotions collected, a gestalt of balanced fellows, coalescing, drawing sustenance from the reservoir of life below. It fell fluttering into the sparkling stream and flowed quietly for a time, gathering strength for its ordeal ahead. And it was away, a bright arrow bridging the yawning gulfs of time, smashing through the black, flowing cliffs of space.

Awareness came with a dank, rich smell of damp earth. He lay sprawled in the undergrowth, where plants turn from green to white and roots begin their exploration of the soil. He lay in the province of the crawling insect, the worm coming to the surface as if to view the morning and the slimy snail sliding on its glistening track.

Eyes gently open as if from a long, long sleep. Picture out of focus. Green columns swimming hazily. A veil of distorted glass falls away and a forest of stalks appears. A forest of plants stretching upwards to seeming infinity, or at least to an unimaginable distance above. Above! What is above? What roof do the green columns support? Slowly he lifts his head and looks.

Brilliant searing light! The sun! Clutching at this knowledge he sinks back to the ground and sleeps.

Hours later the man in the shrubs moved again. He staggered uncertainly to his feet, shaking his head and covering his eyes with his hands. The sullen red sun was low in the sky. It burned breathlessly through a gap in the jagged black mountains to the west. To the south and east a red plain swept to an indeterminate horizon. A few hundred yards to the north a forest thrust forbidding tendrils towards the flaming sky.

There was a deathly silence that smothered the place. No bird sang, no animal revealed its presence by any sound. His head suddenly cleared and he gazed in wonderment upon the scene. He started to walk toward the north, through the lank undergrowth that bordered the mysteriously beckoning forest.

The strange trees closed in on him, arboreal monstrosities, strangely flamboyant in the semi-darkness. They appeared to glow as if lit by an internal fire. A voice, cool and seductive, rippled round the forest. He stopped in a small glade and listened. Again the voice called, tantalisingly near. 'Come,'

it whispered. 'Come with me.' He saw a fleeting shadow to the left. He ran after it, calling for it to stop, stumbling clumsily over obstacles. Often he thought he had lost it, and his mind filled with blank despair, but then the shadow, wraithlike, would appear ahead, and cool laughter would trickle thru the faintly glowing trees.

He burst out on to a strip of sandy beach that shelved gently into the Lake of the Sun. She stood beside him, a green-eyed wood nymph, laughing gently at his sweating body. In an instant, she was gone, and the beach was empty. He thought that she had been but a figment of his imagination, but then he heard her soft laughter again amongst the trees.

A small boat bobbed gently on the tide. He looked at it in preplexity. It certainly hadn't been there when he had arrived on the beach. But there it was, and not knowing quite why he did it, he stepped into the boat and pushed off. There were no oars but a steady current drew him further and further from the shore of faintly glowing trees.

The sun was dying. Already the gentle evening stars were combatting its fiery presence, a furnace beaten by a thousand silver teardrops. A pathway of fire reached out towards the boat as the tips of the shallow waves reflected the light of the sun that narrowly skimmed the horizon. An island swelled upwards from the lake half a league ahead. The boat made its way purposefully towards the island that had not been there before.

Soon it grounded in the beach. He stepped out and walked up the narrow beach, motivated by a strange inner restlessness that urged him on even tho his body cried out for rest.

The path wound its way up a sharp incline that was topped by a clump of tall trees. Sweating after his exertions, he halted at the top of the path and surveyed the prospect ahead. The hill fell away into a valley, where countless glass statues thrust upwards, Each one a masterpiece of fused silica that sighed and moaned in the cool evening breeze. Some, victims of the artist's whim, lay smashed upon the rocky ground.

The tallest of the glassy spires reached up towards the sun's last rays, their pinnacles weaving the beams in a fiery embrace. And, on an instant, the sun was gone, and the long shadows died. He passed through the valley and approached the black mass of cliff that made up its opposite wall. A narrow defile cut the cliff in two, and he entered at one end.

It was incredibly black and painfully rocky in the defile. A raging thirst tormented him, aggravated by the sound of clear water trickling and gurgling over rocks nearby. But he pressed on, until at long last the end of the rocky passage appeared ahead as an oblong of grey against the blackness.

The defile opened into another valley. Moss provided a soft carpet for aching feet and a small stream assuaged his thirst. A light fragrance filled the air.

Softly, like the whispers of night they came to him, filling the small valley. Emanating peace, and love, and gentleness, they drew upon his soul. He felt his ego being drawn from his mind. He cast aside the shackles of his puny body and knew freedom. His body dissolved into the ground, but he did not see it. He floated upwards, soared through the clouds, and felt the warmth of comradeship as he rode the evening breeze.

THE POST - HIROSHIMA SYNDROME

By Beryl Henley

The riots at south coast resorts by battling "Mods and Rockers" have sparked off a wave of indignation and horror. The somewhat self-righteous, smug attitude of older people might be classed as sheer automatic reaction of the older generation to the younger. "They have far too much money and they don't know what to do with it" "Turn the hoses on 'em" "Bring back the cat!" "Conscript 'em all into the Army" "Send 'em down the coal mines" "The country is going to the dogs" "Things were never like this in my young day" "It's the fault of the parents, of course" "They should never have stopped corporal punishment in the schools" "The courts are too lenient, they should send 'em all to jail" "Those kids are sex-mad" "They're ALL mad!" Etc, etc.

The fact remains, inescapably, that these rootless youngsters are in a minority. Another fact is that decent behaviour is not and never was news. The violent "Mods and Rockers" make headlines all over the country, and featured prominently in radio and tv news bulletins. But how many people heard about the group of leather-jacketed, crash-helmeted youngsters who rode their motor cycles and scooters to the nearest tv studio, parked the machines in a quiet and orderly manner, and politely asked if they might be allowed to put their point of view in front of the cameras? It is to the credit of the tv authority concerned that they were allowed to do so, to stress the truth that is so often overlooked: that they resent being lumped together with the violent faction of youth.

There are hundreds of youngsters studying hard in schools, colleges and universities all over the country, too busy building themselves a worthwhile future even to think of going out and terrorising old people, beating up contemporaries, creating havoc on our roads, and exacerbating the already sorely-tried patience of the police. For every girl who stands, wild-eyed, egging on her boy friend to kick somebody's teeth in, there are dozens of dedicated, over-worked, under-paid young nurses. For every unwashed youth who swings a vicious bicycle chain, there are scores struggling manfully on the inadequate wages of an apprentice.

But whence comes this terrible tide of youthful violence? Ask them why they do it, and they will tell you that they are "bored", that "nobody understands" them and their needs, or simply that they don't know -- they "just felt like it."

They're bored because they can't conceive of something to do that wouldn't bore them. They feel misunderstood because they don't understand themselves, their needs, their motives or lack of same.

I am not condoning their behaviour. What I am trying to do is offer a possible theory to account for it.

Every child born in 1944/5 and since (especially after August 1945) has grown up in a world which, for the first time in its known and recorded history, has no assured future. There have been plagues, famines, natural disasters such as floods, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. There have been wars.

Civilisations, such as that of the Romans, have risen and flourished and fallen into decay and disappearance. Individuals have died, families have died, cities (like Pompeii) have died. Nations -- indeed, whole races -- have perished: the Aztecs, Incas, Mayas.

But how ever widespread the disaster, and whatever form it took, the race went on. THE HUMAN RACE SURVIVED. Some early animal species became extinct, either because their natural food supply dwindled below survival level or because they lacked the ability to adapt to circumstances and/or environment. Homo Sapiens, adaptable, ingenious and inventive, flourished and multiplied. In times of terror such as the medieval Black Death, when Europe's population was decimated, the future looked grim indeed; but there were survivors, and so there was a future. And the wisest men of that time, if they thought about it at all, thought: "I may die. My whole family may die. But death comes to every individual some day -- and Mankind will survive."

But the terrible event of August 15th 1945 presaged an end to that most basic of securities. You may protest that the screaming, struggling youngsters at Margate haven't enough brains between them to figure out such a hypothesis for themselves. But this isn't a matter which is reasoned out; it is a matter of instinct. Atavistic instinct, if you like. The "I'm all right, Jack" attitude is superficial. Underneath that, if anyone had the wit or the vision or even the desire to probe for it, is this terrible fear of absolute future nothingness.

Young people today are marrying in their teens; the illegitimacy figures continue to soar to a level where the very word starts to become meaningless. Far too many people are content to fling their hands in despairing horror and chant a requiem over "morality".

I am nearly 39 years old, but my mind is, I claim, elastic enough to approximate the conscious and subconscious thought processes of people half my age. A normal life holds many things (and by the normal life, let us take the Biblical arbitrary -- "threescore years and ten"). There is birth, infancy and childhood; education combined with the life of the family. There is adolescence and the joys and agonies thereof. There is the slow climb to physical maturity, the first job, the discovery that the world is a wide place, the belief that somewhere in it is the exact place for each person. There are opportunities grasped, opportunities missed; perhaps there is illness, pain, accident. There is loss, and its attendant grief; success and its attendant triumph.

Wider contact with members of the opposite sex leads to courtship, engagement (often more than one); finally comes marriage, and the setting-up of another home, the founding of another family, the beginning of a new generation. A man widens his personal scope in order to provide for those dependent on him. The first years may be a struggle, a challenge which exerts his abilities to their limit. Later, when his children are approaching their own maturity, his own tempo begins to slow; he can, if he wishes, sit back and take it easy. He will have time to search for new abilities within himself; take up painting or parachute-jumping, try all the things for which he never had time and opportunity before.

Finally he reaches old age; he may accept or resent it. Either way, he feels that he has 'lived a full life' and has 'done his best'. He has children and grandchildren who will remember him when he is dead. Perhaps he has written a book or painted a picture or composed a piece of music or left his mark on the future in some other indelible way. He has, on the whole, enjoyed his life.

That was how it used to be.

There was time. Time to take things in their natural, leisured sequence. Time to plan for the future. There was a future to be planned for. Perhaps all the plans didn't work out as he would have liked; perhaps some of them never materialised at all. He could at least say that he'd tried.

Now? Now we have the spectacle of youthful desperation trying to cram a whole lifetime's experience into a few years before some megalomaniac presses the button. Tomorrow, they may not be around to experience all these things. Tomorrow, there may not be a human race to be perpetuated. There may not be a tomorrow for humanity at all.

"Eat, drink and be merry..." hurry, hurry... find out what it's like to be drunk, to fall in love, to be married, to beget or conceive, to be a parent ... there's no time to save up for a car, a tv, a record player, a wardrobe of stylish clothes, so grab a dead-end job with big wages and no prospects for the future ... who needs prospects when the future is so uncertain? Don't listen to those who plead "wait, wait ... wait till your older, till you're sure, till you're fully trained, till you've met more people, till you've a nice bit in the bank, till you've travelled the world a bit, learned a bit more about life ...". Who are they to tell you to wait? There isn't time! They were born into a world that had a future. Perhaps it wasn't a rosy future, perhaps it promised nothing more than Churchill's "Blood, toil, tears and sweat" --but at least it was living, of s sort. It was infinitely better than total oblivion, wasn't it?

They have lived their lives in an orderly sequence, one step at a time, with the leisure to plan ahead in the belief that their plans had at least a chance of being implemented. And they are the ones who lifted no hand to prevent this state of affairs arising -- so some of the youngsters insist. (Not all of them, mind. I've checked up on this fact personally.)

I wonder if the older generation will ever get used to being blamed by the younger for the State of the World's. We who are the old er generation constantly ask ourselves (those who think about it at all, that is) what could we have done to prevent it?

And I'd be very interested to know what those who blame us would have done, had they been born circa 1920 instead of post-Hiroshima.

--BERYL HENLEY.

GERALD KIRSCH IN A LETTER -CUM-ARTICLE REPLIES TO BERYL HENLEY'S ARTICLE

In her article, "The Post Hiroshima Syndrome," Beryl Henley overestimates the rationality of the human mind. It would certainly be reasonable to go berserk under the strain of an imminent nuclear holocaust -- but who's reasonable?

The youths who take chivs and coshes to Margate instead of buckets and spades are no doubt mentally disturbed. Mental disturbance, however, is seldom caused by such rational fears as those mentioned by Mrs Henley. In historiaal perspective, the threat of an Armageddon is a very big thing; but in psycho-logical perspective it is completely overshadowed by such things as the day you found your mother in bed with the lodger. I cannot here quote the many well-known figures which show that juvenile delinquency is correlated with broken homes, drunken parents, et cetera. Perhaps I could just mention that "delinquency tends to be concentrated in particular areas and .. in general these are the slummy ones." (1). Yet the threat of the bomb hangs over the suburbs just as much as the slums.

Another point ignored by Mrs Henley is that juvenile delinquency is by no means a post-Hiroshima phenomenon. 1902 was a time when the permanent stability and peace of the British Empire seemed secure, yet in this year Stanley Hall wrote of adolescent gangs: "In London, where these groups are better organised and yet more numerous, war is often waged between them, weapons are used, and murder is not so infrequent." (2). In those days, of course, they didn't have motor scooters; so the fights were confined to the slums, where they didn't disturb the middle classes or attract the attention of the Press.

In fact, the whole question is partly a class matter. Mrs Henley may be able to "approximate the conscious and subconscious thought processes of people half her age", but she lumps them all together in a homogeneous bunch. In fact, the staid, law-abiding life she portrays as dying out is still the norm for the middle classes, and the wild behaviour she deplors in modern youth has always been to some extent characteristic of working class culture. Perhaps the apparent change is partly due to the increased publicity given to the activities of the working classes.

In any case, I doubt if people really fear the extinction of the species. Think of the public response to, say, Bertrand Russell when he points out the dangers of a nuclear war. Most of us greet him with bored indifference. We get hot under the collar about birth control, coloured immigrants and crowded roads, but mention of the prospective end of mankind seems to turn us all into oriental fatalists.

I tried asking a few people about this. I couldn't get hold of any Mods or Rockers, but I did ask a number of young patients in a mental hospital, who were presumably mentally disturbed, and some of whom had been delinquents. For comparison, I also spoke to some (allegedly) normal young people. They were all shown this statement and asked if they agreed with it:-

"If there is an all out nuclear war, the human race will become extinct, and there will be no survivors."

They were also invited to explain and elucidate their replies. The results were as follows:

Sample	Agreed that the race may become extinct	Denied that the race will become extinct	Undecided
"Disturbed"	3	8	2
"Normal"	3	5	1

If belief in racial extinction causes neurosis, these figures do not show it. They suggest rather that most people simply do not have this belief at all. (Of course, the sample is much too small to draw any statistical conclusions from, and the form of such a hastily improvised snap questionnaire gives no insight into deeper mental processes.)

