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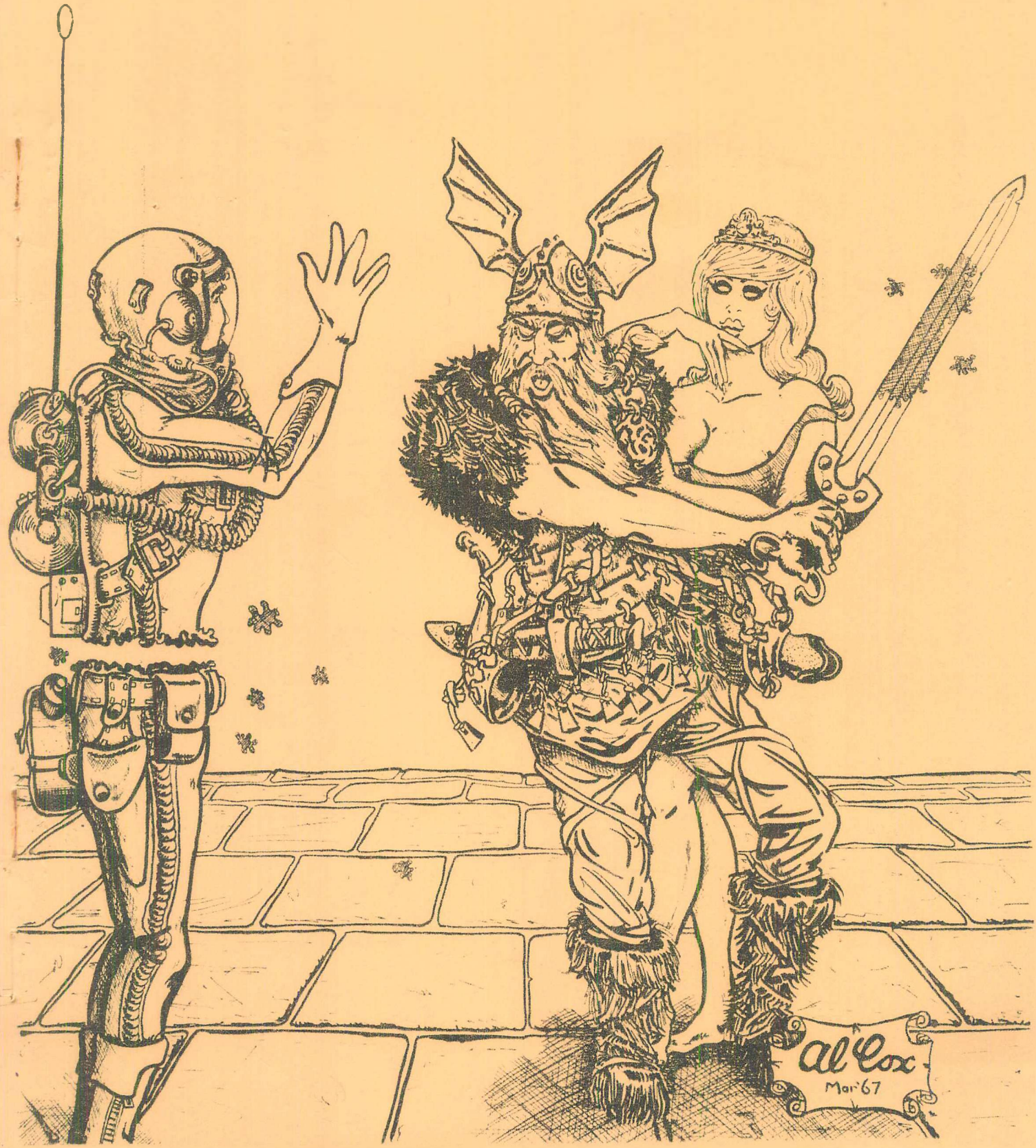
SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW



Australian Science Fiction Review

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ENTER JACK WODHAMS FROM RIGHT, PURSUED BY PLATYPUS...

> "Mr. Frederic Traff looked down at himself and choked back a cry of dismay. He had been incorrectly re-assembled. His legs were on backwards and his toes pointed to the rear. Mr. Traff teetered unfamiliarly. His arms did not feel right. He examined them. His elbows pointed forward, his palms faced outward from his sides. 'Oh, God,' he groaned unhappily. 'Oh, God.' A tear overflowed his eye and trickled down the back of his neck."

With these words the new and considerable talent of Jack Wodhams arrives on the science fiction scene. We might have expected something of the kind from his hilarious letters - now his story, THERE IS A CROOKED MAN, in the February ANALOG bears it out: Mr. Wodhams has an immense comic gift. The story, novelette rather, has its faults - maybe one of our reviewers will suppress his laughter for long enough to point them out - but it constitutes a most auspicious beginning to Mr. Wodhams's writing career. We look forward with great pleasure to reading the next three stories he has sold to Mr. Campbell, and the story to be published in NEW WRITINGS.

This is not the place to go into such things at length, and I don't wish to spoil your enjoyment of CROOKED MAN by saying much about it, but I am wondering if you will feel when you read it, as I did, that this novelette could quite easily have been published in Mike Moorcock's NEW WORLDS... (And if you can't wait to read more Jack Wodhams, turn to page 30 immediately.)

In a month of much work and little reading I have been fortunate to discover a number of eminently enjoyable stories. Foremost among them I must place Tom Disch's ECHO ROUND HIS BONES (NEW WORLDS 169/170). Into this novel Mr. Disch has put ideas (in quality, if not quantity) not unworthy of a Van Vogt, and a simple humanity which reminded me strongly of Bill Temple's FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE. Whether the basic concept of the story is original or not I leave to more learned sf authorities to decide: sufficient to say that the idea is new to me, and it will haunt me for some time to come. (Just as I can't get out of my mind that poor chap swinging like a pendulum through time past and future in THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER - another recent, and staggering, reading experience.)

This issue of ASFR, you won't be able to help noticing, has a somewhat (shall we say) <u>different</u> appearance. There are several factors. Lindsay Cox is a very talented young PMG technician who appeared at the Club one night with a bundle of drawings under his arm. At the time I was absent having a boiling radiator, but we got together soon enough and his first work for us graces our cover this month. You will be seeing a lot more of him. (He also is something of a master mimic; I wish there were some way of reproducing for you his Gert-Frobe-type-German-officer act...) Then my usual stationer was out of white paper, which accounts for the Neapolitan look of this issue. Further, this is the first issue to be produced on our very own ASFR duplicator - a reconditioned Series II Roneo 500 Electric. This huge step forward (or such it will be when I've mastered the thing) has been made possible by an exceedingly generous loan from an eminent Sydney fan. This gentleman is assured that his act of faith is not only appreciated beyond expression by ourselves, but has been recorded in letters of gold in the Great Book of Ghu, somewhere up there.

J.B.

A NOTE ON J. G. BALLARD

Three Novels

JOHN FOYSTER

PREFACE

Neither the editor of this journal nor I feel that the nature of these "Notes" was adequately described when the first of them appeared. Since I am at fault it falls to me to correct any misinterpretations or misapprehensions. I have described these essays as 'notes' because that is what they are. I have not made any attempt to create a directed piece of reasoning, so that the result, which may or may not be interesting, is certainly not persuasive. But this was not my intent. Ballard is a writer who is much discussed, and in my previous article, and in the ones to follow, I am trying to put together some useful information - information that someone else may one day find to be applicable to his way of thinking.

In my view there are several writers who are more "important" and who are still working the vein of science fiction, and if I were to attempt a serious article I should be spending my breath upon them. A.E. Van Vogt, though a writer with many faults, wrote stories which seem to me to contain the quintessence of sf. Gordon R. Dickson seems to me to have lately revealed unsuspected talents. Philip Jose Farmer continues to produce interesting work. But to write adequately about the work of these authors - or any author - requires a great deal more than reading the writers' works and sitting down and writing about them.

When one writes about an admired writer, or rather about the works which he has created, one has the task of tearing away the veil which obscures the writer and his meaning, to a greater or a lesser extent, from the eyes of the casual reader. In some cases this may be an easy task; in others this will not be so. For the critic naturally desires to reveal his subject in the best aspect possible. Thus a succession of attempts may, after all, only reveal feet of clay, and the ideal is destroyed.

To be specific, for the last year I have been trying to write something worthwhile about Cordwainer Smith. I have read all of his works at least twice. I have written about twenty thousand words in notes and drafts. I have interviewed people who knew him. I have taken photographs of a place in which he lived. And yet I still cannot say with satisfaction that I can begin to reveal the man who was Cordwainer Smith. Still all that comes out are silly little phrases. Of course, I don't have a monopoly on this style of writing: Judith Merril seems well-equipped in this direction. She suggests (F&SF, January 1967) that it is only the newness of Smith's work that precludes its discussion. That it would be presumptuous to write of him now. One may, of course, presume at any time. But this is not a sufficient reason for

not writing. In fact, it is the inability to create something which is, in a way, greater than that which the writer himself produced: a coherent picture of another human being, as revealed by his commercial writings.

So when I come to read J.G. Ballard, unable to accept him as anything more than a moderately competent hack, there is no incentive to quarry for the valued ore that is there. For the immediate impression is one of obscurity, of rigidity, of monolithic emptiness. One feels impelled only to kick a few pebbles into the great hole of anarchy.

My previous discussion of Ballard's short stories thus consisted of assorted judgements, interpretations, and straight re-tellings. Some notes were omitted - a discussion of the recurrence of various symbols, for example - for one can have too much of that sort of thing.

* * *

The three novels - THE DROWNED WORLD, THE BURNING WORLD, and THE CRYSTAL WORLD - like the four short stories discussed in the previous note, constitute a well-defined group within Ballard's work. Though not so closely linked in time, the theme running through them is at least as strong as that appearing in the short stories.

Kerans, Ransom, Sanders: each exists in a world radically different from our own. Some catastrophe has occured as a result of which each of these men finds himself thrust into some position of importance - a position which, it seems, he would not have desired in our old world. Each seems to become a focal point, and around him significant action takes place. Without these men mankind would, most probably, have been a very different thing.

The similarities of the plots cannot be coincidental. The novels were published in 1962, 1964, and 1966 (U.S.). It almost seems as though Ballard has just one idea which he is attempting to put across to his readers, and each time, viewing the result, he is not satisfied. Whether he succeeds in making himself more clear at each attempt, or whether he simply succeeds in antagonizing the hapless reader is a matter of personal interpretation. Many readers seem to feel, for instance, that the transition from THE ILLUMINATED MAN to THE CRYSTAL WORLD was not a successful one.

