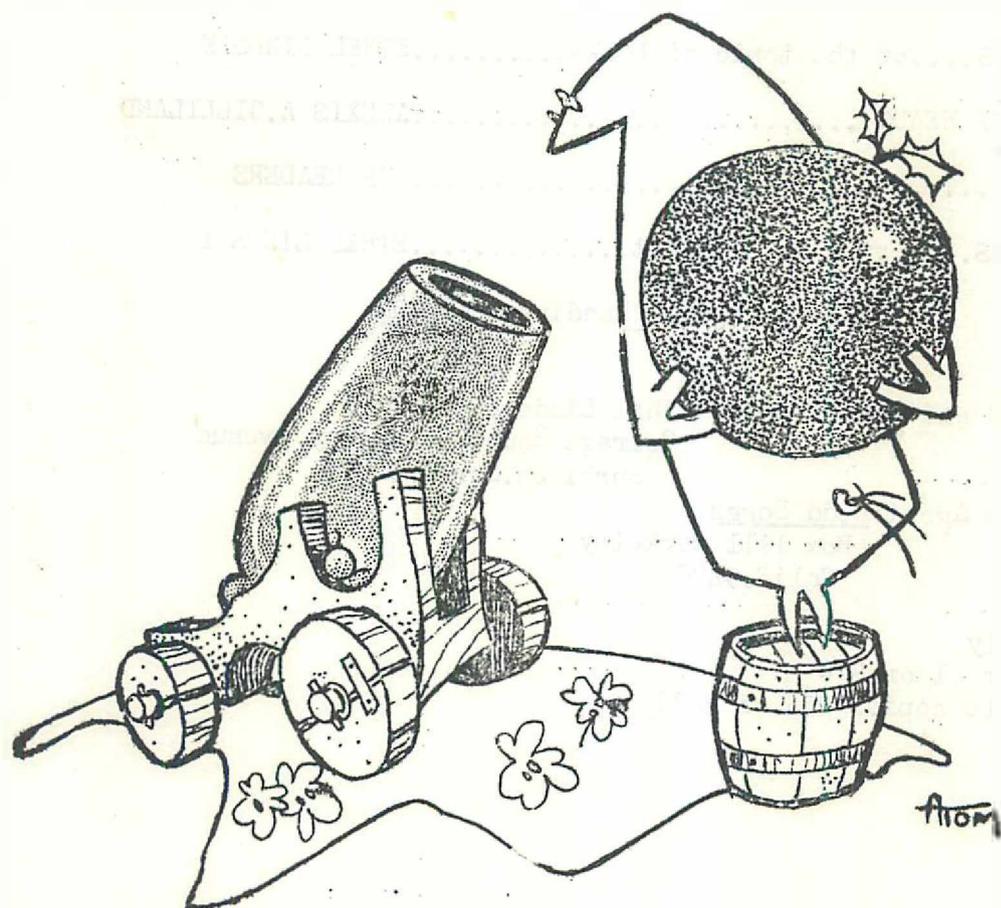


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NIBBLINGS  
NIBBLINGS....at the topic of books.....ETHEL LINDSAY  
A PAGE OF HEADS.....ALEXIS A.GILLILAND  
LETTERS.....THE READERS  
NIBBLINGS....at this and that.....ETHEL LINDSAY

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## Nibblings

While back there I mentioned that I wouldn't comment upon BUG JACK BARRON until I had read it all. This was serialised in NEW WORLDS Nos 178-183. I believe there are still back copies available. The author is Norman Spinrad.

This story has three elements that are liable to make it a bit controversial. They are - a science fiction element, a political one and a sexual one. Taking the most important part first—the sf element—the plot is a variation upon the theme of the discovery of an immortality treatment. Here the author concentrated upon one man and the events that revolve around him till he is made immortal; and his belated discovery that this is only possible by using the glands of murdered children. The general use of immortality and what this would do to our already highly-populated planet is not discussed—the assumption is that it must eventually be free to everyone. I find it hard to forgive an author who ducks this point when he decides to use the idea of immortality for his plot. Otherwise it is handled well.

The political aspect stems from a line of novels that started with ADVISE AND CONSENT in which the action is placed only a short way into the future. This, of course, has many pitfalls; Alan Drury himself fell into some of them. It really is impossible to guess what will happen next completely either in politics or anything else. Life always has some surprises and can beat any fictional melodrama hands down. So, in this case, the author's forecast that Bobby Kennedy would be the President during his future tale can never come true—and his further assumption that RFK would have "copped out" becomes, at least to me, offensive. Jack Barron is depicted as having been a liberal young leader who has "copped out" and become a successful TV personality. The idea of his show is very clever; one can visualise something like this

## Nibblings 2

happening, if it isn't happening already in California. One either feels sympathy for Jack's moral throes or not according to whether you believe that there is an "Establishment" and that one cannot do any work for good through ordinary political channels. I happen to disagree with this; but that is a personal quibble. Given the situation as stated, Jack is very believable.

Lastly I must mention the erotic scenes and the dialogue. The former are as good as you will find anywhere if this is what you want to read. They neither add or detract from the fundamental story. The dialogue is another matter—there is a constant use of the word "fuck" by all the characters; and I found this boring. I would leave it at that - only I have already learnt that it is no use to do so - everyone will conclude that I do not like the dialogue because it "shocks me". I do not like it in the same way as I do not like the use of much dialect in a story. I believe the language in BUG JACK BARRON is genuine; that the people depicted do talk this way; but I do not believe it is necessary to render it so faithfully. I would not like it if a Southern character had every "youall" carefully given; I would not like it if every time a Frenchman spoke his words were given in French; I would not like it if every character who had some irritating speech habit (you know!) had them all lovingly relayed in correct detail. One of the reasons I have never liked Dickens is that the dialect irritates me. So here in BUG JACK BARRON I find the constant use of this one sorely over-worked adjective boring, boring, boring.

Apart from that it is a very lively book and I enjoyed it.

I never like to do formal reviews so I am a bit amazed at my last issue with its review column. I guess I got carried away by the heady thought of having some books given to me for review. Gee! just like a real critic! Only I'm not...I'm just another reader full of opinions who likes to talk and write about books but who does not want to be doing this in any other way than for enjoyment. So I'll take a fresh stab at it.