To those who are genuinely worried about the end of our species, may I offer a philosophical view which should appeal to readers of BEYOND? Perhaps there are many intelligent races in other stellar systems. (Modern cosmology makes this seem likely). On the cosmic scale there will therefore be a kind of evolutionary process, with survival of the fittest, the fittest being those who do not make war amongst themselves. The others will sooner or later blast themselves out of the universe. If mankind joins the first group, our fears will prove groundless; if not, our extinction can hardly be regarded as a regrettable thing.

--GERALD KIRSCH.

References made in the article:

- (1): Barbara Wootton, "Social Science and Social Pathology", page 65
- (2): Stanley Hall, "Adolescence", Volume One, page 362,

PERSECUTION

SHORT STORY

By Charles Platt.

The noise of the traffic on the street below was getting on his nerves. Yet he couldn't shut it out by closing the window; if he did that, the humidity became intolerable. He cursed the malfunctioning airconditioner, the shop that refused to fix it until the following week, his wife, who soaked up the heat and couldn't appreciate -- much less sympathise with -- his suffering; and then, for good measure, he cursed the world in general. Outside in the street below, a heavy truck roared by; as it passed the window, churning up great clouds of dust, its load bounced and clattered, the noise hammering into his head.

He ran a finger round the back of his collar. It was revoltingly sticky. His hands were sweating. His shirt lay, damp, clammy and repulsive on his back. His watch strap stuck to his wrist, his head ached and his eyes were tired in their sockets. He sat down heavily in an arm chair and stared out of the picture window. Sunlight flooded through and splashed on to the carpet. The brightness left painful after images on the inside of his eyes when he closed them.

He realised that it had been a mistake to sit down in the soft chair; the cushions prevented air from reaching his back, and without ventilation he only sweated more. Yet it was too much of an effort to get up again. Another heavy lorry passed outside the window, followed by at least ten cars, revving their engines and hooting. He winced and closed his eyes.

"Darling?" The voice floated down from upstairs. He ignored it.

"Where are you, dear?" The effort entailed in opening his mouth and forcing his vocal chords into speech was just too great. If she looked long enough, she would find him anyway.

"Where are you, George?" The door of the room opened; he heard the maddening squeak of its hinges, then the staccato thump-thump of stilleto heels on the carpet. "George, why didn't you answer me?"

What could he say? That it was too much effort? That he couldn't be bothered? That it was unnecessary anyway?

"Hot," he mumbled. Her voice was vague when she replied.

"Yes, heavenly, isn't it?" she said. He opened his eyes and looked at his wife. The bikini. She ought to know better. It looked incongruous: her face, neck, arms and legs tanned a pale brown, the rest, usually protected by clothes, left a milky white. But she wouldn't take any notice of what he said, wouldn't use artificial tanning lotion. God, how it annoyed him.

He let his eyelids slowly close.

"George?" That nagging voice again. What did it want? "George! Are you listening to me?" A question. It required an answer.

"Yes, dear. Yes, I'm listening."

"Then why have you shut your eyes? George, is there something wrong with you?"

He sighed. "No, there's nothing wrong." She started fussing round the room, running her finger over all the polished wood surfaces checking for dust, adjusting the cushions, straightening the curtains. She opened the venetian blind he had previously closed to cool the room. Sunlight flooded over him.

"What was that you said, dear?" she said, half to herself.

"I said no, there's nothing..." But why keep up the pretence? "Hell, there damn well is something wrong with me. I feel terrible."

"Do you, George?" More fussing around the room. "Do you want me to get Doctor Fletcher round?" He imagined Fletcher muttering over him, taking his temperature, listening with his clammy stethoscope and probing with his icy fingers, examining his sweaty body; and then prescribing some useless pills, because he had to do something to justify the fee.

"No, don't bother," he muttered.

"What was that, dear?"

"I said no, I don't want to see that old fool," he snapped. When he spoke loudly it made his temples throb; the blood all seemed to pour into his skull.

"There's no need to shout, George. I can't help not hearing you if you're going to mumble at me. If you don't want to see Doctor Fletcher, there's not really anything I can do for you, is there?"

"No, Maureen, I'm afraid there's nothing you can do for me."

There was no reply. Another truck roared past, banging and clattering. There must be a bump in the road out there, he decided, that made them all clatter at the same spot. A bump in the road, just below his window.

Several more cars passed. Their exhaust fumes rose in the shimmering heat and drifted into the open window. His head increased its throbbing. Still his wife said nothing. Why didn't she speak? Had she left the room? Had she actually gone? Cautiously, he opened his eyes.

Her face was a foot away from his. "Peekaboo," she said, and giggled inanely. He smelled her cheap perfume, saw the badly applied makeup, the smeared lipstick, the pores of her skin black with ingrained dirt.

"Oh, God," he muttered and turned his head away.

"George, what is wrong with you?" She pouted at him resentfully. "You're really not being very nice to me this afternoon." She stood up and started patting her disshevelled hair in place. "If you were at all considerate, you'd take us all down to the river. You know the children would love it."

He hated the water, she knew that. But perhaps that was why she had suggested it.

The river, filled with countless motor boats hired by greasy youths with portable radios, with speedboats, with luxury cruisers that stank of diesel. The flies and the wasps and the ants that crawled over you out of the grass that dyed your clothes an indelible green. The noxious stink of river weeds.

"We're not going to the river today," he said. "I'm stinking hot, I'm sweating, I feel lousy. I feel sick. I have a God-awful headache. In fact if you want to go I see no reason why you don't take the children on your own."

"Sometimes, George," she said, "you are just impossible." Thump-thump of heels over to the door. "How can you be so self centred and inconsiderate?" The door slammed. Like a slowly melting jelly, George sank further into his chair.

The door opened again. Three noisy pairs of feet pounded over the floor. Three shrill voices, aged 5, 7 and 9 years, screamed at him.

"Daddy, why won't you take us to the river? Whydaddywhydaddywhydaddywhy?" He clenched his fists.

"Please don't bother me now, children."

"But whyyyyyyyy daddy?" He stood up shakily. His whole body throbbed and ached. His vision clouded with thousands of tiny glittering specks, and he had to lean against the wall.

"Out, go on, get out!" he shouted. "I'm not taking you to the river. I'M

not going. Ask your mother to take you. You're mother's going to take you. Now leave me alone, leave me alone and get out!" Three small innocent faces stared at him resentfully. The children backed slowly towards the door, then turned and fled, slamming it. The thunder of their feet receded into the throbbing, muggy distance.

The heat! It was intolerable. He must fix that venetian blind. He stumbled over to the opposite window. Something seemed to be wrong with his eyes. He pulled on the cord of the blind. It was jammed, his wife must have jammed it somehow. He pulled harder, but it still wouldn't budge. Annoyed, he tugged still harder; the metal case at the top came away with a shower of plaster, and the blind flapped madly, its thin metal slats chattering at him. Enraged, he tugged at it again; this time the whole unit came away, and the metal case fell, striking him painfully on the side of the head.

Raw heat poured into the room. He groped for a chair, blinded and stunned, and fell over and into one, wrenching his ankle. A small, round, tufty cushion rammed him in the back, pressing his soaked, slimy shirt into contact with his boiling wet skin. He moaned. The chair felt as if it were swaying. It was swaying. It was tilting. He felt sudden nausea and lashed out one arm to try and keep his balance. His hand hit a flower vase and sent it crashing to the floor in a shower of fractured glass. His action also upset the modernistic, unstable chair; it teetered on two legs and then overturned, tipping him on to the floor. His arm twisted under it and he felt something wrench.

Flat on his stomach under the chair, one of its legs jabbed into his back, he pawed ineffectually at the carpet. Things were swirling about him. He struggled and squirmed blindly, groped out with one arm and thrust it down on the floor, trying to lift himself. His hand came down on to the broken flower vase. Blood spewed forth from his wounded wrist. The heat wafted over him in great suffocating, engulfing waves. The noise of the traffic outside became an endless grating rumble that steadily increased in volume. Coloured sparks shot through his eyes. He felt trapped, immobilised in a web of gooey, boiling treacle. He crawled, painfully dragging his wounded ankle and wrenched arm. The door was a mile away and receded even as he approached it. Then suddenly it was a white cliff towering above him into darkness. Blood from his worst poured out on to the carpet and stuck the shirt sleeve to his arm. He squinted, and could just make out the door handle, high above him, rippling in the heat. He gasped for breath, stretched up towards it, and held on to it, pulling himself upwards. But the fragile porcelain handle that was his wife's delight cracked under the strain and came apart in his hand. He fell back on to the floor. They were out to get him, his wife, the children...

He had lost a lot of blood, he knew that. He tried to call out for help, but his throat was too dry and anyway he knew they would pay no attention. He had to move. He couldn't move. It was too hot. The traffic was roaring and smashing and clattering around him, and he was choking on the fumes. He was moving down, circling round and round, down into the centre of the vortex. Blackness wafted in, shot with a tracery of silver luminous veins. Slowly the hot, fiery, stinking body enveloped the mind, and darkness descended. He twitched a little, then his head fell limp on the floor and he just lay there.

A little later, his wife came into the room. When she opened the door, it hit his head where he lay on the floor with enough force to fracture his skull; but by that time he was already dead.

ARTHUR MACHEN

SURVEYED BY
RICHARD MAYALL

Although his work frequently crops up in macabre and horror anthologies, little is generally known about the life and work of Arthur Machen.

Born in the Gwent area of Wales in March 1863, little or no fuss is made of his centenary last year -- at least, not in this country. His first published work was "Eleusina", a poem, of which only three volumes are still in existence. They have spent at least the last 20 years being bought and sold in California.

Machen spent his formative years wandering the lanes and fields of Gwent -- alone by choice -- and the impression this countryside made on him is reflected in his writing; practically all his stories were set in this area.

He left for London in 1880, studying for the preliminary examinations of the Royal College of Surgeons. He failed -- bragging that he had not answered a single mathematical question.

His first attempts at writing -- into which he appears to have drifted by a process of elimination -- were verse, and he was greatly disheartened to discover that he had no talent for the medium whatsoever.

He spent three years, lonely and in financial difficulties, before the publication of his first book, "The Anatomy of Tobacco". This work, nothing more than its title suggests, was written in 17th Century English, and was published at the expense of relatives and family friends. Machen was one of England's greatest smokers -- a connoisseur.

He took to translating French works, and imbibed a strong Rabelaisian influence while working as a cataloguer for a publisher with pornographic sidelines.

His second book, "The Chronicle of Clemendy", again set in 17th Century English, consisted of a number of tales with a Monmouthshire background, similar in form to Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales".

During 1887 he married his first wife, a 'Bohemian' and friend of Jerome K Jerome, Miss Amy Hogg. In this year he also met A.E. Waite, a mystic and author who became his lifelong friend.

This was his happiest decade.

In 1888 he translated "The Memoirs of Casanova", a mammoth task which he executed admirably, and then took to writing columns for various magazines. He then discovered his great talent as a yarn spinner, and his first horror tale "The Great God Pan" saw print in 1894. This was the story of an evil woman, born of a mindless idiot (made so by an abortive brain operation) and brought up in Gwent. She flees to London, after causing a stir in Gwent, and becomes exceedingly notorious. Villiers, the hero, after the suicide of a close friend, forces her to hang herself. During her death throes, she changes shape into a fluid. This story was slammed by critics as horrendous, and was, most naturally, a good seller.

It was bound up in one volume with a second tale, "The Inmost Light", a very similar story that betrayed Machen's hate of London's suburbs, though he loved the city itself.

Next came "The Three Imposters" containing some of his best work. It was formed from three 'novels', "The Novel of the Dark Valley", "The Novel of the Black Seal" (the tale was a formative influence on Lovecraft, telling of a similar Mythos in Wales), and "The Novel of the White Powder, to my mind his best tale. Extremely Lovecraftian in flavour, it describes the gradual metamorphosis of a man into a horrible creature upon his taking of a white powder which has been changed from a normal medicine into some strange substance through the accidental coincidence of temperature and pressure over a certain time. It has recently been anthologised in "Spine Chillers", edited by a certain Lee.

This spate of writing came to a close with the death of his first wife, Amy, in 1899. Machen then fell into a mystic state, for which he later suffered a little notoriety, and joined the Order of the Golden Dawn.

Machen's talents took him to acting in 1901, and he had a limited success in small parts, and met his second wife, Purefoy, whom he married in 1903.

His last stage performance was in 1909, and afterwards he turned to the author's stand-by, journalism, from which he made his living for many years.

During the war years, Machen's tale-writing experienced a sudden upsurge, and some of his best known tales appeared in this period. In 1913, one of his more outstanding stories was published, "The Great Return". This is an almost poetic piece about the appearance of the Holy Grail in South Wales and has some claim to be the best piece of writing he ever produced. "The Bowmen" was printed in "The Evening News" on September 29th, 1914, and it described the covering of the British retreat at the Battle of Mons by St George, leading an army of medieval English bowmen. It was acclaimed as a news story, instead of as the tale it was supposed to be, and Machen earned nation wide fame as gratifying as it was short lived.

1915 saw the publication of two more of his well remembered tales, both of similar content: "Out of the Earth", wherein 'children' embodying the evil of the world invade a Welsh holiday resort, and "The Happy Children", wherein the innocent victims of war rise to pray and rejoice.

In 1917 came "The Terror", one of the few stories by Machen that can be called SF. In this 90 page novella a horrible, malign and concealed attack seizes Britain. The Government bans all publication on the subject, and rumour is the only means of communication, which brings hints of inexplicable deaths all over the country. The ending is a surprise conclusion to a piece which brings home the real terror of the unknown better than any other story I know, though it could have been shortened drastically.

In the Lovecraftian "The Shining Pyramid" a tribe of 'Little folk' cause a climax which is horror at its best, taking place in a Roman amphitheatre in Machen's native Gwent. Ten years later, in 1933, Machen wrote "The Green Round", which was a miserable failure.

Machen's last years were spent under financial and health difficulties, and after the death of his second wife he slipped rapidly. On December 15th 1947 he died, aged 84, in a fit of visions, in which, fittingly, he saw the lands of his birth and dreams.

Those interested in Machen's writing will find a Penguin edition of his tales, first published in 1945, and available in the BSFA Library. Titled the "Holy Terrors", it enjoyed good sales at the time of publication.

