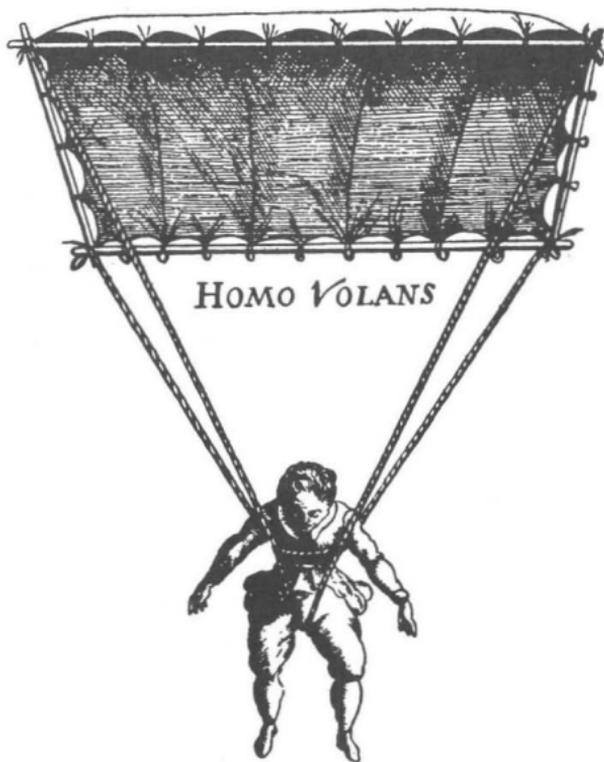


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Matrix

Issue 149

May/June 2001



James White remembered
Dr Who on tape Top ten sf films revisited
BSFA Awards

Matrix

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Contents

Cover: from *Transport Pictures* (Agile
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- 3 Editorial; Novacon ad
- 4-5 Book News; Media News
- 6 Media News
- 7 *Chocolat & Shadow of the Vampire* review, Andrew Butler
- 8-9 DVD review, Gary S. Dalkin
- 10-11 James White Short Story Award speech, Graham Andrews
- 12 *4later* review, Gary Wilkinson
- 13 Resonances, Stephen Baxter
- 14-15 Forthcoming Books, Janet Barron
- 16 Dr Who audio review, Mark Greener
- 17 BSFA Awards, Chris Hill & Tanya Brown
- 18-19 Top ten sf films: readers' letters
- 20-21 PULPitations, Glenda Pringle
- 22 Club Corner
- 23 Forthcoming Events & Conventions; Members' Noticeboard
- 24 Competition, Mail Order Catalogues, Credits



Editorial

And in a packed issue this time around...

Gary Wilkinson's 'Top Ten sf films of all time' piece in issue 147 provoked a vigorous response, the results of which are featured beginning on page 18. As editor I, of course, have to maintain an air of strict impartiality in these matters, but can't help sneaking in mention of three of my favourite sf films of recent years (and I'm using sf in the loosest sense of the term for

two of them) - Darren Aronofsky's spectacular debut *Pi*, David Fincher's provocative *Fight Club* and Andrew Niccol's fine (and increasingly prescient) *Gattaca*, surprisingly nominated by no-one. Not all mainstream genre movies, but ones with a definite sf-nal sensibility to them.

We're also pleased to be able to present the text of Graham Andrews' speech at last year's inaugural James White Short Story Award ceremony. Thanks to Graham for sharing it with readers.

Elsewhere, retiring awards administrator Chris Hill announces the results of the BSFA Awards for 2000, while

new administrator (and BSFA webmistress) Tanya Brown introduces herself. Many thanks to Chris for his hard work and best of luck to Tanya in her new role.

With Andrew Butler's look at two very different films of potential interest to genre fans and Mark Greener's round-up of recent Dr Who audio releases, I think I can safely say that we've produced an issue that should appeal to most sf devotees.

Finally, I'm pleased to report that our request for volunteers for the vacant position of Web/Internet news editor has resulted in a healthy response. Watch this space for an announcement!

After 30 years Novacon finally has a Quality Hotel!

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Further information from <http://www.novacon.org.uk>

News

Books, people and events making the headlines

China's run

China Miéville, author of Clarke Award nominated *Perdido Street Station* is running for Parliament in the forthcoming General Election as the official Socialist Alliance party candidate for the constituency of Regents Park and Kensington.

ConJosé announces web site Hugo Award

ConJosé, the 2002 World Science Fiction Convention, has announced that it will be presenting a special Hugo Award for Best Web Site. The Award will be open to any web site primarily related to the fields of science fiction, fantasy, or fandom and will be given for material displayed on the World Wide Web during the calendar year 2001.

ConJosé's web site has a FAQ answering some questions about the one off Hugo Award, but does not address the issue of voters judging sites that may have changed substantially during the intervening year.

FHarryheit 451

Religious fundamentalists in Pittsburgh torched Harry Potter books in a mass Pre-Easter burning session of items they regard as standing against God. Members of the Harvest Assembly of God in Pittsburgh also set fire to the Disney videos *Hercules* and *Pinocchio* for containing paranormal material. The assembly's Rev. George Bender reportedly said, "We believe that Harry Potter promotes sorcery, witchcraft-type things, the paranormal, things that are against God. That is really bad." JK Rowling has yet to comment.

Good Timing?

Ken (*Cosmonaut Keep*) MacLeod and Molly (*Bad Timing and Other Stories*) just out from Big Engine) Brown will be tutoring an Arvon course 'Writing Science Fiction' between Oct 1st and 6th. It takes place at picturesque Lumb Bank in Yorkshire. The converted eighteenth century mill-owner's house is surrounded by twenty acres of pastureland, deep, unfortunately, (as of April) in foot and mouth country, though with a little luck by the time the course takes place, the viral crisis will be well in the past. Peter Hamilton is scheduled to make a guest appearance mid-week. Further details of Arvon's 'residential creative writing courses open to all' can be found at www.arvonfoundation.org or by phoning 01422 843 714.

Obituaries

Supernatural fiction writer R. Chetwynd-Hayes, described by one of his publishers as "Britain's Prince of Chill," died of bronchial pneumonia on March 20th. He was 81. Chetwynd-Hayes had been living since early 2000 in a care home in Teddington, South London. Born in Isleworth, West London, on May 30th, 1919 Chetwynd-Hayes wrote more than 200 short stories and more than a dozen novels over thirty years. At one time his collections of ghost stories and humorous horror occupied the shelves of nearly every public library in the United Kingdom.

In 1989, he received the Life Achievement Awards of both the British Fantasy Society and the Horror Writers of America. He was also a guest of honour at FantasyCon XVII in 1992 and at the 1997 World Fantasy Convention in London.

His correspondence and surviving manuscripts will be archived in the collection of the Science Fiction Foundation held at The University of Liverpool, where the material will be made available to researchers.

William Hanna, co-creator with Joseph Barbera of numerous animated TV series including *The Flintstones* and *The Jetsons*, died on March 22nd.

Jenna A. Felice, an editor at Tor Books and associate editor of *Century Magazine*, died on March 10th, in New York City at the age of 25. She had been in a coma since suffering an acute allergic reaction the previous Sunday, combined with a severe asthmatic attack, and never regained consciousness.

Awards

2000 Nebula Awards Final Ballot

Novels

Darwin's Radio, Greg Bear (Ballantine Del Rey, Sep99)

A Civil Campaign, Lois McMaster Bujold (Baen, Aug99)

Midnight Robber, Nalo Hopkinson (Warner Aspect, Mar00)

Crescent City Rhapsody, Kathleen Ann Goonan (Avon Eos, Mar00)

Infinity Beach, Jack McDevitt (HarperPrism, Feb00)

Forests of the Heart, Charles de Lint (Tor, Jun00)

Novellas

'Fortitude', Andy Duncan (*Realms of Fantasy*, Jun99)

'Ninety Percent of Everything', Jonathan Lethem, James Patrick Kelly, & John Kessel (*F&SF*, Sep99)

'Hunting the Snark', Mike Resnick (*Asimov's*, Dec99)

'Crocodile Rock', Lucius Shepard (*F&SF*, Oct/Nov99)

'Argonautica', Walter Jon Williams (*Asimov's*, Oct/Nov99)

'Goddesses', Linda Nagata (*Sci Fiction/SciFi.com*, July 5, 2000)

Novellettes

'Daddy's World', Walter Jon Williams (*Not of Woman Born*, Constance Ash, Ed., Roc, Mar99)

'Stellar Harvest', Eleanor Arnason (*Asimov's*, Apr99)

'A Knight of Ghosts and Shadows', Gardner Dozois (*Asimov's*, Oct/Nov99)

'How the Highland People Came To Be', Bruce Holland Rogers (*Realms of Fantasy*, Aug99)

'A Day's Work On the Moon', Mike Moscoe (*Analog*, Jul/Aug00)

'Generation Gap', Stanley Schmidt (*Artemis Magazine #1*, Spring 2000 issue)

'Jack Daw's Pack', Greer Gilman (*Century 5*, Winter 2000)

Short Stories

'macs', Terry Bisson (*F&SF*, Oct/Nov99)

'Scherzo With Tyrannosaurus', Michael Swanwick (*Asimov's*, Jul99)

'You Wandered Off Like a Foolish Child To Break Your Heart and Mine', Pat York (*Silver Birch, Blood Moon*, Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling, Ed., Avon, Mar99)

'The Golem', Severna Park (*Black Heart, Ivory Bones*, Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling, Eds., Avon, Mar00)

'The Fantasy Writer's Assistant', Jeffrey Ford (*F&SF*, Feb00)

'Flying Over Water', Ellen Klages (*Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, No. 7, October 2000)

Scripts

Galaxy Quest, David Howard and Robert Gordon (Dreamworks SKG, Dec99)

Being John Malkovich, Charlie Kaufman (Propaganda Films, Oct99)

The Green Mile, Frank Darabont, from the novel by Stephen King (Castle Rock/Warner Bros, Dec99)

Dogma, Kevin Smith (View Askew Productions, Nov99)

Princess Mononoke, Hayao Miyazaki and Neil Gaiman (Miramax Films/Studio Ghibli, Nov 99)

Unbreakable, M. Night Shyamalan (Touchstone Pictures, November 2000)

The Awards will be announced at the 2001 Nebula Awards Weekend to be held in Los Angeles.

Stoker Awards

The Horror Writers Association announced the nominees for this year's Bram Stoker Awards, recognising outstanding writing in the dark fantasy, horror or occult genre published in 2000. Winners will be announced at the 2001 Stoker Banquet in Seattle in conjunction with the World Horror Convention on May 25th-28th.

Novel

The Deceased by Tom Piccirilli
The Indifference of Heaven by Gary A. Braunbeck
The Licking Valley Coon Hunters Club by Brian A. Hopkins
Silent Children by Ramsey Campbell
The Traveling Vampire Show by Richard Laymon

First Novel

House of Leaves by Mark Z. Danielewski
The Licking Valley Coon Hunters Club by Brian A. Hopkins
Nailed by the Heart by Simon Clark
Run by Douglas E. Winter

Long Fiction

"God Screamed and Screamed, Then I Ate Him" by Lawrence P. Santoro
 "In Shock" by Joyce Carol Oates
 "The Man on the Ceiling" by Steve Rasnic Tem and Melanie Tem
 "Riding the Bullet" by Stephen King

Short Fiction

"Dead Cat Bounce" by Gerard Daniel Houamer
 "Fallen Angel" by Robert J. Sawyer
 "Gone" by Jack Ketchum
 "Mexican Moon" by Karen E. Taylor

Fiction Collection

City Fishing by Steve Rasnic Tem
Magic Terror: Seven Tales by Peter Straub
Up, Out of Cities That Blow Hot and Cold by Charlee Jacob
Wind Over Heaven and Other Dark Tales by Bruce Holland Rogers

Anthology

Bad News, Richard Laymon, ed.
Brainbox: The Real Horror, Steve Eller, ed.
Extremes: Fantasy and Horror From the

Ends of the Earth, Brian A. Hopkins, ed.
The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror: Thirteenth Annual Collection, Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, eds.

