

BRUM GROUP NEWS

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The monthly Newsletter of the
BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison)

1988 Committee: Chairman - Bernie Evans Secretary - Chris Murphy
Treasurer - David Wake Newsletter Editor - Dave Hardy Reviews Editor -
Mick Evans Publicity Officer - Andrew White Novacon 18 - Tony Berry



The BSFG meets on the third Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) at the LADBROKE (now PENGUIN) HOTEL, New Street, Birmingham at 8.00pm. Membership costs only £5.50 per year (£8.00 for two people at the same address)

*Cheques etc. payable to the BSFG, via the Treasurer at 160 Beaumont Road, Bournville, Birmingham B30 1NY (telephone 021-451 2287)
Book Reviews to Mick Evans at 7 Grove Avenue, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7UY (Telephone 021-707 6606), which is also the Chairman's address.
Other contributions and enquiries to Dave Hardy, 99 Southam Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0AB (telephone 021-777 1802)*

This Month's Meeting is on:
Friday 15 July at 8.00pm

This Month's Programme

Admission: Members £1.00
Visitors £1.50

This month's Guest Speakers are:

Maureen Porter & Paul Kincaid

1988 is the 30th Anniversary Year of the British Science Fiction Association - though its original founders are hardly likely to recognise its current incarnation. The BSFA is the main body in this country representing all forms of interest in science fiction: from the fans to the critics, from the professionals to the readers.

This month's talk will look at the wide range of services and publications offered by the BSFA - and no doubt touch upon its past trials and tribulations...

Our guests are Paul Kincaid, the co-ordinator of the BSFA and also the reviews editor of its critical journal *VECTOR*, and Maureen Porter, who edits the news magazine *MATRIX*. (For more about that, see her article in the BNG No. 200.) Every SF fan should know about the BSFA - and, indeed, join it - so come along!

Forthcoming Attractions:

August: Iain Banks. September: Mystery Guest. October: Debate with Birmingham University SF Society (motion to be announced). November: Gwyneth Jones.

Last Month

Professor Jeffrey Knight

It is difficult to give a blow-by-blow description of Professor (or Jeff, as he prefers to be known) Knight's talk, since he illustrated it using both an overhead and a 35mm projector. I can hardly fill the Newsletter with diagrams! Making a brave attempt at describing a very technical subject in non-technical terms, he explained how an autonomous robot requires sensors - visual, acoustic, pressure-sensitive, or whatever - and how its limbs need to move in various axes in order even to approximate the movements of, say, a human hand finding and picking up a glass.

It is obvious that the state of the art (or science) is at present way behind the imaginings of science fiction. The closing slides showed a robot which can engrave cut glass, complete with the slight imperfections of a human; something of which, as an artist, I can hardly approve...

In many ways the question-and-answer session which followed was the most interesting part of the evening. It transpired that Jeff believes that we should be able to produce a humanoid, completely autonomous robot akin to C3PO by the turn of the century. However, it is more likely that robots will continue to be designed to fulfil specific functions, and thus not resemble us - except to show that it can be done. I was also relieved to hear that Jeff believes (as I do) that Man will be an essential item in the exploration of space, no doubt working in close collaboration with robots - a kind of symbiosis.

FEEDBACK

A Follow-up Page to Last Month's 'You Write'

Last month's letter from Wendell Wagner, Jr., and response from Tony Morton, has produced some further feedback. Firstly, Wendell has asked me to apologise for him if it sounded as if he was making a 'Born in the USA' rap, since he, too, despises hearing Americans making that kind of pro-US chauvinistic speech.

He goes on to ask why M. John Harrison's 'Virconium' books are not in print in the US, and to say that if there are more American books not yet in British editions, that's only because the US SF and fantasy field is much larger. Wendell has been pushing Terry Pratchett as a con GoH with his US fan friends, but adds that it is probably a waste of time. (Don't worry - his time will come.)

Chris Morgan has also joined in the debate. He writes:

Dear Dave,

I thought I'd respond to Wendell Wagner Jr's letter in Issue 201, not to argue, but rather to provide some information.

With so many new US writers of SF and fantasy getting novels published it's not surprising that a few are either of a very high quality or fast-moving entertainment - or both together. Of course, UK publishers are not ignoring such authors: indeed, they are continually on the lookout for new talent. As a publisher's reader for Century/Arrow I find that most of what I'm sent to read and report on is first novels by unknown US authors. And we're always glad of recommendations.