I find that I get a thrill just looking at a pile of books—particularly a pile that is just waiting to be read. They look so good, so new, they are the best thing in my room. I also love to receive a parcel of books; there is the fun of wondering what is inside. I first plucked RESTOREE by Anne McCaffrey (Rapp & Whiting.25s) I felt especially interested in the light of the various discussions in fanzines lately on feminine protagonists and feminine authors. Well, I don't know how the male readers will react; but as I read I had the faint feeling of it being a "woman's type of story". I guess this stems from the fact that the heroine, Sara, is kidnapped and then finds herself with a new body, gone a ugly body and a horrible crooked nose and in its place is golden skin and rare beauty. Ho hum! What woman would not like to have that dream come true. As if that isn't enough; she very quickly saves the life and reason of the hero and becomes his "Lady". All sorts of adventures follow and she sails through them all. I decided to relax and enjoy this one and did so throughout. After all, in sf maybe it is the woman's turn. Just think of all those heroes I've been reading about all those years...yes...it is high time the woman had a chance to appear to be invulnerable.

### Nibblings 3

The next book I'd like to mention is quite a contrast. It is PAST MASTER by R.A.Lafferty (Rapp & Whiting, 21s) This is a very unusual book, sf alright, but quite unlike the sf of McCaffrey. It is set on the planet of Astrobe 1,000 years in the future when life there is a new "Utopia". It has an exciting start in a meeting between three important men, met to discuss a crisis in the affairs of Astrobe..with mechanical killers tearing the building down around them. Life in this "Utopia" is described as "full of luxury, beauty and ease"; yet the crisis is caused by a growing number of the citizens leaving this life and heading for cities that are outside the "dream" of Astrobe. Life outside is full of dreadful conditions of hardship, poverty and disease. Significantly the author spends more time describing the hard life than the utopian one. Paradise isn't easy to describe.

There is a curious unevenness in this story- at one point all the principal characters set off on a journey that is quite pointless except to give the author a chance to show his boundless imagination. It is vividly told, this journey, and to me has echoes of OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET. The leader of this expedition is Thomas More who has been plucked out of time and brought to the planet to cope with the crisis.

In many ways this could be called a religious book for behind the "dream" lie "devils". The nearer to the end when More dies (for this world's salvation?); the stronger grows the religious referents. It could be read as a parable against the evils of conformatism and the mechanisation of life. In which case it will fit in well with what we term the 'New Wave' writing. At the same time it ends on an optimistic note that might not make it fit. More in history was not an ordinary hero--nor is he in this future tale.

Quite different again is APEMAN, SPACEMAN, ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCE FICTION. This is compiled by Harry Harrison and Leon E. Stover (Rapp & Whiting, 35s). I prefer novels to short stories; but I am more favourably disposed if the collection follows a definite theme as does this book. It is divided into Man and His Works and then sub-divided. So, under the heading of "Fossils" one finds THROWBACK by L. Sprague De Camp; and under "Local Customs" Arthur C. Clarke's THE NINE BILLION NAMES OF GOD. Side by side with this however are lesser known works such as THE WAIT by Kit Reed a rather grim tale of "Local Customs"; and some relevant articles such as THE KON-TIKI MYTH by Robert C. Suggs. Best of all I liked BODY RITUAL AMONG THE NACIREMA by Horace M. Miner in which the writer pokes his tongue firmly into his cheek and describes us humans as might some alien anthropologist from outer space. This was originally published in THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST so you can see that the compilers have ranged far in an effort to take a fresh look at both science fiction and anthropology. They succeed admirably. I hope that many students get a copy of this book--they would find it invaluable in stretching their minds and imagination.

I had occasion to call at Dobson books and as a special favour was allowed to look around the warehouse there. It is a fascinating place..rows upon rows of books, books, books. Imagine! They pay people to work there! I enjoyed wandering along the stacks just mooning over them all. I stopped to admire the covers of a children's series. Which reminds me - one of our newspapers compiled a list of the 100 best-selling books of all times. The Bible naturally headed it; but there was also a Dobson book listed--CHILDREN

## Nibblings 4

IN HISTORY. Anyway—I came away with three new books I'd like to tell you about now.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF, edtd. by John Carnell (Dobson, 18s) This is No 13 in the series and contains 8 stories in all. From this you can see that they are not too short; the length is generous enough to allow each author to expand his theme. The first, in my estimation, is the best. This is THE DIVIDED HOUSE by John Rackham. His theme is that we are divided into the "doers" and the "thinkers" and he writes of what might happen if this were recognisable and if the "doer" type became dominant. I enjoyed this, it was well-written and the author had avoided making the dominant type too inhuman in their treatment of the others. So often, in a shorter story, the author heightens his theme till it becomes absurd. I feel that this is the case with Sydney Bounds in his story PUBLIC SERVICE which visualises a city grown too big and dominated by the Fire Service, who ruthlessly kill thousands in their fire-fighting and who prolong their power by making it impossible for ordinary people to have fire-proofing. I just found the whole thing unbelievable. There is a good mixture in this book. Hovering on the fantasy is THE FERRYMAN ON THE RIVER by David Kyle. Then there is humans as the descendants of alien waste matter—told in an irritating report to the computer fashion. I rather liked a mood piece by John Baxter called THE BEACH, though it was rather tantalising, I'd have liked to have known more. But that's back to my general complaint about short stories!

The second book was THE PALACE OF LOVE by Jack Vance (Dobson, 18s). This is one of a series of novels in which the hero Kirth Gersen is hunting down the 5 Demon Princes who had murdered his parents. I had previously read STAR KING (also by Dobson) which dealt with his pursuit of the second Prince. Apparently the first Prince was killed in THE KILLING MACHINE but I have not read this one. I didn't like this book much; too many names like Addels Alusz and Navarth abound for my fancy. It is one long series of adventures a typical one being the hero's visit to a planet that has thousands of poisonous plants and whose people live by selling them.

I preferred the third book - THE MONITORS by Keith Laumer. (Dobson 18s) I found this one fun - the idea that aliens would arrive and proceed to run our planet for us; provide us with food, good government, efficient transport and, oh, all the things to make life perfect. The hero Blondel argues against this and joins in a underground against the Monitors. Some of the best scenes are where he argues with the head Monitor who cannot understand why humans would object to having their lives made better and easier. I don't think I'll give the ending away. I think I enjoyed this because it is done with a light-hearted almost farcical manner. Yet it has a core of seriousness about we humans and how we would react to the Monitors if such ever came to us. Perhaps it could have been treated in a more serious way - but then it would have been a different story..and I might not have liked it so much. SF, after all, does not produce too many stories at which one can laugh.