Nonfiction

At the Foot of the Story Tree: An Inquiry Into the Fiction of Peter Straub by Bill Sheehan
Hellnotes by David B. Silva and Paul F. Olson
Horror of the 20th Century by Robert Weinberg
On Writing by Stephen King

Illustrated Narrative

Cable 79-84 by Robert Weinberg
The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen by Alan Moore
Red Romance by Joe R. Lansdale
Spuds by Bernie Wrightson

Screenplay

The Cell by Mark Protosevich
Pitch Black by David Twohy, Ken Wheat and Jim Wheat
Requiem for a Dream by Darren Aronofsky and Hubert Selby Jr.
Shadow of the Vampire by Steven Katz
Unbreakable by M. Night Shyamalan

Work for Younger Readers

Be Afraid!, Edo van Belkom, ed.
The Christmas Things by F. Paul Wilson
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire by J.K. Rowling
The Power of Un by Nancy Etchemendy

Poetry Collection

Burial Plot by Sandy DeLuca
The Complete Accursed Wives by Bruce Boston
Paratabloids by Michael A. Arzen
A Student of Hell by Tom Piccirilli

Other Media

Back to the Black Lagoon by David J. Skjal
 Chiaroscuro by Patricia Lee Macomber, Steve Eller and Sandra Kasturi
 Gothic.net by Mehitobel Wilson
 Twilight Tales Reading Series, Tina L. Jens and Andrea Dubnick, producers.

Molly Gloss wins 2000 Tiptree Award

The winner of the 2000 James Tiptree, Jr. Award is *Wild Life* by Molly Gloss, (Simon and Schuster). The James Tiptree, Jr. Award is an annual literary prize for science fiction or fantasy, written by men or women, that explores gender issues.

More awards news on page 17.

Media News

Gary Wilkinson rounds up the latest on film & television

2-D Buffy

Following on from *Angel* there is to be another spin-off from *Buffy*, *The Vampire Slayer* -- an animated version of the original series. It will air on Fox in the US, probably early next year. The new version will take the show back to Buffy's high school years. Joss Whedon, *Buffy's* creator has said that each new thirty minute episode will allow "stories we could not afford to do" and that it will be "spooky, tough and epic" but still keep the shows unique vein of humour. Let's hope for something Manga-esque and not like the old *Trek* cartoon.

Sleeping Tiger

A surprise at the Oscars was epic kung-fu fantasy *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Although it did win Foreign Language Film award, which it had been tipped for, it also received unexpected gongs for Art Direction, Cinematography and Music (Score) -- highly unusual for a subtitled movie. Another genre winner was *The Grinch* with Rick Baker's team picking up the Oscar for Makeup. It was absolutely no surprise to anyone when *Battlefield Earth* virtually swept the board at the Razzies (The anti-Oscars celebrating the worst films of the year.)

Bond does Bradbury

Pierce Brosnan is to star in Renny Harlin's film adaptation of the Ray Bradbury short story 'A Sound of Thunder'. Hunters travel back in time to shoot a Tyrannosaurus Rex. Unfortunately one of the party steps on an insect and when they return to current times they find the world massively changed.

Quantum Trek 1

Well this is sort of project that convinces you that half of Hollywood is on drugs. John Cusack is bringing us *Cosmic Bandits*. Based on a book by A C Weisbecker Colombian marijuana smugglers are on the run and lost in the jungle when they come across...? Not too sure whether this will turn out to be sf as yet, but Cusack described it as "really original -- it deals with quantum mechanics in a gonzo, gung-ho sort of way." Right...

Quantum Trek 2

Rumour has it that Scott Bakula, who previously appeared as the time and body-jumping star in *Quantum Leap*, has been approached to be the captain in the new *Star Trek* TV series. It now looks almost certain that this will be set in the pre-Kirk 22nd Century, with 'gritty' starship interiors to predate the lyra, miniskirts and computers with transistors of the Original Series. But filming could be clobbered by the looming writers' and actors' strike, which also looks likely to hit the tenth *Trek* movie (which is planned to feature new look Romulans). Coincidentally one of the strike's organisers, the co-chair of one of the Screen Actor's guild wages and working conditions committee, is Armin Shimerman -- Quark from *Deep Space 9*.

Tron Returns

It finally looks like that *Tron 2.0* will see the light of day. Rumours abound that Disney will be producing a sequel to the 1982 original. Original director Steven Lisberger will write and possibly direct (returning after career killing disaster *Slipstream*.) The effects look likely to be handled by Pixar of *Toy Story* fame. The planned plot involves programmers inserting themselves into cyberspace to pull off the ultimate hack. Disney want as many of the original stars as they can get, including Jeff Bridges, to return to play powerful computer executives.

Bird Brains

A remake is planned of the Hitchcock classic *The Birds*. Jan 'Speed' De Bont has been approached to direct this time around. Intriguingly Melanie Griffith is

in talks to play the role originally played by her mother Tippi Hedren. The budget is \$40 million with a big chunk of it to be spent on special effects via KNB (the company behind the effects of, ahem... *Maniac Cop 3*.) Let's just hope for an improvement over Gus Van Sant's shot-for-shot version of *Psycho*.

Battle of the Battlestars

Glen Larson, the creator of the '70s show *Battlestar Galactica* and Richard Hatch, who played Apollo in the series, had been hawking around some CGI concept ideas for his vision of a new series at various conventions. Unfortunately he seems to have been beaten to it because Bryan Singer, responsible for the *X-Men* movie has reportedly been given the opportunity to produce a new series -- as long as he can fit it around the filming of *X-Men II*. Apparently Singer was a big fan of the original series and can recite the plot and cast lists of entire episodes by heart. The new show will ditch the last series of *Galactica* (and associated TV movies) where the Battlestar ended up in orbit around the 1980s Earth (to make it cheap to film) for continuity. The fleet will still be searching of the lost Earth whilst fleeing from the Cylon menace and visiting interesting places along the way. Sounds like a *Voyager* remake to me. Another *Trek* connection is that this will be a sort of *Galactica*, the *Next Generation* -- focusing on a new group of young actors, playing descendants of people from the first series, but still including some of those from the original show in minor roles as the fleet's new leaders. This series will also be 'darker' (just like the new *Trek*) in design and plot with infighting between the young and the old and many new models of Cylons (presumably coming to a toy shop near you soon).

See-you, Buffy!

A possible new coming to Channel Four is *Sikeside*, which has been described as *Buffy* meets *Trainspotting*. The series has been penned by comics writer Mark Millar. *Sikeside* is an area in Miller's hometown of Coatbridge which has been described as the Scottish Harlem. It definitely sounds more *Trainspotting* than *Buffy* in its outlook with vicious

vampire assaults on the police, sex with zombies and bestiality (the last apparently before the titles even roll!) It will invert the traditional Vampire predator/prey relationship: instead of aristocratic vampires feeding off the peasants; these bloodsuckers are from the sink-estate underclass. As long as Channel Four approve the scripts (they have already paid for them), production will be going ahead soon -- *Blair Witch* style: low budget, a cast of unknowns and filming on digital video.

Not Dead Yet

House of 1000 Corpses (got to be a contender for best title ever) the directional debut of Rob Zombie (from the group White Zombie) has been turned down by its backer Universal. The film is well-made and fulfils Mr, er, Zombie's creative intentions; apparently just not too tastefully, that's all, and the studio has surrendered the rights back to the director. He is now looking for new distributor.

It's a Rap

After his success with fat Buddhist 'saint' Steven Segal in the thriller *Exit Wounds*, the rapper DMX will appear in *Lazarus* aka *Crow 4* (but this one will have no connection to any of the previous *Crow* films) -- well, as long as he beats charges of assaulting two prison guards, that is. Flavour of the month Eminem will be playing a villain who is raised from dead in the film; apparently he's got no charges standing at this time.

Not content with the Motown version of the *Wizard of Oz*, *The Wiz*, that came out back in the 70s, *Grease* director Randal Klesier is planning to make a hip-hop version. Brandy will play Dorothy a "successful but lonely" music producer who, after an LA earthquake, falls down into a "strange, wondrous land called the Big Oz." Joining a host of rap stars (including Busta Rhymes, Queen Latifah and Eminem, again) is Little Richard as the Wizard.



A Sweet Tooth

Andrew Butler samples *Chocolat* and *Shadow of the Vampire*

Both these films are confections, and Euroconfections at that. *Chocolat* is based upon a best-selling novel by Joanne Harris, which I confess to having not yet read despite myriad recommendations. The story concerns a small town in France ruled with a firm moral stance, and the impact of the arrival of Vianne Rocher (Juliette Binoche) who is setting up a place to sell chocolate in Lent. As some of the inhabitants melt and accept the remarkable truffles and green triangles and nut clusters produced within the shop (Vianne has a knack for guessing what a customer's favourite chocolate is) so the moral resolve of others is stiffened, and a boycott is attempted. The arrival of a band of travellers on a boat, and the alliance Vianne forms with them, is the last straw for many.

Whereas in the book the moral soft centre is a Curate, here the killjoy is Alfred Molina's mayor, an aristocrat no less, the Comte de Reynaud, all slicked back hair, dark suits and daft moustache, not to mention the accent. The priest, on the other hand, is only a short while into his residency, and is given to singing rock 'n' roll songs. Molina, unfortunately, is a pantomime villain, the sort of patriarch that would cancel a play his kids had been rehearsing for weeks. His insistence on the sanctity of marriage – when his own is far from stable – leads to him insisting that the abusive Serge (Peter Stormare) is reunited with Josephine (Lena Olin) who has taken shelter with Vianne. This has potentially catastrophic results.

Meanwhile Vianne seeks to reunite her landlady Armande Voizin (Judi Dench) with estranged daughter Caroline Claimont (a barely recognisable Carrie-Anne Moss from *The Matrix* and the excellent *Memento*). I can't but feel that Halstrom really wanted Julie Walters for the rôle. Much as I like Judi Dench (I saw her Cleopatra fifteen years ago and she acted Anthony Hopkins off the stage, and her Pru Forrest in *The*

Archers was award-winning material), the elderly and stubborn Armande has the unmistakable air of a character from a Victoria Wood sketch – somewhere between *Acorn Antiques* and *Dinnerladies*. Presumably Walters was too busy doing *Billy Elliot*. The part is a scene-stealer, even so.

With British actors, Molina and Dench, French actors, Juliette Binoche, Swedish actors, Olin and Stormare and American actors, Moss and Johnny Depp, the latter playing Oirish, there is a befuddling mixture of accents on display that sometimes gets in the way of the performances. Molina seems to be rehearsing for a series of *Allo, Allo*, as does veteran stage actor John Wood.