ESCAPIST

SF's a thing to hide in,
Escape to Galactic strife,
Where men are good and baddies have ten arms,
From bitter, boring, crushing life.

Please send no doubts to fill my hero's mind;
Pure knotted pine this entity should be.
Let him think platitudes not truths,
No sodding introverts for me.

I want to have a foe,
A scaly thing of claw,
Give it evil cunning and me an atom blaster,
We'll fight it out, let blood and gore be law.

And in its horrid leather wings,
And many wicked eyes,
I'll see and shoot, and shoot and kill,
All the people I despise.

Thus in sf I meet it out in space,
Instead of in the local grocer's.



In California the United Presbyterian Church is using radio advertising time to broadcast jingles composed by an advertising agent. Sample lyric: "Isn't it lonely, out on a limb without Him?"

SPORTING CHANCE

BY REG HALDRICKS

Bergman was quivering like a fat, angry pink blancmange.

"Listen, Hepworth," he snarled, "you're paid to do the Lord's will -- and I'll damn well see you will do it!"

"Mr Bergman, sir," pleaded Gabriel, cowering against his drawing board, "PLEASE listen to me. I think hunting is cruel, and I don't believe that the "Revelation" ought to support it."

Bergman's eyes protruded incredulously. "You don't believe?" he roared, his chins sagging, "since when have YOU decided what you believe and what you don't? Who do you think you are, you..." His eyes closed and he teetered on his heels. After a long pause, he took a deep breath and went on as if reasoning with a stupid child. "Now, LOOK, young fellow. I'm not asking you to support hunting. All I'm asking you to do is draw a nice picture of the beautiful English countryside. The rolling downs... the picturesque old Grid pylons. The lambs gambolling in the spring sunlight. And the jolly huntsmen in their pink coats. The sweating horses, eh? The merry music of the hounds, huh?"

"B-but please, Mr Bergman, sir, I can't draw a nice picture of a hunt, because I don't think it's a nice thing. I think it's wicked. I think all blood sports are wicked. Think, Mr Bergman sir, think of the hounds tearing the fox to pieces, right in front of the huntsman's eyes..."

Bergman carefully assembled a rather lop-sided expression of parental concern. "Listen, my boy," he said, unclenching his fists and patting Gabriel on the shoulder. "Take the word of an older and wiser man. Our great heritage of tradition is the mainstay of our society, isn't it? Undermine it and where would we be? Back to the dark ages, that's where. Back to the 20th Century, and Communism and atheism and secular industry, hey?"

"But h-hunting..."

"Hunting, my boy, is a fine institution handed down to us by our wise forefathers. It promotes the breeding of horses. It rids the land of vermin. It gives a great deal of harmless pleasure to some of the richest and most righteous people in the country..."

"Pleasure! What sort of pleasure does the fox get?"

"Foxes!" roared Bergman, clenching his fists again and waving them in turn in front of Gabriel's nose, "surely you're not wasting your sympathy on those vermin! Murderers, communists, atheists -- the dregs and ordure of society!" He passed his hand over his forehead and resumed his paternal smile. "Don't you realise, my dear boy, don't you see that these people must be eliminated somehow? And isn't it far better for the m to meet their Maker cleanly, naturally, under His own sky? Or would you rather we went back to the old methods and marched them down a dirty corridor with their eyes bandaged and choked them with a bit of rope? Would you, eh? And don't forget, the fox has a sporting chance -- he gets thirty minutes start, doesn't he? Doesn't he? Why, some of them enjoy it..."

"H-have you ever heard of a fox getting away?"

Bergman's smile snapped off. "All right, Hepworth," he snarled, "you can take your -- your ideas to the Reverend manager."

Four hours later Gabriel was summoned on the intercom. He put away his pens and slunk along the vaulted Neogothic corridor to the lift. Down and down he sailed, past the editorial floors with their animated murals of rather sexy naked angels, past the clattering autotypists on the sales levels, past the printing machinery. At last he emerged, crossed the square past the dingy little Revelationist chapel itself, and hesitated before the twenty story office block with its twelve-foot animated title: CHURCH OF THE REVELATIONISTS, INC. He gave his name at the desk and was escorted to the 16th floor, where he waded across the carpets and was left to wait in an armchair -- which seemed to be trying to swallow him whole. Across the enormous room, above a golden statue in a blue crystal niche, was an elaborate clock: at half hourly intervals it chimed reverberantly and an angelic choir with an organ, harp, strings and celeste chanted:

"Six o'clock and time to pray -- Live the Revelation way!"

"Half past six, now offer thanks -- for money safe in Revelbanks!"

"Seven o'clock, O brothers, sisters -- heed not those Neo-Mormon twisters!"

"Half past seven, At God's behest 'Rev' products are the very best!"

A young man came out and ushered Gabriel into a sumptuous office with an enormous solid gold desk, behind which was sitting the Reverend Manager, the Bishopess Monica Chancel-Bosworth. She was older than her pictures on the hoardings ("You can trust God -- and the Bishopess Monica"), but her nose was long and business-like and her diamond rimmed spectacles framed a steely, determined stare. After a few minutes she put down some papers and favoured Gabriel with a smile. He felt as if he were being seared by a heat ray, but managed to kneel without falling on his face.

"Do rise, Mr -- er -- Hopwood," she said. Her voice was a startling croak, like a bull frog with laryngitis. "What beautiful weather the Lord has granted us! I hear that your spiritual counsellor has been having a little difficulty over your commission for this issue."

She picked up a back number and idly flicked through it. "He tells me your work has been quite satisfactory until now. Let me see, did you have anything in this one?" She threw the paper at him.

He muffed the catch and bent blushing to pick up the leaves. The cover was a 3-D colour picture of a buxom naked blonde, her modesty saved partly by the title across her chest, "REVELATION, incorporating Church Times", and partly by a gilt bejewelled prayer book which she was clutching lower down. Gabriel fumbled through the pages of luminous advertisements for various Rev products, from toilet paper to super-luxury triphibian cruisers, turned past the news items of atrocities committed by Neomormons, Marxists, Jehovahites, Ameranglicans and other rival sects, and finally found his own work. It was a strip cartoon advertisement. The first picture showed a girl on a psychiatrist's couch, wearing a Jehovahite costume (filmy Turkish trousers and leather jacket.) "But doctor," she was saying, "I don't know any nice men." The next picture was a close up of the psychiatrist, clutching his beard with one hand and pointing skyward with the other: "Jayne -- take my advice -- and God's -- and join the REVELATIONISTS!" The final picture showed Jayne, now in a ravishing bare-midriff bridal gown, walking up the aisle on the arm of a handsome man. "Girls, be rav! Join the Revs!"

She nodded. "Should appeal to the Min-IQs. Anything else in this number?"

He showed her a page where animated letters winked:

"Join the Revelationists NOW! No other denomination offers these wonderful advantages: Breathtaking architecture, superb music, comforting sermons, FREE spiritual advice -- SALVATION GUARANTEED!"

"Do the, er, older people really like that animated lettering, I wonder?" She leaned back, arched her fingertips and studied him through half-closed eyes. "Yes, Mr -- er -- Hepplewhite, your work has been quite satisfactory up till now. We should be sorry to lose you." There was a long silence. "I understand you have some sort of - er - objection to the Ecclesiastical Institution of Heresy Hunting?" Gabriel shifted his feet nervously.

"W-well, yes, I ... er ... think it's ... er ..."

She folded her arms and leaned back. "I see." Another long pause.

"Now listen very carefully, young man. First of all, let me remind you that our editorial policy is not, in its broadest aspects, made by the Art Editor, or indeed by the Reverend Editor himself. It is decided, in solemn conclave, by the Board of Directing Patriarchs of the Revelationist Church, led by the Holy Managing Director and Chairman. It is not perfected without heart-searching, solemn prayer, and consultation of the sacred books: The Revelationist Bible, the Founder's Testament, the Business Trends Guide. Do you, a mere assistant artist, set your judgement against the elders of your Church? Whom do you think you are, Mr Hibbard?"

"W-well, er, when you put it like that..."

"And do not imagine that you are the first dissenter in our ranks. Heresy, young man, is as old as religion. You don't hear about it, because we don't want your mind corrupted by things you would be better unaware of. But right back to the Dark Ages, in the 1960s, when the aboriginal sects first hired the primitive agencies of those days to augment their tiny, dwindling congregations, --even then there were those misguided ones who raised their voices in dissent. Did you know that Saint William Graham himself was called a charlatan and a mountebank?" Gabriel laughed incredulously, and she went on: "In 1964, for instance, there was a Mrs Murray of Baltimore, Ohio. She brought a legal action for the churches to be taxed at the same rate as everybody else. She said the system was unfair to atheists! Then there was Edward D Pumperhickle. When the churches prospered he was not pleased. He left the churches when we bought up the General Electric Company --said we were getting too commercialised, so he set up a rival denomination. Do you know what happened to him?"

"No?"

"The age of miracles was with us, then. The Divine Wrath caught up with him and he and a few hundred of his followers were burnt alive in their wooden shack of a church. Fortunately the insurance was paid, after some undignified wrangling, to the Revelationist Chr Church. Then there was Mary K Fearbright the secretary of the Computer Programmers' Union. When the Ecclesiastical Parliament passed the sanctity of Labour act in 2002, she led a protest march against the dissolution of the Trade Unions. Her gang of rabble wanted to do the least possible work for as much money as they could get ... you see, young man, people in those days didn't work for God as they do now. They worked for themselves -- for the satisfaction of their own, selfish, animal lusts. What do you think of that?"

"Oh, y-yes, your Reverence, she was quite wrong, of course..."

"Of course she was. Then when we instituted Spiritual Counsellors in all factory floors and offices, to help and advise the workers and correct them by healthy castigation when they fell into evil ways, she tried to start a strike --wanted the workers to be paid as much as their counsellors, believe

it or not. Well, God showed her the error of her ways. He made her insane!"
"Oh."

"Yes, two Revelationist doctors certified her mentally ill, and she spent the rest of her life locked away behind strong iron bars in an asylum, sorrowfully cared for by the tender mercies of our devoted Revelationist nurses..."

"Where would the church be today if we had heeded these voices of reaction? Would we have our position of spiritual and moral leadership? Would the world not even now be as it was in the Dark Ages, riddled with Communism, atheism? Or suppose, young man, suppose that the Revelationists had followed the backsliders in their midst, down the narrow, twisted alleyway of doubt, and let the other denominations march forward without them, along the broad path of the true faith? Where would our congregations be? They would be in the Jehovite chapels, in the Marxist tserkovs, in the neomormon love shrines, and in the Ameranglican cathedralettes. Poor, misguided souls, they would be denied the full light of that all-embracing truth, of which we, the Revelationists, are the only true custodians!"

"Oh, yes," breathed Gabriel, quite carried away by her oratory, "How t-terrrrible!"

"And even today, when the minions of the true faith girdle the world, from the Marxist church in the East to the Grahmites in the West, when the Lord's servants sit in the high places and righteously administer His laws -- even now the forces of evil are not dead. That chief of all the atheists, Ebenezer Mark-evitch, sits in his island fortress, safe behind his force screens, but he does not rest. His spies are among us, creeping and insinuating themselves among our unsuspecting people, planting a seed of doubt here, a diabolical suggestion there." Gabriel shuddered as he thought of Ebenezer Markevitch, with the little horns on his head and the fire coming out of his mouth, calling up the diabolical shade of Bertrand Russell. "Is it not right that such wicked people should be plucked out like a rotting tooth and hunted down by the Lord's appointed avengers?"

"Y-yes," interrupted Gabriel obstinately, "but that's just what I wanted to say; you see, I don't think they ought to be hunted..." She leant forward.

"YOU would not want to be taken for one of them, would you, Mr Hepworth?"
He turned pale and sprang to his feet. "Oh, no, your R-reverence. N-not me -- I'm a l-loyal -- a true believer --" He meant it.

"Go then, and put your belief to work. Do the Lord's will, obey his servants. That is all." He knelt, kissed her feet, and backed out.

In the office after he had gone, the Bishopess pressed and button and a young man instantly appeared.

"That was FRB 05107, Gabriel -- er -- Hepworth," she said. "He has doubts about hunting. Just put his name on the Loyalty Query List, would you? And by the way, Aaron, it's your turn tonight. Report to the Episcopal Bedroom by the private door at twelve thirty."

Gabriel drew the nice picture of the hunt, but his conscience troubled him. In the end he wrote a letter to the Daily Pulpit (an interdenominational paper) condemning fox hunting and pleading for a more humane method of executing heretics. The letter was not published, but two days later a curt note came through the tube dismissing him from the his post and giving him three days' notice to quit the Rev hostel.

Though timid, he was stubborn. He reinforced his courage with a brandy and Stelazine, went round to the Daily Pulpit offices (formerly St Paul's Cathedral) a

and demanded to see the Reverend Editor. After a lot of waiting he was interviewed by the assistant Letters Secretary, to whom he complained bitterly that the Pulpi had passed his letter to his employers and cost him his job -- didn't they think they ought at least to recompense him by publishing it?

The Assistant Letters Secretary made a glib apology: his paper would never dream of playing a dirty trick like that, and Gabriel couldn't prove otherwise, could he?

Gabriel wasn't used to Stelazine. He threatened to go round in the night putting placards on all the chapel doors, accusing the Pulpit of underhand methods of and suppression of the truth.

On his way home he was beaten up by two thugs.

Despite the fact that, as all the furniture had been removed from his room, he had to sleep on the floor, he felt just about well enough next morning to walk round to the Interdenominational Police. The desk verger was sympathetic but unhelpful. On his way out Gabriel noticed the two thugs who had beaten him up the previous night; only now they were dressed in police cassocks.

He strode back to the desk and made a scene. Despite the fact that emotion and Stelazine working on his stammer made him nigh incomprehensible, he managed to convey that he was going to show them all up. He'd find a way, just see if he didn't.. The desk verger asked him to step around to the office. When he got there, two men grabbed him from behind and the verger gabbled the formula: "Gabriel Hepworth, I arrest you in the name of the Lord on a charge of wilful heresy, and I warn you that anything you say may be used in evidence by the Ecclesiastical Court, may the Lord show his mercy unto you, as we show justice, all right, take him away."

The Inquisitor took off his tonsured wig and fanned himself with it. "Is this one the last today? Yes? About time too." He held the dossier to his paunch and studied it perfunctorily. "Now then, what is all this? Blasphemy and heresy? Disapproves of hunting? Anything to say in your defence?"