One of the best American inventions is the jiffybag; certainly it is one of the most efficient. They arrive to me full of books kept in perfect condition; and then they can be used again, and again, and again. Does my

## Nibblings 5

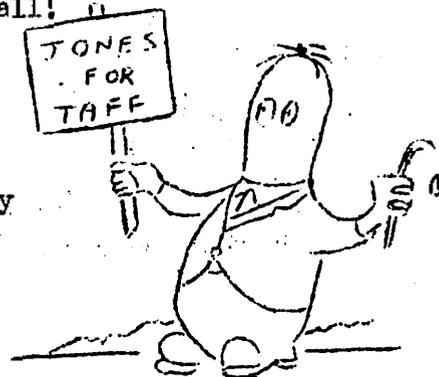
thrifty Scots soul good! Among the goodies that come to me in jiffybags are ACE POCKETBOOKS. I've now acquired two more in the Edgar Rice Burroughs series - THE MOON MAID (G-745.50¢) and THE MOON MEN (G-748.50¢). ACE are rather good at series; another is by John Macklin who writes on occult subjects. I have two more here - DIMENSIONS BEYOND THE UNKNOWN (H89.60¢) and PASSPORT TO THE UNKNOWN (H81.60¢). These are collections of occult stories; a typical one being the history of the Kohinoor diamond. Similar to this is another series represented this time by VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES, AND GHOULS by B.J. Hurwood (H8360¢). The Jules Verne series has THE HUNT FOR THE METEOR (H78.60¢). This is the collection which has many Verne stories that have never been translated into English. I guess I could also include in this lot WILD TALENT by Charles Fort (H88.60¢) as ACE have published others of his books.

I have two ACE SPECIALS. The first is called THE TWO-TIMERS by Bob Shaw (H79.60¢). These books listed under the 'Special' label have all been good. This is a very exciting time-travel story in which John Breton finds himself being threatened by himself. A plot full of tortuousness that keeps you guessing to the end. The other is called SYNTHAJAY by D.G. Compton (H86.60¢). I enjoyed this even more, it is extremely well-written with very three-dimensional characters. It is ~~roughly~~ told by the wife of the man who invented Sensitape which is a means of recording the emotions of -say a great musician as he listens to a great symphony. But he also invents Soxitape and is about to go on from there when he is murdered. There are some very chilling implications and the horror gains by the rather factual manner of its telling. The wife is supposed to be a nurse and I found this highly believable--not a thing I would readily say about fictional nurses! I'd highly recommend this one.

ACE of course produces lots of sf adventure stories, very popular always are the Andre Norton WITCHWORLD stories, my latest in this is SORCERESS OF THE WITCHWORLD. Similarly there is a new Fafhrd and Gray Mouser story. This is SWORDS IN THE MIST by Fritz Leiber (H90.60¢) which features another adventure through the "night-alleys of Lankmar". Leiber's stories are, of course, well under the heading of fantasy. Sometimes a tale is border-line..such as THE BROKEN LANDS by Fred Saberhagen (G740.50¢). Set in a post-war period it is a tale of the people of the "broken lands". Technology is lost to a large extent and the use of magic is powerful. This is never explained--and I always find it hard to swallow that magic would become reality in the future. I strain to swallow when it is explained away as "mutant power"; but when as here it just is - why I cannot swallow at all! u

I enjoyed this story much more than I thought I would, it isn't really stereotyped and contains some fine flights of imagination. It is obviously one of a series and I find I want to know what happens next. As it is really more fantasy than sf--most unusual for me! More adventure in a couple of ACE Doubles. First

DERAI by E.C. Tubb combined with THE SINGING STONES by Juanita Coulson (H77.60¢). There is always an added



## Nibblings 6

interest when the author is a friend, both Ted and Juanita give the reader their money's worth in adventure! Both take us to alien planets, stir the imagination and briskly bring their heroes to safety. The other double is INVADER ON MY BACK by Philip E. High and DESTINATION SATURN by David Grinnell and Lin Carter (H\$5.60¢). I liked the High story best. Should you live in his world you could be asked are you a Delink, a Scuttler, a Stinker, or a Norm? Or are you one of the terrible new-subdivisions of humanity--the Geeks? Highly inventive and original this, and I liked the main characters. DESTINATION SATURN was not so much to my taste. It is written in a humorous manner and tells of a multi-billionaire who wanted a world of his own. The biggest fault I had to find with this one was that I didn't think it funny.

Lastly I have a copy of THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION 14th SERIES. Edited by Avram Davidson. (A17.75¢). A theme runs through this lot alright..a very downbeat one! All the stories are well written but as I read straight through--it left me feeling a little depressed. I'd recommend you to dip. Good stuff mind..Zelazny's A ROSE FOR ECCLESIASTES with its well deserved reputation being a good example of the calibre.

Since I started writing this I've acquired some more books from Dobsons. Two are by Keith Laumer. GALACTIC ODYSSEY (Dobson.18s) and THE OTHER SKY (Dobson.21s). Unabashed adventure with the hero rescuing the heroine three times before the happy ending makes up the first book. Quite enjoyable in an undemanding way. The second book consists of four novella-length stories. I think I preferred NIGHT OF THE TROLLS best, quite a well-worked out post-war story. However, I reserve my enthusiasm for the third book I received. This was SENTINELS FROM SPACE by Eric Frank Russell. This was originally published in 1951 as THE STAR WATCHERS. For years I have had a ACE paperback of this and I have often re-read it, counting it as one of my all-time favourites. So I am very pleased to now own a hard-cover edition. Mind you, the pb still looks good considering it has been well-used since 1953! Now if all the people who were puzzled by 2001 had read this book they might have grasped the meaning of the ending sooner. To be sure the "Star Child" does not resemble the "bright-eyes moths" of this story; but surely the meaning is the same. I suppose my 'sense of wonder' is all tied up with this story. To me it is beyond criticism and has moved into the category of a well-loved friend. I guess I'd better pass the pb onto some young fan for a contemporary opinion. I just think it is great.