THE DROWNED WORLD

From beginning to end this book is oppressive. From

"Soon it would be too hot. ...the relentless power of the sun"

to

"So he left the lagoon and entered the jungle again, within a few days was completely lost, following the lagoons southward through the increasing rain and heat, attacked by alligators and giant bats, a second Adam searching for the forgotten paradises of the reborn Sun."

is a journey only in time. The stink and the heat remain. The atmosphere of the Earth and of the book do not change. Even Kerans, the protagonist, hardly changes. This must be considered a major success. Few writers of sf are sufficiently skilled to suit the style to the plot so carefully. Even though Ballard tends to write longer sentences than the average sf writer, and perhaps to use more colourful words, in this novel the length and structure of the sentences exudes a feeling of enervation which the reader cannot help but notice. Although the effect is startling, in that the reader quickly comprehends the nature and mood of the book, it is also deadening. Few readers want to be oppressed.

A glance at two paperback editions (Berkeley, 1962 and 1966) shows that Damon Knight probably sees the book in this same light. The 1962 edition is yellow and green - harsh, and entirely unpleasant. The new cover on the 1966 edition is done in sombre, smoky colours: the heat is still there, but now it draws the viewer in and suffocates him.

This is what the changed Earth does to Kerans. It lures him, by no mechanism we can detect, into itself, almost despite what he knows of this new world. This mystery is, in some ways, just the thing that spoils Ballard's work, in that the reader of sf requires some reason for each event. Ballard's contention is, naturally, that the world and what happens in it cannot be explained, and that those who think they can detect a set of universal laws are either deluded or are examining a peculiar subsection of the universe.

In this Drowned World, the sun has warmed, the polar ice is melting, and man is retreating to the poles. That's the science part of it. Because of the increased humidity, there's a regression to the Age of Reptiles. That's the fiction part of it. Normally a science fiction writer would have created a solid adventure yarn from this material - wars between North and South, aliens who come to the rescue, an attempt to cool the sun and so on. Ballard is interested solely in the reaction of one man (a particular man, admittedly) to this world.

Kerans is not just an ordinary man. He does not recall the old world at all. For all of his life the earth has been becoming warmer, and the slow migration North is a part of his life. He does not, therefore, react to the change from our earth to this new one. He is a man who, at one place and at one time, decides that he must endure the change in himself, rather than in the world around him. That is, he will adapt to the environment, and not change his environment to suit him.

Kerans's reactions take place against a background of adventure: damming back the waters covering a city, scientific expeditions, piracy and looting. In early sf this would have been the story - and by early sf I mean that of the Gernsbackian era. These things take place, but only to show Kerans's general indifference to them. Certainly, when he realizes that Strangman is going to attempt to halt the change, to keep the city dry, to prevent evolution, he reacts, and reacts violently. But this is because Strangman's action is going to interfere with his idea of change, not because he feels for the city, but because of what he feels about his existence now. Thus he says:

"Have you been down in those streets, they're obscene and hideous!

It's a nightmare world that's dead and finished, Strangman's resurrecting a corpse!"

Note that he does not say: What a shame it is - surely it is better to leave it covered! No, he rejects this action because it spoils the new world by bringing back the old.

There are a couple of minor troubles with this novel. One can see why Beatrice Dahl might want to stay in her palace (but not why she might end up going), but one cannot see why Kerans should want to stay - other than for the reason suggested above. Perhaps no other reason is necessary.

The writing is not first rate, if some minor aspects are considered. In the quoted passage above, which was chosen for an entirely different reason, a comma is twice used in place of a full stop and a question mark is omitted. These are almost trivial matters, but the fact that these grammatical lapses occur in a randomly chosen quote suggests that similar, or even grosser, mistakes occur elsewhere.

All that we know of the characters is by implication. The picture formed in the mind is a vague one, since Ballard avoids precise description, does not evaluate. The result is a feeling of understanding, but not of comprehension, of agreement, but not of knowing the reasons for that agreement.

"27th day. Have rested and am moving south. All is well. Kerans."

Kerans's last note reads just like a note left on an Antarctic expedition. Kerans knows that other men will follow him, just as he followed Hardman.

THE BURNING WORLD

If THE DROWNED WORLD was hot and oppressive, then THE BURNING WORLD is almost cool by comparison. The heat here is a dry one, and the book is light and crisp. THE DROWNED WORLD is essentially a novel of character, with the action very much in the background: by contrast, THE BURNING WORLD is very much a novel of action. There are few paragraphs of sheer description, and any scenes Ballard sets are sparsely populated.

Nevertheless, or perhaps even because of these strong contrasts, there are great similarities between the two novels. The catastrophe is much the same, yet is reversed - too much water and too little water. Eventually the hero adapts to the new environment. The sf elements are minimal.

In fact, it almost seems as though Ballard's sf is in his language rather than in his plots.

"For Ransom it had become a matter of withdrawing into his own speere of selfness, leaving behind the world of half-reality which so often now swirled around him. Now he found himself more and more often leaning forward, eagerly, as though to a feast: a feast from which he never returned satisfied, so that time and again he had to go back, until time had no longer any meaning."

That's not Ballard, by the way, just "Ransom used to drive his car to work" in Ballardese. The events which Ballard describes are, so terribly often, commonplace and ordinary. But his language is extraordinary.

Unfortunately, the problem of Ballard's language occurs again, in a rather different way. It is difficult to obtain a reasonable mental image of someone who is described as (a) insane and (b) not stupid or unintelligent on successive pages. Just which is it that Ballard means? The answer, perhaps, is that he really doesn't mean either: he just wants insurance.

And there is another way in which Ballard's language is unsatisfactory. In introducing one character he uses the following words, all in the space of one page:

> vigorous, uncertain, muscular, intimidate, justice, threat, retribution, tall, strong, fierce, towered, bad-tempered, headmaster, inflict, slightly twisted, unpredictability, bellicose, sharp, suspicious, initiative, militia, ostensibly, guard, curious, moral contempt, fighting, preached, offense, committing, struggle, strange, battle, evil, rivalry, contestants, embattled, hellfire

One is tempted to add "donner and blitzen." This is, the reader must agree, overdoing it a bit. Okay, so Ballard wants us to have a negative attitude towards this character, but is all that really necessary?

Nevertheless, it is just this character who produces the argument for adaptation: for remaining where one is and trying to wait the drought out. That he himself does not do so is unimportant, perhaps, since the idea is less strongly implanted in this story.

In fact, Ransom does leave his community, and returns some ten years later for a rather unsuccessful finale. He rejects the idea of staying and adapting, and goes to meet his destiny, only to be robbed of it by a fateful accident:

> "It was some time later that he failed to notice it had started to rain."

This, too, is extraordinary language, but since, in terms of Ballard's thinking, it is the interior view of the universe that matters, and not the exterior one, the words are quite acceptable.

The similarity of Ransom and Catherine Austen to the characters of the same name in THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION is noted, and passed over quickly. The reappearance of these names is pointless to all but Ballard, until a reason is revealed. (The thought might just cross one's mind that there is a similarity between the action concerning Ransom, Philip Jordan, and the swan, and Paul Gallico's THE SNOW GOOSE. Then again, it might not.)

THE BURNING WORLD contains Ballard's clearest description of his concept of time:

> "All summer Ransom had watched it shrinking, its countless associations fading as it narrowed into a shallow creek. Above all Ransom was aware

"that the role of the river in time had changed. Once it had played the part of an immense fluid clock, the objects immersed in it taking up their positions like the stations of the sun and planets. The continued lateral movements of the river, to which Ransom had become more and more sensitive during his visits to the houseboat, its rise and fall and the varying pressures on the hull, were like the activity within some vast system of evolution, whose cumulative forward flow was as irrelevant and without meaning as the apparent linear motion of time itself. The real movements were those random and discontinuous relationships between the objects within it, those of himself and the other denizens of the river, Mrs. Quilter, her son, and the dead birds and fish.

With the death of the river so would vanish any contact between those stranded on the drained floor. For the present the need to find some other measure of their relationships would be concealed by the problems of their own physical survival. Nonetheless, Ransom was certain that the absence of this great universal moderator, which cast its bridges between all animate and inanimate objects alike, would prove of crucial importance. Each of them would soon literally be an island in an archipelago drained of time."
(page 11)

This allusion, so simple and even common, is tremendously strong in THE BURNING WORLD. Ballard just says: Time is a river. Therefore, when the river dries, time will vanish.

Ransom sees it, but it never seems to be important in the novel other than as an allusion. The river always appears as a physical thing, and though such trivial symbols as Jordan standing for the eternal youth (he ferries up and down the river with ease) might be considered, they don't really add anything to the novel as a whole. It is much simpler, and perhaps even more profitable, to think of it as a simple adventure story in fancy language.

If this can be done, without unduly irritating the intellect, then Ballard has failed. His novels must make us feel they are more than 'simple adventure stories' to succeed. Using his private allusion, illusions and symbols are not enough.

Calling individual chapters THE DROWNED AQUARIUM, THE BURNING ALTAR, and THE ILLUMINATED RIVER, is interesting as a game, but nothing more. Nor are alligators and iguanas, to reflect back to THE DROWNED WORLD, attractive to me.

THE CRYSTAL WORLD

Unlike many sf authors, Ballard, in preparing THE ILLUMINATED MAN for publication as a novel, rewrote the whole work, using only the ideas of the shorter work, and incorporating some of the relevant sections into the novel. Consequently, this pair offers a unique opportunity for discussing the relative merits of Ballard as a writer of short stories and of novels. If Ballard were more like the run-of-the-mill sf writer, one could extend the ideas beyond Ballard, but he is so different that such an extrapolation would be worse than useless.

What is not clear about the two pieces is the reasons Ballard had for changing names but not backgrounds. Undoubtedly there are reasons, but they are not at all obvious from either of the two published stories. In the shorter story, Ballard managed to maintain the mystery which pervades his short works generally, and in the novel, as with his other novels, it is a feeling of clarity that is dominant. The actions are fixed and clearcut. The twiddly bits generally come in the description, and because Ballard writes the way he does the percentage of dialogue in the novels is much greater than that in the shorts. The result is the one stated above: Ballard does not seem to handle scenes involving human beings particularly well, as so many readers have noted, so that these sections become almost ham-handed; the characters have no motivations, and probably no feelings.

The shorter story is also more acceptable because readers do not mind a little mystification. When it comes to being mystified (in the sense of not understanding the action) for more than eight to ten thousand words, a certain amount of boredom sets in.

More likely than any other is the explanation that Ballard does not yet handle the novel-length work well because he has not yet had sufficient practice.

In this novel, Ballard takes the view that disease is just another form of evolution. Others have already expressed their dislike for "the shaking of hands in tabes dorsalis" which so delights Ballard: no doubt his leprophilia is just as attractive. I don't think this interpretation of disease is a reasonable one, with the result that I'm counted out when it comes to deciding whether or not the idea is science fiction. Ballard imagines an atomic leprosy which slowly and simultaneously affects small parts of the universe. One assumes this, anyway, but Ballard has the thing occurring on three small parts of the earth's surface and also invading an entire galaxy. Why the scale should vary so is difficult to imagine, and perhaps it's best to assume that Ballard thinks galaxies are relatively small.