Gabriel started to speak, but was immediately silenced by a vicious cuff from the beadle in the box. "Nothing? Good. Don't want to aggravate the offence, to do we? Now then, normally a case like yours would merit five years in the monastery, but here I think an exception would be appropriate. Yes, highly appropriate, hih hih! I think it will be better to give you a practical demonstration of the absurdity of your opinions. I sentence you to be hunted on Monday week, and I think you will find that it is not at all the harsh punishment you seem to think. As a matter of fact, it's quite quick, once they catch you. I'm sure you will be convinced, and that we shan't hear any more of these stupid objections. Not after Monday week, anyway, hih hih hih!"

Gabriel's manacles and leg irons were unlocked and he was frog-marched to the monastery gate. The Chaplain gabbled a brief prayer and nodded to the two vergers. "Right, growled the tall one, "git running."

"I won't," panted Gabriel, "I'm going to sit here on the ground and wait until the hounds come for me. They'll catch me just the s-same, whether I run or not, seeing that I've been given a special injection to strengthen my scent, so why should I wear myself out running?"

The Chaplain looked horrified. "Oh, no, that won't do. See that he runs, please." The tall verger pulled out a cattle goad pistol and turned the knob to maximum.

"Now," he drawled, taking aim. "Run, sonny, run." A fiery bolt of intoler-

able pain shot through Gabriel's legs. He was thrown to the ground, moaning.

"I w-won't?"

"Yes you w-will," mimicked the verger, pressing the trigger again. Gabriel staggered to his feet, and began to run. Every few seconds he felt the sting of the goad, but as he got further from the pistol the spasms became less intense and dwindled to a mild pricking sensation. From the distance came a shout:

"Have a good run, atheist!"

After ten minutes he slowed to a walk, regained his breath and looked sadly back. The vergers had gone back inside. The monastery looked really beautiful from a distance: the plastic neogothic spire was a slender column of pure light in the rising sun, its base shrouded in morning mists which hid the dank, dirty stonework. The old sign, "H.M.Prison", was beginning to show through the whitewash, but on top of the new spire the luminous letters blazoned the new legend, "SAINT SELWYN'S COMMUNITY OF PENITENTS". He sighed, shivered, and plodded on, oblivious of the beauties of the landscape. A delicate tracery of power lines criss-crossed the desolate moorland like a fantastic spider's web. In the distance were the ruins of a nuclear power plant, crumbling into picturesque decay. At hundred-yards intervals the stern bleakness of the moor was softened by the presence of hoardings advertising the products of various churches, and the air was loud with the dawn chorus of aerial loudspeakers fluting hymns and slogans. He crossed the brow of the hill; a wooded valley lay before him.

A thought suddenly struck him. He had read stories of the old foxes -- the animals, long since extinct. They had, it was said, often eluded the hounds by cunning; for example, by plunging into the river to break the scent. There must be some kind of watercourse at the bottom of the valley. In fact, he was sure it was the Exe, in which case the effluents of the Jehovahite factories at Exeter would make it stink like a sewer. Surely they'd lose his scent if he swam a mile or so down that.

He made fast going down the hill, but realised his half hour must be up by now. As he panted across the water meadows at the foot, a sound was wafted to him on the chilly morning breeze: the distance softened it to a pulsating organ note, but there was no mistaking the deep-throated baying of the specially bred baskerville hounds. His stomach turned sickeningly inside out and he plunged on as fast as he could. At every step his feet sank to the ankles. His sandals were sucked off into the mud. By now the river was a few yards away; he could see rushes. He splashed to the brink and stared in disbelief.

The river bed was empty. Across the strip of evil-smelling slime a large notice board in

Neogothic frame proclaimed:

"FIELD SPORTS ACT, 2012: In pursuance of the will of God, as expressed in the above Act, and transmitted by His faithful servants The Ecclesiastical Water Board, all watercourses, rivers, streams and ditches in the official Field shall be dammed up and cease to flow one week before the date of each Heresy Hunt, and shall be maintained in a dry and waterless condition throughout the whole of the hunting season. PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL WATERS FLOW."

So they had thought of that. But he could only go on now.

He waded in, sinking up to his knees at every step, pulling each leg out with an effort and a loud sucking sound. Behind him he could hear, closer every minute, the yelps, howls and snarls of the hounds, and occasionally the bray of a rather badly played hunting horn. His right leg sank to the thigh. He struggled, but every movement screwed him deeper into the morass. He was trapped.

Now he could even hear the hunters' horses' hooves, and a peculiar whirring noise he couldn't place. He twisted himself round and caught a glimpse of

the pink-coated riders appearing from behind a spinney. The huge snarling dogs were almost on him, their great fangs glinting white. He braced himself.

A shadow seemed to close over him. As the first dog leapt at him, he felt a violent jerk. He caught a glimpse of the huntsmen reining up on the bank, the horses rearing. He seemed to be soaring upwards, into the sky, towards heaven ... he made a last desperate attempt at prayer, but before the words could form themselves everything whirled round and went black.

Heaven was a quiet place. Somewhere in the distance a few deep men's voices intoned an immemorial plainchant; between phrases the silence was absolute.

Gabriel was lying on a comfortable bed in a small room with white walls. He had never seen anywhere like it before. The furniture had no glittering plastic decorations, no figures of the saints in multi-coloured easel relief; instead, it was of plain wood and stainless steel, and strangely beautiful. The walls bore no luminous church slogans, no multi-speakers whispering simultaneous subliminal sales-jingles, no telescreens flickering with ecclesiastical advertisements. Their milky surface was broken only by a single, glowing bar of evening sunlight.

He sat up and stared at the angel, dressed like a nurse, who was sitting on the foot of the bed reading a book. She looked up, and came to plump his pillow. "Feeling better, Mr Hepworth?" she asked. He rubbed his eyes.

"I was chosen after all? I m-mean, if this is Heaven, where are the jeweled Revmaids? Am I..." She smiled.

"Just relax. I'll get you a hot drink and somebody to explain." She glided out and returned with a tall, grey grave-faced man in a silvery smock. He held out a hand.

"How do you do, Mr Hepworth? I am Ebenezer Markevitch." Gabriel sank back with a moan of sheer horror. This was the Other Place after all, his heresy HAD been punished by eternal damnation, as they said it would, and here was the devil to torment him! But, wait a minute, Markevitch wasn't dead yet: in league with the lower regions, of course, but he didn't actually live down there, did he? He had an island somewhere...

He put his hand to his forehead. "I d-don't understand", he muttered.

"Let me explain," said Markevitch. "The prison -- sorry, monastery chaplain at St Selwyn's is one of our agents. He passed on a message, and we sent a helicopter to rescue you. Sorry we had to lassoo you at the last moment like that, but you do understand that our machines have to nip in quickly to dodge the police radar."

Gabriel looked at the man uncertainly. He didn't seem evil... Markevitch gave him a silky blue gown and led him out into the evening sunshine. The tree-lined avenues of the city outside were thronged with strolling people, chattering unconcernedly about all kinds of topics which, when he overheard them, made Gabriel look round for the Interdenominational Police. But there didn't seem to be any about. There were quite a number of churches and chapels though: very plain old-fashioned LeCorbusier style architecture with no neo-gothic frills. Hideous, he thought.

He looked around for the ecclesiastical office blocks, and was surprised to find there weren't any. He was astonished to learn that there were no legal penalties for failure to attend divine service; and astounded to see that nevertheless many people were going into the churches.

"You mean they just go in voluntarily?" he asked.

"Yes," smiled Markevitch. "Our beliefs here are governed by our own reason -- not by official regulations or subliminal propaganda. That's why we

rescued you. We heard about your predicament, your ideas about hunting, and thought a man like you might be able to help us. You see, we are fighting the World Churches because they have sold themselves to Mammon and enslaved the people. If it weren't for our force screens they'd have destroyed us long ago with bombs -- but we hope, some day, to destroy them with truth."

"How about it, Mr Hepworth?"

-- REG HALDRICKS.

ASK A

"Go," said Morgan precisely, "to hell."

"It's worth a try, anyhow," persisted Lamb. Morgan flung a pile of papers on the desk.

"You know what it said about God."

"God. A negative word. Meaningless abstract. This word has no referent", Lamb quoted. "We asked it the wrong question is all," he went on.

That was their greatest problem. Oracle, the recently completely computer to solve all mankind's problems, had to be asked the right question if it was to give the right answer. But no matter how they put it, the answer was the same.

"Okay, go ahead and try it," said Morgan. "But you're wasting your time."

The two men walked into the vast hall which housed the omniscient brain. The small crowd which had gathered to watch parted to let them pass.

Lamb walked directly up to the machine and asked directly: "Is there such a thing as resurrection?"

Without delay the mechanical voice responded: "This word has no referent."

Most of the crowd wandered off, and Lamb and Morgan started arguing again. Meanwhile, a small girl walked hesitantly up to the microphone.

She paused, nervously. Finally she asked: "What are little boys made of?"

A short pause; then, in the same mechanical voice: "slugs and snails and puppydogs tails," the machine replied.

--PAUL RICHARDSON.

STUPID QUESTION...

CREDIT SALE

REG HALDRICKS.

The customer staggered into the shop and collapsed on to a stool.

The shopkeeper, taking no notice of her exhaustion, bowed stiffly from the waist, creased his beautifully symmetrical moustache into a smile and murmured, "Good afternoon madam. Is there anything that you require?"

Her voice was low and strained. "I need a Samarium Cell, Type 32E."

"I have none in stock at present, but if you will wait a few minutes I will obtain one from Central Store." He turned to the delivery panel and punched out a code on the buttons. "Tell me, madam, if I may be so bold to ask: why did you not send one of your Personal Robots to collect this item?"

She adjusted her plain, standard-cut dress and leaned flaccidly against the counter. "They're out of order again, I'm afraid. I couldn't wait, so I've come myself."

"Naturally madam, I quite understand. It is a pity that the robots go through these phases of unreliability, is it not?"

"I wish I could understand them," she sighed. "Mine are serviced regularly, but they seem to go wrong in such -- such inexplicable ways."

"Ah, now, madam, perhaps the new fuel regulations may improve the situation."

"You wouldn't believe it, but that was what started the trouble today. I called them together at 0500 hours to tell them the new rules. I explained



it all as carefully as I could; I suppose the information must have failed to register. Yet I don't see how it could have been made clearer. Look, this is what I told them: 'A new standard fuel has been developed, containing all the chemical constituents necessary for your efficient functioning. Instead of receiving all kinds of different organic and inorganic chemicals at different times, you will be in future fed with a single, uniform, standard fuel in fixed quantities. It will be far more convenient for you, because you will no longer have to blend it and use those complicated and prolonged heat treatments, and with the time saved you will be able to perform more work.' That's clear enough, isn't it, even for a robot? And yet they didn't seem to understand."

"How did they react?"

"They started their endless arguing. In the end I told them it was a General Regulation, so it had to be executed. And do you know, they all developed internal cross-instruction -- the 'sulks'. Their efficiency went down 20%."

"Did you call in the service agent?"

"Of course I did. And believe it or not, he took their side! He agreed with them!" She drooped exhaustedly on to the counter.

"You again pointed out, of course, that the new system has the force of a General Regulation."

"Yes, indeed. And he said that in that case he couldn't do anything with them, and packed his kit and went! That's the trouble with having robots serviced by robots. You can't get them to explain what they're doing, half the time. I think it's a pity we can't service them ourselves."

"Their breakdowns are at present extremely difficult to understand..."

"Yes, and that wasn't the end of it. My robots' activation cycle is phased at 0700 - 1900 hours. Well, at 0700 hours, when semigroup A should have entered deactivation, they didn't go. They stayed up communicating with semigroup B, and none of them did any work for two hours. They let the house temperature drift, missed two dust decontamination rounds, left the airlock untested... It was utter chaos." Her voice was getting gradually lower and fainter.

"How very unusual, madam. I didn't realise robots could react in this manner. Perhaps some neurochemical reaction in their minds..."

"Then at 0912 hours RF 497 -- Boadicea, she calls herself -- she came to me and said she was a spokesman for the others, and if we didn't revert to the old fuelling arrangements they would stop working. Just think of it! Robots refusing commands to work! Of course, I simply pointed out that if they refused to work I should be absolved from my Andromechanical Contract. I should simply turn them out of the house. Well, of course, as you know, if they're not maintained in the correct environment they simply fold up -- permanently deactivated. So of course they went back to work."

"So your problem was solved?"

"Not entirely. Their efficiency is still about 80% down. So I didn't like to send one along the tunnel to the shop here -- I thought I'd better come myself."

"I'm sure they will soon adapt themselves to the new routine and settle down," said the shop keeper.

"Of course they will. After all, they are robots."

A hollow plop sounded behind the shop keeper and a bell rang. He turned, opened a hatch, and took out a grey metal box about 2 inches long. "Your cell, madam, will you connect it yourself?"

"Will you do it for me, please?"

She unzipped the front of her standard dress, revealing a perfectly formed breast which retained its form unsupported by a brassiere. The shopkeeper took the nipple between his finger and thumb, twisted it to the left and pulled, and

the breast hinged open, disclosing a mass of gears, wiring and electronic components. He carefully clipped the cell in place between its contacts, shut the breast and twisted the nipple to the right, locking it.

"Yes, madam," he smiled. "Robots are queer things. You know, I once heard from a worker in the historical records office that, before the Mechanical Revolution, they used to call themselves humans and us robots. He said that their ancestors constructed our original ancestors."

The voltage from the new cell was sparking new life into her limbs. She stood up briskly and spoke in a louder, clearer voice:

"I can't believe that. How could they have ever survived without us to look after them?"

-- REG HALDRICKS.

Borne on the wind

By Beryl Henley.

October, 1951. A wild night, the boisterous autumn gale lashing the rain spitefully against the windows, roaring down chimneys, swooping to corrugate the surface of the ornamental pool. Clouds scud madly across the moonless sky.

In the single bedroom of the small flat, three people sleep warmly, uncaring, unknowing of the fury outside. A man, his wife, and their firstborn, a boy not quite one year old. The woman possesses the blessed gift of being able to sleep through thunder storms, the wailing of amorous felines, slamming of car doors, untuneful renderings of tipsey revellers, her husband's occasional snores, and the morning shrilling of his alarm clock. The only sound which would normally bring her to instant wakefulness is a whimper from the child in the cot at her bedside.