I get rather torn in two about the question of hard back books or paperback. No doubt the former look well and will last longer. Yet I have to reflect that a pb will last as long as I will..and they are cheaper. Another factor that weighs with me however is that the pb takes up so much less room. When you have only the one room--no matter how big it is--that is a very important factor indeed.

In my last issue in my column NIBBLINGS I made a mistake and attributed a book to the wrong firm. My apologies to all concerned. The book, over which I erred was - THE TRAPS OF TIME by Michael Moorcock. It was published by Rapp & Whiting and costs 25s.

Ethel Lindsay.

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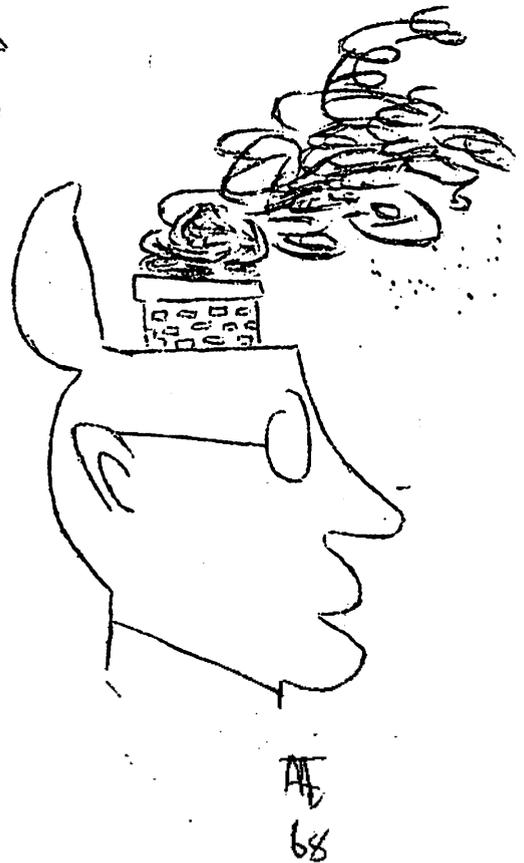
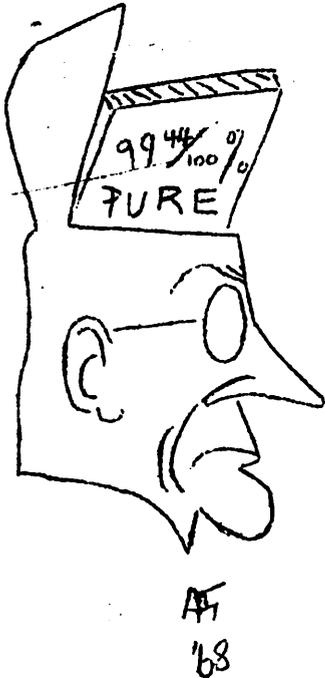
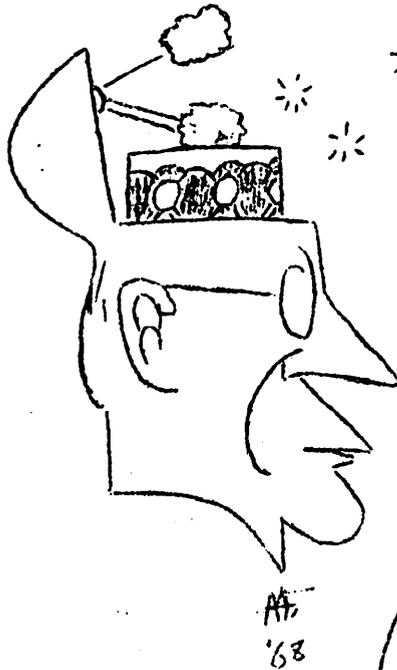
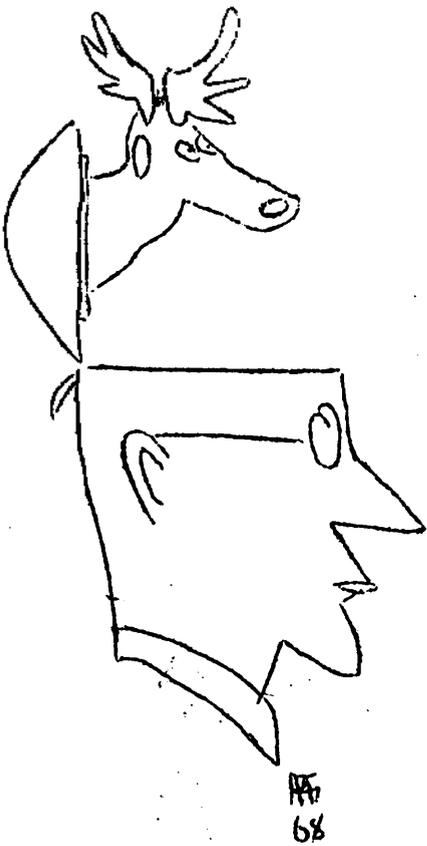
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OF

HEADS

by

Alexis A  
Gilliland





Arthur Hayes  
 Box 1030  
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 Ont., Canada

sounds better than some interpretations I've heard about. Some tend to advance the idea that they are deliberate signals involving intelligence directed to Earth's civilisation(?). I find this idea fantastic because the very distance the signals are believed to originate from means that, when they did originate, there could not have been any evidence of any intelligence on Earth. Say 500 light-years..this means that evidence was gathered about Earth, 1000 years ago."