Of the specific authors Wendell mentions I can offer some UK publishing news. Paula Voisky has written two good fantasy novels, *The Sorcerer's Lady* and *The Luck of Relian Kru*, which Arrow is publishing in its Legend imprint. Roger MacBride Allen's first two novels, *The Torch of Honor* and *Rogue Powers*, are coming in Arrow's Venture series, though his later books, *Orphan of Creation*, *Farside Cannon* and *Redangel*, are all disappointingly ponderous. Some of Diana L. Paxson's stories are or will be appearing here as the various Marion Zimmer Bradley anthologies come out from Headline and (probably) Legend. Melissa Scott's *Five-Twelfths of Heaven* is just out as a Gollancz paperback, with two more of her books scheduled from them.

There are a few other US authors to look out for as well. Methuen are publishing a wonderful first SF novel, *Liege-Killer* by Christopher Hinz, about now. Michael Swanwick's superb *Vacuum Flowers* is coming from Simon & Schuster (UK). Novels by both Nancy Kress and Scott Baker (SF and fantasy respectively)

are being published by Century/Arrow this year. *The Net* by Loren J. McGregor has recently been bought by Futura. These are all books I've read and can recommend strongly.

And if there's room in the Newsletter, perhaps I will argue after all. The only Somtow Sucharitkul novel that I've read is *Aquilliad 1*, which I found silly and boring. But if another of his books come my way for business reasons I'll read it without prejudice. Yours sincerely,
Chris.

Thanks, Chris! Now, an editor searching feverishly for something to print will grasp at whatever comes along, so I'm reproducing here a card I've received from Dave Langford (well isn't anything from DL worth printing anyway - ?):

Dear Dave,

Many thanks for yet another BSGF newsthingy. I particularly liked the ego-boosting small ad which was inset by a crazed editor requiring a copy of my UFO spoof. Tell him it's his for a fiver - I do have a few left here. (We *New Scientist* hacks must stick together.)

The Drunken Dragon book-with-the-long-silly-title isn't literally a collection of criticism but of parodies and skits. (The confusion arises because, of course, the long silly title was originally attached to a critical speech/article, not actually included in the book!)

Congratulations to Pete Weston for being just about the first to articulate in an obituary the very mixed feelings one has to have about later Heinlein.

All best
Dave

A few notes of explanation may be needed (especially if you didn't read last month's BGN), but first I should add that Andromeda did in fact have a copy of *An Account of a Meeting with Denizens of Another World, 1871*. (Dave goes in for snappy titles, doesn't he?)

In the *New Scientist* of 26 May, he refers to it as "passing away quietly to that remainder shelf whence no traveller returns". He also relates how the book came about - and met its demise - and refers to other spoofs. All in all, it's worth reading said book, in conjunction with the article. Though I would like to be in the shoes of someone who found the book without knowing Mr Langford - if you see what I mean... >

The reference to the Drunken Dragon book can be found in last month's Jophan Report, which, as Rog has been at pains to tell me, was not strictly accurate. The book is actually entitled: *The Dragon Hiker's Guide to Battlefield Covenant at Dune's Edge: Odyssey Two OR The Collected Science Fiction and Fantasy Parodies of David Langford, Volume 1*. It will cost £9.95 for a trade hardcover and £24.95 for a leather bound edition (100 only). There will be NO paperback. So get your orders in now!

And that, Rog insists, is the ONLY book so far signed up by DD Press...

As to the cryptic comment about *New Scientist* hacks, this refers to the issue of 9 June, in which there is an article with the title 'Visions of Another World: David A. Hardy on the contribution of artists to the exploration of space'.

For the benefit of those members who don't take *New Scientist*, and since I've promised elsewhere to tell you why I shan't be at the next meeting, I'll reproduce part of that article here:

A group of artists wanders across the surface of an alien world. Some sit on a lava outcrop, sketching; others take photographs. The artists are of all nationalities: American, Canadian, European (including British) and Soviet - including a cosmonaut who has walked in space.