Ballard's acute vision is present here also. In one of these novels he describes a girl's hair as being worn straight to the shoulder, in the way that girls who have suffered from polio so often wear it. Strange that he should have noticed it. I wonder how he checked on this interesting fact: did he quiz a large number of girls who were polio-sufferers? Again, in THE CRYSTAL WORLD, he describes Father Balthus as having

> "The self-immersed eyes and pale neurasthenic hands (which) bore all the signatures of the imposter, perhaps an expelled novice still hoping to find some kind of salvation within a borrowed soutane."

which is yet another piece of remarkable observation. But, as it turns out, Father Balthus is genuine. Just what does Ballard hope to gain by these false impressions? Are they intended to be false in the sense of being recognized as such by the reader, or is it just a matter of Ballard trying to be Lit'ry? As has been indicated above, Ballard gives no evidence of being so good a writer as to be able to weigh the ability of his readers to judge the truth or otherwise of his statements. Quite frankly, as was indicated in the previous article, the question is, does Ballard know what he's talking about?

There, it was a simple matter of asking whether Ballard knew Claude Eatherly's role in the bombing of Japan or not: here, it is a matter of asking a more serious question - are Ballard's symbols and allusions and ideas intended as truth, or part truth, or as total fiction? If the last case happens to be the one which Ballard considers 'true' then we are in trouble. His lack of interest in discussing his work seems to be complete, and his expositors weak-kneed and vague. The result of fighting with a jelly-fish is just sticky, unpleasant fingers.

When Ford Madox Ford was asked just what had attracted him to Lawrence's writing, he answered that it was a page of one story, in which he described a train coming round a bend as being like a pony trying to bound away from the control of its rider. This was a description which Lawrence's readers had either experience of or a clear mental image. Too many writers, Ford indicated, used abstract descriptions: to say a train came at 40mph conveys nothing to the average reader.

From this vantage point we can perhaps reasonably express the view that Ballard's writing is not Lit'ry: that it is in fact pretentious and weak. That it conveys no humane feelings. That it is shallow, and withstands no deep investigation.

His short stories, nevertheless, do have much to commend them.

As Brian Aldiss pointed out in his article (BRITISH SF NOW) in SF HORIZONS 2, Ballard is attracted by the non-conversation of some producers of modern literature. Aldiss suggests that Ballard is not entirely able in this field. His example, chosen from THE DROWNED WORLD, is at least coherent. But I feel that no one can possibly make sense from a small section near the start of THE CRYSTAL WORLD. Sanders and Balthus are on the boat waiting to land. They have been talking together for some time. Their first reported conversation is this:

Sanders: The light - have you noticed it? Is there an eclipse expected? The sun seems unable to make up its mind.
(A couple of paragraphs of description follow)
Balthus: An eclipse?
(Description)
I think not, Doctor. Surely the maximum duration would be eight minutes?
(Description)
The light at Port Matarre is always like this, very heavy and penumbral - do you know Bocklin's painting, "Island of the Dead," where the cypresses stand guard over a cliff pierced by a hypogeum, while a storm hovers over the sea? It's in the Kunstmuseum in my native Basel. ..... We're moving. At last.
Sanders: Thank God for that. You should have warned me, Balthus.

The "Thank God for that" is clear enough: it's the other part that's difficult. What is it that Sanders should have been warned of? That eclipses last a maximum of eight minutes? That the ship was going to move? Or that the light is poor in Port Matarre? If any, it must be the last. Yet no reasonable man would have expected a description of the lighting conditions in

the port. Ballard's characters are not, one might say, reasonable.

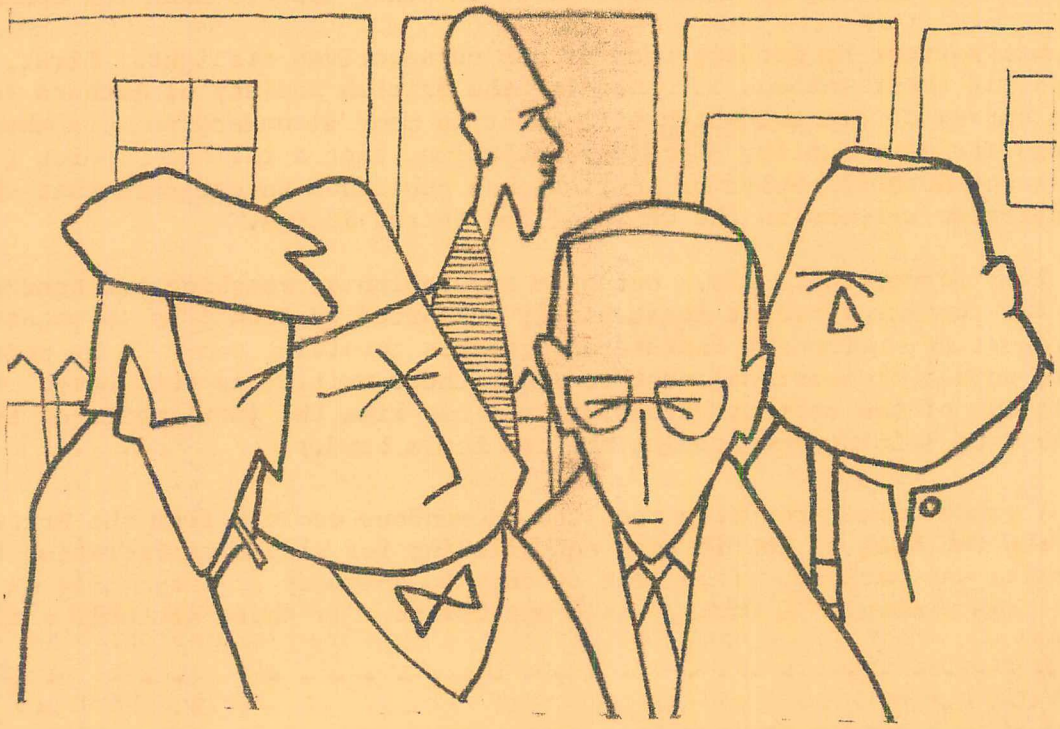
As has been the practice with the other two novels, a small piece of style-sniping can be attempted. On page 45 of the British edition, Ballard has Sanders and Louise Peret together in the hotel dining room, a public place. They stand. He takes her arm. So far so good. Then "her hips and shoulders touched his own." In a public place. Then more or less in this position they walk out of the hotel. I think Ballard possibly meant "hip and shoulder." Later, on page 166, Sanders and Louise are obviously walking along side by side, arm in arm, etc. but again it appears: "Feeling her hips against his own..." One can but humbly suggest that had Sanders's eyes been open he would have noticed her move into his field of vision and against him. Despite this clear interpretation of Ballard's words, we read with astonishment that "Sanders almost believed for a moment that he was walking away from her." A man who can believe that, despite the evidence of his own senses, has no place in any kind of novel, not even a science fiction novel.

Again, as in THE BURNING WORLD, there is a small section which says a great deal about Ballard's thoughts:

> "In this forest we see the final celebration of the Eucharist of Christ's body. Here everything is transfigured and illuminated, joined together in the last marriage of space and time."

In THE CRYSTAL WORLD, Ballard writes of the crystallization of matter as a result of the removal of "time." Why?

JOHN FOYSTER



THE ECONOMICS OF S. F.

JOHN BRUNNER

> "In an earlier instance the Meredith agency did sell the picture rights to a book then unwritten. That one, Evan Hunter's MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS, has now been completed, and German rights have just gone to Kindler Verlag, in a deal closed with their representative here, Maximilian Becker, for a record $17,000 advance. Also, Corgi have just acquired British paperback rights on a £15,000 advance." (Daniel J. Boorstin: THE IMAGE, p.158)

It so happens that I'm represented by the Scott Meredith Agency which pulled this trick. Every now and again I feel tempted to photostat that excerpt and send it to Joe Elder, who handles my work, with a terse note asking what Evan Hunter has that I haven't (apart from $17,000 and £15,000).

It's small wonder that most people have an entirely false impression of what authors make, and this impression is distorted even further when one comes down to sf, a thoroughly anomalous field in other aspects than its content.

Let's start by getting some of our perspectives straight. First, as to writers and their incomes in general: the British Society of Authors is conducting a survey at present which will clear up many misunderstandings when the findings are made public. Consider, meantime, that a reliable source (the Bulletin of the Authors' Guild of America) has published an estimate that there are 250 full-time writers in the whole of the United States.

I'll repeat that: 250. Out of a population approaching two hundred million. The remainder are at least partly supported by such jobs as magazine editing, reporting, permanent feature assignments involving non-writing activity, or hold down a professional post to which their writing is secondary. (Advertising is one of the current havens; it's a bit like the jazz greats of the thirties who kept joining and leaving the Ted Lewis band.)

A young writer recently received tremendous acclaim from the British press. I've read the book he got it for, and allowing for slight exaggeration I think the praise was merited. I've lent my copy to somebody so I can only quote a sample from memory: "I doubt," said one critic, "if there are half a dozen

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Reprinted from VECTOR 37 (January 1966), with additions by the author.

people who can match" Mr. X's prose. He made the headlines recently when a publisher offered to pay him what amounts to a salary for the next two years, on condition they are given a couple of books they can publish. Amount of that "salary"? £800. And he was probably glad to get it. Brother! Given a reasonable amount of overtime, he could probably collect more working on a building site!

Now the generous publisher isn't buying his entire thinking time, of course. But he's buying the cream of Mr. X's output, and if Mr. X is halfway honest he'll be turning down supplementary earnings which would infringe on the thinking time needed to create books reflecting his true abilities. Many - perhaps most - writers never stop working; everything they do from breakfast to bedtime, everything they read from advertisements to poetry, everything they see or hear or smell or touch or taste gets mortared into the foundations for their subsequent output. Isaac Asimov wasn't joking when he said writing has the characteristics of an addictive drug. Once you're hooked on it properly, your life revolves around it in the same way a junkie's revolves around his next fix. It can be physically unpleasant to be deprived of the opportunity to write. (Believe me.)

What of the writer who, by misfortune, has a temperament inclining him towards sf? Well... I'm one, and a very atypical one, so most of the following remarks must be read as applying to me personally and generalizations should be made therefrom very tentatively indeed. Nonetheless, I feel they may be of interest as a kind of case-history cum guided tour of a thorny question.

Cardinal fact: sf is a minority taste, to the extent that hitherto one has been able to say it's read by one person in every thousand of the English-speaking population. (I refer to habituated readers, and not to those who are exposed to an occasional freak best-seller serialized in the SATURDAY EVENING POST.) For instance, I recall seeing ASTOUNDING's public estimated at some 185,000 in a country of about as many million; similarly, the Atlas reprint edition used to sell about 45,000 in Britain.