Alan Rispin  
 27 Nelson Terr  
 Chopwell  
 Newcastle upon Tyne

for SF was in a rut. "Are we still with this New Wave Jazz? Mike has done one thing good with this genre. That seems to me to be when the accent is changed from mechanistic SF to humanistic SF. This needed doing, But the New Wave seems to be swinging the pendulum in the other direction now. Soon we'll have new cliches, and be ripe for another change. However one thing I've noticed as I've progressed from apprentice draughtsman to research assistant, is that I've lost the SOW I used to have. Apart from the inevitable loss as one becomes older, the more I become involved with such old SF standbys as computers, and mad

## Letters 2

professors, the more I cannot accept great slices of SF. Mad computers don't happen. Computers are thick. Fast but thick. They do exactly as they are told. The majority of rejected programs are because the programmer has assumed the computer will do something which it has to be told to do, by itself. In Newcastle U. we have the Ultimate Computer (as of now that is). It is installed in a hole in the ground, air-conditioned, cost £2m, and is like something out of a Finlay illo. Durham U. is connected to the computer, via GPO and all the U Departments have their on-line console. Come and see it sometime; I'll show you rows of geniuses typing programmes under the earth; I'll quote incredible statistics like a million calculations a second. But it's still a thick, incredibly fast machine. The things it is best at are vast reams of equations which would take a human years to solve. This brings many more problems nearer to understanding...Ah! a breath of youth again..Penelope brings back memories of Glenn Miller..Lloyd Biggle's "Introduction" was too full of self-important Sense of Wonder that it positively made me flinch to carry on after the first sentence. As a self-imposed pat on the back it was fine, but haven't we had enough of this "Mankind is wonderful because it writes SF" crap? Mankind would be a damn sight more wonderful if Czechoslovakia, Biafra and Vietnam didn't happen."

Joe Patrizio "Well, well, so Penelope is still with us. I remember  
7 Oakwood Rd America in the way that Penny does. But as I've grown  
Bricket Wood older I've developed a love-hate attitude towards the  
St Albans, Herts place; I admire it and am disgusted by it at the same  
time. I think this stems from the Great American Dream. The Founding  
Fathers' concept strikes me as one of the great steps forward in the social  
history of Man and it is a magnificent thing; but when you consider what  
generations of 'politicians' have done to it, it makes you sick and angry.  
It's the anger of disappointment, and this is a bitter anger...Looking at  
the names in the letter column makes me think that Scot. must have a reput-  
ation as a rest home for old fans--or are they just getting their second  
wind? "Dear me..not a rest-home, I hope..a refuge maybe? It sounds more  
polite at anyrate.\*\*"

Archie Mercer "Regarding the "Judgment of Eve", I was entirely  
10 Lower Church Lane satisfied that she took the three of them in triple-  
St. Michaels, Bristol harness. Beryl, however, won't have that, and is  
BS2 SBA. furious at Pangborn for not being more explicit"  
\*\*I rather like your theory of Eve..that is really having your cake, eating  
it too and having another one in the cupboard! But if I'd had to choose--  
I suppose I liked Kenneth best.\*\*\*"

John Brunner "You managed to provoke me into an acute attack of  
17D Frognaal nostalgia (the same as neuralgia only it affects an  
London, NW3 altogether deeper level of the nervous system) when  
you commented on the current attempt to revivify OMPA. Yes indeed I was  
once a fanzine publisher--indeed I had two..I don't think either of them  
ever exceeded a dozen pages, but in their way they were fun to produce. So  
what, you may well ask, causes someone to give up something which is fun?  
..I found that preparing a fanzine of eight or a dozen pages took up twice,  
three, four, maybe more, times as long as a short story of the same number  
of words...and what's more I didn't get paid for it! During the past couple  
of years I think I've published as much wordage in fanzines as I did during

### Letters 3

my entire stay in OMPA -chiefly in YANDRO, but altogether probably in half a dozen different places. All I had to do was write letters; someone else cut the stencil, corflued errors, ran the thing through the machine, collated and mailed the result, and that is what they call a Labour-Saving Device. Let me move on to a slightly more serious subject raised by (Well, well! What's Lazarus got to show now?) our old friend Penelope; the question of What Happened to the American Dream? I suspect I'm in an unusually good position to answer that; for example my visit to the States in 1967 was spent half in the Statler Hilton and half in a lower East Side slum. (In fact I have now stayed at three different addresses in the lower East Side - Chip Delany moves around a lot.) In the course of one day I've lunched with people who told me about how the Berkeley police blackmail girls caught holding pot into going to bed with them, and dined with people who assured me that the Berkeley police force was a model for the entire U.S. I've lunched with a publisher who talks, and I suspect thinks, like James Stewart the same day I dined in a soul-food restaurant with a guy who calls himself a white Black Panther. And so on... Nothing happened to the American Dream. It's still being dreamed. But this, of course, doesn't alter the fact that it is, and always will be, just that - a dream. Jews in America in 1942 weren't being shipped to extermination camps..but they were being refused admission to holiday resorts in Florida. Negroes in America aren't being refused admission to holiday resorts in California..but when they move into a neighbourhood in Los Angeles, prices go down! (I spent a weekend on my last trip just a mile or two from Watts, and owing to a violent attack of pharyngitis I discovered that Watts isn't a place- it's a state of mind. I woke up at 7 a.m. needing the urgent attention of a doctor; it took an hour to locate a hospital which refused to treat me, and in the upshot it wasn't until 11.30 that I found a doctor who was fortunately in his office due to an emergency. Did you know that one of the chief grievances of those poor devils in Watts was that there isn't a hospital in reach, and a guy can die in the back of a car because doctors there refuse to make what they call "house calls"?) Frantically oversimplifying, I'd say the trouble with the American dream is exactly the same problem that the communist countries are facing, and almost literally every other country on the face of the planet regardless of political complexion....Their system is obsolete... Consider that the American constitution was drafted in order to cure the blatant evils of 18th century European society (I'd cite the idea of having elections for judges and district attorneys, to escape the flagrant abuses of political patronage the colonists had been used to at home). Consider, likewise, that Marxism was originally a scheme to cope with the evils of the Industrial Revolution, which had separated man from things like the land he grew his food on and made the mass of the workers vulnerable to the whims of the factory-owner and the fluctuations of the market. Each of these systems has in turn developed its own evils: thanks to the influx of illiterate immigrants in the 19th century, the American political machines evolved, which turned out to be rigid, undemocratic power-structures which the average voter could not hope to affect, while correspondingly the brave slogan concerning the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (democratic in principle if one believes the working-class to be the majority, hence entitled to rule) seems to have shed all but its first word, "dictatorship".... We have the capacity, and people sense the fact, to develop true participatory democracy -electronic communications put this within our reach years ago. I'm not sure I'd enjoy