No, it isn't a glimpse of the future, or a pipe dream. It will be reality by the end of next month. I just used a little artist's licence (to which I am entitled, being an artist) in describing the landscape of Iceland as an alien world. And anyway, it is: the Apollo astro-

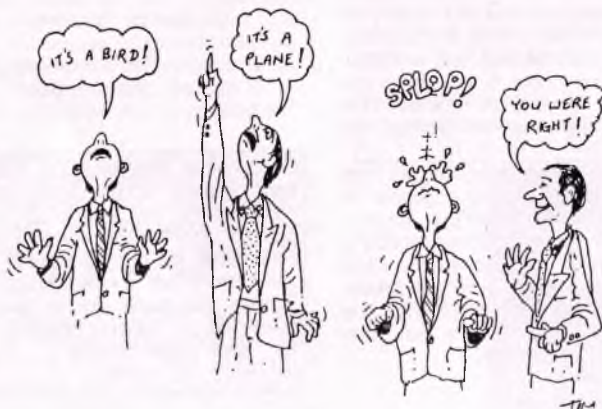
nauts used it in training for their visits to the Moon.

The artists are all members of the International Association of Astronomical Artists (IAAA). We usually call ourselves 'space artists'. The American contingent has held workshops before, in Hawaii and Death Valley; in other words, spots on the Earth's surface which resemble as closely as possible the geology and conditions of our neighbour worlds such as the Moon and Mars. But this year they will be joined in Iceland by, among many others, the leading Soviet space artists Andrei Sokolov and Alexei Leonov - the first man to 'walk' in space (in March 1965). Further exchanges with Moscow are planned.

I went on to talk about the oldest examples of space art known to me (1874), of the best known space artist (Chesley Bonestell, who died in 1986, aged 98), and of the possibility of international co-operation on a manned mission to Mars. I closed:

I submit that the visions of space artists are as vital as the designs of engineers and the discoveries of scientists in ensuring the continuation of the human race by its expansion into space, as we learn to live on other worlds or extract valuable minerals and chemical elements to make rocket fuels from the asteroids, or energy from the Sun.

Anyone care to argue with that? As a BSFG postscript, the illustration of a volcano erupting on Jupiter's moon Io which accompanies that article (as well as the cover of the June issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*) belongs to our Chairman, Bernie Evans!





Chris Murphy: Secretary

Chris is 36, and works as a Systems Analyst for a Building Society; no wonder he reads SF! But he claims that his first exposure to it was through *Bill and Ben*, *the Flowerpot Men* - anarchic humanoids influenced by sentient plant frolic amid the artifacts of a higher civilisation.

A TV run of *Flash Gordon* and comic strips like *Dan Dare* and *Captain Condor* also helped. There he began to supplement with anthologies from his local library. Instead of becoming involved in fandom at about the age of 18, he went to college - foolishly choosing one without a SF Society. Chris says that the Student Body (there wasn't much of a Student Mind) venerated Tolkien and admired Heinlein, but actually read Marvel comics. He eventually escaped this rather limited cultural atmosphere into an unsuccessful teaching career.

His introduction to fan activity came in 1977 through Six of One, the appreciation society for *The Prisoner*. He subsequently found that there were other forms of fandom - including something called the Brum Group. By now he was living in Birmingham, having changed his career. His first convention was Novacon 10.

The next stage in his fan's progress was a detour into the Birmingham Science Fiction Film Society. After the collapse of that ill-fated body he felt thoroughly disillusioned and withdrew from SF fandom for some time. It was due partly to the persuasive powers of Daves (the other) Holmes and Cox that he rejoined the BSFG in 1985.

He now plays a rather more active part than he used to, having enjoyed being a gopher at Novacon ("hard work but great fun"); In January, thanks to your Editor (then Chairman) spotting his potential, he joined the Committee (and produces excellent Minutes). As for the future, Chris says that as a fan he doesn't have any ambitions - "as long as there's fun and friendship I'll take what comes!".

New Members: June

In June we were joined by Hugh Ross Tulloch, who now lives in Cannock - though his accent suggests an origin north of the border. He saw the Newsletter at Andromeda, which led to his joining. His favourite authors are PKD, Brin, Cherryh, Gibson and Martin (George R.R.), and has read SF since at least his mid teens. Other interests: role-playing games and history.