There is a slow upward trend in these figures at present, due to such causes as the adoption of sf by "respectable" houses like Penguin and the discovery by literate readers that there are literate writers in the field. The impact of this has not yet been sufficient to alter much of the economic pattern of the sf writer's life. We will assign Arthur Clarke, John Wyndham, John Christopher and some few others to the stratospheric altitudes of the movie world (every writer dreams of selling film rights on every book he produces), and concentrate on the somewhat more mundane levels where the majority of the writers who appear in your Favourite Magazines float around.

As pointed out, there is a three-to-one difference in the size of the audience for sf when you compare Britain and the U.S.A. It's reflected fairly accurately in the rates paid. To try to make a decent living by selling nothing but sf in Britain would be impossible. (John Lymington appears to have found a sort of solution to this, but I have no information regarding other earnings he may have.)

Example: Gollancz's basic advance on a hardcover edition - to which royalties will be added after a very long lapse of time - is £100. I received that

much for both THE BRINK, in 1959, and NO FUTURE IN IT, in 1962. Ace, not the largest or most prosperous of American paperback firms, would put down $1000 for the same manuscript, or about £350. As to magazines, I recall how pleased I was when Ted Carnell gave me a bonus on a story he published by raising my rate from two guineas to £2.5.0 per thousand words. Near as dammit, two guineas is $6. As far as I know the lowest rate paid in recent years by an American sf magazine has been that from FANTASTIC at 1.5 cents per word - i.e. $15 per thousand, or 2½ times as much.

The highest current rate is ANALOG's 4 cents a word, plus a cent a word bonus for topping the An Lab, or half a cent for coming second. The less pretentious of the men's magazines go no lower than a nickel a word - a cent higher than the best offered by an sf magazine, in other words.

It's a minor miracle that there are so many writers in the sf field, isn't it?

There are basically two ways in which you can keep afloat in sf without resorting to devious expedients like writing continuity for a comic-strip (e.g. Jack Williamson for BEYOND MARS, Harry Harrison and heaven alone knows who else for FLASH GORDON) or beating your brains out on a TV serial (a common disaster among American sf writers, I gather, but not so popular in Britain.)

The first is to get the hell out of the United States, if that's where you happen to be, and settle in some country where a phoney exchange rate stretches your dollar earnings. I live in Britain but almost exactly 90 percent of my income is from America.

The second is to be prolific as hell, and that's a matter of temperament. I'm lucky; I have a very high rate of output because I actually enjoy the physical process of writing, and get unhappy when I'm kept away from my typewriter. I've been writing about eight books a year lately, and banking on selling six of them to get me a decent living. But I can't keep that up forever; I was just about at the end of my tether when I started getting serializations in American magazines - something I'd previously failed to secure - and was able to contemplate reducing my schedule because of the extra income thus obtained from the same investment of effort.

(There's a third solution: to live on bread and cheese in one room, preferably in a warm part of the country to save on heating bills. Some people can stand it. I can't. When I first moved to London from my home, my earnings as a writer average four pounds a week and I was renting a two-guinea room. I gave up and went to work for Sam Youd and it was two and a half years before I plucked up the courage to try freelancing again - by which time I was married and Marjorie was still working, so it wasn't so risky... This suggests another solution I'd overlooked: marry an heiress. Difficult. So few heiresses appreciate sf.)

All this stems from some comments in VECTOR 32, where Ken Slater was explaining the facts of life to those of his customers who wanted to know why they couldn't have the Ballantine edition of THE WHOLE MAN (TELEPATHIST) instead of the Faber hardcover edition to be followed in about two years' time by a Penguin.

Well, it's very nice to know that so many people are eager to read my stuff... and I'm not even much hurt by the fact that they aren't eager enough to

pay eighteen shillings for the privilege of reading it now this minute. Among my colleagues I'm regarded as something of a subversive for approving of original paperbacks - but why not? After all, there are few books you read more than once. A typical novel is likely to give you an evening's entertainment, at the speed most moderately literate people read. It seems reasonable to pay for it what you'd pay for a seat at the local cinema or a gallery seat in a theatre; say 3/6 to 7/6, the price of a current paperback.

But look at the matter from the author's point of view. Look at it, specifically, from mine. Turning out up to eight books a year means that at best one of those books is going to be really good; the rest will range from competent to barely passable or even lousy, and would benefit immensely from being put on the shelf in MS form until I have the time and the inclination to revise, polish, or perhaps scrap them.

If, out of a given book, I'm making only £350 less the ten per cent which the agent takes (which is what happens if I sell it solely to an American paperback publisher who then markets his own edition in Britain), I have to keep churning them out. From the outside, I should perhaps explain, writing looks like a cheap way of running a business, but I often find when making up my tax returns that my deductible expenses - i.e. those incurred directly in connection with my work - have used up twenty per cent of my gross income.

The sales of that American edition in Britain add practically nothing to my earnings; the book comes in, months or years after its first appearance in the States, attracts no attention whatever, isn't reviewed anywhere, and does no more than spoil my chance of selling the same work to a publisher in this country. As a matter of fact, British sales may well add nothing to my earnings, because the American publishers simply want to get their back stock out of the warehouse to make room for a newer item. This is called "dumping."

By signing a contract which confines distribution rights of the American edition strictly to territories outside the sterling area (the wording varies, but this is an example), I can hang on to the chance of additional sales. Suppose, as happened with THE WHOLE MAN, Faber buys the MS: I get, eventually, another couple of hundred quid in small chunks; I get the chance of a Science Fiction Book Club selection, which adds a bit more; I get the chance of a paperback sale in Britain, which adds a great deal more; over a period of about three to five years, I've comfortably doubled the procee ds. I know it's an awful nuisance to have to wait for the Penguin edition in 1968 or whenever before you read this book that all your fan friends in Oshkosh or Walla Walla are raving about. But it contains a blessing in disguise: by 1968 I shall have put together my long-awaited epic, SOUL SLAVES OF THE UMPTEENTH CONTINUUM, and it's going to make all my previous work look like Kid-dee Com-ics. Up till now, force of circumstances and the wolf at the door have conspired to make me postpone work on it.

More seriously, here are some hard figures by which you can gauge the economics of the field as they apply to a competent, diligent writer of average output and adequate persistence. Let's call him Theokurt Frishblitz in honour of some of my personal idols.

In Year One of his career, Mr. Frishblitz breaks through the hitherto

impenetrable wall of rejection slips, revises his long-standing opinion of all editors as purblind nits, and sells a short story to UNUSED PLANETS, a British magazine with a high reputation and low rates. Proceeds: about £10.

Encouraged, he stands the editor a drink and makes a note in his diary: To Business Expenses, 3/6. The editor is favourably impressed with his idea for a novelette and promises it the cover if it turns out okay. He also suggests some alterations and improvements in the story line. Mr. Frishblitz gets it right on the second submission. Proceeds: about £50.

One or two or possibly more stories later, he conceives his first novel, and offers it as a serial. It clicks. Proceeds: about £150.

Provided he has had the good sense to make two carbons of this novel (getting it re-typed by a competent agency will cost him £20-£30, so it's much cheaper that way...), he can now cast covetous eyes on the U.S. market. So far, he's been getting nothing but bounces - from the stories which UNUSED PLANETS thereupon bought at the minimal British rates. But a novel, surely, which has been serialized...?

Mr. Frishblitz wraps it up, fills out the customs declaration with an optimistic assessment of the book's value (which will later cause some wrangling and delay in the U.S. Customs), and mails it to Trump Books Inc., a small but voracious paperback house in New York with an enormous output of sf. It comes back, much later, with a reasonably kind letter saying they published more or less the same story in 1937 and just reprinted it, but would welcome more of his work; they pay a standard advance of $1000 and would rather the customs slip was marked NO COMMERCIAL VALUE because it makes things simpler at the New York end.

At the end of Year One, Mr. Frishblitz tots up his earnings. Rejections included, he's written some hundred thousand words or so - which is a lot of words if you count them one by one. It's even more if you take re-writes into account. He's made about £250, which is damned good going for his first year.

What to do? Well... how about an agent? He applies to Scotfree Cheeryble Inc., who - according to THE WRITERS' ANNUAL - had the highest turnover in America last year and sold one book for a total of $175,000. A note comes back saying, with devastating honesty, that Cheeryble aren't much interested until a writer is making $1000 p.a. on his own; then they'll consider accepting him.

He knows already how much $1000 is - he worked it out when he got the letter from Trump Books. It's £357. Anyway, what does he want to give ten per cent of his earnings away for? He's doing okay, isn't he?

We-ell...

Let's skip the interval during which he learns the basic economics of the job, and jump to the year in which he quits his regular employment to take a flyer as a freelance; let's say that this is Year Five of his writing career. He's saved up enough to risk an initial drop in his total income, though his wife is afraid of having to go back to work, and his two children are more expensive than racehorses to feed and keep. The accumulated frustration left over

from part-time work, interrupted by having to go to the office every day, lets go with a surge and carries him through the first half of the year with three novels and a couple of good novelettes.

He sells the novelettes - totalling 30,000 words - to U.S. magazines, and makes from them about what he made in his first year's work: £250. He sells the first two novels to Trump, which he now regards as a safe market, for $1000 and $1250 respectively. By golly, there's about £1000 for half a year's work!

Novel three comes back with a regretful note to say it's below standard, try again.

To Mr. Frishblitz, this is a sore blow. He does no more work for a month through worrying; then starts worrying about not working; then the worry fouls him up for a further month, during which time the children eat the proceeds of the sales so far this year. By the year's end, he's recovered enough to have completed a fourth novel. Proceeds this year amount to an acceptable £1500, but he's written about 300,000 words for that, some of it hasn't found a home, and he's not at all sure he can manage the wordage equivalent of five novels every year from now on. His imagination is getting a bit tattered around the edges and what he really wants to do is spend a month researching a magnum opus about colonizing the ocean-bed, whereas Trump Books are asking for a sexsational novel about adultery in free fall, tentatively entitled PEYTON PLANET.

If he has any sense, this is when he writes to Cheeryble Inc. again. He has the sales behind him to make them interested, but he lacks the specialized knowledge to exploit himself.

Let's wish him luck and see how he's doing in Year Ten.