Let not this criticism get in the way though. The arrival of Vianne with her daughter on the back of the wind, wrapped up in red riding hoods, is quite magical, and with the voice-over the whole takes on the air of a fairy tale, albeit one with the darker shades of narrative that the early fairy tales had before the Victorians bowdlerised them. Vianne is haunted, by the spirit of Mexico, and more importantly by her childhood and her relationship with her mother, a relationship she is clearly repeating with her own daughter. The social scenes are a joy to behold – not since Alfonso Arau's *Como agua para chocolate* (1992) based on Laura Esquivel's novel (translated as *Like Water for Chocolate*) has chocolate been so sensuous and magical on screen. Thumbs up here, then, to Roger Pratt, who has worked with the Coen Brothers and Terry Gilliam. Depp, in little more than a cameo, is eminently watchable and plays a decent acoustic guitar.

The same internationalism affects *Shadow of the Vampire*, with Americans John Malkovich and Willem Dafoe in the major rôles, and actors such as Eddie Izzard and Udo Kier supporting. Malkovich was last seen in *Being John Malkovich* (and in a Eurostar advert

ripping this off), essentially a one-joke movie but a very good joke at that. This film is another one-joke movie – what if Max Schreck in F W Murnau's classic chiller *Nosferatu* (1922) were not just an obscure actor but a method actor, even a real vampire? This is more than enough to sustain a sketch, but not really enough to hang a whole movie on.

It is fun enough to watch Murnau despair of ever getting through the troubled movie (he'd had copyright problems with the Stoker estate over its links to *Dracula*) before all his cast and crew has been drunk, but it's not quite funny enough. Izzard is poorly cast, not sparkling in his usual manner. The benchmark for this kind of thing is still Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein* – the *Scream* franchise notwithstanding – or even Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Hunters*, as well as James Whales' *The Old Dark House*. This film is neither frightening nor funny enough; by aiming at two targets it seems to miss both. Malkovich is over the top as German dictator/director, and Dafoe is fabulously uncanny as Schreck, but it's not enough.

Design wise, the film is remarkable, recreating the film of both the German Expressionist cinema of the 1920s and 1930s and the Universal Horror sequence of the early 1930s. However, from all accounts the real story of the making of *Nosferatu* is more interesting than this utter fiction. Producer Nicolas Cage has not delivered the goods here, alas, and after *8mm* he's got a lot of making up to do. Given this film and the recent capitalist revisioning of *A Christmas Carol* and *It's a Wonderful Life* in the shape of *The Family Man*, plus the disturbing thought of him in the title rôle of *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, suggests a long wait.



I want my DVD

When Arnie said: "I'll be back", he was right. Gary S. Dalkin on the return of *The Terminator*

I am going to assume we've all seen *The Terminator*. So the point is, assuming you like the film, should you buy this DVD set? Other than an additional end credit honouring Harlan Ellison, the film is exactly the same cut as released in UK cinemas in January 1985. James Cameron is famed for making 'Special Editions', (see my DVD reviews of *The Abyss* (1989) and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991)), but there's none of that here. There are seven 'terminated' scenes on the second DVD, but there is no option to watch them in context within the film.

One thing is different however. The sound. I saw *The Terminator* at the cinema once in 1985, and again in 1988, and have seen it several times via the original sell-through video release. Both at the cinema and on video, the film was in mono. At the cinema the sound was perfectly clear, with completely comprehensible dialogue, but as we expected of local cinemas in those days (and often still do) the audio was nothing special. The video transfer, in addition to having slightly more picture information at the top and bottom, and rather less at the sides, offered the same mono soundtrack, but with little dynamic range and a fair degree of hiss. Making a direct scene by scene comparison with the DVD, the difference is remarkable. Not only is the anamorphically enhanced 1.85:1 picture vastly more detailed, with far stronger colour saturation and contrast, but the sound is elevated to an entirely new level. Obviously this now available quality existed in the original sound recordings, but given the low budget of the film and the lack of surround sound equipment in most cinemas in the 1980s, the film was released in mono. Here the

original sound elements have been remixed with James Cameron's approval into a new Dolby Digital 5.1 soundtrack. Everything has far greater depth, clarity and dynamic range, which for many fans will mean nothing more than that the many action scenes sound much more ferocious than before; not that the sheer visceral impact here quite matches anything from more recent, much more expensive movies.

However, there is something much more interesting than mere audio-collateral damage here. The soundtrack is used much more to enhance the subtext of the film. The world in which the characters in *The Terminator* live, is like our own, permeated with electronics and machinery. We see machines everywhere, from hairdryers and Walkmans (which can really be bad for your health) to answering machines, video recorders, telephones, cars, garbage trucks, construction site equipment and industrial robots. But now we hear them everywhere too. From the hum of air-conditioning and a general low-level city thrum in many scenes, through the specific details of distant police sirens and a helicopter passing low in the background (this as Reece escapes from police early in the film, establishing a connection with the threat of the flying Hunter-Killers we have seen in the opening future war, sequence) we are now completely enveloped by the lifebreath of machines.

Many 1980s films saved money by using electronic rather than orchestral scores. *The Terminator* makes a major virtue of this necessity (one of the documentaries on the second DVD notes that by post production there was no money left for the music) with Brad Fidel's minimalist, electro-percussive score often breaking down the boundary between music, sound-effects and machine noise. He employs rhythms which could be the pulse of machines, or the pounding heartbeat of a fleeing human, the new sound mix extravagantly spreading his score around the speakers so it fuses seamlessly with the sound design and aforementioned machine sounds. Often anticipating the musical nightmare that is modern 'dance' and 'techno', this is nevertheless genuine improvisational composition to highly focused effect: for all its modernism following the leitmotif

approach to film scoring which dates back at least as far as Wagner's operas and finds prominence in everything from Max Steiner's *King Kong* (1933) to John Williams' *Star Wars* (1977-2005) saga. It is also music based on a strongly emotional and foreboding main theme, which adds greatly to the cumulative impact of the unfolding drama. So impressive is Fidel's work in this audio remix it is only to be regretted that the DVD has missed the opportunity to include an optional isolated music track.

For once the use of pop music is also exemplary. Particularly so in the first part of the set-piece suspense-action sequence in the *Tech-Noir* bar. An entirely apposite pop-Goth number (sounding not unlike early *All About Eve* gone Californian) yearns with the fever of rampant teenage hormones as oblivious celebrants gyrate in a dance of death. As the sequence turns into eerie, lull-before-the-storm slow motion, the camera focuses on one carefree young woman with a hypnotically swaying red skirt in much the same way Spielberg would later pick out the girl in the red coat in *Schindler's List* (1994). And as this happens the song is slowly swallowed by metallic reverberation, slipping inextricably into the cold terror of Fidel's score. It is one of the great suspense set-pieces, perfectly constructed, elongating time in exactly the way time does elongate when something dreadful is in the process of unfolding with the remorselessness of inevitability, before the carnage begins in a sequence which, along with the later police station shoot-out, almost certainly influenced the dawn of the Hong Kong *Heroic Bloodshed* genre a year or so later with John Woo's seminal *A Better Tomorrow* (1986).

All that remains on the first DVD are two versions of the screenplay accessible only via a DVD-ROM drive (the cover says three versions, but the third is actually on the second disc and can be read from a television screen via a conventional DVD player).

The second disc offers two 4:3 ratio documentaries. An hour long reasonably in-depth account of the making of the film, including interviews with all the main players, and an 18-minute conversation between Cameron and

Arnold Schwarzenegger filmed in 1992. Both are interesting, though what is missing is any real analysis. We are told that the film is 'great' and that it contains deeper themes, but only in the most superficial terms - the importance of the seemingly most insignificant individual - what these might be. Certainly everyone keeps well clear of the potentially horrendously controversial pro-life argument implicit in the film; at one point the detective leading the hunt for The Terminator points out that he/it is the ultimate retroactive abortionist. Likewise it is left for the viewer to make what they will of the initials of the unseen future saviour of mankind, and of the other elements of Christian allegory scattered throughout the story.

There are TV and cinema trailers, and much more interestingly, the seven aforementioned 'terminated' scenes (strangely, the trailers are presented anamorphically enhanced, while the 'terminated' scenes are not). Two of these prove that the direction of the second film, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, wasn't an afterthought, but existed in the material filmed for the original movie. Arguably two scenes, one in which Sarah Connor decides she and Reece should blow-up Cyberdyne Systems before they can ever develop the technology which leads to Skynet, and a second, which shows Sarah being taken away by ambulance after the final confrontation and has the camera pan-up to reveal the name of the factory as Cyberdyne, should have been left in the film. The former would have given a good reason for Sarah and Reece taking a motel room near the Cyberdyne complex, and the latter more satisfactorily complete the time-travel loop on which the film is posited.

The second disc is completed by a series of photo galleries of publicity, behind-the-scenes and special effects images. The only problem with these is that the pictures are often far too small, appearing with a vast border within the middle of the screen. The whole, together with a minimally informative eight-page booklet, comes in a foldout cardboard case which fits into a card slipcase. Throughout the design is very good, though the animated and scored menu system lacks the sheer polish of the US *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*

set. Indeed, while nowhere near as extensive as that release, a functionally identical version of which should be available here by the time you read this, is still a first class DVD set which demonstrates that UK companies are beginning to take the format seriously.

The credit for Harlan Ellison is really rather bemusing. None of the elements in *The Terminator* are original. There had been time travel, killer robots and megalomaniac supercomputers aplenty in SF before. What James Cameron did was weave stock genre elements together into his own story. As a time travel narrative it was not original or complex, even by cinematic standards, certainly not compared to the near contemporaneous *Back to the Future* (1985). In-fact, if one were to trace the cinematic antecedents of the movie one might look to a trinity of *Colossus: The Forbin Project* (1969), *Westworld* (1973) and *Time After Time* (1979). The former clearly anticipates the entire Skynet storyline, whilst also making two direct references to *Frankenstein*, which of course is the grandfather of all such stories. *Westworld* the cinema's first great out-of-control humanoid robot relentlessly hunting down human prey, while the central story of *The Terminator* is essentially a variation on *Time After Time*. In that film an unstoppable killer of young women time travels to modern day San Francisco, followed by a weaker, more ordinary man. The latter of these falls in love with a young woman from the present, finding himself fighting desperately to save her from the time-travelling killer. There is even a scene in which the hero is held in police custody, accused of being the killer, and a scene in which the killer murders the 'wrong' young woman in the heroine's apartment. The only real difference, apart from style, is that protagonist and antagonist come from the past rather than the future. Our hero is H.G. Wells (an excellent Malcolm McDowell), our villain Jack the Ripper (a likewise superlative David Warner). *Time After Time* actually remains one of the most underrated films in the history of science fiction, and it is to be hoped that it will be released soon on a high quality DVD and find the wider audience it really does deserve.

One last point. *The Terminator* was

originally certificated 18, both at the cinema and on video. Those wondering if the film has been cut to obtain the lower 15 classification can be assured that it has not. Considering that not so long ago films where either given a higher certificate on video, or cut further than their cinema incarnations for video issue, or both, this is further evidence of the remarkable change of direction at the BFFC in the last two years. Personally, I am either too old or too sensitive, but I still find the film so nightmarish and horrifying - it sends more pleasurable shivers of dread and terror down my spine than any other film I have seen in a very long time - that I feel it should retain its original rating. Perhaps the new rating is an indication of how much our society has hardened in the last 16 years. If so I regret the time when *The Terminator* is re-classified PG and shown in an especially enhanced extraviolent 3D version on Sunday afternoon TV. In the meantime, *The Terminator* remains one of the most exciting, ingeniously crafted, intelligent and moving science fiction films ever made.