THE

ANDROMEDA

TOP TEN

The ten best-selling paperbacks in June in the country's biggest and best SF Bookshop were:

The Top Five hardcovers:

1. *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* - Douglas Adams, Star.
2. *Dr Who: Vengeance on Varos* - Star.
3. *The Darkest Road* - G.G.Kay, Unwin Hyman.
4. *Book of the Damned* - Tanith Lee, U.H.
5. *Book of the Beast* - Tanith Lee, U.H.
6. *Star Trek: The Time Trap* - Titan.
7. *Burning Chrome* - William Gibson, Grafton.
8. *Companions on the Road* - Tanith Lee, Beaver.
9. *Malady of Magics* - Craig Shaw Gardner, Headline.
10. *The Walrus & The Warwolf* - Hugh Cook, Corgi.

The Top Five Hardcovers:

1. *We Can Build You* - Philip K. Dick, Severn House.
2. *Mona Lisa Overdrive* - William Gibson, Gollancz.
3. *Life During Wartime* - Lucius Shepard, Grafton.
4. *Sourcery* - Terry Pratchett, Gollancz.
5. *King of the Murgos* - David Eddings, Bantam.

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Thanks this month go to Tim Groome for the cover illo, to William, Wendell, Dave and Chris for their contributions - and to all book reviewers, of course.

The Competition Page

or, the Morgan the Merrier

The Caption Contest

Well, did you have a go at the last Caption Contest? I already know the answer: it's 'No', unless your name is Pauline Morgan, because she gave me the only entry. I deliberately put the contest up on the door at the last meeting, but did *not*, as I usually do, keep shouting for entries. Pauline has won before - but you can't complain, can you - ?

Pauline's winning entry (and she did submit two) was 'Next time you take the guest speaker out for a meal, Bernie, make sure they don't eat garlic...'

As I announced last month, it *was* the last. A pity, in a way, for although it was hard work getting them out of you, some of the entries have been pretty funny! In fact, there is no competition at all this month, as I shan't be at the meeting to collect (any) entries. If you want to know where I'll be, you'll find it elsewhere in the BGN.

Historical Characters' Favourite SF

We had several quite good entries for this (although the person who pleaded for the deadline to be extended for a month did not, in the end, take advantage of it - did you, Steve - ?). Thanks to all who tried, but the winning entry came, without doubt, from Chris Morgan. Indeed, it was so well thought-out and presented that I felt it was worth printing, in full. So here it is:

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS would very much like to have discovered *A Passage to India* by E.M.Forster, and may well have considered himself *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate* (Michael Moorcock), but those are not, of course, SF. His favourite might well, for reasons of vanity, have been *A Columbus of Space* by Garrett P. Serviss, though he would probably have picked *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, or even *A Brand New World* by Ray Cummings.

CHARLES DARWIN would have been fascinated by *The Evolution Man* (Roy Lewis), *The Fittest* (J.T.McIntosh) and *Galapagos* (Kurt Vonnegut), though he would undoubtedly have chosen, for his desert island, *The Voyage of the Space Beagle* by A.E.Van Vogt.

RICHARD COEUR DE LION would have regarded SF as the work of the devil, but might well have enjoyed fantasy. Thus, although it has been suggested that he enjoyed *Man in a Cage* by Brian Stableford or *The Prisoner*

(Disch, Stine, etc.), I believe that his choice would have been either *The High Crusade* by Poul Anderson or *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, also by Anderson.

JAMES WATT was heartily sick of puns on his name, so he would certainly not have enjoyed *Who?* by Algis Budrys. Nor was he fond of fiction, so even intriguing titles such as *The Steam-Driven Boy* (Sladek) or *The Celestial Steam Locomotive* (Coney) would have left him cold. However, he would probably have read *Power* by S. Fowler Wright under the impression that it was non-fiction.

ISAAC NEWTON would certainly have enjoyed *Downward to Earth* by Robert Silverberg and *White Light* by Rudy Rucker. He would have been flattered to read *Newton and the Quasi-Apple* by Stanley Schmidt. His favourite of all would, without doubt, have been *Mission of Gravity* by Hal Clement.

THOMAS ALVA EDISON was easy to please and lacked taste: not only did he enjoy *The Sound of Music* (Trapp) but he was happy to read any novel that telegraphed its ending. He would probably have been attracted (moth-like) to *A Different Light* by Elizabeth A. Lynn and would have seized upon *The Power* by Frank M. Robinson or the aforementioned *Power* by S. Fowler Wright. His favourite would have been *Edison's Exit* by Joseph M. Mauro.

ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL would have been intrigued enough to read (and even re-read) *The Unorthodox Engineers* by Colin Kopp and *Star Bridge* by Jack Williamson & James E. Gunn. he might well have found enjoyment in *Iron Master* by Patrick Tilley. But being a perceptive and highly literate man there is no doubt that his favourite would have been *The Bridge* by Iain Banks.

Now there's a man who knows his SF! But you can see what you missed if you didn't even try it... Thanks again to Stan Eling for the idea.





Record Review

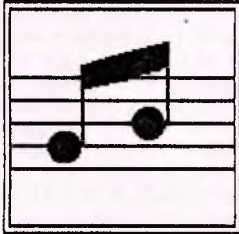
by William A. McCabe

An unsolicited submission - could it be that my appeal has worked? Whether so or not, all members are very welcome to send in reviews of records (or videos, or whatever) that they think other members might like to know about.

God in Three Persons:

The Residents: Compact Disc (label? - ask William)

The Residents have always been idiosyncratic to the point of alienation. No other 'pop' group could have remained anonymous for so long (no member of the band has ever appeared unmasked). This production is no exception, but at the same time it does not take it to extremes. It is obscure (deliberately so), yet not to the extent that the plot becomes incomprehensible. Much of the awkwardness seems intentional: the narrator's character is trying to come to terms with something he cannot fully understand and at the same time draw to himself a personal mystique (mysticism) that can further complicate an already complicated situation. For this reason much of the interpretation is a personal thing.



The Residents have performed shows before that could be thought of as SF - but maybe these are merely surreal - the most obvious of which is *The Mole Show* (a story of conflict between two intelligent alien races). This CD is more Earthbound, something on the level of 'The Man with X-ray Eyes' in its treatment of what would otherwise be called psychic power and its links with religion.

The story is, as the title implies, of the interaction between three people. With the narrator ('Mr X' - his real name is Ed) there are the twins: Siamese twins, one male one female, joined at the shoulder. They have an immense power, of some sort of electrical nature, that emanates from their joint. This power can be used to heal, as is shown in the service - something between a church service and a power circuit (the twins are linked to their congregation by copper wire). But there

are other uses. The narrator feels some desire for the female, but their personality is indistinct and blurs the difference between the two. This desire, or maybe something else, drives him to sex with her; but somehow it turns out to be much more than that. His intention was to take her but he in turn is taken by the creature that is 'them' - there is no 'she'.

The style is sometimes cynical, sometimes profound (with a slightly fake ring to it), and the sound is unusual. The disc comes expensive at £15.00, but runs for just over an hour which, considering that most of their material (where available) comes at rarity or import price, isn't too extreme.

EDITOR'S NOTE (!)

How do we define 'science fiction music'? Where there is a vocal, or a narrator, there is little room for doubt (except the usual one about whether it is SF or fantasy, etc.). So *War of the Worlds* is obviously SF, as are some offerings from Hawkwind, The Moody Blues and Pink Floyd, to mention just a few.

When it comes to instrumental music, though, there seems to be a certain 'sound' which is thought of as 'SF music' - whether the composer intended it that way or not. It is usually electronic, so includes artists like Tangerine Dream, Vangelis, Jean Michel Jarre, *et al.* I suppose the other expression is 'spacy'. One of my favourite albums is *In the Region of the Summer Stars* by The Enid, which I first saw reviewed by one Paul Ryan (not one of the singing brothers) in a fanzine to which I used to contribute - one of David Bridges' early efforts. All of The Enid's albums are worth listening to, in fact - try them.





All books reviewed in these pages by members have been provided by the publishers, who will receive a copy of this Newsletter. Members may keep books reviewed by them (or may donate them as Raffle Prizes, or Auction Items, if feeling generous...) Please keep reviews to under 150 words, unless instructed otherwise. Deadline for reviews: at least 2 weeks before next meeting

ENCOUNTERS Ed by Isaac Asimov, Martin H Greenberg and Charles Waugh.
Headline; 399 pages; £3.50 p/b; Reviewed by Maureen Porter.