In this year, he writes three books, one of them on commission from a publisher who bought an earlier novel. This is a comfortable pace to write at; it allows time for adequate research, second thoughts, re-reading and if necessary complete revision, and generally permits him to make sure that what he wraps and mails is as good as he can make it. Proceeds are roughly as follows:

The first novel appears, specially abridged by himself, as the lead short novel in a U.S. magazine and grosses $500, then sells to a paperback house for $1500 and to an English publisher for £150, in the full-length version. The second is published as a two-part serial in a U.S. magazine, which pays $800, and also goes to a paperback house for $1500, but is too far out to interest the rather conservative British publishers. Not to worry: number three marks two "first" notches for him - his first U.S. hardback edition and his first double sale in Britain, to both hardback and paperback houses, as well as going to a U.S. paperback publisher, bringing in some $2000 and £400 from a single book. In addition, he receives some small royalties from previous work, and there is no reason why number two should not later on find a home in Britain; moreover, by now he's picking up the odd translation sale, and when the escudos and francs and marks and whatsits are converted to sterling they add another 100-odd quid to the year's total.

Year Ten, therefore, sees him comfortably established with an income of around £2500 plus past, future and imponderable accretals from work not actually done during the year. He is doing very well, considering the field he's in. Next year he may very well make less than £1000 because he breaks his wrist and can't type, or he may make £10,000 because his agent happens to be drinking within earshot of a film producer and seizes his chance on hearing the producer is looking for a science fiction property. He can't tell. But he wouldn't trade problems with anybody. He's hooked on writing.

Mr. Frishblitz did everything right, and had the single essential attribute, out of that list at the beginning of his career, which is persistence. He's probably about thirty-five or forty; he gets half a dozen fan letters a year and is asked to speak at Conventions, and when the BBC puts a programme together about sf they send someone around with a tape recorder and use two minutes forty seconds on the air. He's okay. But if it hadn't been sf he wanted to write - if it had been, say, TV serials and he sold an idea which caught on like DR. WHO - he might easily have made in the first two years enough to retire on, in a gracious modern house on Grand Bahama Island with his own private beach, and the seventeen Frishblitz books you so greatly enjoyed over the past five years would never have been written at all.

Some time I must ask Mr. Frishblitz which way he'd have preferred it to turn out, back in Year One of his career...

If this finds its way into the hands of any U.S. readers, they should remember the phoniness of the dollars-to-pounds exchange rate. In this country, an annual income in the Frishblitz bracket will provide a comfortably furnished house, adequate food and clothing for a family of four, a medium-priced car, and the occasional vacation abroad. At the current Stateside rate, it would compare so badly with what one can earn in business that the writer's wife would almost certainly leave him, unless she was desperately in love.

My guesstimate is that Mr. Frishblitz, living in the States, would have to earn some fifty per cent more in order to survive, and at least 100 per cent more to enjoy the U.S. equivalent of Anglo-Frishblitz's standard of living.

I couldn't manage it. That's why I live here. (Also I was born here, which counts for something...)

Footnote:

Since the first publication of the above article, there have been some marked improvements in the size of advances: Penguin have been offering some very substantial sums for original novels, almost comparable with U.S. rates - which is truly astonishing to anyone accustomed to the differential described in the article - and Ace are now talking of launching a series of original novels for which they will pay an advance of up to $2500.

Over the next couple of years, Mr. Frishblitz can confidently expect his earnings to rise by fifteen per cent or more for the same investment of work.

Assuming he maintains his standards, that is!

R E V I E W S

ALAN REYNARD IAN GODDEN ROBERT GERRAND
DIANA MARTIN PAUL STEVENS LEE HARDING

JOHN CARNELL (ed): NEW WRITINGS IN SF - 9 (Dennis Dobson: $2.00)

- ALAN REYNARD

When John Carnell launched this paperback/hardcover series a couple of years ago, British sf was at a very low ebb. NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY had got into difficulties and had been picked up by another publisher. Carnell, depressed by a dwindling magazine market and a lack of promising new writers, decided that some drastic sort of move was needed to guarantee the survival of sf as a short story medium.

The idea of a series of quarterly paperback collections of original sf stories was initially very promising. There had been a precedent in Frederik Pohl's STAR SCIENCE FICTION series in the fifties, but that had seen only half a dozen volumes in more than that number of years before the decline in the quality of sf made it impractical to continue: most popular writers had moved on to the more lucrative field of the paperback novel. What Carnell attempted fell somewhere between the established anthology of "classic" sf stories, with which it would have to compete, and the average magazine issue, with which it must also be in competition.

The series poses a problem for the reviewer. On one hand he has to consider each individual collection as an "anthology," which it is, and also as a hybrid sort of magazine. Carnell expounded his ideas for the series in the first volume:

> "NEW WRITINGS IN SF is a new departure in the sf field, bringing for the first time to lovers of the genre new stories written specially for the series by well-known as well as new authors. It is the next step forward in expanding the sf short story from the limitations it has suffered during the past thirty years, and will present international authors writing for a far wider audience than ever before... NEW WRITINGS IN SF lives up to its name and does not present old material already published many times. The editor will also be encouraging new methods and techniques of story-telling."

Bold words, ambitious scheme. Perhaps a number of forces, matters of plain economy more than anything else, have so far prevented Carnell from expanding NEW WRITINGS as much as he would have wished. So far there have been nine hardcover volumes published, eight Corgi paperback editions, and two or three

American Bantam paperbacks, so in at least one respect - that of being a truly international publication - Carnell has been successful. But in other respects, less so.

I have been very conscious of the lack of really major writers in the series. In nine volumes there has been one story by Brian Aldiss, one by James White, one by William F. Temple. Carnell has even had to rescue obscure shorts by Asimov, Pohl, and lately, Eric Frank Russell, to enhance his covers. In this he has been only partly successful: Carnell's task has been to encourage new talent, and with a quarterly schedule this means a longer "learning time" for tyros. Eventually this may prove a burden for editor and readers alike.

The stalwarts of NEW WRITINGS have been the relatively minor writers, such as Colin Kapp, John Rankine, William Spencer, and our own John Baxter. There has also been a suspicious number of very efficient "newcomers." The one major discovery of the series has been Keith Roberts, who has probably been responsible for many more stories than bear his name. The only other discovery of note is Douglas R. Mason. The rest have been competent makeweights - but even Baxter's steady output for this series has been barely adequate for a professional writer.

Something else must account for NEW WRITINGS being more significant than the above line-up of contributors would seem to indicate. There is a distinct and lively difference to a volume of NEW WRITINGS which immediately sets it apart from mundane magazine issues. (The closest comparison would be Pohl's WORLDS OF TOMORROW, over which NW wins, incontestably.) In ASFR 2, Carnell remarked that he had tried to introduce the "feminine" attitude into as many stories as possible - something different from simple sex interest - and certainly there is an unusual emphasis on characterization in NW stories. It is almost as if Carnell has been trying to appeal to a far wider audience than that of the magazines, but at the same time not adulterating the traditional sf elements of his stories. John is a traditionalist, as much as Campbell is, and it would be difficult to imagine him compromising to the extent that some would wish. He is, primarily, editing a sf collection - and only secondarily trying to widen the appeal of this specialized field. In this I believe he has succeeded admirably.

But what about the dearth of really big-name writers and the corresponding lack of truly memorable stories? For one thing, Corgi's contracts probably inhibit the submission of these desirable by-lines. A sale to NW means, with few exceptions, that the story is impounded for two years before re-sale to other markets is possible. So hungry authors miss out on best-of-the-year prestige in other collections, and on further sales to European markets. Corgi pay well, of course, but still well below the American average. Provided the authors are willing to wait, they can make quite a bit from NW, but waiting is something a busy professional can ill afford to do. Is it any wonder then that the bulk of NW stories are contributed by very competent amateurs who have little thought of getting the maximum return from each submission?

There is a possibility that the future may see a gradual change in the pattern of Carnell's buying, and he may eventually be able to command better writers than he is currently getting - or he may persevere with people like Douglas Mason and John Baxter until they are producing really top-flight material. The older British pros have long since turned to writing novels and, as Bert Chandler remarked to us recently, once you've embarked upon this lucrative

and attractive field, the short story seems rather tame.

The latest volume of NEW WRITINGS to hand is no.9. I imagine this hardcover edition sells rather well to libraries: it is certainly worth two dollars. But at that price it is unlikely to appeal to the average fan who buys a lot of sf. Still, this applies to most hardcover sf - and, in fact, is one of those things that publishers have to reckon with.

No.9 presents an attractive cross-section of the series. One volume is very much like the next in quality and variety of content. For example, this one starts out with a long novelette by John Rackham entitled POSEIDON PROJECT. Now I have never read a story by John Rackham without being annoyed. He is a man who writes completely without style - although perhaps this in itself constitutes some sort of style. The advances made by other writers since 1940 hardly seem to have affected him, and his people have to be read to be believed - they are absolutely impossible. But I mention this by way of observation and by no means as a criticism: heaven knows there must be people who like this cardboard fiction, and Carnell is ready to accomodate them. I simply find the man unbearably absurd, and his view of human behaviour ludicrous. In this present story we are told in a matter-of-fact way of an experimental human habitation on the sea bed, and it is complete with Rackham's usual alarums and excursions.

FOLLY TO BE WISE, by Douglas R. Mason, is an awkward piece of prose, with some clumsy attempts at "poetic description." Mason should leave this alone and concentrate on his story. With regard to plot, this one re-works the same idea that Poul Anderson used in his Hugo-winning novelette, THE LONGEST VOYAGE. It's not a bad idea, as Poul himself knew when he wrote the story a dozen years earlier, and for the same editor, and called it THE HELPING HAND. I wish people would stop re-writing this story. At the moment Mason seems to have a fresh talent, but not the technique to apply it convincingly.

GIFT OF THE GODS is an amusing, if minor, story by Arthur Sellings which is very well-written in that deliciously wry manner we have come to expect from this experienced writer. THE LONG MEMORY is another of William Spencer's essays into the super-city environment. Spencer, like Lee Harding, seems to have only one plot, and it is beginning to bore. This story is perhaps marginally more daring than previous efforts, because we have - for a while - more than one character; but it is basically as predictable as his others.

Carnell introduces Eric Frank Russell's SECOND GENESIS as "vintage Russell", and indeed it is - in at least two ways. First, it appeared in McCall's magazine fifteen years ago, and second, it is one of the two outstanding stories in the collection. People like Russell have filled their minds with the vision of a vast universe. They have felt the long reaches of space in their blood, and we shall not read their like again. They are a vanishing race. The new breed of writers, the Laumers and Herberts, cannot replace them. They dreamed an impossible future, and it runs through their better stories like a rich, dark wine. Some of these oldtimers have lost this precious gift. In Poul Anderson it sometimes flares, but fitfully. It might yet find its most striking expression in the works of Bertram Chandler, a contemporary of these past masters but only now coming into his prime. And this Russell story from another epoch of sf writing draws a most striking contrast with the other

stories in the book. The rest are writers, but Russell... Russell was a dreamer. SECOND GENESIS is not a great story, but it leaves a powerful impression upon the reader. I defy anyone to read it and remain unmoved.