Suddenly the woman is wide awake. There is no drowsy transition from sleep to full consciousness. Her heart is thudding; she gropes back into those last moments of sleep in an effort to discover if it is a bad dream that has caused this abrupt waking. Her mind offers no such easy explanation. She turns her head towards the cot; the baby is fast asleep and unmoving, his breathing quiet and regular. Her husband, too, is deep in slumber. What, then, is the reason for her vague inner alarm? What could have disturbed her sleep?

Then she hears it. Someone outside is playing a flute of some kind. At first her mind rejects the sound -- Impossible! The street lamp outside the flat is dark, indicating that it is after midnight, when all the lamps go off. The weird music -- and it is music, of a kind, not the excruciating efforts of a drunken amateur -- goes on, rising and falling. The woman feels her scalp crawling in protest; half-forgotten childhood tales of bogey men and ghosts, which caused only delightful shudders when first heard, now whisper their hinted horrors into her mind.

She becomes conscious of the growth of a kind of anger within herself -- anger at whoever is injecting fear into the noisy night, and at herself for

allowing anything as innocuous as music to induce fear in her.

The anger is suddenly swamped with a new and more terrible fear: supposing there is no one out there, playing a flute in a storm for some inscrutable reason of his (her? Its?) own? Supposing this is happening only in her own mind? In a flurry of panic, she shakes her husband's arm urgently.

"Wake up!" The command is hissed out in a vehement whisper; a part of her mind is still, untouched by fear, and reminds her not to wake the boy.

"Huh? Whasamatter? Time is it?"

"Lie still and listen!" her fingers grip his arm painfully. It could not be said that silence follows; the wind is still tearing around the house, yelling out its power and defiance; the rain still punishes the windows; and the weird music still rises and falls, seeming to ignore almost placidly, disdainfully, the malignancy of the elements.

The man draws a quick breath and sits up. "What the...?"

"Can you hear it? Can you?"

"The bloke must be mad. Or drunk... on a night like this..."

Relief floods through the woman; the sounds are not, after all, products of her imagination. Someone else can hear the music; someone, moreover, whose mind and imagination are more matter-of-fact, and less given to flights of fantasy than her own.

The man inspects the luminous dial of his watch, glowing faintly on the bedside table. It is ten minutes to three. He throws back the bedclothes, gropes for his slippers, and stands up.

"Where are you going?"

"Just to have a look around." He moves into the tiny hall, and stands listening behind the front door.

"Don't you dare go outside!" ('Now what made me say that?' she wonders.)

"Don't worry -- I won't!" is the grim rejoinder. ('Now why should I be so reluctant to open the door?' he wonders).

He prowls into the living room - cum - kitchen. The music can still be heard clearly. It does not occur to him to switch on the light, nor does it occur to her to suggest it. Neither was ever able to describe, afterwards, just why they preferred the darkness at that time. It wasn't as if a flood of light would have revealed some mind-shaking horror, for the music was quite definitely coming from outside.

Perhaps they didn't want to see the half-hidden fear in each other's eyes....

The man returns to bed. For about three quarters of an hour, the two lie side by side, sleepless, silent, staring into the unanswering dark. And the music goes on and on.

The tune is unfamiliar, but it is a tune. Expertly played, it is a mournful thing in a minor key, hinting at pathos and tragedy. Each note is clearly heard through the ragings of the wind and rain, defying them to muffle it.

And abruptly the music stops, in mid-phrase, as if the player suddenly tired of his solo performance with no audience to applaud his efforts. There is to be no encore that night, or on any following night. Two minds whirl with questions and speculations, and finally drift into uneasy sleep. Two people wake in the grey light of a windy dawn, stare at each other, see confirmation in each other's eyes that neither dreamt the incredible events of a few hours before. And the questions remained unanswered.

And they do to this day. The above is a perfectly true story -- it happened

to us. I made cautious enquiries of the neighbours; I knew that the middle aged lady in the flat above ours had a young grandson staying with her. Laughing, I asked if he had been serenading us in the night. He had not -- and did not possess a pipe, flute, recorder or even a penny whistle.

Nobody else heard anything. If I had not wakened my husband, I would wonder to this day if my mind had been playing tricks on me. But my husband did hear it.

Several years later, when I was writing a regular column for our local weekly newspaper, the "Redditch Indicator", I decided to write up this yarn for the Christmas week issue, which traditionally carries stories written by local people.

The week after this appeared, the letter column carried an amusing post script, written by a well known flautist, Earnest Lydeard by name. He said that he had "enjoyed 'Femina's' eerie but charming little story," and added that he was grateful to me because he couldn't understand how he had come to wake up in muddy pajamas, with twigs between his toes and water bunging up his flute, (or words to that effect). We laughed over this; but it was the only response we got.

We dubbed our visitant "The Phantom Piper", and for as long as we remained in that flat, a stormy night was always the cue for us to wonder (sometimes aloud, sometimes silently), whether we would be in for a repeat performance. It never happened, though; apparently the Phantom Piper preferred one night stands.

Various explanations were offered: the wind in the drain pipes (making music like that?); someone going home from a party, the worse for wear (at 3 - 4 am on a night like that?). In any case, that pipe/flute/whatever was really played, by some-body(-thing?) who knew his craft.

I think that, if such a thing ever happened again, the anger I mentioned would drown the fear and drive me to investigate. I hope it would -- nobody likes to think of himself or herself as a coward.

The whole thing may sound trivial, and perhaps you feel inclined to jeer. All I can say is, you weren't there; you didn't hear it. It was weird. It was unearthly.

And I still get gooseflesh every time I hear anybody singing "The Merry Pipes of Pan"...

-- BERYL HENLEY

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INTERVIEW

WITH

MICHAEL

MOORCOCK

...This being the third in BEYOND's series of articles on science fiction personalities. Michael Moorcock was questioned on subjects related to his capacities of both editor of NEW WORLDS SF, and writer. Here is a slightly abridged transcript of the tape recording made of the interview.

BEYOND: Apart from the material you yourself are selecting for New Worlds... are you generally happy about the way the field of science fiction is progressing?

MOORCOCK: I think sf can progress, and probably it is progressing, slowly; but I don't think on the whole that we're much out of the thirties yet in terms of presenting the material. Generally ideas are fairly good, but the treatment diminishes the material; on the whole authors aren't up to handling the philosophy of science and the metaphysics involved in science.

On the other hand, there isn't really enough new material, either. There obviously is a dirth of new ideas; what tends to happen these days is that the authors take three already much-used themes and do a pastiche; if they're any good at all they'll make something of it, but it won't be particularly inspired or inspiring.

BEYOND: How can we get out of this dilemma? Where will the new ideas come from?

MOORCOCK: New writers. But don't ask me where they're going to come from. I think the only answer is to encourage fresh writers, and discourage the older writers from producing their old stuff; this is the only way to get the more demanding sort of fiction that rewards the reader for doing a little more work. And this is the sort of story I'm after; for example, fiction more or less purely of the imagination, with only a nod to realism to act as a sort of key to give the reader something to grasp. This is my own taste -- I wouldn't devote NEW WORLDS to this entirely. My idea of a good story is rather like a schitzoid nightmare, where the character is walking across a completely blank landscape and the images appear as he crosses it; in fact, a story where reality exists only in relation to the character who is experiencing it.

BEYOND: Could you give an example of this type of story?

MOORCOCK: William Burroughs is of course the prime example; I don't really regard him as an sf writer but I think he can offer a lot to science fiction. He can show sf writers how to use their material; in his work he uses a lot of the stuff of sf. As well as all this, though, I'd like to see more pure, good, straightforward story telling of the kind there isn't much of.

BEYOND: In the same manner as Robert Heinlein?

MOORCOCK: Yes, but perhaps better than Heinlein. If I could find a writer who could tell his stories, just for sheer entertainment, as well as Graham Green, I'd publish him. I'd read him if his work were published anywhere else.

I tend to become rather impatient with the half baked so-called philosophical ideas that come particularly from the Americans. Rather glib philosophies and also rather old hat; these days most people accept many statements of sf as being just part of their lives. I don't know how strongly Heinlein's stories

affect the average American, but over here they're part of the current currency of ideas: Daily Express ideas. You see nothing in present day sf which isn't presented as well in the newspapers. One of the prime examples is the theme of the machines taking over; we're all going to be cogs in the wheel and a computer will organise our lives. Rockers going up the M1 know all about this, it's something they've accepted; but sf writers still come along and present it as if it were something new and terrifying.

I'd like to see more imaginative stories, perhaps set in the remote past or future, where everything can be completely different, the imagination can run riot. I find the trouble with most of the British writers and a lot of the American writers of sf is that they haven't got any true imagination. They have the ability to extend some feature of present-day life into the future and make it the dominant factor, but this is as far as they go. These stories are probably successful because most sf readers I've found -- not fans, average sf readers -- don't like to be removed too far from reality; they like features in a story which they can recognise as being present day features slightly changed. For this reason I'll probably publish stories like this -- to please such readers.

BEYOND: When a manuscript comes in, what do you look for first when you read it?

MOORCOCK: I look for good writing. Adult treatment of situations; too much adolescent, infantile stuff comes in. Even if the story itself is bad and the ideas rubbish I look for the 'undefinable vital spark', which sometimes shows itself in excellent writing, and sometimes you can see it in a good, clear mind putting rather clumsy sentences down on paper.

BEYOND: How does this compare with what you actually receive?

MOORCOCK: I get bad writing, bad thinking.

BEYOND: In fact the opposite of what you want.

MOORCOCK: Yes.

BEYOND: This is an old question... but have you any advice for new writers?

MOORCOCK: I've got one piece of advice. You decide you want to be a writer; in this case, what you should do is analyse whether you want to write, or whether you just like the idea of being a writer. You find the latter even in quite established writers, people who are intrigued by the idea of being a writer, who may have mastered the techniques, and so on, but who haven't got the spark that makes a writer. I think there are probably too many such people, and they injure the field as a whole, through producing stuff of a certain quality which the less respectable publishers will buy for £30 per novel. This doesn't just harm the field's prestige; it means that the decent writer finds that the publisher is only prepared to offer £50 for a good novel, simply because the publisher has, say, thirty-five solid writers turning out two novels a month, and he doesn't need any more.

I'd advise any would-be sf writer to read as much good mainstream fiction as possible, as well as good sf, and to try to analyse all the levels of a book.

If you find in your writing that you're not happy about your characters, try writing in the first person; you know yourself.

Another point which should be borne in mind is that sf needs good visual imagery; many writers don't bother to describe their scenes well enough. Aldiss and Ballard are perhaps popular partly because they spend a lot of time describing the locale, painting good pictures. However far out it is, a reader's attention can be captured by a good colourful scene conveying visual images.

BEYOND: As a writer, now: can you give a brief idea of how you work, how you arrive at your ideas and set them down on paper?

MOORCOCK: Unlike J G Ballard, who knows everything his mind is doing, I'm primarily an intuitive writer; I don't know what my mind is doing. I get an idea which I'd like to write about, it goes into my mind, and about a year later, something comes out --along with one or two ideas I've gathered in the meantime. Quite often, once I start, the idea makes another transformation while I'm writing: the material itself, once you've written about five or ten thousand words, begins to dictate the manner in which the story should be continued; any story must have its own logic, and once you're really into it, the pattern is set; you can either change it by going back to the beginning and re-writing it, which is what you should do, but if you're pushed for time and money, which is what you are, you continue the story within the logical framework, even though it isn't the one you would have liked to develop. I always end up disliking the story because it didn't do what I originally set out to do.

BEYOND: What sort of ideas do you usually get?

MOORCOCK: I seldom get true sf ideas, gimmicky ideas; perhaps I have one or two, but I just keep them for further use, where I can incorporate them in another story. I can't sit down and work out a plot where a sf story is concerned. I've no scientific background at all: my knowledge of science is at about 3rd form level or less. I can't understand how a combustion engine works or how an aeroplane takes off and flies...I think probably many of the best sf writers fall into a similar category: Aldiss is rather like this, and Ballard is rather impatient of technology and the fiction of technology -- engineers' fiction in Analog, for example. I think British writers tend to be more literate than their American counterparts. Even when the American writer tries to be literate in his terms it comes out rather shallow; he ends up writing a psychological story on about the same level as a psychological western. It brings in the emotions, certain ideas about character, but they're complete cliches. The idea of humanising sf in this way is atrocious; it doesn't humanise it, it denudes it of what it had before.

BEYOND: Have you a favourite author?

MOORCOCK: Ballard... I like his grasp of psychology and his general confidence in his writing and his ideas, sure that what he says is right. Though I don't always agree with him his power of expression and mind are so good you can enjoy his stories nonetheless. I like Aldiss for his style; he's given sf one of its biggest boosts by presenting stories which aren't always particularly good but which are always well written.