The Terminator

Directed by: James Cameron

Written by: James Cameron, Gale Anne Hurd and Bill Wisher

Cast

Arnold Schwarzenegger - The Terminator

Michael Biehn - Kyle Reese

Linda Hamilton - Sarah Connor

Paul Winfield - Traxler

Lance Henriksen - Vukovich

Produced by Gale Anne Hurd

Music by Brad Fiedel

Cinematography by Adam

Greenberg

Edited by Mark Goldblat

Special Effects by Stan Winston
An Orion Pictures release

MGM DVD 15917DVD Z1

1.85-1 anamorphically enhanced for widescreen televisions

Dolby Digital 5.1

Subtitles in various languages, including English 'hard of hearing' titles. Certificate 15.

Yesterday is far too far

Graham Andrews remembers James White

Graham was kind enough to send us the text of a speech he gave at the inaugural James White Short Story Award ceremony, held after last year's Octocon at the Irish Writers' Centre, Parnell Square, Dublin. It's a funny and moving tribute to a fine writer and I'm pleased to have the opportunity to be able to publish it here. (ed.)

Once in a great while, if we're lucky, someone like James White comes along to remind us that being polite is not a sign of weakness and that nice people don't always finish last. Having said that, however, Jim owned a water pistol and he knew how to use it.

But I don't want to get too serious. I'd just like to give you some idea of what it was like to be a member of the Belfast Science Fiction Group in the late 1960s and early 1970s, before the Ulster Troubles became more than a minor inconvenience that cut into our drinking time.

We used to free associate every other Thursday night in the old White's Tavern, which was not by way of being Jim's family business. That was his story, anyway. Nor is the old White's Tavern to be

confused with the new White's Tavern, especially on Wednesday evenings. Or so I've been told.

This unroyal 'we' included original members Bob and Sadie Shaw, Walt and Madeline Willis, George Charters, and – of course – James and Peggy White. There had also been a recent infusion of 'new bloods' like Frank McKeever, Seamus and Ann Lavery, Tony Moran, Ed and Ann Dilworth, Peter Crozier, and me ... Graham Andrews.

Looking back, I can't make up my mind whether the Belfast Science Fiction Group of those days was a think-tank or a drink-tank (The more things change...). But there was certainly a lot of talk – mostly blether, with the occasional wee thinky bit, and enough bad puns to fill ten Piers Anthony novels.

The one thing that never changed, however, was the general air of goodwill that prevailed among us. Sectarian politics were left outside the front door of White's Tavern – along with our shillelaghs and water pistols. As Jim once said in a TV interview: "I've got nothing

against Little Green Men, or Little Orange Men either."

I'd like to say that James White was the lone voice of reason in pan-Ulster fandom – some members came from as far away as Bangor, County Down – but he could be even loonier than Bob Shaw. I can say, however, that he gave unstinting expert advice to every would-be and shouldn't-be writer in the group. As did Bob Shaw, I must quickly add.

Like Socrates before him, Jim would gently pose questions and give cogent hints. Such as: "Do you really need that three-page description of a Martian sunset?", or "Send this story to *Astounding Science Fiction* – in 1947." Even, perhaps less gently: "It's your round." I made that last bit up (I think).

I offer as evidence a conversation we had in the old Blackthorn bar. White's Tavern had just been demolished as part of an unofficial urban renewal programme. It was almost like the fall of Trantor in Asimov's Foundation series. Anyway...

Jim brought up the idea of a

rich man who made regular use of organ transplants from his own family. Just before closing time he said: "This idea is too nasty for a James White story. Why don't you write it Graham?"

Looking upon Jim's suggestion as a compliment, I did write the story. 'You Are Old, Father William...' duly sold to *Dream* magazine, and I converted the thirty-odd quid into liquid assets. So, if ever a writer deserved to have a short-story ward named after him, that writer is James White.

But it wasn't all one way, believe you me. Like most writers, Jim didn't like to talk about his current work, except in the most general terms. He would, however, sometimes seek advice from the assembled company; especially over titles, which could be a problem with him. *The Silent Stars Go By* – inspired by his listening to 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' at a carol concert – was one of the happy exceptions.

Dark Inferno offers a good case in point. Jim had trouble titling this novel, about passengers of an abandoned spaceliner who take refuge in these claustrophobic plastic-pod things that get increasingly hot and humid. Or dark infernos, if you will.

Frederik Pohl, then editor of *Galaxy* magazine, wanted to use *Dark Inferno* for the serial version. But, as Jim told us: "I don't like *Dark Inferno*."

We kicked possible titles around White's Tavern for a while, leaving them all for dead – even my own brilliant suggestion of *The Pod People*. I'd have left in a huff, but I couldn't afford the fare. Then Frank McKeever asked Jim: "Why don't you call it *Space Balls*?"

There was a long pause, worthy of Sir Harold Pinter himself, before Jim saw fit to reply with: "I like *Dark Inferno*."

I, for one, still think that Frank's idea had the classic simplicity of all great thinking. And I seem to recall this film-producer type at the very next table, scribbling madly away on the back of a beer mat. In any case, Ballantine Books threw out *Dark Inferno* and used *Lifboat* instead. Alfred Hitchcock almost sued them.

It couldn't have been the punny-type wordplay that put Jim off the title *Space Balls*. Once, when Peggy asked him to mow the lawn instead of writing in his custom-built garret, he audaciously told her: "The pen is mightier than the sward."

Although James White took a proper pride in his work, he never treated readers with the contempt shown by some writers whom I don't have to name. That, of course, should have gone without saying. But it's nice, every once in a while, to say the things that all too often go without saying.

Every time I asked Jim to be Guest of Honour at a Belgian sf convention, he would reply without hesitation: "I'll be there, Graham. And the first drink is on you." I didn't mind all that much, however, because the last drink was always on him. "Thank you, Jim – and *sláinte*!"

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES FOR SALE



Recent donations and bequests mean that the Science Fiction Foundation has a large amount of sf/fantasy books and magazines for sale. Income from this goes to support the work of the Foundation, including its sf library at Liverpool.

For further details look at the website at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/~asawyer/sale.html>, or contact Andy Sawyer, Special Collections and Archives, University of Liverpool Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool L69 3DA, UK (e-mail: asawyer@liv.ac.uk).

'Do Not Sleep'

Gary Wilkinson stays up for Channel 4's late night extravaganza *4Later*

Very late night television can be a peculiar place full of American sports and poor TV movies. However you should not entirely overlook it -- it's not just for insomniacs, students or the unemployed -- especially Channel 4, because in the latter half of the week, and on into weekend, it presents its *4Later* strand of programmes. This strand, designed to cater for a diverse range of minority interests, actually comes close to Channel 4 original programming remit -- though not quite the examples of sailing and wine-tasting that Willie Whitelaw was given when he guided the channel's inception through parliament. C4 later, of course, became known in the tabloids as Channel 'Swore' and Channel 'Fwour' a reputation it has never really shook off, for good reason -- we get plenty of the 'Swore' and some of the 'Fwour' with *4Later*.

The programmes range from the deadpan card-sharps of *Late Night Poker* (which for some reason I find compulsively mesmerising) to the way-out *The Trip*. Some of these you are going to love and some you will hate. Many have a SF edge to them; below are some of my favourites.

The shows are introduced by 'The Collective' -- a series of web-cam vignettes submitted by viewers -- some are inspired, some mad, some truly awful and some completely hilarious; or often all four.

The aforementioned *The Trip* is simplicity itself: old footage with an added dance track. What makes *The Trip* so watchable is the choice of footage. A recent show included: early brightly coloured film of the American landscape leading into video of the clean up of Chernobyl, then back to America but this time industrial crop-spraying; the Black Panthers intermixed with the Ku Klux Klan; weird Soviet psychic experiments mixed with some contemporary computer adventure game -- all to an eclectic range of dance, trance and fuzz guitar.

Cult Crazy tracked down some of the truly bizarre fringe religions in the US (these people make old Hubbard's lot seem the epitome of sanity) -- and had moments of poignancy when you see how quickly these organisations can fall apart once the leader dies -- once place out in the desert with a huge church, and surrounding village is like a ghost town with only a half-dozen of burnt-out hippies left. But also the presenter, was not afraid to get angry at some of the obvious abuses he came across.

On a similar theme is *Disinflation* (which has a fantastic accompanying web site) a magazine show of Fortean and related topics, some serious, some humours. Topics have included an interview with comic writer Grant Morrison and a look at his *Invisibles* comic series, some truly frightening ecological

predictions leading to the end of the world and @TMARK (pronounced art-mark) an organisation that allows the sponsoring of anarchic political acts. Perhaps the most amusing recent subject was on a schism in a Satanic church -- a 500 pound Satanist, who is married to a Christian ("She's becoming more Satanic") and works as the DJ in a roller-disco, claimed that Satanism is not anti-Christian. Unfortunately his fellow worshippers disagreed.

From the weird to the ridiculous is *Troma's Edge TV* (if you have seen any of their films like the *Toxic Avenger* or *Class of Nuke 'em High* you'll get the idea). All I can say is this show single-handedly manages to redefine the word gratuitous as applied to nudity.

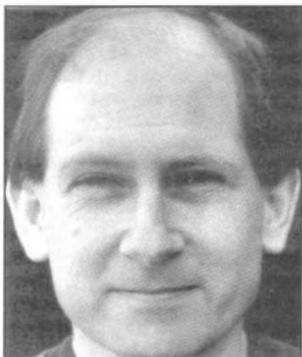
Vids is a zero-budget video and DVD review show (it's the naughty brother to the tomboyish *Bits* -- a computer-games programme fronted by three women with plenty of girl-power.) Produced in Glasgow *Vids* has been presented from various video-rental shops, via a decrepit tenement, to end up in a garage for the current series. However the two presenters -- Nige and Steff -- do get around and about the streets of the city and out into the nearby countryside. Nige is the foul-mouthed stocky Welsh one with cropped died-blond hair; Steff is the quieter lankly gothic Scot. In between Nige's hilarious mad

(Continued on page 15)



Resonances

Stephen Baxter's guest column



What's your favourite impossible gadget? Teleportation, warp drive, invisibility?

For me it has to be the Thunderbirds' camera detector.

The principle of this particular gizmo is simple. If anybody takes pictures, moving or still, of the mighty Thunderbird machines as they go about their heroic business, then Scott Tracy, at the controls of Thunderbird One, is alerted by a bleeping little gadget that looks strangely like an orange squeezer stuck to the wall. Secrecy, as everyone knows, is vital to International Rescue, so Scott swings into action, more often than not resolving the situation with extreme prejudice. (As Kim Newman once noted the Thunderbirds must be the most heavily armed rescue machines of all time – and, apparently, above the law.)

A simple concept, obviously useful, easily understood. Fine, but how does the camera detector work?

I suppose you could imagine a trace detector picking up the faint chemical scent of wet photography -

which was the technology assumed when the *Thunderbirds* shows were made. Maybe you could even detect the ghostly electromagnetic echo of digital photographs being taken. Even this is impressive enough: does the detector work all the way to the horizon? – what about passing spy planes and satellites? And remember, Scott is able to operate the sensor from within an atomic rocketplane, while in motion.

But the bad guys could surely eliminate such leaks by shielding their cameras in glass boxes to shut in the chemicals, and Faraday cages to close off the electromagnetic traces.

And anyhow there's more to the detector than this. The detector doesn't bleep every time a camera comes within imaging distance. It doesn't bleep even when nearby cameras are used on innocent subjects, like the toppling Empire State Building or passing giant alligators. No, it bleeps only when a camera is turned on an International Rescue machine.