GUARDIAN ANGEL is supposedly written by Gerald W. Page. I wish I could be sure that Mr. Page is a real person, for this first offering is so thoroughly professional that I hesitate to suggest he is a newcomer. This is one of the stories where the "feminine" attitude is most strikingly welded into the plot. Modest but amusing, it goes well with the company.

Last of all we have DEFENSE MECHANISM, a crude title to a rather outstanding "lost-race" tale, of which we have seen so many in Carnell's magazines. I am not at all sure that Vincent King is real, either, no more than I am convinced that David Stringer and John Rankine are, but why go on? This is a suspenseful tale of discovery and rude awakening, highlighted by some very fine writing. If there is any miscalculation on the writer's part it has been in adding too many sub-plots - and this in itself suggests that Mr. King is drawing upon past masters and not himself. But I would like to see more of Mr. King - in any of his guises. (I can't help thinking he's Keith Roberts - but then I suspect every good new writer of being Keith Roberts.)

Taken as a whole, this volume of NEW WRITINGS more than maintains the generally high standard of previous collections. If really major stories are few and far between, so too are really bad stories: and this is rather more than can be said for some of the magazines...

What we really need, Mr. Carnell, is a BEST OF NEW WRITINGS. That would skim off the best of the individual volumes and give a very satisfying indication of what you have achieved so far with this series - and I would recommend it unconditionally as a hardcover buy.

ARTHUR SELLINGS: THE QUY EFFECT (Dennis Dobson: $2.30)

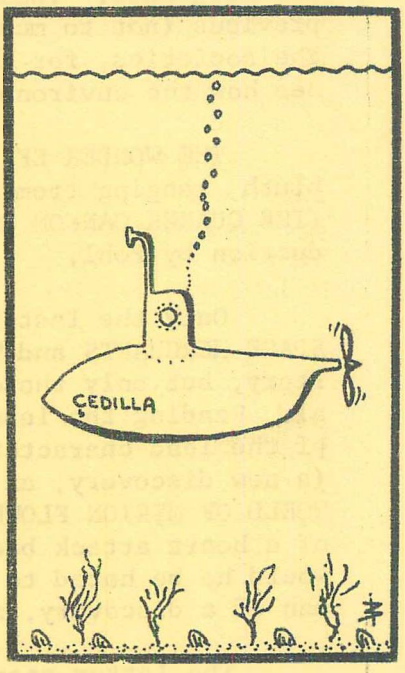
- IAN GODDEN

To put the matter as succinctly as possible, the Quy Effect is a reactionless force which produces a handy little product called... antigravity (and in the process of so doing, disposes of Newton's Third Law of Motion).

The inventor-by-accident of this revolutionary force is one Adolphe Quy, a crusty, no-bloody-nonsense, seventy-one-year-old tinkerer with matters scientific. Lacking any formal training, he has dabbled in one scatter-brained scheme after another to the disgust of his conformist son, who is a hidebound and blinkered administration brass hat somewhere in Whitehall.

In 1973, old Quy (call it Key) is doing some experimental work for a company in London called Hypertronics. Trying to develop an organic molecule which will behave like a superconductor at ordinary temperatures, instead of only at near absolute zero, he finds that this non-metallic superconductor is not only impervious to magnetism as was expected - but to gravity as well. When he pumps sufficient voltage into his test set-up, the whole affair takes off into orbit, spreading the Hypertronics factory over the surrounding country-

side. As a result of this Quy finds himself, quite understandably, persona non grata at Hypertronics, and so is deprived of the means of further experimentation.



Most of the rest of this very short novel is an account of the irascible Quy's attempts to raise the money necessary to bring his discovery to the knowledge of the powers-that-be, and is often highly amusing.

As the central character, Quy is the book's greatest strength. In him Sellings has created a genuine character - one who reminded me strongly of Conan Doyle's marvellous Professor Challenger. (Remember the LOST WORLD and the POISON BELT?)

The novel is not much more than an overgrown short story, but is good entertainment if you like your (pseudo?)science fiction enriched by the antics of a first rate eccentric - and provided that you can swallow the all-my-dreams-have-come-true ending, which was a little too contrived for my taste.

C.M. KORNBLUTH & FREDERIK POHL: THE WONDER EFFECT (Gollancz: $2.30)
ALFRED BESTER: THE DEMOLISHED MAN (Penguin: $0.60)

- ROBERT GERRAND

Bester, Pohl, Kornbluth - three names that changed the accent of science fiction overnight. They made use of society as a vehicle for their ideas, though each in a different way. In reviewing them they demand wider standards of judgement than those of sf. The two books to be considered here, unlike their authors' best work, fail by these broader standards.

But in a way, reading these books gives you a better idea of sf than the other, better, books: the flaws pinpoint the difficulties, the differences of approach, of sf. Looking into a cracked mirror reveals the shiny coating on the back which is not apparent in the unflawed article.

In THE DEMOLISHED MAN, Bester almost achieves the success of his later STARS MY DESTINATION (or TIGER! TIGER!, as the British edition is known). The two stories are different, yet about the same things. THE STARS MY DESTINATION is THE DEMOLISHED MAN rewritten in a different framework, with a surer grasp of character. Both books ultimately concern a hero with a strong and abnormal driving force, but Gully Foyle is brought to life, while - what's his name? - Ben Reich falls just that tiny, vital, distance short.

One of the strong points of both books - and much of Bester's sf - is the author's ability to write so convincingly about psi powers. He not only makes you believe they exist - he makes you believe they should exist. And this he does by the brilliant way he sketches in his societies - a gift shared by Pohl

and Kornbluth. These societies are not mere backdrops, as was the case in most previous (not to mention present) sf, but vivid, necessary parts of the story. The societies, for the first time, give meaning to the characters' actions: we see how the environment influences the people.

THE WONDER EFFECT is a collection of nine short stories by Pohl and Kornbluth, ranging from one of their first (A GENTLE DYING) to their last and best (THE QUAKER CANNON and CRITICAL MASS), plus an intelligent and informative introduction by Pohl.

Only the last two stories stand up to comparison with their magnificent SPACE MERCHANTS and WOLFBANE. All the stories are above the average magazine story, but only these two (and perhaps NIGHTMARE WITH ZEPPELINS) are exceptional. Reading the lesser stories you can see part of their method: a description of the lead character together with his society, a change in the environment, (a new discovery, an accident) which leads to a sudden snap ending. In THE WORLD OF MYRION FLOWERS there is a rich man given a telepathy machine, who dies of a heart attack because (the last line) "only in the world of Myrion Flowers would he be hated to death." There is always the concern with the effect on man of a discovery, never a discovery or invention for its own sake.

The latter story doesn't succeed, because the idea of the world Flowers has built and lived in is not developed enough. We are told "Flowers was a cold, controlled man. He never married. In lieu of children he had proteges ... He backed them... as long as they worked to the limit of what he considered their abilities; at the first sign of a let-down he axed them."

Now this achieves a certain effect; but hate is powerful emotion - more than six pages are needed to describe it.

By sf standards both of these books are required reading since, even if they miss out on "classic" status, they have that marvellous characteristic of good sf: they are enjoyable reading.

POUL ANDERSON: THE STAR FOX (Gollancz: $2.30)

- DIANA MARTIN

Last month I remarked about J.T. McIntosh's TIME FOR A CHANGE that that book displayed a refreshing style, was exciting reading, was more realistic in its characterization than many sf works, and had a crystal-clear story-line. Poul Anderson's novel has none of these virtues. Its hero is time and time again extricated from very drastic situations with an annoying "flash-forward" technique which didn't appeal to me at all. It seems just too damn easy on the author, and a little too glib for this reader's taste.

I know that the "novel" appeared in F&SF as a series of novelettes, but Anderson obviously hasn't exerted himself much to join them up into an acceptable whole. What we are left with is a reasonably good adventure story, in which we may find romance, human interest, and adventures colourfully depicted. The uncomplicated plot concerns an experienced spaceman who sets out to rescue a group of French colonists on a little planet called New Europe. He is opposed and hindered by his own kind, who in the interests of galactic unity prefer to believe that the New Europeans have been wiped out by their attackers, a race of

aliens with whom Earth is working out a somewhat shady deal.

Anderson has a nice way with aliens and they come through in this book quite sympathetically, while never losing their "different' way of life to the human beings in the plot. His humans are reasonably appealing and not just names on a piece of paper, but they are nowhere near as vivid as the people in Mr. McIntosh's book. Why must they lapse into foreign languages at the most interesting moments? At least on two occasions this is most annoying, since unless one has a smattering of the languages concerned a point could be missed. Possibly the average sf reader is likely to have a rudimentary knowledge of what is going on, but an author should not rely on this to the extent that he forgets his duty to the rest of his public. A few footnotes wouldn't have gone astray here.

Another point that bothered . me was the city Anderson has provided for us on New Europe. Surely in the future when space colonization has become very advanced, human beings will not build in a style which resembles nothing so much as the French Quarter of 19th Century New Orleans as described in a Frances Parkinson Keyes novel? Anderson might be trying to take a stand on the idea of history repeating itself, but I think either he's just been lazy or his colonists are sentimental to the point of lunacy.

TED WHITE: SORCERESS OF QAR (Ace: $0.50)

- PAUL STEVENS

I don't always find myself in agreement with Lee Harding's estimates of books in these columns (e.g. ROKK: is by no means a rock), but I certainly go along with him when it comes to PHOENIX PRIME and (if he has read it) SORCERESS OF QAR.

This book is a sort of sequel to PHOENI PRIME inasmuch as the four main characters are all motivated by their contacts with Max Quest, the hero of the earlier book. As Quest does not appear here, the hero is Elron (big in-joke, that), a minor noble of the city Qar on the world of Qanar, situated in an alternate universe. Qanar suffered a planet-wide catastrophe some 2000 years ago and is now inhabited by the remnants of a scientifically advanced race.

If you read PHOENIX PRIME, you may remember that Max Quest in his fight against the eight other supernormals was deposited on Qanar, and after saving his girlfriend returned to Earth and in a final battle defeated the nasty old baddies by flinging them out into the wastes of the multiple universes. Two of these "others" - Edwards and Archer - somehow make it to the island city of Zominor, where they force Shannara to restore their shattered powers with the aid of some machines from the planet's past. Shannara, you will recall, was the "sorceress" who had been thrown forward in time by a faulty matter transmitter. Leaving Zominor, Edwards and Archer journey to Qar, where they take control of the city. Elron, for some reason best known to the author, escapes.