## Letters 4

the results, because most people, being aware of how poorly informed they are, tend to take refuge in a safe conformism, which in a world changing as fast as ours implies that they are reactionary. . . . But skip that; I'm talking about implementing the ideals to which we give lip-service. Here's the theoretically perfect cure for the evils of the 18th century, which the US was founded to eliminate - here's the majority-government system which could put paid once for all to the oligarchical injustices of the days of squires, landed gentry and hereditary peerages with the automatic influence at government level regardless of qualifications. . . . Equally, we have the potential to develop a truly affluent society-I don't mean in the sense of putting hi-fi sets in every home, or washing-machines, or whatever, but in the sense that no one need ever go hungry again. (Think I'm exaggerating? Go check up in Don Fabun's "The Dynamics of Change". . . . By the way, do you remember Don when he was editing Rhodomagnetic Digest? I do! Christ, I feel old!) And there, of course, is the solution to the injustices the communist system was originally intended to cope with, because a man who's decently fed without having to exhaust himself in getting the food has time to think, plan, and benefit from education. In other words he can become free; a starving man never can. . . . What is wrong with the American Dream, therefore, is the same as what's wrong with the British, the French, the -for heaven's sake-Arab dream! It cannot be realised so long as there are people who care more about their personal power than the fact that someone, somewhere else, is dying of starvation. And precisely because such people have had the chance to choose otherwise, being the recipients of expensive education and free from the want which sometimes prevents men from making rational decisions, and have chosen selfishly, I regard them as less than human, and I shall mourn their demise (which I hope will be speedy) no more than I mourn the death of a pet dog. . . . I won't take steps to bring it about - except by talking, arguing and writing - because they haven't managed to hurt me enough. A freelance writer is immune from many of the worst effects of our society. But when they are disposed of by the people they really did hurt, know they were hurting and went on hurting, I shan't weep. . . . Penelope, dear, America is rich-fabulously and fantastically and incredibly rich. It includes some of the nicest and most generous people in the world. But it's going to fall apart into little bloody bits, probably before the end of this century, because there aren't enough generous people, there aren't enough kind people, there aren't enough people willing to take the trouble it would require to make the American Dream come real for everyone instead of just the lucky few. You walk down Avenue C some time, around 10th, 7th, 3rd St, and look at the people there. You won't see the bruises; they're mostly coloured and Puerto Rican. But you'll feel them. If you're halfway human, you'll feel them just as though they'd been battered into your own skin. . . . This does, of course, tie in with the remark in "Natterings" concerning scientology and lawsuits. I don't really think you're correct to say that you'd lose libel suits more readily in the States because "more stress is placed on the right of free speech". My experience suggests a different emphasis: that rejecting libel suits is about the only surviving way in which the fiction of free speech can be maintained. According to A.J. . . . Liebling in The Press by the time he was writing, several years ago now, something like half the population of America already lived in a one-news-paper town; since then, the situation has been aggravated by the number

## Letters 5

who now live in a one-TV station town - all this implying that fifty per cent of the population of the US learn what a small monied group tell them they ought to know...Free speech without adequate information about the real world is a ridiculous contradiction in terms." \*\*\*\*I still maintain that it is easier to win a libel suit over here..and the Scientology bods are busy suing all sorts of people over here right now. I wonder that no SF author has visualised the future politically with the use of electronic voting machines built into every home!\*\*\*

David C.Piper  
24 Dawlish Drv  
Ruislip Manor  
Middsx.

"Agree with your nibble at "The Judgement of Eve", I got it when it first came out, being a rabid Pangborn fan. Apart from carping bits about "Davy" and a short article in ZENITH by John Boston, I can't remember much in fanzines about Pangborn. Seems to me rather neglected. A beautiful author..at least he can write And tell a story which is something that can't be applied to----- (fill in your own choice here--it's sure to agree with mine). Have you read "The Trial of Callista Blake"? Lovely tale, all the characters are beautifully drawn. Callista is on trial for murdering her lover's wife; but the court and jury really try her for having the affair. It's a cracker.

Rick Sneary  
2962 Sta Ana St  
South Gate  
Cal 90280

"I was quite happy to read Wollheim's speech in SCOT. It is my view compleetly, but this is the best expression of the view I have read. And it is doubly encouraging to read it from a major editor who can put his feeling into action. Ted White has written much the same thing. I have just cut stencils for Moonshine reviewing Moorcock's Final Programme, attacking the whole idea of the depressing story--even if it is realistic. Not as well as Don has done..but...It will be interesting to see if you get any responce from New Wave writers (are there any mere readers?) One thing you must say for the New Wave though, it has caused more talk about science fiction in fanzines and at Cons than anything else since Stranger in a Strange Land..and maybe since Dianetics...A thought comes to me on reading Birchby say there were no good Stuart Kings. Which Kings and Queens you/he say were any good? I ask this partly to start an argument..and to see if you ever came out better than we have with Presidents. After the first five we had a lot of dry years. Down to the first Roosevelt, we had a bunch of nothings--excepting old Abe of course..and he was a kind of fluke. I am not good at English history for all of my interest, but I always rather thought Henry V and VIII, and maybe even Richard I&III (for all of Shakespear) had helped the country. Victoria is of middling interest, but so Victorian that she seems disagreeable and dull today"\*\*\*\* I always rather fancied Charles, the merry monarch, he must have been a bit of a relief after the Puritans and all that hymn-singing. But if it is English history you want..I'd better leave it to Sid\*\*

Harry Warner  
423 Summit Ave  
Hagerstown  
Maryland.21740

"The return of Penelope is a delight spoiled by only one purely personal and selfish trouble. I find myself suddenly unable to remember who she is, although I can distinctly remember how honoured I felt when someone revealed the secret to me in her former prime...Sid Birchby's experience interested me, and left me rather envious. At 600 feet, I doubt that my degenerating eyesight could see a real person so clearly, much less a ghost. His