Now, how does the detector know what picture the camera is taking?

Does it detect the glint of a lens turned its way? – but cameras don't need lenses, certainly not of glass. You could just use a pinhole, probably still beloved of physics teachers even in the year 2065. And anyhow James Bond long ago proved you could camouflage any camera.

Can the detector somehow pick up and process every image taken by every camera in the area, to see which ones who Thunderbirds technology? Maybe yes for digital cameras, by reading leaked signals

cleverly enough. But it's hard to see how you could do that with chemical imaging. And we already noted that you could screen emissions from any sort of camera reaching TB1.

None of this makes sense.

There is only one remaining possibility. It seems to me that the camera detector must do nothing less than pick up the intentions of the photographers! It's not the technology the detector sniffs out; it detects the evil purpose of a baddie trying to take a Thunderbird's picture. Maybe that Brains guy is smarter than we thought. In addition to inventing Thunderbird 2, a chess-playing robot and anti-gravity, he's come up with a device that can read minds.

Or maybe the answer is more subtle. Perhaps Scott, like some primitive peoples, senses that a little of his soul is stolen every time his photograph is taken. So Scott isn't a chisel-jawed astronaut's son after all, but a uniformed New Age spoon bender. In which case the thing on the wall is just a dummy to reassure techno-buff sceptics. Or maybe it really is an orange squeezer. It can get pretty hot at 15,000 mph.

I guess we'll find out in 64 years' time.

Next issue: *Star Trek's* holodeck. Think of the energy soaked up creating all that dummy matter: $E = mc^2$ squared, remember. No wonder it will take *Voyager* 70 years to get home ...



Books

Forthcoming books and publishing schedules, compiled by Janet Barron



Key

HB = hardback
TPB = trade paperback
PB = paperback

NOIP Now out in paperback

= Reissue

= nonfiction

******* Watch out for these

All others, first UK edition. Unless references are given, all quotes are from the publisher.

*******Chris Amies *Dead Ground* (Big Engine, May, PB, £7.99)

Kelley Armstrong *Bitten* (Little, Brown & Company, June, TPB, £10.99, 256 pp)

Mike Ashley (Editor) *The Mammoth Book of Awesome Comic Fantasy* (Constable Robinson, May, PB, £6.99, 512pp)

Isaac Asimov *Foundation* (Voyager, June, PB, £7.99, 240pp)

NOIP Iain M. Banks *Look to Windward* (Orbit, May, PB, £6.99, 416pp)

NOIP Stephen Baxter, Arthur C. Clarke *The Light of Other Days* (Voyager, May, PB, £5.99, 400pp)

James Blish *The Seedling Stars* (Millennium, June, PB, £9.99, 192pp)

NOIP Alice Borchardt *Wolf King* (Voyager, June, PB, £6.99, 384pp)

Ray Bradbury *Fahrenheit 451* (Voyager, June, PB, £7.99, 176pp)

Arthur C Clarke *Childhood's End* (Pan, PB, June, £6.99, 208 pp)

Richard Calder *Impakto* (Earthlight, May, PB £6.99, 368pp)

NOIP Storm Constantine *The Crown of Silence* (Millennium June, PB, £6.99, 432pp)

Storm Constantine *The Way of Light* (Victor Gollancz, June, HB, £16.99, 400pp)

Paul Cornell *Something More* (Victor Gollancz, June, HB/TBK, £16.99/£9.99, 400pp)

Raymond E. Feist *Krondor: Tear of the Gods* (Voyager, June, TPB, £10.99, 384pp)

Maggie Furey *Spirit of the Stone* (Orbit, June, HB, £16.99 432pp)

David Garnett *Space Wasters* (Orbit, May, PB, £6.99, 320pp)

NOIP Julia Gray *The Jasper Forest* (Orbit, June, PB, £7.99, 480pp)

NOIP Simon R Green *Beyond the Blue Moon* (Millennium, June, PB, £6.99, 416pp)

Jon Courtenay Grimwood *Pashazade* (Earthlight, May, HB, £12.99, 384pp)

Harry Harrison *Return to Eden* (Ibooks, June, PB, £10.99, 496pp)

NOIP Tom Holt *Valhalla* (Orbit, May, PB, £5.99, 256pp)

Tom Holt *Nothing But Blue Skies* (Orbit, May, HB, £15.99, 288pp)

Aldous Huxley *Brave New World* (Voyager, June, PB, £7.99, 288pp)

Ian Irvine *Dark Is the Moon* (Orbit, May, PB, £6.99, 704pp)

NOIP Kate Jacoby *Black Eagle Rising* (Millennium, June, PB, £9.99, 464pp)

NOIP Paul Kearney *The Second*

Empire (Millennium, May, PB, £5.99, 304pp)

NOIP Katharine Kerr *Polar City Nightmare* (Millennium, May, PB, £6.99, 368pp)

Mercedes Lackey *Brightly Burning* (Victor Gollancz; June, HB/TBK, £16.99/9.99 324pp)

Fritz Leiber *The First Book of Lankmar* (Millennium, June, PB, £6.99, 768pp)

Roger Levy *Reckless Sleep* (Millennium, June, PB, £6.99, 352pp)

Megan Lindholm *The Reindeer People* (Voyager, May, PB, £5.99, 336pp)

George Mann *The Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (Constable Robinson, PB, £9.99, 640pp)

NOIP George R.R. Martin *A Song of Ice and Fire Book 3: a Storm of Swords* (Voyager, June, PB, £6.99, 688pp)

NOIP Jack McDevitt *Deepsix* (Voyager, June, PB, £5.99, 400pp)

*******Ian McDonald *Ares Express* (Earthlight, HB, May, £16.99, 352pp)

NOIP Ian McDonald *Desolation Road* (Earthlight, PB, May, £6.99, 384pp)

L.E. Modesitt Jr *Magi of Cyador* (Orbit, June, PB, £7.99 672pp)

Michael Moorcock *Elric* (Millennium, May, PB, £6.99, 800pp)

Ward Moore *Bring the Jubilee* (Millennium, June, PB £6.99, 208pp)

Larry Niven *Protector* (Orbit, June, PB, £5.99, 432pp)

K.J. Parker *Shadow* (Orbit, June, TPB, £10.99, 448pp)

Stel Pavlou *Decipher* (Simon &

Schuster, May, HB, £12.99, 624pp)

Frederik Pohl *Jem* (Millennium, May, PB, £9.99, 304pp)

Terry Pratchett *The Rincewind Trilogy* (Victor Gollancz, May, HB, £16.99 758pp)

Terry Pratchett *Thief of Time* (Doubleday, May, HB, £16.99, 329pp)

***Alastair Reynolds *Chasm City* (Victor Gollancz, May, HB/TPB, £16.99/£10.99, 480pp)

Adam Roberts *On* (Victor Gollancz, June, HB, £16.99, 396pp)

NOIP Kim Stanley Robinson *Red Mars* (Voyager, June, PB, £7.99, 672pp)

Eric Frank Russell *Next of Kin* (Millennium, June, PB, £9.99, 192pp)

Robert Silverberg (Editor) *Nebula Awards Showcase 2001*, The Year's Best SF and Fantasy Chosen by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (Harvest Books, May, PB, £12.99, 272pp)

Gus Smith *Feather and Bone* (Big Engine, April, PB, £7.99).

Brian Stableford *Swan Songs: The Complete Hooded Swan Collection* (Big Engine, June, PB, £8.99).

Connie Willis *Passage* (Voyager, June, TPB, £11.99, 512pp)

Roger Zelazny *Damnation Alley* (Pocket Books, May, PB, £7.99, 192pp)

Marion Zimmer Bradley *Priestess of Avalon* (Voyager, May, PB, £6.99, 400pp)



'Do Not Sleep' (Continued from page 12)

scatological rants against all that is wrong in the world are some very incisive film reviews. They tend to cover the odd mainstream block-buster, plus the surf/skate/snowboard sports vid, martial-arts, foreign, horror, sf -- in fact everything that could come under the heading 'cult'. This included the occasional (oh okay, every episode, straight after the mid-prog ads) 'sex' film -- but never boring straight porno; this is more likely to be art-house stuff (i.e. *In The Realm Of The Senses*), one of those truly awful '70s sex comedies or an 'educational' sexual self-help film. *Vids* is never going to be to everyone taste but it is funny, and kind of grows on you. It's probably the best film review program on at the moment; in fact, *Vids* has become a bit of cult itself.

Perhaps the most obviously science-fictional programme is *SF:UK*, which, as I write, has just broadcast its third episode. This is a programme that is not afraid to ask difficult questions and then come up with the answers. The show appears to be based on or at least inspired by the book of the same name by Daniel O'Brien and Kim Newman; the book itself has been promoted after the programme. The show is ably present by Matthew De Abaitua, someone I have not seen on television before, with some contributions by such talking-heads as Kim Newman -- showing his erudition as usual, Charlie Higson, best known for *The Fast Show* and the *League of Gentlemen's* Mark Gatiss. The latter is obviously a fan; talking

animatedly about his affection for the old Universal horror films. The first episode was a fairly prosaic look at H. G. Wells; though it did include insight into Well's radical nature. However the show really got into stride with the second episode on *Frankenstein*, concentrating on the classic film including the director, James Whales', camp touches. The latest, as I write -- 'Big Brother goes Hardcore' -- was truly excellent. Framed around an interview with Nigel Neal, this looked at his obscure *Year of the Sex Olympics* -- which in this era of reality TV looks frighteningly prophetic. I wonder if those stuck on that Hebridean island have ever seen it? To titillate an audience board with watching sex all the time, the powers that be film a couple in a remote highland croft, adding a tramp who is, unknown to the couple, a serial killer. The programme went on to look at *Quatermass*, briefly *1984*, and *The Prisoner*. It was insightful enough to note the attractions of paranoia -- it is far better to think they are out to get you than thinking you are insignificant and no one cares. Great stuff, I can hardly wait for the next episode looking at the attractions of when it all goes out of control as *Thunderbirds* meets Ballard's *Crash*.

This has been only a brief overview of some of the highlights of *4Later* and there is plenty more to be discovered. So set your videos to record or even better... just don't sleep.

Z Z Z Z Z z z z z ...

Whispers of Terror and other tales

Mark Greener on Dr Who's new audio adventures

For many of us, watching The Doctor battle Cybermen, Daleks and Ice Warriors each Saturday teatime was our introduction to SF. And *Dr Who* is still regarded with rose-tinted nostalgia by many SF fans. However, five years after the TV-movie, *Dr Who* remains an active commercial franchise, spawning books, videos and DVDs, as well as an on-going series of new audio adventures.

Videos and DVDs allow us to revisit loved episodes. The books, which are becoming increasingly adult and sophisticated – to match their audience – offer a diverting read. But I approached the audio adventures, issued each month by Big Finish, with some trepidation. I hate audio adaptations of books and very rarely listen to Radio 4 plays. However, I had a long, boring car journey to a long, boring meeting. And listening to *Dr Who* seemed a good way to pass the time.

I began with *Red Dawn*, which re-introduces the Ice Warriors – one of my favourite monsters. The story, which explores the Warrior's code of honour – they're a sort of interplanetary samurai – paints man as the real monster. It's a taut, atmospheric tale with moments of real tension and strong performances from Peter Davidson and Nicola Bryant (Peri). I was hooked.