I've always considered an anthology to be an excellent means of "tasting" new writers, and thematic anthologies have always formed a staple part of my diet. *Encounters* is a collection based around the idea of first contact between humans and aliens, and it is the driest assemblage of stories I have ever read. Only duty drove me to continue. It's not that I have anything against "hard" SF, but I see no reason why "hard" should be equated with boring. The fault seems mostly to lie in the choice of stories, David Drake's 'Contact' has to be the tackiest example of Vietnam SF I've yet encountered. I longed for the subtle hand of Lucius Shepherd to erase the sub-*Appocalypse Now* attitude. However, there are two gems, Clifford Simak's *A Death in the House* and Edgar Pangorn's *Angel's Egg*, sensitive and intelligent stories that deserve to be reprinted. For those two I would recommend this collection but with deepest reservations about the rest.

STAR KING by Jack Vance; Grafton; 204 pages; £2.50 paperback;
Reviewed by Maureen Porter.

I am puzzled by Jack Vance's popularity. I recently reviewed *Araminta Station*, and was sadly disappointed with the turgid prose, lack of plot, and preoccupation with world creation at the expense of story and characters. *Star King*, an earlier work recently reissued, displays many of the same characteristics, but having read it, I think I understand his attraction for so many people. He is not a storyteller, though he knows how to plot a story; his characters are not fully developed, though each tends to display one or two distinctive traits which take them beyond being cardboard; he cannot write dialogue. His great virtue is his ability to create a historical context for his worlds and his peoples. Each chapter of this fairly mundane story of Kirth Gersen's systematic revenge against the aliens who killed his family is headed by entries from fictitious historical works, memos, discussions which set every event firmly in its place. I find this device intrusive, but I can see how it would prove an attraction. My main complaint is that this book is so uninvolving. Vance appears to have the skill to hook a readers interest, but I find myself grabbing at crumbs of plot and feeling frustrated that there isn't more to the story. Still, I read it, so - recommended with reservations.

WEB OF WIND by J.F. Rivkin; Orbit; 203 pages; £2.95 paperback.
Reviewed by Anne Gay.

Cashing in on the success of her last cheerful barbarian romp, J.F.Rivkin has cast her two heroines in another racy adventure. The aristocratic witch Nyctasia, exiled in the first book *Silverglass*, fetches up with distant relatives. Naturally Corson, the mistress-at-arms, is with her. The mystery that threatens them all is unnatural. Humour and sub-plots weave in and out of this jolly, undemanding but inventive piece of sword and sorcery. This book won't stay with you once you've closed it, but it will while away some time agreeably.

THE HAMMER OF THE SUN Mike Scott Rohan; Macdonald; 501 pp; £11.95 h/b
Reviewed by Geoff Williams.

This is the third volume in Rohan's *The Winter in the World* trilogy and opens seven years after the events of *The Forge in the Forest*. Each year Kermovan, the King of Morvannec, has mounted an expedition to the West to rescue those under the threat of the Ekweh. As he prepares for the coming expedition, mastersmith Elof Valantor worries about his relationship with Kara, fearing that she only loves him because she wears his armring, and that one day she will leave him. He uses his skills to try to bind her to him. Kara recognises what he is trying to do and leaves him. Once again Elof sets out to find Kara, but this time the journey is more difficult and he only has one companion to aid him. This volume lives up to the high standards of the previous two. His characters do not become stale or repetitive, nor do his backgrounds, and he introduces new characters and settings in each volume. I would recommend this trilogy highly to all serious lovers of fantasy.

QUEEN MAGIC, KING MAGIC by Ian Watson; Grafton; 239 pages; £2.95 p/b.
Reviewed by Tony Morton.

A novel based on chess, where the main characters move as chess pieces when "attacking". The story, a sort of "*Romeo & Juliet*" type, has Pedino (white pawn/Queen's squire) and Sara (black pawn/King's squire) falling in love and trying to beat the odds. However, once the outcome of a "battle" is decided, the whole dimension collapses to renew itself - but the participants remember nothing of their past lives. Working out their predicament, Pedino and Sara escape to another (parallel) "game", via a snake and ladder, and have a brief spell in a "Monopoly" type dimension, before finally returning to chess to complete the piece. I'm unsure of the imagery within the book, but while the chess world works well, the others seem a little contrived.

MERCEDES NIGHTS by Michael Weaver; N.E.L; 240 pages; £2.50 paperback;
Reviewed by Michael Jones.