A long desert trek, another faulty matter transmitter, robots, sex, a telepathic power booster, ruined cities, jungles, a hovercraft - I think you can safely work out the story-line for yourself: it all comes right in the end, you know. More important to a reviewer than the story-line is the question of

Mr. White's motive for the book's preoccupation with sex. If these scenes served any useful purpose one could forgive them, perhaps even enjoy them, but as they are the suspicion must remain that the author has used them to prop a sagging story-line. I'm sorry, Mr. White: I read your letter in ASFR 6, and I've tried to find something worthwhile to say about SORCERESS OF QAR, but I can't. To approach it as a piece of serious writing or as a good yarn, either way is to be disappointed.

FRITZ LEIBER: THE NIGHT OF THE WOLF (Ballantine: $0.60)

- LEE HARDING

The four long stories in this volume were originally unconnected. Leiber has now prefaced each with a paragraph or two to give them some sort of unity and retitled them all, so that the word "wolf" appears in all four, presumably to give unwary browsers the impression that the book is a novel. It isn't. Moreover, three of the stories are pretty bad by Leiber's generally high standard.

THE CREATURE FROM THE CLEVELAND DEPTHS appeared originally in GALAXY. Here it becomes THE LONE WOLF. It is the most recent story in the book, and reads like it. Resembling Sheckley's WATCHBIRD more than somewhat, Leiber's brilliantly ironic style and his gift for off-beat characterization take this story far beyond the essential gimmickry of the Sheckley tale. In working out the ill-considered development of a "benevolent" machine, he manages to avoid the expected macabre denouement and delivers an up-beat finale which is somehow even more frightening. Leiber knows his Homo Saps.

After that brilliant introduction our course leads steadily downhill. THE WOLF PAIR comes from AMAZING, where it appeared as NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES six years ago. It's a short novel and roughly represents the sort of fiction Leiber was turning out for the pulps at that time. Even then it was decidedly threadbare in style, and its theme elderly, to say the least. Leiber adds nothing new to the "after Doomsday" story, and we have a rather unpleasant plot that could have been written by just about anybody in the Ziff-Davis stable. It is typical of Leiber in his early days that he could write easily for a specific market, and that seems to be what he was doing here - and doing it well, considering the generally poor quality of pulp writing at the time: but surely he has better work to resurrect than this? THE WOLF PAIR is an adventure story, but mixed into it are some well-diluted philosophical points which, blurred as they are by the hack quality of the writing, annoy rather than add to the narrative. Die-hard addicts of Keith Laumer may like this effort: it has some of that writer's characteristic disregard for the values of human life. What Leiber has been trying to say here is that violence has been a necessary burden to the human race, but that one day we may find a way out of our collective "deathland."

CRAZY WOLF appeared in ASTOUNDING in 1944 as SANITY. It's a typical talk-piece of the period, based on the premise that the sane are not always what they seem. THE WOLF PACK, which first appeared as LET FREEDOM RING in a 1950 AMAZING, makes more extensive play on the ideas in the previous story, but is frankly so poorly written that it reads like an Alexander Blade reject. It is incredible that so fine a writer has emerged from such unlikely beginnings.

M O R L O C K S

KEITH ROBERTS MICHAEL MOORCOCK JACK WODHAMS
NORMA WILLIAMS FELICE ROLFE UGO MALAGUTI

A STATEMENT OF POLICY: A fair amount of editorial discretion is inflicted on this column, in an effort to keep it both interesting and representative. Out of all letters received perhaps one-tenth of their contents is used. Please don't be disappointed if your letter is not published: we appreciate and take notice of all comments. Any news or comments not for publication should be indicated. Addresses (apart from town and country) of professional writers are not usually published without stated approval. Editors, of course, deserve everything they get.

KEITH ROBERTS - Henley-on-Thames - Oxon - England: I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking you for sending me the various copies of ASFR in which my work has been discussed; I've found them informative and excellently produced and thoroughly enjoyed reading them through. BUT, I feel I've just got to take exception to the Widdershins report, or review, or whatever he calls it, of PAVANE in issue five. :::: Whoever is lurking behind that noxious pseudonym really should have his head immersed in a vat of treacle, or sheepdip, or whatever bizarre fluid comes most readily to hand Down There. I've read bad reports of my work and I've read downright vindictive ones but I've never come across such an absolute masterpiece of misunderstanding; I'm well aware that widdershins traditionally go backwards but this is really too much. I'll stress I'm in no way miffed, the thing's too daft to be taken seriously, but I would like to straighten the poor confused chap out just a bit. :::: Taking his points in the excitingly random order in which he presents them, I've said quite clearly at umpteen places in the book just why my postulated Church behaves the way it does. I could I suppose arrange some critic's copies where a little light comes on or a bell rings when the reader gets to the Author's message, but I think this might be going a little far. The novel has a post-nuclear setting, embodies the elderly notion of repeating time-cycles, and poses the even more hoary question of the validity of scientific progress; see BRAVE NEW WORLD, &c &c &c. Maybe it would have helped Mr. Widdleskin if I'd hyphenated some of the longer words. I'm sorry the stories wouldn't have been good enough for UNKNOWN, whatever that is, but as I didn't write them for it I'm not as distressed as I otherwise might be. As a matter of fact I don't think the quarterly journal of the Ear, Nose and Throat Practitioners of Kuala Lumpur would have gone much of a bundle on them either. :::: However Mr. Ditherspin successfully confuses the whole issue, with I must admit great skill and economy, before moving on to What I Have To Say. (Armed, one imagines, with deerstalker, calabash and kingsize magnifying glass.) His first conclusion emerges with lightning-like rapidity; THE SIGNALLER is not a novel. This would seem to be a fatal flaw. It could, he growls, have been Expanded. Well, I'm sorry; but sometimes I write novels, sometimes short stories. Authors do

that sort of thing. This is exactly the type of critical remark that drives one to a clucking fury; if Mr. Withershin had devised an apparatus for, say, polishing the outer husks of Bomongo nuts, he would be quite justified in losing his temper if I turned round and pointed out that it wouldn't whitewash pigruns. SIGNALLER was devised as a short story, part of an interlocking set; I never wanted it to be a novel, it never will be a novel; can't he be more constructive than to pick at it for the thousand and one things it isn't? He also becomes disturbed at my use of flashback; this, I learn, leaves the reader slightly confused. While manfully repressing the suspicion that Mr. Diddleshin started out just slightly confused, I would still like to know how in the name of ten thousand devils can a death-dream, which is what the whole thing is, flash in any other direction but backwards? If he would lay out for me, in detail, the more logical and polished treatment he no doubt has in mind, I promise to study it with fascination. :::: To cap it all I discover the story is not after all clearly resolved, with "two entirely contradictory endings appearing consecutively." Here is the one point at which I really could emit short bursts of steam from the ears. Does Mr. Hitherthin actually imagine I was so vapid and so totally idle as to be unable to finish the piece? that I - and my editor - simply stuck on a pair of likely ends and left the reader to choose for himself? Did it not cross his mind, even briefly, that he might have missed out somewhere, that he hadn't in fact understood the first damn thing about the story? The rest of his remarks merely verge on the cretinous; that crack is downright bloody impertinence. He has of course shown himself unable to grasp the central point of THE SIGNALLER at all, though I would have thought it was crystal clear; I don't frankly see how I could have underlined more firmly the parallel between the death of the god and the half-sacrificial death of the boy. Possibly he has never heard of the Balder myth; that's fair enough, but I did put down a full version within the story to sort of help him along. Maybe he missed that bit. I would suggest a short course in comparative mythology, kicking off with the Epic of Gilgamesh, working through Venus and Adonis, &c &c, and not missing out on Christ. It wouldn't take more than three or four years. :::: And the rest of the stories were unsatisfactorily truncated because I'd got fed up with them. Well, I just couldn't have realized how bored I was when I was working on them; funny how one can never appreciate one's own state of mind. I thought I was enjoying myself. And, Oh dear, I never did get round to explaining about the People. That's just my whole trouble, Mr. Sniddlepin; always leaving nuts and bolts off things. But didn't you ever believe in fairies? Not even when you were a little moron? What a horrid dull life you must have had, I'm so sorry. I'm afraid you sound a bit like a chap I once knew who sent Picasso a ruler and compasses so he could get his lines straighter. And though I'm really pleased you find my little world delightful I'm not going to tell you what makes it tick, I positively decline. You'll just have to sit out somewhere with an icepack and a nice cool drink and fret about it. I will give you one tiny clue though, since you were really quite nice and jolly about everything. Brother John isn't the same as Sir John the seneschal. :::: Why the blue Hell should he be, you nit!

MICHAEL MOORCOCK - 87 Ladbroke Grove - London W.11 - England: Thanks for the latest ASFR (8) and once again I apologise in advance for not having the time at present to make any sort of detailed comment. It keeps its standard. ::::
I suppose I'd better comment on at least one or two things that Foyster says in his Ballard article - though to be honest I'm slightly weary of the discussion.

Foyster is quite rightly reacting to some of the deliberate overstatements made by me and Ballard. This kind of overstatement is used to heighten what we believe to be the issues at hand. We know we exaggerate, simplify and often sound wild - but it gets its effect and it gets people talking, defining their own ground, doing their own kind of work. A more formal kind of approach would get bogged down, offer more opportunity for hair-splitting, and generally become dull in a very short time. :::: Foyster, however, seems to miss the essential issue and scoot around it (either deliberately or from choice) while managing to split quite a few hairs on the side. (The paragraph on Dali, for instance, and the paragraph on literary ideas - surrealism was originally a literary movement - Celine, de Lautrement, Jarry, are just three writers regarded as early surrealists - stream of consciousness is a literary technique and generally regarded as such - most modern writers incorporate the work of the symbolists into their work these days - science fiction was the creation of writers, not scientists... and &c &c can include the "condensed novels" of Borges, the "cut-up" method of Burroughs...) The essential issue - referred to often enough - is that we must find new literary techniques that are speculative by their nature, that are future-directed, future-oriented, and not past-oriented as is most fiction (including sf) these days. The point is that we are living in the future whereas our immediate forebears were living in the past - that is, they saw their lives in the perspective of the past, but nowadays people are seeing their lives in the perspective of the future. Ballard, and certain other writers who are by no means "followers" of his but share his convictions (a very different thing) are trying to find techniques and subject matter which enable people to see their lives and interpret their world in terms of this perspective. Evidently, one cannot state this too frequently. :::: Perhaps many of my statements do seem vague to Foyster, since he consistently misrepresents my meaning. It might be fair to say that they are too general - but it is hard to go into too much detail in the editorial space I allow myself. It is, for instance, common practice here to identify Ballard as being in some way a follower of Burroughs (see the Amis interview in IMPULSE 10), and it would seem a waste of space to give examples. Neither did I make the particular comparison between Joyce and Ballard that Foyster mentions. He seems to expand what I have said and makes it vague by means of what seem to me to be rather woolly paraphrases - he could at least quote what I actually wrote. Rather than repeat it here, I recommend anyone interested to compare the editorial in question with Foyster's interpretation (if that's the word). And if Foyster does not understand what I mean by "conventional" (which I can't believe) then it would seem he has little business trying to write a critical article on Ballard at all. :::: I suppose the breakdown he has done will be of help tosome. It's an admirable effort; but I can't help feeling that this pulling apart process gets no one very far towards understanding and appreciating what Ballard is trying to do. And as for making comparisons with Eric Frank Russell - I can only suspect that Foyster is being sardonic. If not then the idea is ludicrous in the extreme. :::: I would also like to point out that the sort of thing we are trying to do is beginning to be recognized outside the limitations of the sf field. A BBC Third Programme series - the new sf - in three parts - will be broadcast in early spring, and will have particular reference to Ballard; an article in the NEW SCIENTIST recently applauded the work we are doing and, in our hour of trouble, many members of the literary establishment have supported our aims (J.B. Priestley, Anthony Burgess, Angus Wilson and many others). It's possible that all these people could be wrong, but it would seem to me that, on the whole, their literary credentials are

somewhat more valid than Foyster's and they, at least, seem to know what we are talking about. :::: When, with luck, we change our format and harden our standards and approach shortly, it may be possible to convince Foyster (who is evidemtly not unsympathetic) that the work Ballard and others are doing (or working towards) has qualities to recommend it other than the ones he lists.