## Letters 6

description sounds oddly like one or more of the appearances of the apparitions in *The Turn of the Screw*, although I haven't dug up my copy of the James story to see if it's because Sid uses similar writing or describes a similar appearance. I've never seen a ghost, but once in a long while, I think that I sense one, or something just as inexplicable as a ghost. It's usually just after I've gone to bed and I feel with perfect assurance the presence of something in the room with me. It's so strong that I've never turned on the light to look for a real creature, confident that this is something which wouldn't show in a light. Your disbelief in life after death doesn't necessarily rule out ghosts, of course. They could represent some sort of journey in time or from parallel universes or other unknown phenomena created by a living individual....Even over here, it's not wise to feel too confident in exemption from libel problems. The newspaper for which I work has just been the main attraction in a couple of suits which seek more than \$200,000 altogether. I had nothing to do with writing or editing or publishing the items that caused the libel suits, fortunately; another reporter has calculated that he will be expected to work without wages for the next 24 years, to repay his share of the blame if the plaintiff wins. The Supreme Court has just issued a ruling that makes it much safer now for the American press to write nasty things about public officials, but this doesn't apply in the local situation.\*\*\*\*That James story is the only one I've ever read that made me feel moved enough to believe in the ghostly characters. The lawsuits by the Scientologists are still wending their way through our courts. Last month a High Court Judge stopped one against our Home Secretary. He ruled that there was no reasonable cause of action and that the suit was an abuse of the process of the court. The scientologists, however, were given leave to appeal. It was brought by two students who claimed that the Home Secretary had acted unlawfully in deciding not to consider any further applications by aliens who wanted to study Scientology here. The Judge said that in excluding scientology establishments from the list of approved educational establishments the Government had made a general policy decision, as it was entitled to do. This decision was not subject to the rules of natural justice, or subject to review in a court of law with regard to fairness. Tune in later\*\*\*\*

Peter Singleton  
Hlock 4  
Broadmoor Hospital  
Crowthorne, Berks.  
literary output. At the end you state that "Happiness is a parcel of books I wasn't expecting." In my case, it goes-"Happiness is two parcels of books from John Christopher I wasn't expecting" In a recent letter, John offered to send me regular batches of recent SF pbs. He contacted me after spotting a bit of news about my long hospitalisation in the lettercol of PSYCHOTIC. How about starting a John Christopher Appreciation Society, or something?"

Roy Tackett  
915 Green Valley Rd. NW  
Albuquerque  
New Mexico, 87107  
reach one erroneous conclusion---that the Indian has any political muscles to flex. There are a total of a little more than 500,000 Indians in the US Roughly one-half of one percent of the population...Nowhere do the Indians form a political bloc that, as Ian puts it, can unseat Senators, etc. The

"Ian Peters has, I know, a great interest in the plight/status/whatever of the Indians in this country and I found his review of Steiner's "The New Indians" of interest. Ian does, however,

## Letters 7

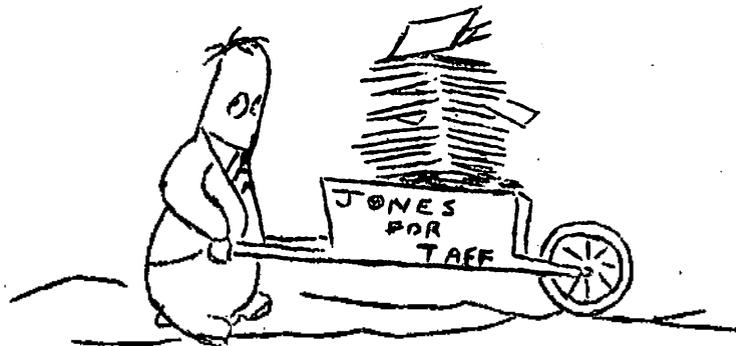
best they can do is to elect a representative or two in some of the state legislatures, if the legislative districts are not too badly gerrymandered. This, of course, is one of the Indians' problems, If they represented 10 or 11 percent of the population and were concentrated in urban areas as are the Negroes then the politicians would take notice. As it is they are politically insignificant and are accordingly treated by the politicians. It is, of course, a rather sad commentary on the nation's affairs when the welfare of the people is dependent upon the number of votes they can deliver. ..I read the first section of the column by Penelope (Penelope Fandergast??) and was moved to write something about dreams and illusions and the feeling during the war that we all had a sense of purpose and were all united and how sad it was that once the war was won we had no united goal to take its place. And Penelope wants to know what happened to the dream and where is it that little girls are promised a New Life these days. I really don't know but a land which kills its children on the moors had better have something to hold out to them...other than the opportunity to be buried under a slag heap..And that's unfair, isn't it? But so is attempting to blame all 200,000,000 of us for the actions of a couple of nuts." \*\*Thinking about the point you made over voting rights - I wonder if a lack of them is the reason why the gypsies over here get pushed around from county to county...but I still cannot bear to think about the "couple of nuts" you mention.\*\*\*

Nigel Lindsay  
311 Babbacombe Rd  
Torquay, Devon.

"Like you, it takes very little to make me happy,  
and here are a few things from my list:-  
Brown bread and honey.

Playing "Tico Tico" without hitting a wrong note.  
An electric blanket.  
Listening to Ella Fitzgerald.  
A crowd who don't ask for the Gay Gordons.  
Doing something I'm not supposed to.  
Accomplishing something I've kept putting off.

like writing this letter.." \*\*I'm real glad that one reader came up with their list of 'happiness is--'. I began to think I was the only happy one around here.\*\*\*





Recently I attended a Globe Meeting and got talking to Graham Boak on the subject of fanzine publishing. He was feeling rather put out at a review of the Bristol fanzine BADINAGE. This review had been written by Ted White—and I had to admit that Ted's remarks had been rather scathing. At times like these I am rather (as usual) torn in two as to my reaction. On the one hand I never like to see someone given too crushing a criticism; it rarely achieves the purpose of encouraging the person to improve. More often it sends the fanned out of the fan-publishing bit altogether. Or the fanned becomes sure that all such criticism is unfair and gets a chip on the shoulder. More than one fan feud has had its roots in this kind of grievance.

On the other hand I could defend Ted's remarks on the grounds that he is reviewing from the perspective of fanzines that are of high standard and in the memory of some past British glories in this field. I well remember, when I first started HAVERINGS (where I comment upon fanzines received) feeling very uneasy over an early issue. I asked the opinion of a friend who said that in my effort to be kind I really sounded patronising. I guess, in a reaction to this I went to the other extreme for shortly after a few faneds discontinued sending their zines to me. The happy medium is the best to go for—but it is difficult. No doubt too, many would argue with me on the grounds that it is sometimes kind to be cruel. Though fans don't usually produce such platitudes..so perhaps not!

Graham pointed out what a help it would be to have some knowledge of fan history..and he said to me..."But where can you find it?". I replied that there were some British fans with fanzine files..Archie Marder must

## Natterings 2

have one. Graham looked as if he didn't think this would be much help.