The title is rather clumsily derived from the initial premise that the beautiful actress and superstar, Mercedes Night, has been cloned, copies being available from Bedmates Corporation to anyone who can afford the (considerable) price. In fact there is far more to the book than this somewhat adolescent wish fulfillment fantasy. There is future crime, plenty of high-tech gadgetry, politics, and there is the mysterious Sub Space Corporation, which is carrying out its own private programme of other world exploration. All these elements are woven around Mercedes Night into a complex story which finishes with the good guys triumphant and all the loose ends tidied up. More or less anyway. This is a good book in its own right, but I would predict that Weaver can improve upon it and do even better.

THE SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY WORLD OF TIM WHITE ; Paper Tiger;
144 pages; h/c £12.95; p/b £7.95; Reviewed by Dave Hardy.

It seems quite extraordinary that Dragon's World make no mention of the fact that this book was first published in 1981 by NEL - except that this is the copyright date ascribed to Tim White inside. Apart from this everything points to it being a brand new book. As far as it goes this is a fine collection of the artist's work, which is excellent: 116 full colour illustrations, some quite small, plus some black and white drawings. It is nice to see that all the illustrations are dated and in chronological order, along with the titles of the books on which they first appeared, where applicable. But it does mean that over ten years of Tim's work remain unpublished in book form: a subject for volume two?.

BLOOD MUSIC by Greg Bear; Legend; 262 pages; £2.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

Greg Bear is a highly original and daring writer, so much so that this novel will not appeal to all readers. It begins with a relatively simple idea---genetic engineering has produced white blood cells that are not only able to communicate and exchange information with each other, but also are intelligent. The problem is that Virgil Ulam has designed them without authorisation, and when he is sacked from the research lab, he smuggles them out in his own blood stream. The rest is extrapolation. There is a lot of technical information given in places, which may be indigestible to those with a limited scientific background. Although there is action present, this is not a book for those who prefer adventure science fiction or neat solutions to problems, but more for the readers who want their literature to be mentally stimulating.

THE NEW GULLIVER by Esme Dodderidge; Womens Press; 247 pp; £3.95 p/b.

Reviewed by Kevin McVeigh.

It is a while since I read Swift's "*Gullivers Travels*" but this book seems to faithfully reproduce what I recall of its style. Like Swift, Dodderidge aims to satirise our society with gentle mockery. In Capovolta women are the dominant sex, and Gulliver experiences all the abuses and drudgeries of women in our society. He is harrassed in the street, seduced, left to mind the children, and only able to find menial clerical work. With a sharp wit this lovely book exposes male chauvinism without overstatement of its feminism. Where it slips up for me is in a couple of idealogical points - the people she pokes fun at for sexism also pay a maternity allowance to mothers. They tend to vegetarian pacifism. It could be possible to lump these things in with the other wrongs of Capovolta, if one wanted to tear apart this modern satire. I recommend it as much as Swift's original.

THE JUDAS ROSE by Suzette Haden Elgin; Womens Press 363 pp; £4.50 p/b.

Reviewed by Anne Gay.

This is the second novel in the *Native Tongue* series. Like its predecessor, it concerns the fact that it is a male dominated society, the language is more geared to expressing male perceptions. Most women will recognise the "get to the point" syndrome! So, in a patriarchal society, where aliens have made limited contact with Earth, languages have come to the fore. And what could be more natural than that linguist women should "play" at making their own language? From this point - the end of native tongue 1 - *The Judas Rose* takes off. Clever, witty, with a cast of dozens of disparate individuals, Ms Elgin weaves her story. It is hard to identify with a single character, since the plot goes from one to another as they play their different roles, but it is an excellent SF novel on all levels.

THE WOMEN AND THE WARLORDS by Hugh Cook; Corgi; 429 pages; £2.95 p/b.

Reviewed by Steve Jones.

This the third volume in a projected twenty (20!) book series, all with titles going W.... & W..... (presumably the last one will be *The Wombles and the Whortleberries*.) The history of the world over several generations will be explored, with each book following the viewpoint of one character. Yen Glass is a slave oracle, who is caught in the middle of an invasion and later the succession to an empire. She survives by her wits and playing her enemies off against one another, not by incredible sword skills or by magical powers as is so common in this sort of fiction. This book was a lot better than I expected it to be, and I may well look out for the others in the series.