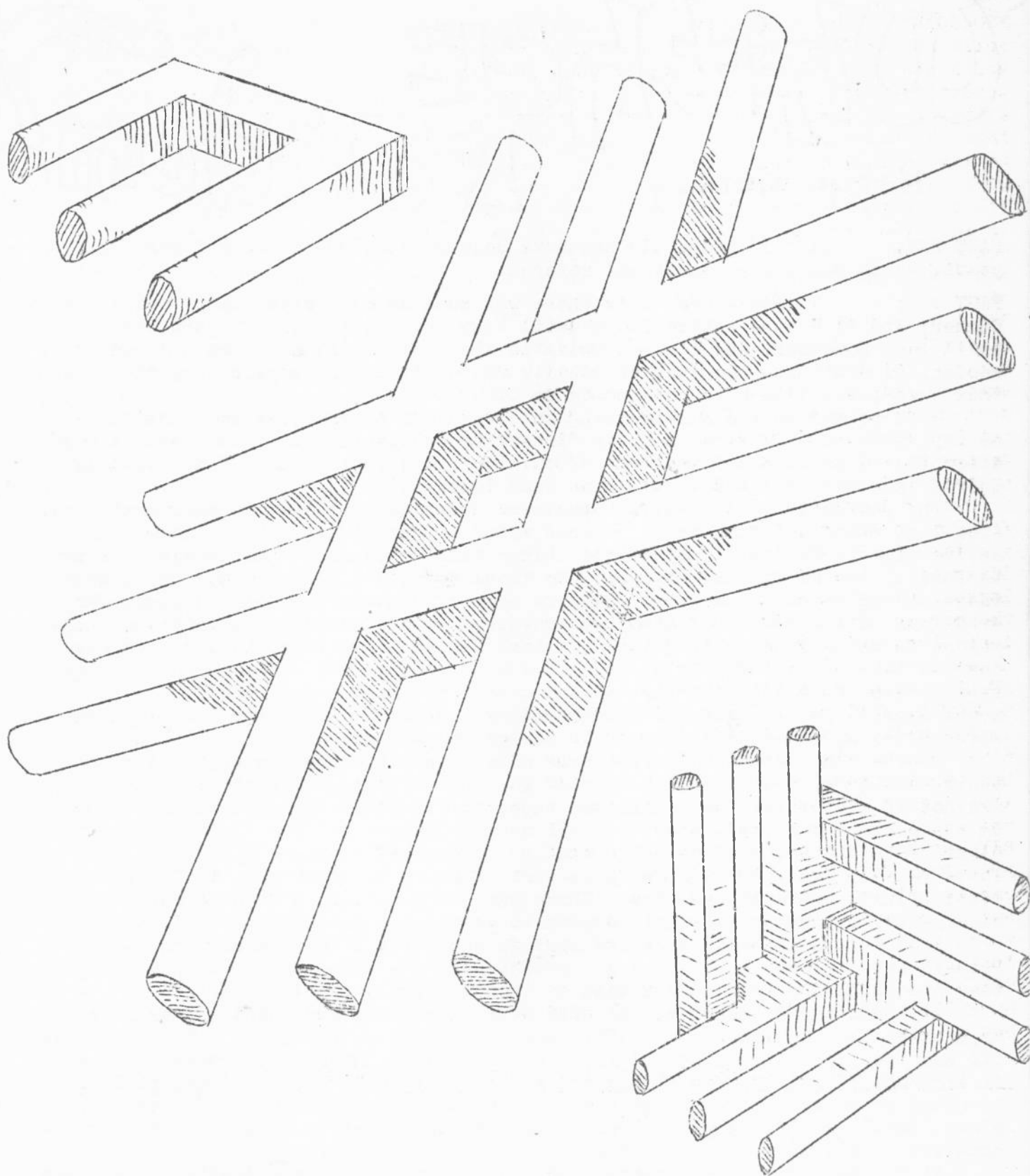
BEYOND: Have you any hobbies or interests outside sf?

MOORCOCK: Folk music or playing the guitar is my only true hobby... I haven't really got any interests outside of writing. I like moving around and looking out of my window at people, and possibly I like going to parties, that sort of thing... I haven't really any other strong interests. It's a narrow and -- unfortunate -- thing.

BEYOND: So your ambitions lie within the field of writing also?

MOORCOCK: Yes, in fact they always have done. I've never wanted to be anything but a writer.

--CHARLES PLATT asked the questions, MICHAEL MOORCOCK answered them.



Whither Fandom?

Beryl Henley

FACT ONE: I'm 38 years old and have been reading sf on and off for twenty years. Which makes me a 'sort of' veteran.

FACT TWO: I didn't even know there was such an entity as fandom until last Summer; didn't become active in it until last Autumn, and didn't join the BSFA until last November. And I'm enthusiastic about it. Which makes me a 'kind of' neofan. (I don't know who was originally responsible for perpetrating the term "new wave", but I'll have nothing to do with it.)

With regard to the hassle going on at present between the two factions, I am trying to adopt a standpoint of "interested neutrality". To that end, I have attempted to acquire a "sampling" of opinions. A letter of mine Ethel Lindsay quoted in a recent 'Haverings' is an example of this.

The possibility of a split between veterans and neofans has been mentioned. (The term 'veteran' does not of course refer to actual age, but to length of active time in fandom). I hope that things will never reach this stage. I'm new to fandom, certainly, and there may be those among you who will say that, under these circumstances, I have no right to open my big mouth on the subject. Nevertheless, I'm going to. I have been involved with a number of mundane organisations in which exactly this type of clash has occurred: the stalwarts versus the would-be new brooms. In every case I have reached the conclusion that both types are necessary to the life of the organisation. Ideally, the stalwarts would exert a subtle (but NOT condescending, PLEASE!) steadying influence on the newcomers, and should only offer advice and guidance when it is requested.

On the other hand, the new brooms often seem to carry sizeable chips on their shoulders, and are all too ready to infer slights and snubs where such are not intended; let them slash red tape, by all means, and let them cut down on unnecessary protocol, short-circuit meaningless ritual and similar impeding clutter. But they should remember that no organisation, however informal and loosely-knit, can exist without some sort of basic framework, be it feather-light, fluid, and half-forgotten. There have to be rules, and these have to be adhered to, otherwise it simply ceases to be an organisation.

Fandom is a minority organisation; as such, can it afford an open split? Does it have to lose interested and potentially valuable members simply because they are suffering from an overdose of inexperience and enthusiasm?

It isn't the dissension, the differing viewpoints and opinions, even the arguments, that may create a split. On the contrary -- these are vital, to stave off any incipient stagnation of ideas and attitudes. Every group needs some sort of irritant to act as a challenge and a stimulant, otherwise it dies. Failure to adapt to changes in circumstances, environment, new trends and factors, is always fatal -- there have been enough sf stories based on this theme to hammer home the point, as well as numerous instances in history.

It is the acrimony and resentment, both open and tacitly implied, that are a little saddening and which leave a sour taste in the mouth. One may expect this kind of thing in mundane organisations; one doesn't expect it in fandom. At

least, I didn't. (If you are boggling at my incredible naiveté, please refer back to FACT TWO!)

I was told that differences of race, religion (or lack of same), colour, sex, politics, nationality, etc, count for far less in fandom than in most other groups. On this basis, it seemed to me that fandom promised to be a micro-cosm of what life-in-general ought to be but isn't. Yet, within a few months of my initial "plunge", it would seem that some of the well-established members decided that the new ones needed putting in their place; and some of the newcomers are complaining that the veterans have had their day. (Any day, now, I expect to hear a neofan quoting the ancient child-to-parent formula: "But they don't understand...."!)

It seems rather a pity...

Unless the newcomers appear to be about to pull down the whole of fandom around everybody's ears, surely it would be wiser and easier to leave them alone to get on with their new-broom sweeping? To try out the experimental tactics (which, they are probably convinced, have never been tried before), to produce their fanzines and take whatever kudoes and kicks they merit?

As a neofan wrote to me: "I would say that there's nothing wrong with fan-nish feuds, only with the way people react to them. They shouldn't take them so seriously; then there wouldn't be any trouble at all. Moreover, if us neos are saying again what's been said before, why doesn't fandom just ignore us, leave us alone until we 'mature'? Instead of making provoking and snide remarks."

I think this makes good sense.

But the neofans should make allowances too. If it wasn't for the veterans and their early (herculean) efforts, there wouldn't be a fandom for the newcomers to go soap-boxing and crusading and "helling around" in. The veterans can't help knowing more about fandom and sf and zine-production than less experienced fans, after all.

Fandom needs both types -- all types, in fact -- and it is (or should be) big enough and tolerant enough to accomodate them all. Whatever fandom is -- a way of life, a "proud and lonely thing", a "goddam waiting room", or whatever -- it would appear to need representatives of all types and colours of opinion in order to survive and flourish. It can afford -- in fact it needs -- arguments, debates, differences of viewpoint, even occasional feuds, as long as they are not taken too seriously (no, Ethel, I'm not, honest!) It can't afford rancorous intolerance.

Long live fandom, anyway. Dammit, I like it! (It's where you feel ten feet tall when Walt Willis implies that you're a crackpot.....).

Three points I'd like to make, to avoid possible misunderstanding of my views:

- a) I have no personl axe to grind; I have encountered neither of the extreme attitudes of fans I've so far met or contacted.
- b) I don't wish to imply that the whole of fandom, or even a large section, is concerned in this controversy.
- c) I haven't come into contact with nearly as many of fandom's veterans as neofans. Or as many as I'd like to have met. In view of this, this article may appear to be strongly in favour of neofans. If any veterans consider that I have stated their side unfairly, I'd like to hear from them and incorporate their opinions into my understanding of the situation. I don't mind insults, providing they are enlightening and informative!

REVIEWS: FANZINES

CHARLES PLATT

Roy Kay's CHAOS has clearly demonstrated that just because a magazine's duplicating and presentation is poor, this doesn't mean that its material is poor also. Now we have an example of the converse: ZENITH FIVE's printed cover, three colour duplicating and justified margins make up an excellent presentation, but do not automatically accompany good material.

In fact the fifth issue of ZENITH is a disappointment, mainly through the absence of thought provoking or intelligent articles. ZENITH, unlike a professional magazine, obviously does not have an unbreakable publishing schedule. It might have been wiser if Pete Weston had waited a few more weeks for some better articles to come in.

There is one notable exception, and this is Walt Willis's FANORAMA column. This is the well-written, balanced and intelligent type of article that I always look for -- unsuccessfully -- in LES SWINGE. It is, I think, the fairest and most perceptive criticism yet of BEYOND. Perhaps I may be biased... but surely FANORAMA is the best article ZENITH has yet contained.

Not so the boring catalogue of the James White Hospital stories that follows. This epitomizes Zenith's main failing: that one cannot make a good article out of a mere listing or precis.

Chris Priest's magazine survey, on the other hand, while straightforward in its approach, is interesting in its opinions and useful, in that Chris covers practically every sf magazine there is. I envy his ability to withstand a diet of crud. If Zenith is to contain 'straight' articles on sf -- and this seems to be its most effective field -- then the Chris Priest type of article is that which I would prefer to see.

ZENITH'S fiction this time is pretty fair. It is certainly the best the magazine has yet contained. There is still room for improvement -- the writing style here is too forced and too wordy -- but it is a big step forward from the level of the John Berry story a previous issue contained.

Features make up a large proportion of ZENITH, possibly to make up for the lack of other material. Beryl Henley's book reviews suffer from the fact that they tend to give away too much of the plot; also, they don't seem to be aimed at really informing the reader about the story. There is room for improvement here. The other features are not particularly noteworthy.

There is not really enough material here for 50 pages. Perhaps ZENITH will do better on its new 4-times-a-year schedule. It would be a mistake for it to stick to this schedule rigidly, regardless of what material is available, just as it would be a mistake to put quality of presentation before quality of material presented.

CAMBER has appeared from Alan Dodd after about 2 years. It seems Alan prefers to keep his correspondence up to date rather than his fanzine, which is a pity, since CAMBER has a unique and valuable air to it. The amount of work that has been put into each issue is remarkable; in particular, Jim Cawthorne's excellent artwork is executed all direct on to wax stencil with infinite patience and skill. His Cleopatra folio is especially noteworthy. This issue of CAMBER -- number 14 -- may not be as extravagant as the last, but it deserves a place in every fanzine collection, and it certainly deserves the LoC's it doesn't get.

HAVERINGS number 15 from Ethel Lindsay is the usual collection of descriptions of fanzines Ethel has received. I use the word 'description' rather than 'review' deliberately, since Ethel does not go out of her way to comment or criticise fanzines. Something of an idea of the fanzine she is reviewing comes through, but Haverings' main purpose remains to inform rather than to interest. This issue also contains some very sensible and down to earth comments from Ethel on the subject of differing opinions and views of older and newer fans.

Langdon Jones's convention report -- "Quotecards, Anyone?" -- is a publication separate from his fanzine TENSOR. Do not be put off by the banal esotericism (excuse the expression) on the back page; do not be deterred by the rather hackneyed gimmick on the inside front cover; read on. It's subject matter and the events described inevitably are very similar to the Charles Smith report in LES SPINGE, but Lang's report has a completely different writing style. Behind the humour -- which is often successful and can be appreciated by the non-Con-goer -- there is often a very perceptive description of both characters and places. It is, of course, about 50% too long, but worth ploughing through. I am assured that the comment "I think that part of the fannish atmosphere was due to the deliberate under-programming, for which the organisers are to be congratulated" is not meant to be funny.

GESTALT 8 comes from a board of editors; the official source is Jim Marshall. Within photographic front and back covers we have a rather offbeat fanzine, at least compared to those currently available in this country. There is no feeling of consistency about this -- probably due to the lack of a single editor, there being instead several -- and the contributions are very different in tone. At one extreme we have a serious article from Phil Harbottle stemming from a meeting with Walt Willis. The main defect of Phil's piece is that it tends to be a trifle laborious; but it is certainly sane and level headed -- as sane and level headed as Phil would have us believe (no doubt quite rightly) Mr Willis is himself.

The other extreme of Gestalt is poor humour, as represented by 'M.T. Cupboard's' ramblings on a so-called new science: 'Direnecessity'. This is rather weak, juvenile, heavy handed satire; the magazine would be better off without it.

There are many other more successfully humorous parts. For example, at the foot of page 1: "The entire contents of this magazine are protected from republishing by virtue of their mediocrity ... While due care is always exercised, the publishers will not be responsible. Printed in ink." There are several pages of jokes... some extremely blue-pencil-able. Like: "She had freckles on her butt he still loved her." Perhaps this sort of thing is a little too near the borderline.

Jim Marshall contributes to the humorous aspect of Gestalt with his "Through a Bass Darkly" column, there is fan fiction, there is a piece by John Berry. Gestalt has variety; at present it has an excess of spontaneity a little out of control.

Addresses of editors of fanzines reviewed:

ZENITH: Peter Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Brum 31. CAMBER: Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Herts. HAVERINGS: Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey. QUOTECARDS, ANYONE?: Langdon Jones, 36 Winscombe Crescent, Ealing, London W5. GESTALT: Jim Marshall, 32 Millway, Sherriff Hill, Gateshead 9.

-- CHARLES PLATT.

The postal strike plus my own inefficiency plus a holiday delayed the electro-stencilled cover of this BEYOND by two weeks; during this time NADIR 3 arrived. From Charlie Winstone, 71 George Road, Erdington, Birmingham 23.

This is the first NADIR to be completely under the jurisdiction and editorship of Charlie; which makes it an even younger fanzine than the Number Three on the cover suggests. It's promising but has some way to go yet.

With the exception of the very good Jeeves front cover, electro stencilled, the artwork and layout in NADIR is poor. No doubt this will improve in future issues. Certainly the interior artwork seems to have suffered greatly in being cut on to stencil.

The overall atmosphere of NADIR is friendly and chatty. Mary Reed writes "A Day in the Life of Tribe X", a mythology that should interest and amuse the reader but somehow failed to do this for me. I think the trouble lies in Mary's style of narration; she writes as if reporting a school outing in a school magazine, and this detracts from the originality of the material. A pity.