The series – now up to 17 stories – contains some real gems. *Whispers of Terror*, as its name suggests, uses the aural medium fully, with a creature of sound in a story of political intrigue. *The Spectre of Lanyon Moor* brings the Brigadier out of retirement into a creepy tale of Cornish mystery. *The Apocalypse Element* unites Lalla Ward (Romania) and Colin Baker in a marvellous battle against the Daleks that I would have loved to have seen on TV.

There are – as befits *Dr Who* – some more pedestrian episodes, such as the first story, *Sirens of Time*, which unites the fifth, sixth and seventh doctors. They spark well off each other. But, like the television stories that reunited the various incarnations, these never seem to work as well as you think they should. And just as in the television stories, the audio adventures boast strong supporting casts – including Garth Thomas and Jacqueline Pearce from *Blake's 7* and James Bolam. (Both the *Likely Lads* have now appeared in Doctor Who, either on TV or tape.)

The audio adventures allow writers (and the writing is often a delight) to explore events that never made it onto TV, such as a meeting between the Brigadier and the sixth Doctor. (Indeed, the sixth doctor is a firm favourite on

the audio stories. The adventures allow Colin Baker to rehabilitate his incarnation, never the most popular on TV. I always liked his somewhat darker interpretation, which harked back to Hartnell.)

The latest titles are generating considerable excitement. Since his appearance in the 1996 TV movie, Paul McGann's eighth incarnation has become part of the mainstream *Dr Who* continuum, with books developing his character. Now in a series of stories, McGann brings the incarnation to life. The first *Storm Warning* offers an alternative history of the R101. McGann is brilliant. At times, his tongue might be in his cheek, but when it matters, he brings suitable gravitas to the role.

The latest story *Sword of Orion* introduces McGann to the cybermen. If anything, this is stronger than *Storm Warning*. Just as with the Darleks, when you can't see the cybermen they somehow seem all the more menacing.

These adventures are worth checking out, if you have any lingering nostalgia for *Dr Who*. More than 30 years after I started watching the series, I look forward to each of the audio adventures almost as much as I once anticipated the TV programme. And that's just about the greatest compliment I can pay.

BSFA Awards

The results, and the new Awards Administrator introduces herself

BSFA Awards 2000

Chris Hill, retiring Awards Administrator, writes:

The results of the 2000 British Science Fiction Association Awards were announced on Sunday, 15th April at the Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, Leicestershire, UK.

The results were as follows:

Best Novel: *Ash: A Secret History* by Mary Gentle

Best Short Fiction: 'The Suspect Genome' by Peter F. Hamilton (*Interzone* 156)

Best Artwork: 'Hideaway' by Dominic Harman (Cover *Interzone* 157)

Dominic Harman was at the ceremony to receive his award.

Congratulations to all the winners and sincere commiserations to the losers.

If you require any further information about the 2000 BSFA Awards then please contact me at awards@sandman.enterprise-press.com

I would also like to announce that after four years I am stepping down as BSFA Awards Administrator. Thank you to everyone who has been so supportive during that time. The

new Awards Administrator is Tanya Brown, currently responsible for the BSFA web site, and all enquiries not related to the 2000 Awards just presented should now be directed to her. She can be contacted by email at: amaranth@avnet.co.uk and by post at:

Flat 8,
Century House,
Armoury Road,
London,
SE8 4LH,
UK

Talking of whom, Tanya takes this opportunity to introduce herself to those of you who already haven't had the pleasure of meeting her.

I've been reading science fiction for nearly thirty years, writing about it for twenty years, reviewing it for ten ... Given this neat measuring-out of my genre career in decades, it seems to be about time for another phase change. With this in mind I offered to take over administration of the BSFA Awards when Chris Hill announced his retirement from the role.

Plans? Oh, I have plans. The very first part of my plan is to dice Chris's brain (subject to his consent: I may settle for a more traditional hand-over package) so that the changeover is as smooth as possible. Chris has done a great job of ensuring that the

BSFA Awards are an important milestone in British science fiction, and I hope to build on that success. As Webmistress of the BSFA web site, I'll be in an excellent position to introduce online nominations, available to BSFA members only. All nominated books will be available to buy via the Awards page – I know how frustrating it is when you can't find the novel that everyone's talking about! I also hope to include relevant reviews from *Vector*, and, where possible, links to author web sites. I'm looking forward to hearing what the voters want, too. Should we reinstate the Media award, last given in 1991? Do we need a separate class of award for series as a whole, rather than hoping – as with Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars* trilogy – that one component, read alone, will be better than any single-volume work that year? Is the Artwork award past its sell-by date? And what about this Internet thing, then? The future is here. Say hello nicely!

2000 PKD Award

Michael Marshall Smith has won the Philip K. Dick Award (for distinguished SF published as a paperback original in America) for his novel *Only Forward* (Bantam Spectra, 2000, in the US; Harper Collins, 1994, in the UK). The award was announced on Friday, April 13th, at Norwescon 24 in SeaTac, Washington. Runner-up was Scott Westerfeld, for *Evolution's Darling* (Four Walls Eight Windows, 2000).

Top ten sf films of all time

Readers reply to Gary Wilkinson's piece in issue 147

Gary's article a couple of issues ago generated a fair amount of comment. First off, Martyn Taylor takes strong exception to some of Gary's choices (and Gary gets the chance to reply):

Martyn writes: If you want an anodyne selection of sf films then Gary Wilkinson's top ten will serve. Not many will argue with many of his choices, although the latest arrived in 1988, nearly 20% of cinema history ago. Is he allowing the passage of time to add a patina of accepted wisdom to those named?

I reject only one out of hand. I thought *Brazil* was great at the time, easily better than its contemporary, *Back to the Future*. Rewatching it shows that, almost unique in the Gilliam canon, there is less to *Brazil* than meets the eye first time around, just the usual suspects doing their respective things, and to nothing like the effect they achieved in *Time Bandits*, which is still a joy. What about *Twelve Monkeys* if we look for something more recent, or *The Matrix*?

Blade Runner the best of the ten? Probably, and that is despite the voiceover and the ending. Just think what *Gladiator* would have been like with as good a story as *Blade Runner*. But then, Dick didn't write the source material for that.

Anyone who thinks *The Terminator* is better than *Judgement Day* does not appreciate better writing and better acting (*Ouch!* - ed.). Even Arnie is halfway okay in *Judgement Day*. So the ending is sentimental. So what? By comparison with *Gone With the Wind* it was written by Raymond Chandler!

Gary wholly ignores the non-Anglophile (-phone?, ed.) mainstream movie (because he hasn't seen them? - (*extra ouch!* - ed.)). Tarkovsky's *Solaris* is worth consideration, if only because Tarkovsky was a cinematic stylist on par with Kubrick and Scott. My opinion is that his *Stalker* is one of the five best films made anywhere, anytime, better

than anything on Gary's list.

Akira is probably the best anime of all, but when I mentioned this to my son, who is a manga illustrator himself, he tied me to the chair, superglued my eyes open and made me watch *Ghost in the Shell* for forty-eight hours. I suppose Ian Watson would understand about aliens on the same planet.

Others? *Dark Star* has enough ideas to keep most directors going for years, and it is funny (see where Mike Myers ripped off the 'Bohemian Rhapsody in a Pinto' scene. *Timecop* has its moments (*but not the bit about carbon dating the Confederate gold shipment!* - ed.), and Ron Silver, although it also has *The Muscles from Brussels*. *Planet of the Apes* has to be a contender, and I wonder about any list which does not include *Silent Running*. See it. Bruce Dern can actually act!

Ah, my train of thought has now arrived at the ultimate sf film trope, Woody Allen, Diane Keaton and the Orgasmatron. I can hear those nice young men in the clean white coats coming to lift me bodily from the word processor....

Gary replies: Anodyne? Possibly, though your reply implies I have at least provoked some argument! 'Is he allowing the passage of time to add a patina of accepted wisdom to those named?' No, I just don't think that any truly great sf films were made in the last ten years... perhaps *Fight Club* but that is way out on the edge of sf and I was trying to keep to films that are at the core of the genre. I was fairly impressed by Weir's *The Truman Show* (if only for making Jim Carrey look half-human for once, instead of the soulless android from the planet Zarg he appears in most of his movies) but in the end it is just a lightweight satire and not enough for the top ten. I loved *Pi*, but that is going to be too art-house for most tastes. *Twelve Monkeys*? Well it is a remake (*of La Jetée*). Brad Pitt's histrionic acting is supremely annoying and the ending is so

predictable. *The Matrix*? Visually impressive, but it is all flash and dash. It is too obviously 'part 1', there are huge plot holes and far too much bad philosophy -- what the hell was all that nonsense with the spoon? And too much was stolen -- the idea (and some sets!) from *Dark City* and the action from John Woo. The directors' previous *Bound* was much more interesting film.

The Director's Cut is the best version of *Blade Runner* -- though it is not definitive. Scott was too busy at the time to notice that the people producing the new version -- using the American rather than international version of the original film as their basis for the changes -- left out fifteen seconds of gore and violence he wanted to be kept in.

Judgement Day better than the original version of the *Terminator*? No way. The sequel is impressive the first time you see it but on repeated viewing Arnie's new caring, sharing, non-killing Terminator is an emasculated bore compared to the earlier rock-hard killing machine.

Tarkovsky is overrated -- he is not even close to Scott or Kubrick -- *Solaris* was an incoherent boring mess, not even visually interesting. Foreign Language Film? Try *Alphaville* or Luc Besson's *Le Dernier Combat (The Last Battle)* -- although there is no language in that one...

Ghost in the Shell is rather good, though it makes *Akira* look like a model of coherence. The trouble with most anime is that it is just a précis of the original manga source comic.

"If only Tina Turner had been in that one..." If only Tina Turner could act.

Dark Star is too mired in its hippy origins (though still funny in parts). I've not caught up with *Timecop* as yet (probably because every other Van Damme film I've seen has been dire -- though I must admit I've got some mindless affection for *Universal Soldier*).

Planet of the Apes? Planet of the Over-Actors more like and I cannot get all those abysmal sequels out of my mind. I hope the re-make is an improvement. *Silent Running?* And you say *Judgement Day* is sentimental. *Silent Running* has a stupid plot (Biologist takes almost forever to realise plants are dying because of the obvious lack of sunlight, and that is just one example) and cute robots (urgh!). (Have to agree with Gary on that one, ed.)

Woody Allen... for me hell would be being chained to my seat and forced to watch a Woody Allen retrospective, forever.

Steve Kerry wrote: I mostly agree with Gary's choice of movies, but there are two that I simply could not leave out.

Silent Running (1971) Directed by Doug Trumbull.

Earth has been devastated by nuclear war. The last remaining habitats, with a careful balance of flora and fauna, are placed in a series of environmental domes and sent into orbit around Saturn. One day they will be recalled, and used to replant the Earth. But when the call does come, it is not to return the domes but to jettison and destroy them. One man's battle to save the last forest, and the steps he must take to do it, makes a powerful movie experience. The environmental statement is just as relevant today as when it was made, perhaps even more so. Filmed on a shoestring budget (£1.35m), this movie should be compulsory viewing for all SF fans.

The Day The Earth Caught Fire (1961) Directed by Val Guest.

A series of nuclear tests has caused the Earth to wobble on its axis, and a handful of newspaper reporters in London slowly uncover the full implications. There are no flashy explosions, and no big special effects beyond a thick fog. Certainly there are no superheroes to step in and save humanity at the last minute. It is this understatement that makes the film so powerful. No doubt a Hollywood version would see half of America destroyed (the rest of the world doesn't matter), with lots of earthquakes and

hundreds of screaming people. And it wouldn't be half as good. This movie is 40 years old, and holds its age very well. Again, compulsory viewing.