On thinking this over it seems to me he is right. We keep saying that new fans would be helped by knowing what went on before, but don't produce any history to help this along. There is the Fancyclopedia of course, but there are not many copies over here. There is THE IMMORTAL STORM but this stops far too short to be of much use to British fans. Harry Warner has been hard at work and when his fan history comes out this should be of great help. Yet I can't help wondering just how much time he has been able to devote to British fandom when there is so much American ground to cover.

What is really needed is a separate History of British fandom; and I started musing on how to go about it. There is a splendid start already in the history written by Walter Gillings in THE NEW FUTURIAN. I myself have about 14 years in fandom to remember. I knew something of Manchester fandom--but there's Brian Varley, Sid Birchby, Eric Benteliffe who could tell this part better than I. I don't know who could write about Liverpool fandom--it's hard to get a postcard from them! Yes, it could be done but would it be worth it, all that work? Would anyone really want it, would anyone care?

It would take some writing to cover Irish fandom, but there is one part that could be quickly covered, and that's Scottish fandom!

At the time I left Glasgow there were just five active members of the Newlands SF Club of Scotland. I think it was a combination of marriage and other interests that broke this up after I left. Individual fans have been heard from now and then since, but not one club has got up enough steam to make themselves heard. I keep wondering why none of the universities have produced a club as they have done in England. Does anyone know why this is so?

At another Globe evening Jean Muggoth showed me an extract from a letter that I thought interesting enough to quote here...It was written by Luis Vigil who is co-editor of NUEVA DIMENSION and the Spanish agent for the 1970 World Convention Bidding Committee..

"I read about the replacement of the four year rotation plan for a five year one. And my question is: How truly can a group of USA fans continue to be called 'world opinion'? You know, this was true 20 or 30 years ago, when fandom outside the USA was unknown, but not now. So, by taking decisions that seem binding to the whole world fandom I think that those fans at the Baycon were more or less taking an 'imperialistic attitude'. That comes because I have been working on some articles for the SF prozine in which I collaborate, about the proposed 1970 Worldcon in Heidelberg. Well, if it comes true it will be thanks to the co-operation of the fandoms of Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, France, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Spain, etc.

So when a group decides to take an 'important action' regarding matters affecting so many people who haven't any vote..how binding are they on those not present? I ask this because there is already talk in Europe that if the location for the '70 Con is not given to Heidelberg it would be good to have

### Natterings 3

an International Con anyway... I think you can see where this can carry us: to two or more WorldCons every year, to the fractioning of the already not-too-much-united world fandom, and so on... Is it not enough for the American fans to have three of each four WorldCons that they want to have four of every five?

Excuse me if I'm being rude, but I love fandom too much, and I have too many friends in your country to accept these matters without trying to do something about them.

- Already you are showing too much 'selectivity' in the WorldCons. When giving the Hugos, for instance, you only take into consideration American works and American pros and fans, the only foreigners are from some of the English-speaking countries. I know the difficulty of judging works and authors not translated, but to what extent can the prizes then be called world-wide? When is a Russian or an Italian going to be nominated for any of the writers prizes, or a Romanian or Spanish magazine for the promag one? These are only some of the examples of a phenomena that I don't think has received due thought in the USA: SF, now, is a world wide literature, and fandom isn't limited by the US frontiers."

This letter was originally written to Michael Barnes who runs the Overseas Bulletin. I'd sure like to know what my American readers think of it! I can remember that when the World SF Association was disbanded there was some indignation among fans over here. This was very muted however. I guess that British fans have for so long depended upon US fans for contacts and experienced so much generosity that they have been inhibited in their criticism. Still-it is something to be thought on - it would be a bit daft to have two WorldCons on the go! Perhaps it could be discussed at the business meeting at St Louis?

As to the point about not having a vote on the next Consite..European fans can now vote, providing they are members of the convention. This begins with the St Louis Convention in 1969. This costs \$3 and should be sent to St Louiscon, Box 3008, St. Louis, Mo. 63130. European fans may now complain--why should they send their money like this? Well, Con committees everywhere need and deserve support; and this tradition that Americans have of joining the convention to give support even when they will not be able to attend, is a tradition we could do well to emulate. Recollect too that the bulk of the money for TiFF has come from American con support. American fans have always been generous in their support for TiFF and for convention committees.

British fans are much more--well let's be blunt--niggler! How many British fans would join next year's con when they knew they would not be able to attend? How many British fans put an advert in the programme to help support its payment? How many British fans send in auction material? All these things are done regularly in the US. If we are going to criticise them for still calling their annual cons 'World' cons and muttering about "imperialism"; let us also reflect that they have altruistic traditions that we can admire.

At this same Globe meeting I also collected a copy of the latest NEW

## Natterings 4

WORLDS. On the whole I find this issue disappointing. There are two good pieces of writing by Brian Aldiss and by Samuel Delaney but even they left me feeling dissatisfied. Aldiss writes in AND THE STAGNATION OF THE HEART what appeared to me to be the opening segment of a novel. This describes a future in which two "long-livers" approach Calcutta to aid in the evacuation of the city as it has broken down under the weight of the population. With the two is an Indian Health Officer who reads as if he could very well be played by Peter Sellers. Without doubt this segment conveys the whole sense of the future as seen by Aldiss; but I would have quite liked to have gone on and read more details. I can't imagine why he wouldn't want to sell this as a novel and have me pay out 30/- to read it--rather than the 5/- demanded by NW!

The Delaney TIME CONSIDERED AS A HELIX OF SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES also struck me as being a part of a bigger story although here the background of the future is brilliantly evoked; and there is more sense of roundness to it. Again however, this could easily be expanded into a novel. Well, perhaps they both will be.

The rest of the issue has nothing that I would label SF. One story that is situated in a hospital left me really incredulous. I know that in the US nurses are in short supply and that the conditions are vastly different from our own--but even so at the end of the story I could only think that the writer just had to be joking!

There is also an article about the work of Andy Warhol. Well now, you didn't think NW would review 2000! d d you?

You will see from the cover that ATOM joins SCOTTISHE and myself in wishing you all a bomb of a Merry Christmas..and a very Happy New Year!

Ethel Lindsay.