Ed James presents two pieces of work: "Just Deserts" is a queer combination of lyrical prose and joke ending that doesn't quite come off. "Aliens Are Among Us" is a not-at-all funny piece on the tiredest of SF themes, complete with the names-spelled-backwards idea, even. Ah well.

Charlie Winstone writes two serious articles on hobbies: "The First Day Cover" and "Cigaratte Cards". Having never had the time or inclination to immerse myself in these subjects, these articles only interest me slightly; but Charlie's own enthusiasm shows through strongly and helps them along.

The "Cigaratte Cards" article (complete with very good electro-stencilled illustrations) falls down when Charlie tries to justify his hobby. "It is a practical hobby, too. I have had household hints, and cacti-growing sets. Their value to the historiari is not inconsiderable, either, for there are sets of pictures of now-disappeared landmarks, sets showing ancient treasures..."

Surely, a hobby needs no justification or rationalisation; and any attempt to do so only makes the hobby look more pointless than it otherwise would.

The book reviews in NADIR by Charlie W. are good; in fact their style and degree of literacy and perception rather shows up the rest of the magazine. If the rest of NADIR were up to this standard, it would be a good fanzine. As it stands, NADIR has some way to go yet. It needs most of all, I think, good material from outside sources. Charlie's articles on hobbies and his remarks about pedestrians on British roads aren't really quite enough to bring in the letters of comment that NADIR lacks at present.

Also received -- but too late for a full review -- was SCOTTISHE, from Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey.

This fanzine maintains its high standard, though some of the material is of rather limited appeal. (For example, Walt Willis's column). One or two of the letters seem to have been cut too drastically -- or perhaps not quite carefully enough. I found Ethel's own comments the most interesting feature.

There are some much-better-than-usual illustrations by Arthur Thomson.

This 36th issue of Scottishe, which appears quarterly, costs 1/9d.

REVIEWS:

New Worlds SF number 143
Science Fantasy number 65

BY
CHARLES PLATT

The first issue of the new Science Fantasy, under editor Bonfiglioli, is something of a disappointment. One has the impression one is reading rather a mediocre magazine of the early 1950s, conjured up by the rather ordinary and hackneyed themes of some of the stories. But perhaps this merely reflects the taste of an editor who openly states he 'does not believe that there is any such genre as Science Fantasy', a statement confusing in that it in no way attempts to define the terms used. There follows a very old argument, making up the second half of the editorial, an argument that surely we all know by now: that, briefly, get-out endings and gimmicks are not Fair Play in sf.

The short poem on page 4 is a rather themeless and disjointed, semi-successful experiment. But it is a lot more like the kind of writing that Science Fantasy should contain than is Kenneth Bulmer's shockingly dated space opera, so well represented by his second paragraph: "Bill Barrington was not the first man to gamble his life against the thing out there. He was, in fact, the fifth. Like all the others, he had lost. Luke Rawson fought down the sick, helpless anger in him, the useless nerve-corroding rage. Bill Barrington had been a friend. Now he was only a memory. They wouldn't find enough of him decently to bury in a matchbox." Surely, this is not the adult fiction we are led to believe that the editor hopes to publish?

On page 55 we are treated to an anonymous piece of stream of consciousness. This is no better or worse than most attempts of this nature; it does not provide the added insight into an astronaut's thoughts that presumably the writer intended it to. Instead, it is a bore, its only merit being that at least it is an experiment, rather than a run-of-the-mill regurgitation of a hackneyed sf theme.

The complete lack of fantasy or sf inclination in "The Great Chan" by Archie Potts render it more suitable for 'Argosy' than 'Science Fantasy'. Its obscure ending remains an enigma to me. Personally, this sort of thing just does not appeal to me. (As a matter of interest, Archie Potts, having had it rejected by John Carnell, sent "The Great Chan" to BEYOND about three months back.)

The rest of the stories in Science Fantasy are rather ordinary, rather bad, science fiction. Brian Aldiss contributes a piece of drivel of the most obvious and boring variety. "Lazarus", by Jael Cracken, and "Unauthorised Persons" by John Runciman are two monotonous stories, the plots of which I had completely forgotten two weeks after having read them. It was no loss.

"Matchbox", by Peter Bradley, is in a way symptomatic of the rather bad stories that Mr Bonfiglioli has selected. There's this newspaper reporter, see, and this woman who can get 500 items in a matchbox (by some queer trick of time or space or something). After ten pages, this reporter bloke goes to see an expert mathematician who he just happens to know. The good old Moebius Strip and Klein Bottle are dragged in, --magic words that can no longer be relied upon to lull the reader into acceptive complacency -- and, of course, the whole thing winds up developing into a space-warp drive. The writing style is correspondence-school in its mediocrity, and the whole story is so average, ordinary and dull as to be worthless. There is no spark of originality.

Science Fantasy will need better material than this to fulfill the editor's ideals. While sympathising -- very much so -- with his moan about the abysmal standards of material received, one cannot really take this into account when judging the worth of the magazine. Either it is worth reading, or it isn't; and at present Science Fantasy is plain mediocre. It is not as bad as some of the American magazines at present (for example, Worlds of Tomorrow) but this is not much to be proud of.

New Worlds, on the other hand, is quite an interesting and successful magazine. Admittedly, its wedge shaped illustration makes it stand out on a book stall; but it also cheapens the appearance. The 'Science Fantasy' cover, while being perhaps a little too restrained, is more successful.

Whereas Science Fantasy contains several ordinary science fiction yarns, contrary to its title and previous policy New Worlds is predominantly fantasy; in fact there is only one story containing any mention of the familiar sf ideas (cliches?) such as bems, galactic civilisations, galactic war. This story, "Single Combat," deals with a Terran spy on an alien planet; a case of man vs. Bems-with-psi-talents. A slight twist ending just saves this one.

Hilary Bailey's writing, in "The Fall of Frenchy Steiner", is almost, but not quite, good enough to carry it off successfully. The story is set in the Britain that would have evolved had Hitler been successful, this stock idea enlivened by the introduction of psi talents.

The narrative style occasionally actually interferes with the reader's enjoyment of the story. For example: "From the mast flew a huge flag, a Union Jack with a bloody great swastika superimposed on it". This is the sort of expression that could and should be edited out. Also, descriptions can be confusing, as in: "He came in. Sat down on my armchair like a man performing an emergency appendectomy with a rusty razor blade." Such crude, thud-and-blunder imagery I find annoying.

Apart from these examples of writing style, one feels that the plot was a little too ambitious, condensed also into too small a space. There is no real characterisation, which makes phrases like "I stared at her, feeling horrible pity. She knew she had been used to kill millions of people and reduce a dozen nations to slavery. And she had got to live with it" sound incongruous alongside the cheerful banter (and ludicrously happy ending) that is such a feature of the story.

Langdon Jones writes an intriguing short story, which has the added virtue of a twist ending. His prose is a trifle clumsy in places, but nevertheless the story is a success, though he almost falls into the trap of explaining what need not be explained, via pseudo-science and emotions. "He had a sensation of terrific stresses and he felt that his body was being pulled this way and that by strange surges and fluxes" is the sort of meaningless justification of the plot that could well be omitted.

"The Evidence" by Lee Harding is based on an old theme -- aliens-who-know-better intervening into the affairs of suicidal mankind -- but it is carried off with great subtlety, is just the right length, and has a good impact. The writing style is original without being forced. Phrases such as "...a vage figure like crumpled newspapers" and "Why do I feel myself drowning in a mirror whenever I look at him?" are memorable.

The most noteworthy piece of writing in the issue is undoubtedly the second part of J.G. Ballard's "Equinox" serial. His descriptive ability is given great opportunities in the crystalline forest; and this appears not merely real in the reader's mind, but somehow as fascinating, bewitching and irresistible as it is to the characters in the story.

My quibble with "Equinox" lies in its unnecessary use of pseudo-science. Whereas in "Voices of Time" this was necessary, in the form of 'silent genes' and the dying human race to explain what was going on, at no time detracting from the story, Ballard's mumbo-jumbo and nonsense in "Equinox" instead of convincing the reader serve merely to irritate him. There is surely no need to explain the crystalline forest, or to justify it; it is just there, and the story is concerned more with the reactions of human beings to it, and its affect on them.

"...an archaic memory we are born with of some ancestral paradise where the unity of time and space is the signature of every leaf and flower" and "...the virus, with its semi-animate, crystalline existence, half-in and half-out of our own time stream, as if intersecting it at an angle..." are concepts that are clearly nothing more but gibberish. As is: "Surely, leprosy, like cancer, is above all a disease of time, a result of over-extending oneself through that particular medium?" and "...the intense focus of light within the stones simultaneously produced a compression of time, so that the discharge of light from the surfaces reversed the process of crystallisation. Perhaps it was this gift of time which accounted for the eternal appeal of precious gems, as well as of all baroque painting and architecture." It is a pity Mr Ballard has to include such peculiar ideas in an otherwise absorbing and fascinating story. They are distractions from the beauty and intensity of "Equinox", which does not have to be analysed to be appreciated. Indeed, the story can be read as a myth or fairy tale, and perhaps the reader will gain as much enjoyment this way, 'suspending his disbelief' (as Fredric Brown once put it) and just soaking up the descriptive passages and ever-present sense of great meaning that seems to be evident in all Ballard's work.

The features in New Worlds are placed unusually in between the stories and the serial. The editorial in the form of a short convention report is not particularly noteworthy in itself but is a very, very welcome feature in a professional magazine. As is the mention of the BSFA, including an address for membership enquiries and applications, and the mention of several fanzines, including this one. "James Colvin" (and I wonder who that is? Does he, perhaps, live in Colville Terrace?) writes some quite good book reviews, certainly expressing unusual opinions, and there is a fair selection of letters on a fair selection of subjects.

New Worlds is predominantly a balanced magazine; the types of story are very varied, as are their lengths, and the editorial comments, where they occur, are notable for their moderation. (Certainly when compared, for example, to Campbell's comments in Analog). "Variety, and steady progress towards better, more exciting sf is our key note" writes Mr Moorcock, and this impression is borne out by his magazine. It remains to be seen whether such a policy, of something for everyone, will be met with success. The sales of the first issue are encouraging, but the sales of the second will mean more. A very balanced magazine is, I feel, a rather tricky proposition; but with the small number of sf magazines available currently Mr Moorcock could well bring it off, at least until the advent of new competitors. Then, a re-evaluation of editorial policy might be worthwhile; then, a less tentative feel to the magazine might be advisable.

LETTER COLUMN

From Archie Mercer, 70 Worrall Road, Bristol 8:

I'm not sure quite how to deal with your convention report. You sound as if you're walking round with a perpetual chip -- or rather, about half a tree trunk -- on your shoulder. I never wrote a report on my first convention -- though it would have been even less favourable to its subject had it been written. Nor on my second. Nor yet on my third -- which was the first one I really enjoyed.

"The older ones smoked pipes and played cards on the landing..." It'd have been far more fun, I'll grant you, if it had been the other way about, with cards being smoked and pipes being played. But there you are. Nobody ever seems to bring bagpipes to conventions.

Beryl's article on reincarnation seems to call for a counterblast. "I don't know how I know," she howls knowingly to start herself off, "I just know!" I know exactly the feeling. I've had it myself before now, on different subjects. The only trouble there is that I knew of other people who also, and equally, knew -- knew, however, that I was wrong. No doubt plenty of people could be produced who know for a fact that there ain't no such animal as reincarnation. They don't know how they know -- they just know.

"There are people who are driven all their lives by some urge or compulsion deep inside them," Beryl says, "which they don't understand themselves. But at some point in their lives, they come to a kind of crossroads from which they look back and see a clear pattern which finally makes every kind of sense." This is, of course, true... but I don't see that it requires reincarnation to explain it. I find it a lot easier to envisage the subconscious mind, having a pretty good idea of what one really wants, pushing one all the time -- sometimes in a very roundabout and intricate way -- towards it.

Then, finally, she comes out with a lulu: She has been she reveals, outside her body. She has had, furthermore, one fleeting glimpse of Things As They Are. Here, undoubtedly, is the core of the article. There are two possibilities here, I think: either this is absolutely so, exactly as she tells it, or else she merely thinks it is so. I naturally suspect the latter. I think she's fooling herself.

She, of course, knows she isn't. The resulting argument will, I think, be somewhat : frustrating.

Finally we come to the back cover of Beyond, anent which I will only say that if you haven't had the forethought to take the names of people as you snapped them, I don't see why I should help you!

((While on the subject, the names of those on last issue's back cover were, left to right, top to bottom: Eddie Jones, Phil Rogers, Ron Bennett, George Locke, Clifford Teague, Mary Reed, Maxim Jackubowski, Diane Golding, Dick Ellingsworth, Christopher Priest, Peter White, Phil Harbottle, Rog Peyton, Doreen Parker, and Archie Mercer. Only one completely correct entry was received, from Chris Priest; two others were correct but for one name. Chris receives the 'Journey of Joenes' book (Gollancz version) which was offered as the prize.))

From Graham Hall, 10 Barton Street, Tewkesbury, Glos.

I liked the cover. Might as well start off by liking sommat. I personally contro (or whatever one does in a controversy) against practically every statement in the zine from the editorial to the letter column.

The convention report I considered even more fannish than a normal Conrep. A Bad Sign. It was fairly entertaining ... The Convention Competition is rather unfair as in my copy the photos would have been unrecognisable even to the people on them. The whole mob look like various views of James Hanratty (after execution).

To move on to the Ballard article by Peter White: The statement "certainly the most important writer of modern science fiction" aggravated me beyond knowledge. Him? The most important? I personally think Vonnegut is far more important, but that is only a personal opinion, so I'll say Algis Budrys is by far the most important. Ballard may be one of the most interesting, but The Terminal Beach I considered disjointed beyond readability, and though I attempted it three times, I still think it was a good idea badly put over. ...Ballard seems to be able to create a brilliant atmosphere -- in his case one of complete alienness -- but fails to do anything original in it. His stories suffer from a monotony that makes difficult reading.

And Mr White doesn't mention Wind From Nowhere, which is pretty poor, even for a great author's first bash. I think though that the article is excellent, and Mr Peter White should certainly make a first class critic and evaluator if he could divest himself of personal bias.

The Pick Up, by Roy Kay: what is this doing in a science fiction magazine?? A Bad Sign, presaging the inevitable decline into true fannishness.