Colin Odell & Mitch Le Blanc offer their own alternative top ten:

Gary Wilkinson's list of the ten best Science Fiction Films did what all good "best of" lists do - provoke a response. Whilst there is no denying the place of any of the films on Gary's list (with the possible exception of Mad Max 2) in a top ten, such a limited number inevitably leaves omissions, more so in a list that has two Ridley Scott films and two Stanley Kubricks but no John Carpenters. So rather than looking at each entry here is an alternative list, just as valid and presumably just as wrong to everyone else's!

Forbidden Planet (Wilcox, 1956). Great effects. Great script. Laugh at Leslie Nielsen. Shiver at the genuinely terrifying monsters from the id (still one of Disney's finest hours). Gawk at Alta's costumes. Wish you had a cool robot that can manufacture whisky. Marvel at the finest matte and model work of all time. Theramins. Triangular doors. Shakespeare. Big, bright, wide, classic.

They Live (Carpenter, 1988). Which Carpenter could you choose? The hilarious *Dark Star*? The awesome *The Thing*? The exhilarating *Escape From New York*? The classics keep rolling, but *They Live's* combination of left field idealism, ugly aliens, shades, cheesy dialogue and wrestling superstar Rowdy Roddy Piper go a long way to selecting this as the unfairly overlooked film of his impressive oeuvre. And he's all out of gum.

Tetsuo: The Iron Man (Tsukamoto, 1992). Not to be confused with the equally excellent *The Iron Giant* (1999 - take your kids, pack some hankies, it's a tear jerker alright) Shinya Tsukamoto's Gatling gun-paced black and white underground cult film is an often unfathomable fusion of manga, Svankmajer-style animation, metal fetishism and sex and violence, set to one of the most pounding scores imaginable. Shocking, audacious and breathtaking.

Flash Gordon (Hodges, 1980). Forget *Get Carter*, this is Hodges' masterpiece. A gloriously camp Day-Glo comic book of a film splashed across a wide canvas. Fabulous script, impeccable design perfectly mirroring Raymond's drawings, top-notch casting. It's a deconstruction of American male. It's an S&M classic. It's got Peter Duncan getting bitten by a tree beast. Sex, drugs, whippings, flying creatures, bore worms, floating cities, Max Von Sydow in his finest role since *The Seventh Seal*, Brian Blessed chewing the scenery. Add that over-the-top Queen score and it's almost a musical as well. Unbeatable.

Fantastic Planet (Rene Laloux, 1973) Every frame screams European science fiction comics. Bizarre settings, strange creatures, truly alien in its outlook. Nothing like this could have come out of Hollywood and certainly not out of Disney. At times moving, at times surreal, at times mystifying and proof that Japan isn't the only country that can make decent animated sf.

Things To Come (William Cameron Menzies, 1936). Producer Alexander Korda proving that Britain could, at one time, more than compete in scale with other countries' productions. Huge sets that still impress, great ideas, props, etc. Science fiction with a brain but also great for the eye, a sort of British *Metropolis*.

The Day The Earth Stood Still (Wise, 1951). Robert Wise proves he is the Jack-of-all-genres this elegantly designed pacifist film. Proof that aliens don't always mean bad things, that Mars doesn't need women and that quality special effects can be used as an intrinsic part of the story rather than as the be all and end all of a film.

Mars Attacks! (Burton, 1996). The anti-thesis of such patriotic drivel as *Independence Day*. Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!* is so gleefully tasteless, dangerously bright and merciless in its rejection of Hollywood blockbuster rules (other than its unashamed delight in spectacle) you can't help but like it. Brimming with ideas but virtually plotless and quite possibly the most enjoyable way to throw \$85,000,000 of Warner Brothers' money on a huge pyre

(Continued on page 21)

PULPitations

Glenda Pringle finds that nostalgia ain't what it used to be

nos-tal-gia *n* [NL, fr. Gk *nostos* return home + NL *-algia*; akin to OE *genesan* to survive, Sk *t nasate* he approaches] (1770) 1 : the state of being homesick : HOMESICKNESS 2 : a wistful or excessively sentimental sometimes abnormal yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition; *also* : something that evokes nostalgia... (from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*)

A recent spate of thought-provoking editorials in SF magazines and the excellent *Destination: Mars* series on TV has set me wondering as to whether nostalgia is necessarily all it is cracked up to be. We all too often equate 'old' with 'better' and not just in SF of course. But were 'the good old days' better, or just different?

Stanley Schmidt, albeit in an editorial on religion and science fiction in the April 2001 issue of *Analog* got me thinking with the following observations:

There was a time, back when magazine science fiction was new, when it occupied itself mainly with speculations about future scientific discoveries and technological inventions – space travel, for instance, and what sorts of things might live on other planets. Such things were considered wildly visionary back then, and most of the stories were primarily about the ideas.

The ideas are still important, but the range and scope of science fiction's concerns have broadened dramatically. That

process started, perhaps, when John W Campbell was editing Analog (then called Astounding) and insisting that authors devote equal care and attention to the science and the fiction in their stories. Where an earlier story might have been primarily a showcase for an idea, such as the suggestion that satellites could be used for worldwide radio communication, a Campbell story based on the same idea would be more concerned with how that capability might affect the lives of human beings all over the world.

We still get the occasional nostalgic [my emphasis] call for a return to the older, simpler kind of "gadget" story; but most readers now prefer the more in-depth, multidimensional approach to examining the consequences of an idea. The trend toward broadening horizons that Campbell arguably started has continued for several decades, and science fiction now routinely concerns itself with the Big Questions. Things like the origins of life, the Universe, and everything; the meanings of life and death and humanity; and morality and ethics – that whole thorny complex of problems about how people should behave, and why...

Forgive the extensive quotation, but I felt it was important to let you know where I'm coming from here. My point being that times have changed and that SF has, out of necessity and sheer evolution, changed along with it.

Where once we thrilled to 'sensawonder' stories where the hero braves all odds to overcome an attack by little green men on a distant planet and return home, we're more likely these days to be met with a mundane, but nevertheless interesting, story about the day-to-day problems being encountered by a terraforming team on a planet carefully chosen for its near-Earth conditions. Is this necessarily a bad thing or are some of us (and I include myself to a certain extent) showing "a wistful or excessively sentimental sometimes abnormal yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition"?

As Schmidt points out, most people these days prefer the wider, more scientific approach. But why? Personally, I think it is because much of the need for, let alone desire to experience, 'sensawonder' has disappeared from people's lives. Man has been into space and walked on the moon, it was boring and ridiculously expensive in some people's opinion. When things started to go wrong (e.g., Apollo 13 and the Challenger disaster) it was shown to be dangerous and unpredictable. Very few people can cite anything beneficial that came out of the space program (although the man on the Clapham omnibus might pitch in with 'non-stick pans'). This is why my heart went out to those dogged scientists building a mock Mars landing site in the US desert in the *Destination: Mars* series.

How are these guys going to spark interest in a Mars landing when Joe Normal has, he feels, achieved his lifetime ambition by getting a season ticket to Manchester United/Washington Redskins/you fill in the blank? If life is grand right here, why should we bother going to an inhospitable, not-as-red-as-we-thought planet? Because it's there and because we can if we really want to and because, once again, we all would benefit from the spin-off technologies in our everyday lives! Ho hum...there I go, off dreaming again...

I firmly believe that our modern interest in SF stories that deal with the practicalities of discoveries and technologies rather than the rip-roaring adventure surrounding their acquisition is a direct off-shoot of people's loss of interest in space exploration coupled to the fact that we now know that there are no little green men on Venus and that we can't just step out of a spaceship on Mars and hop on the nearest canal barge for a ride to the Intergalactic Hotel on Main Street. Because we know so much more about the universe, we have in our everyday lives ceased to wonder or even speculate about what's out there. Thank goodness our science fiction authors haven't!

Robert Silverberg, in his two-part editorial on the influence of the New Wave of 1965-72 on science fiction (*Asimov's*, March & April 2001), has I think pinpointed the very moment when SF changed from the old to the new – when 'sensawonder' gave way to revolution and transformation, and finally the modern,

'streetwise' SF we all know and love today. (It's interesting to note that this 'revolution' occurred at the same time as many of the high points of the space programme.) Forgive me if I once again give way to quotation, but as Silverberg puts it:

The standard view of the New Wave story nowadays, among those who know anything about it at all, goes something like this: until 1965, science fiction was an artistic and intellectual desert, dominated by a few tyrannical editors who served the needs of an undemanding, uncritical public by forcing all writers to crank out simple, formulaic stories, devoid of all stylistic flair and intellectual individuality. Only standard themes (space war, time travel, robots) were permitted, and all stories had to have positive, uplifting endings. Then, suddenly, a turbulent bunch of brilliant nonconformist writers arrived on the scene, bringing with them a host of new ideas and new ways of telling stories, and drove all the reactionary editors, and their cadres of musty old hacks from the scene.

But, as Silverberg then goes on to point out: "Some of that is true. Most of it isn't." Such a view ignores the classic genre-shaping contributions of (to name just a few) Heinlein, Asimov, Bradbury, Sturgeon, Simak, van Vogt, Williamson, Vance, Bester, Leiber, Herbert, Dick, Niven, Aldiss, Lafferty, Ballard, Delany, and, of course, Silverberg himself. Now I remember what I was feeling so nostalgic about!

(Continued from page 19)

and watch the glazed expressions of studio execs and audiences who just didn't get it. Ak-ak-ak!

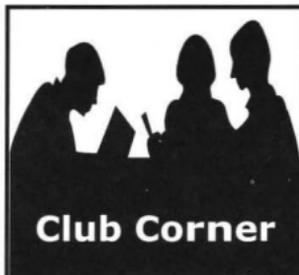
Solaris (Tarkovsky, 1972). Often billed as the Russian *2001* (i.e. it's science fiction, it's bum numbingly long and most people found it dull and/or overly intellectual) Tarkovsky takes the metaphysical approach to life in space. Long shots of empty rooms (pre-dating *Alien*). Multi-minute takes around Russian motorways. Rain indoors. Pontificating about life and humanity. Long, long periods of almost total silence (do not bring in any popcorn!). Lots of different length cuts to compare and contrast. Two hundred minutes of head nodding worthiness that is essential viewing for anyone - even if you do hate it.

Laputa (Tenku no shiro Rapyuta, Miyazaki, 1986). Anything by Miyazaki is cause for celebration but this is a beautiful combination of cell animation and picture perfect characterisation. Half futuristic, half Victoriana this is far more profound than anything from the Mouse-house, more inventive and more satisfying. Suitable for children and adults alike but be warned, some scenes are really scary!

Le Derniere Combat (Besson, 1983) Before Luc Besson crippled the wallets of studios with epic fare such as *The Fifth Element* or *Joan of Arc* he made this ultra-low budget black and white post-apocalyptic film with Jean Reno. The conceit of having a plot involving everyone being unable to speak makes for a film that is universal in market and economic in its lack of synch-sound requirements. A triumph of imagination over budget.

Borderline: Some films that would have been in this list had they been more obviously science fiction: *Nowhere* (Gregg Araki), *City of Lost Children* (Jeunet and Caro), *Edward Scissorhands* (Tim Burton, 1991), *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999).

Thanks to everyone who took the time to write in. Some consensus, some dissent. Just what we like to see! (ed.)