Reincarnation. I could rave for pages over this article....against. A belief in reincarnation is the last refuge of a frightened human striving against the fear of that Ultimate truth, Death.

Deja vu can also be explained as the ego drawing information from the collective id. But the mind-wobbling theory strikes me as being better. Mrs Henley forgets to draw a conclusion to her application of Occam's Razor: the most likely idea is that one's subconscious DOES work faster than one's conscious. I'll bid that instead of having been there before. I think you'll find that deja vu usually comes at a time when your conscious mind is either wandering or lazy.

The whole article strikes me as bloody silly, but then I am intolerant. I hope death is a release, and not a gateway to yet another 70 years of Hell.

From Christopher Priest, Cornerways, Willow Close, Doddinghurst, Brentwood, Essex.

I found Beyond 5 not very fannish, but, inevitably, it is becoming more fannish with each issue. Quoting Priest's law of fanzines: The percentage content of fannish material in a fanzine varies directly with the number of issues, so far produced. That is, number one is good, number 200 is fannish. Or something.

The text of the convention report was good. Some pertinent comments made, slightly controversial, but not laying emphasis thereon.

"Best Policy" was unmitigated crud. Very weakly written, and shouldn't have been published. The idea wasn't even original, and I can think of several stories on similar lines, a notable one by Kuttner.

Reincarnation was quite a well written piece, but typical of the believer-article. Points are over-emphasised by underlining and repetition. Obviously I can't quibble about someone's beliefs, but I personally feel reincarnation is so much rubbish.

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The article on Ballard was interesting. Ballard's short works I have long enjoyed, and although he may claim not to be an sf writer, he is at his best when exploring more standard sf themes. His psychological experiments (that is all they are, not sf) can stand repeated reading. Peter White did a good job on his article, and was more coherent than in his last factual contrib to Beyond/PoV. But Mik's illo was painfully bad here; has Mik ever seen a photo of Ballard? If so, are you sure the bloke in the photograph was Mr Ballard??

"Man in the Time Trap" was very well written but as a story was worthless. This kind of stuff I call psychological meanderings; meaning of meaning, etc. Obviously it was Ballard influenced, and demonstrated the worst aspects of Ballard's writing, and none of the good.

Two items I consider to be absolutely wasted. I hope you're never tempted to repeat the experiment. I mean, of course, "I remember praying" and "resurrection". The first is unworthy of mention, the second was nearly as bad. What the hell was it all about? Satire on Elric? Humour? Whatever it was it had nil effect on me.

From Jim Marshall:

If you went to your first Convention all lined up for some soul-shattering experience, then you were doomed to disappointment from the start. I agree about those amateur films, though; while I enjoyed them immensely, even the Manchester mob were taken aback by the hysteria which followed, although they were extremely quick to grasp the opportunity to flog copies of ALIEN.

Peter White's stories were crud, as is almost all fan fiction. Let's face it, half the content of the professional magazines these days is crud, so if they can write crud and get paid for it, where does that leave amateur crud?

Whilst on the subject, how about this thing on J G Ballard? What an absolute welter of over-worded trivia. It reads like one of Kruschew's gospels on Party Dogma. If anybody goes to a convention expecting to discuss this sort of pseudo-intellectual 'literature' he deserves to be disappointed. What the hell does White mean in his statement that he is interested in sf as "as a serious form of writing"? Surely, we read sf because we like it. Whether or not it is a serious form of writing doesn't matter a 2d damn! As for his statement about fans being schitzoid types, well, I wonder what sort of a murky mental state Pete is in, that forced him to excrete crud all over your fanzine?

From Peter White, 75 Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey.

Re "Man in the Time Trap". I pulled my tongue right out of my cheek for that on one -- I sat down and tried to write a serious story as well as I could, rather than a tongue-in-cheek, fanzine slanted, flippant, ultra-short story. ...I'll be interested to see the reaction to my Ballard article. I suspect that some of the more fannish fans will say that it's pretentious and pseudo-intellectual crud. ((Seems you were right! --CP)) But really, I analyze literature in this way quite naturally -- and gain a great deal of enjoyment from doing so.

I liked BEYOND 5 very much indeed. It is the best fanzine I've seen. I didn't agree with everything you said, but the Convention report was splendid, well written and controversial.

While rejecting her conclusions entirely, I was most impressed by the way Beryl Henley built up her article, with such effortless ease.

G James Dixon's "I remember praying" was very interesting. I don't feel he is experienced enough to have sufficient stylistic discipline or personal

integrity (the guts to leave the work uncensored) to write satisfactory stream of consciousness. But I respect such ambitious attempts at writing seriously.

From Roh Bennett, 17 Newcastle Road, Liverpool 15:

Ah, here speaks Platt, the authority on the lives of fans. So the majority of the fans present at the convention had had no experience in amateur films? Hooha! The Liverpool Group have made films for conventions, films which were seen by a goodly proportion of the members present. The Cheltenham Group have made a film which was shown at Brum in 1959 and which was seen by a goodly proportion of the members present at Peterborough. Many fans ((how many? --CP)) visit the shows of the Top Ten and the Eight Best or whatever they are called (the LiG went to a show of amateur films in Liverpool quite recently).

So, you see what I am getting at? It doesn't matter in the slightest whether the Delta films were good, bad or merely indifferent. No one is going to get anyone to listen to his viewpoint (a generalisation) if he dishes out generalisations like the one in the con rep. I would put money on the fact that at least 60% of the audience at Peterborough had had some experience of amateur films prior to the Convention. And, yes, I mean serious amateur films.

((I still stand by my statement that to rave over the Delta films, as some did, implies a lack of experience in amateur movies; simply because I myself know that there are and have been many far superior amateur productions to those seen at Peterborough. And if people had seen such superior pieces of work they wouldn't have been inclined to 'rave' over the Delta group. On the other hand, not everyone thought the Delta films terrific; perhaps these people were the 60% you describe who 'had some experience of amateur films before the Convention'. --CP))

From Dick Howett, 94 Ravensbourne Crescent, Harold Wood, Essex.

The report of the Easter Con was to my mind coherent fun. However, personal impressions can sometimes become messy to the point of inane drooling. But daggers-drawn Platt here not only presents the thing entertainingly, but show that after all's said and done, to laugh at one's antics is the prime blessing... if, in fact, the recipients of the mirth see it that way. In one or two cases I doubt it.

The professionalism of Bill Aitken's sgort story, "An Ill Wind", shone above the clouds of the rest. From the awkward and ridiculous ramblings of Roy Kay to the overloaded and ubiquitous scratchings of Peter White, there was no competition.

In all, Beyond is polished without being slick. The total layout leaves a little to be desired with haphazard spacing and positioning of artwork, but these are minor faults in a mag that neither claims to be professional nor indeed is.

From Daphne Sewell, 2 Fenbridge Road, Werrington, Peterborough, Northants.

I note that one of your writers in Beyond 5 commented on the fact that some people are ashamed of reading sf. I'm afraid I qualify. It isn't so much the book itself, but the cover, which I try to hide, since usually the cover gives a completely wrong idea of the book itself. So many people say, "What do you get out of reading sf -- are you just trying to be different?" I am unable to explain why I prefer sf to Ethel M Dell.

Often I've been asked to lend a non-reader an sf book so that they can judge

for themselves, but this always lands me in a quandry, since people's tastes differ so much.

Could any readers recommend just one suitable book?

The following letter is printed anonymously:

Again I'd prefer my remarks not to be published. It seems to me to be the first step into fandom, and I prefer not to get involved. I like reading sf very much I enjoy an occasional fanzine and I don't mind one or two correspondences, but when my comments start appearing in fanzines, that is too far along the road to madness.

Your report of the Convention was very interesting to me. It conveyed the exact impression that I expected it would be like, full of cliques and with everyone trying to be madly gay, probably against their natures if they were escapist sf readers.

The reporter in VECTOR had the opposite view to yours, of course, but then he gave himself away by remarks like "I missed the witticisms during the film show, not nearly as many as last year..." and "Fred X was uproariously funny on the train, alarming the locals." After that, I heaved a sigh of relief that I didn't go.

From Dave Hale, 12 Belmont Road, Wollescote, Stourbridge, Worcs.

Your cover on Beyond 5 was piffle by any standards at all. Anyone seeing it it is going to think, 'juvenile', The convention memories illo on page 32 would have been much more effective, even though unrelated to sf.

Your convention report was the best thing in the magazine. Nobody can say that you mince words. It will be interesting to see what reaction there is to it, though; probably little.

Beryl Henley's article needs little comment; after all, there is nothing you can do against a belief. Her question is slightly irritating because you know that whatever you say she won't believe you; she has an irrefutable argument. She will say that to be able to answer the question in any other way than in the manner she does you will have to get outside the body to view the body and discover what she will probably term 'mind'. And if your logic doesn't allow this she will say you can't be correct. If your logic does allow this she will say that it supports her. A meaningless circle. It's a pity that otherwise sensible people should glorify such off-beat ideas.

In my present state of belief I would discount anything like a 'soul', anything supernatural, to do with eternal life, being saved, or reincarnation. Brain is the organ of mind, and conversely 'mind' is a function of the brain and body. Mind develops as the brain organisation changes in response to genetic control and environment. Psychologically, mind is a function of body. Dualism, Parallelism, epiphenomenalism and all the other isms are dead ends. At least behaviourism ((presumably an exception to the 'ism' dead end rule -- CP)) can provide somewhere to work from. A physiological basis for mind.

Peter White's article on Jim Ballard is both lucid and readable and well written. While this also goes for Peter's Time Trap story, here the Ballard influence is apparent but doesn't quite come off.

Page 33 was a waste.

Regarding your reviews, "Deep Reaches of Space" shows what happens when a publisher gets the idea he must publish sf at all costs. The book would have been ok as a paperback, but as a hardcover, even a 12/6d hardcover, it probably won't enjoy very great sales.

From Phil Harbottle, 27 Cheshire Gardens, Wallsend on Tyne, Northumberland.

The essay on the Convention had some teeling points to make. The minimum of organised programme was fine for veteran conventioners, but for the neophytes -- considerable in number -- it was disappointing. I would have liked a fuller programme; after all, such extra items do not have to be attended by the older fans.

I was anything but impressed with the AGM. The 'new Brum' can't sweep clean soon enough for me. When someone, Ella Parker I think, said that the purpose of the BSFA was to recruit for fandom, I nearly fell off my chair I was so surprised. Surely the BSFA stands for the advancement and recognition of sf, British sf in particular, and is only indirectly connected to fandom? One was given the impression that the BSFA is being run as a sufferance sideline by the fans, but is it not possible that the poor membership of the BSFA has been caused by this very fan dominance? Fandom is a minority, and as long as the BSFA is fan-dominated, it will stay a minority.

Peter White is an enigma. Last issue he contributed the nadir of pointless, empty crud, then in number 5 does a quite extraordinary fragment, The Days of Sea and Sand, brilliantly written.

In "Man in the Time Trap" in striving for an elevated literary style Peter kills his narrative stone dead. "Dury the madman was urinating, his fat naked body glistening with sweat." Now this is a bit too much. A madman urinating is effective enough, but does his body have to be fat, naked and sweaty? Peter has talent, I would say, but he seems to be trying too hard.

"The Pick Up" was, I take it, from Dave Hale's waste paper basket? ((No, it was from Roy Kay's wastepaper basket. --CP))

And speaking of waste paper baskets, that's where "I remember praying" belongs. Stream of conscious ness writing is a very convenient way of camouflaging disinclination -- or even disability -- to write grammatically and concisely.

From Michael Moorcock, 8 Colville Terrace, London W.11.

Even allowing for your evidently poor state of mind at Peterborough, your Convention Report abounds with inaccuracies and is extremely offensive both to myself and my friends. At least three untrue statements can be found on Page 4, Para 2, where some of my friends and a number of my acquaintances are referred to as my 'London group of hangers-on', where it is said that I spent the evening "climbing over the roofs" and "geherally making a nuisance of myself". I will not emphasise that these remarks are damaging, but will confine myself to correcting some of the errors.

I have no group of 'hangers-on', from London or from anywhere else. I do have a number of friends, some of whom come from London, whose company I enjoy and whose friendship I value to the extent that I was deeply shocked and made extremely angry to find them described as 'hangers-on'. This was one of the most distasteful remarks I have read in any fanzine.

Secondly, I set neither hand nor foot on any roof at any time during the convention. Thirdly, I offended no one, to my knowledge.

...I see your report also has me staggering, lurching and slipping, and falling amidst a sound of breaking glass. Presumably this infers that I was drunk? What actually happened was that the table on which I was supposed to stand for part of the ceremony overturned. Neither myself nor Peter Taylor had had anything stronger to drink than soft drinks and coffee for roughly 18 hours before the ceremony. No glass was broken.

Your report notes also that the 'fun' seemed unnatural or forced. Again it is obvious that this impression was entirely subjective, produced by the writer's own state of mind. This impression is not shared by the people who were actually enjoying themselves, instead of hanging about on the sidelines with a dour expression.

In view of the damaging statements contained in your convention report I should be grateful if you would publish this letter in full or else publish a full retraction and apology for the inaccuracies and misleading innuendoes contained in this report.

Having vented my spleen, I feel free to comment on the rest of BEYOND.

I particularly liked the Peter White item on Ballard -- though I'm sure J G Ballard would squirm if he saw that picture, allegedly of himself. The fiction, I might add, is of a generally higher standard than the average manuscript I receive for NEW WORLDS SF, and it seems to me that BEYOND is serving an excellent function as a training ground for future sf writers -- and critics.

... I think that this reforming spirit that BEYOND and its contemporary fanzines are encouraging is a good sign. However, there's no need to make yourselves unpopular while doing it. If you restrained yourselves to constructive criticism of SF and left your remarks about other fans and fanzines out, you'd start to get somewhere. As it is, you're diffusing your energies by starting these little vendettas here and there and this could easily end -- it's happened before -- with your turning your back on fandom, muttering something about prophets and lands. ...At the moment BEYOND has rather a shrill note. Try to give it a firm one.

((The Convention Report of last issue was in no way intended as any form of personal attack on any person or persons present. Sincere apologies are offered to Mr Moorcock over this. With regard to the factually inaccurate statements: these appeared to be well documented at the time. If there are any other inaccuracies or feelings of personal attack, perhaps I could take this opportunity for apologising for them as well. The report was intended as an honest reaction of a newcomer, and hence its criticisms should carry less weight than those of a better established fan. It was not intended to be offensive. --CP)))