Belfast Science Fiction Group

Alternate Thursdays, 8.30pm at the Monico Bars, Rosemary Street, Belfast. Contact Eugene Doherty 028 90208405
tinman@technologist.com
www.terracon3000.org.uk/sfgroup.htm

Birmingham: Brum SF Group

Second Friday of the month on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel, New St. Membership is £15/year. Contact Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, W. Midlands WW13 1HX.
bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk

Cambridge SF Group

Second Monday of the month in The Cambridge Blue, Gwydir Street, Cambridge.

Cardiff SF Group

First Tuesday on the month 7.30pm in Wellington's Café Bar, 42 The Hayes, Cardiff.

Colchester SF/F/Horror Group

Third Saturday of the month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub, St John's Street.
Contact Des Lewis 01255 812119.

The Croydon SF Group

Second Tuesday of the month, 8pm in The Dog and Bull, Surrey Street (by the market), Croydon, Surrey. We are sometimes upstairs or out in the garden. Contact Robert Newman on 020 8686 6800.

Glasgow SF/F Writers' Circle

Alternate Tuesdays at 8pm, The Conference Room, Borders Bookstore, Buchanan Street, Glasgow (actual dates are publicised in Borders events guide, available in store, or ask at the Information Desk). All genres and standards of proficiency welcome.
Contact: Neil Williamson, 0141 353 2649, or e-mail: neilwilliamson@btinternet.com

Hull SF Group

Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 8.30 to 10.30pm at The New Clarence, Charles Street, Hull (from Jan 2000)
Contact Ian and Julie on 01482 447953, or Dave and Estelle on 01482 444291, or see: www.mjckeh.demon.co.uk/hullsf.htm

Leeds Alternative Writers

Second Saturday at 2pm in central Leeds. For venues and details contact Ian on 0113 266 9259 or Sean 0113 293 6780.

London BSFA meetings (* note change of venue)

Fourth Wednesday of the month (except December) from 7pm at the Rising Sun, Cloth Fair (off Long Lane), EC1. Barbican/Farringdon tube. Check Ansible for details and guests, or organiser, Paul Hood on 020 8333 6670
paul@auden.demon.co.uk

Guest for the May meeting is Alastair Reynolds.

London Circle

First Thursday of each month from around 5pm at the Florence Nightingale ("Dead Nurse"), on the Westminster Bridge Road/York Road roundabout. Waterloo/ Westminster tube.

Manchester: FONT

FONT meets on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at The Goose on Piccadilly from about 8.30 onwards. Contact Mike Don on 0161 226 2980.

North Oxford

Last Thursday of the month at The Plough, Wolvercote from 7.30pm. Irregular and just starting, so contact Steve and Vikki on 01865 371734 or peverrel@aol.com for details.

Norwich Science Fiction Group

Second & fourth Wednesdays from 8pm at the Cellar Bar, Ribs of Beef, Fye Bridge, Norwich. Contact 01603 477104; NSFG@cwcom.net

Peterborough SF Group

First Wednesdays at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe and third Wednesdays in the Great Northern Hotel, opposite station Contact Pete on 01733 370542.

Portsmouth/South Hants SF Group

Second and fourth Tuesdays at the Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth.

Reading SF Group (*note change)

Now meets every week in the Monk's Retreat, Friar St, Reading. The usual time will be from 9:00pm (probably later in practice), but every third Monday will be from 7:30pm. Some people may decide to meet at the earlier time every week, but this is not official. For details contact: RSFG@onelist.com

Sheffield (NEW ENTRY)

Anyone interested in setting up an informal pub meeting in the city? Or maybe there's an existing meeting that I'm not aware of. Either way, contact your humble editor at the address on page 2.

Southampton: Solent Green

Every third Thursday, 7pm, at The Duke of Wellington, Bugle Street, Contact Matt 01703 577113
werkhaus@tcp.co.uk

Walsall SF Group (NEW ENTRY)

First Saturday of every month at 2pm in the Meeting Room of Walsall Central Library, Lichfield Street, Walsall.
http://members.nbci.com/walsall_sf/

Forthcoming Conventions & Events

6 May 2001

Eleventh Peterborough Fantasy Fair

The Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. For details contact: Peter Cox (01733 370542 – evenings). To book a stand contact Bruce King, 5 Arran Close, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7QP. Tel: 01477 534626.

25 – 27 May 2001

Second (Secon 2)

The DeVere Hotel, Swindon. Guest of Honour: Paul McAuley. Membership now £25 to 15th May (£30 at door or £12/day (£6 after 6pm)). Cheques payable to 'Secon'. Contact Secon, 19 Hill Court, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 3JJ; secon2@sjbradshaw.cix.co.uk; www.secon.org.uk

28 June – 1 July 2001

A Celebration of British SF

University of Liverpool, deposit: £25, total cost) £235/\$355 (inc. B&B, 3 lunches, 2 dinners: student/unemployed £177/\$265), day rates £50. Cheques to The Science Fiction Foundation (22 Addington Road, Reading, RG1 5PT). GoH: Brian Aldiss, Stephen Baxter, John Clute, Nicola Griffith, Gwyneth Jones, Ken MacLeod. E-mail: Farah@fjm3.demon.co.uk or A.P. Sawyer@liverpool.ac.uk for details, or see www.liv.ac.uk/~asawyer2001.htm

6 – 8 July 2001

Nexus 2001 (media)

Jarvis International Hotel, Bristol. £40 reg., £24.50 child, rising after 8th June. Contact: 280 Southmead Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS10 5EN

24 – 26 August 2001

Eboracon MMI/HarmUni (Unicon 2001/filk con)

Langworth College, University of York. Guests of Honour: Douglas Hill, Anne Gay, Stan Nicholls and Pete Morwood & Diane Duane. Membership: £25 (students £20), £30 at door. Contact: Eboracon, 9 Prospect Terrace, Fulford, York, YO10 4PT; eboracon@psych.york.ac.uk; www.users.york.ac.uk/~amr107/eboracon/index.html

25 – 26 August 2001

Cybercon 2001

Hilton Hotel, Belfast. Guests: Ian McDonald, Paul Darrow, Jeremy Bulloch, Nicholas Courtney, Michael Shear, Claudia

Christian. Membership: £30. Website: homepage.ntlworld.com/dawn.marks/

30 August – 3 September 2001

Millennium Philcon/Worldcon 59

Pennsylvania Convention Center & Philadelphia Marriott, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Guests of Honour: Greg Bear, Stephen Youll, Gardner Dozois, George Scithers. Toastmaster: Esther Friesner. Membership currently \$160, but check for latest rates. Contact Philcon, Box 310, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006, USA; phil2001@netaxs.com; www.netaxs.com/~phil2001

22 – 23 September 2001

Hypotheticon

Somewhere in Glasgow. Membership: check for current prices. Further details: Hypotheticon 2001, 25 Ravenscraig Avenue, Paisley, PA2 9QL; secretary@hypotheticon2001.co.uk

13 – 14 October 2001

Octocon

Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Guest of Honour: Anne McCaffrey. Membership: £12/€15 Irish to 1/5/01, then £20/€16 Irish. Contact: Octocon, c/o Yellow Brick Road, 8 Bachelors Walk, Dublin 1, Ireland; info@octocon.com; www.octocon.com

1 – 4 November 2001

World Fantasy Convention

Delta Centre-Ville, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Guest of Honour: Fred Saberhagen, others TBA. Membership: ask for current rates. Contact WFC, Attn. Bruce Farr, 7002, N. 6th Ave., Phoenix, AZ, 85021, USA; bruce.farr@intel.com; www.worldfantasy.org/wfc01.html

9 – 11 November 2001

Novacon 31

Venue TBA (Walsall?). Guest of Honour: Gwyneth Jones. Membership: £32 to Easter '01, then more. Info: 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ

29 March – 1 April 2002

Helicon 2 (Eastercon)

Hotel de France, St Helier, Jersey. Guests of Honour: Brian Stableford, Harry Turtledove & Peter Weston. Membership £35. Contact: 33 Meyrick Drive, Wash Common, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 6SY; helicon2@smof.demon.co.uk; www.smof.demon.co.uk/helicon2.htm

3 – 6 May 2002

Damn Fine Convention (Twin Peaks theme)

Shepperton Moat House Hotel, Shepperton, Surrey. Guests of Honour rumoured to be Colin Odell and Mitch Le Blanc. £20 registration until 1st December 2001 (free for Norwegians resident in Norway!). Cheques (made payable to 'Damn Fine Convention') to: DFC, 37 Keens Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1AH. Rooms £30ppn twin or double, £40ppn single. Contact: info@damnfineconvention.org.uk; www.damnfineconvention.org.uk

16 – 19 August 2002

Discworld Convention 2002

Hinckley, Leicestershire. Guest of Honour: Terry Pratchett. Contact: SAE to Discworld Convention 2002, 23 Medora Road, Romford, Essex, RM7 7EP; info@dwcon.org; www.dwcon.org

29 August – 2 September 2002

Conjosé (60th Worldcon)

San José, California. Guests of Honour: Vernor Vinge, David Cherry, Bjo & David Trimble, Ferdinand Feghoot. Toastmaster: Tad Williams. Membership: \$120 until 31/12/00. Contact: PO Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-4128, USA; UK Agents 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, RG30 2RP; www.sfsfc.org/worldcon/.

4 – 6 October 2002

Conquest (media con)

Essex County Hotel, Southend-On-Sea. £50 reg., £20/day, £32 two days. Contact: 73 Bourne mouth Park Road, Southend-On-Sea, Essex, SS2 5JJ. Tel: (01702) 469093.

Members' Noticeboard

Wanted to complete Cowper/Murry collection: reading copies of Colin (Middleton) Murry's *A Path to the Sea and Private View*.

Please contact Mike Cross, 41 Redland Drive, Kirk Ella, Hull, HU10 7UX; Tel: 01482 656866; Email: mike@mjckeh.demon.co.uk.

JO's Timewasters Matrix Competition 149

Competition 146

2/7; 1/8; 3/10; 6/9; 5/11; 4/12

The novels by Philip K. Dick (1-6) derive from, incorporate, or take ideas from the short stories (7-12). The information is contained in the notes to PKD's Collected Short Stories. Only one all-correct entry, from regular entrant Theo Ross.

Competition 147

Oh! Valinda/Pacem Est/Delena Est/Lrg. Forst/Dark Icarus/Jean Dupres/Rorqual Maru/Willie's Blues/Casey Agonistes/Lisbon Cubed/Doing Lennon/Automatic Tiger/Camera Obscura/Chicken Icarus/Occam's Scalpel/Savage Pellucidar/Unaccompanied Sonata/Venice Drowned/Proxima Centauri/Omithan Thropus.

Lots of entries for this, probably to point out the typos, which I've left in. Most people got them all, and first in the draw is Michael J. Cross.

Competition 148

As of today (April 6th) no entries received.

Competition 149

Some sf inventions have come to fruition, such as Heinlein's waldoes. For the following creations, can you say what they are? Some are obscure – you can guess those; guesses for them all might even win the prize.

1. Dexax
2. Toktik
3. Cupriolanic tape
4. Beep (not an invention, but the result of one)
5. Venusupial
6. Spindizzy
7. Polypip
8. Flapple

Entries for competitions 148 & 149 to:

John Ollis, 49 Leighton Road, Corby,

NN18 0SD by early June 2001.

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Credits issue 149

Matrix 149 was edited and produced by **Andrew Seaman** to the happening sounds of REM, Morphine, Godspeed You Black Emperor! and Calexico.

As always a big 'thank-you' to all contributing editors and everyone who supplied items of news – you know who you all are.

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