JACK WODHAMS - PO Box 48 - Caboolture - Queensland: I quite liked my first copy of ASFR, although I must confess that I am not an avid absorber of any and every product of the medium. It is tough to keep abreast of the facts, and any fiction reading has to fit into the nooks and crannies of so-called "spare" time. Fortunately I have a friend who is an sf crank, and he draws my attention to the particular items of special delight. He also has back numbers of many sf magazines, this being a considerable library which he is kind enough to make available to me for a fag and a chat and a drop of guzzle. :::: Not being a wild and hairy sf fan of long standing, it is rather late now for me to attempt to catch up with those weaned on Hugo Gernsback's products. However, my opinions on sf may not be entirely worthless, bringing to the scene, as I may, an outlook that has not been overly distorted by a life spent steeped in weirdies. Willing to be helpful, I would nevertheless be grateful if you would keep in mind that, apart from a triffid, a geezenstack, and an illustrated man here and there, this lad is not comprehensively conversant with all-time sf output. Your indulgence is craved. :::: Thank you for THE COSMIC DUSTBUG. First read this title as COMIC DUSTBAG but after a vain search for Snoopy soon realized my error. (This sloppy tendency in reading mangles more names than enough. On occasion such carelessness has turned notable sf writers into Brabury, Asmov and Blard, in my mind.) This "edzine" as you call it is a sneaky way to get out of letter writing. Have to admit, though, that it is eminently sensible. Correspondence can be a big drag. Had to deal with my first fan-letter the other day, and not too much of that kind of thing could bog a man down seriously. :::: Your note on assessment of sf for children intrigued me. Is sf now competing with the Grimm Brothers, and Andersen, H.C.? Are we now getting beddy-byes lullabyes that run something like this? -

There is a wicked scientist, see? who lives in Bludupta. Bludupta? you say, Where's Bludupta? Bludupta here, I say, slicing at my neck, Will you shut up while Daddy is reading the story? Good. Now this scientist makes experiments on little girls, particularly ones about your age, six or seven, and do you know what he tries to do? He tries to turn them all into little boys. Of course, you know what little girls are made of, and to change them over takes simply enormous amounts of puppy-dogs' tails, and frogs, and oozes and oozes of slimy old snails. He has barrels of acid to counteract the sweetness, and he has reagents and catalysts, and centrifuges to precipitate the crystals, and he has mixers and stirrers, and solvents for dimples, and dyes and ironers for ringlets and curls.

Are you asleep yet, darling?

Oh.

Well, he'll get a little girl like you and chop her up into teeny, oh so teeny! pieces, and then he'll put the whole lot through a grinder, taking great care not to miss the button nose and the itty-bitty finger-tips, with the lovely delicious pink little nails. Scrunch, scerk, scrunch. He does so enjoy turning the handle. And then he puts the little girl, who will be just like sausage meat by now, into the solution, and he'll do all his business with test tubes and retorts, until at last he has her essence, totally free

of any candy or spices. With this essence in a bottle, he will mix up a pot of, ergh, gooey, sticky, nasty, ergh, smelly, vile, nauseating, putrid, ergh, stinking, messy shuddabrew. Are you listening, angel? When the concoction is at its odiously noxious sewer-like peak, he will add the essence, and pour the lot into a horrible, ugly, ginger-haired, pimply, obnoxious little-boy mould. He will let the mould cool down, and then, opening it up, out will step a dirty, scruffy, cheeky, ill-mannered, badly-behaved little boy.

And there you are, see? That's what the wicked scientist does. And that's what can happen to little girls who won't go to sleep, because the wicked scientist can only capture little girls who are awake. Little girls who are asleep have an innocence in their essence that spoils the repulsive little-boy mould, see? So go to sleep, sweetheart, and you'll be safe. Shut your eyes and.... uh? Now, lovey, don't be silly. You don't really want to be a nasty, horrid little boy, do you? Of course not. Don't insist, pet. You know perfectly well that you like being a charming and delightful little girl. No, I won't call him up. Believe me, honey, you wouldn't enjoy being a little boy. You wouldn't, I tell you. Now don't be silly. You can't stay awake all night, and he's not operating in this district any more. Go to sleep, there's a good girl. Go to sleep, I say. You do <u>not</u> want to be a little boy! Oh, my God!.....

<u>NORMA WILLIAMS - 6/5a Sadlier Crescent - Petersham - NSW:</u> I agree with Andrew Escot (ASFR 7) that we don't read sf in order to improve our knowledge of science - though, on the other hand, it has been my experience and doubtless that of most readers that the knowledge we have painlessly absorbed from sf has led us to read further in more serious vein. And one thing I picked up from sf was a hangover-preventive which has saved me much after-party sorrow! :::: Note that I specify "painlessly absorbed;" no less than Mr. Escot do I deplore the didacticism of the old Gernsback magazines with their informative footnotes and quizzes. It is the mark of the good writer in any field of fiction that he gets across to the reader his ideas, facts, character development and so forth by implic ation. To take a crude example: he doesn't say of his heroine - "Tanya had red hair," but rather implies that fact by some such device as - "The firelight caught a gleam of red-gold as Tanya leaned forward to reply..." :::: If Shaara had a good reason for the fact that his planet was completely water-covered, he should be a good enough writer to bring it out

implicitly in his story. :::: As A.E. puts the case in para. 3 of his letter, the "big lie" skilfully put over as, for example, in THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON, can result in a good story - but I contend that Shaara's story is of the second kind, disregarding scientific truth. :::: Wells's Cavorite, when you think about it, results, for instance, in perpetual motion, and should make the reader say, "This is unbelievable piffle." That it does not is due to Wells's power as a writer, and to the fact that he contents himself in each story with one "big lie" logically developed, making every subsequent little lie depend on the first. :::: Certainly when I think of a planet I think first of Earth; it is the only one of which I have first-hand experience. But I don't stop at that point; I recognize that, as far as we know, other planets in our Solar System differ from Earth in various ways, and for various reasons, and probably represent to some extent stages th rough which Earth has passed or will pass. :::: For instance, I recognize that Mars, being smaller than Earth, has lost most of its atmosphere and water vapour - and I realize that this could ultimately be Earth's fate, given time enough, for while we receive daily from space meteoric particles and dust, we also lose daily those upper-atmosphere molecules which have attained escape velocity. :::: Likewise I realize that Jupi ter's atmosphere is inimical to life as we know it on Earth - but I also speculate that it is a stage of evolution through which Earth has long since passed, and that in such a primary atmosphere our own beginnings were. At least, that seems to be implied in some of the research lately done on the origins of life. :::: One could, for the purposes of a story, imagine a planet composed entirely of nickel-iron, or glass, or green cheese, or with an atmosphere of ethyl alcohol (oh bliss!) - but I think readers would feel some curiosity as to how it got that way, and would want the author to satisfy this by implicitly giving some sort of explanation, however flimsy. :::: I think Mr. E. has missed my point about Gre nville's Planet. I don't complain that it is unlike Earth, but that in some respects it is like Earth - with the discrepancies so highly unlikely that they require explaining away. I would have found the tale much more convincing if the planet had been entirely composed of water. :::: (To diverge for a moment to a statement made by Mr. Escot: which satellites in the solar system are entirely composed of water, and how has this been ascertained? Is it a sure thing or only a reasonable speculation?) :::: If Mr. E. will again refer to my article, I gave reasons for disbelieving that a heterogenous body could be completely covered by water, in that any melt of heterogeneous composition segregates in cooling, and that following on from this a further cycle of events takes place. I doubt that the mysterious inhabitants of Grenville's Planet are able to suspend the laws of physics on so vast a scale, and yet have not attained spaceflight. Again, Mr. Escot wonders why I should have postulated a "vastly greater" content of water as necessary, and again I refer him to what I said earlier in the article concerning the "rafts" of SIAL - which, in the case of the block containing the Himalayas, must be considerably thicker than Everest's height. :::: No, Mr. Escot, I haven't any specialized knowledge or list of planets and compositions; I am merely arguing from common sense, and from what has been observed so far of planets within the solar system, and from what has been discovered of the composition of our Sun and others. Is it not more reasonable to infer that, since astronomical observation and the analysis of meteorites has so far failed to turn up anything very extraordinary in the way of new elements or combinations of elements, that most planets are probably very similar in composition? Surely it would be far less reasonable to imagine that, out of a more or less homogeneous mishmash of material, some kind of "space eddy" has detached a mass which has a very much

greater than average amount of one particular compound? Or that the usual rules of physics and chemistry have been suspended so that, within an average mass, changes have taken place to produce a more-than-average amount of one particular compound - with presumably a corresponding deficiency of some other compound? :::: The real crux of the matter is not that Shaara took as his premise a "big lie" but that his story just wasn't good enough to depend so much on so big a lie. In THE KRAGEN, Jack Vance also uses a completely water-covered planet, and while this fact is basic to his story, it can be passed over because, potentially, the story can carry such a big lie. (In practice, unfortunately, Vance falls down on other aspects - about which, if our editor is indulgent, you may read in these pages at some future time.)

UGO MALAGUTI - 1, Via Pascoli - Bologna - Italy: Thanks for your kind words about the terrible floods which have so badly shaken some of our finest Italian towns. Bologna, fortunately, was preserved; but all around Bologna, in the small country towns and in the fields, the flood struck as badly as in Florence and other parts of Italy. Sometimes Italy is not quite the "paese del sole" - the country of the sun. It is, especially here in the north, the country of the fog, and - sometimes - of the water. Let's hope this spring will give us no more trials like that. :::: Thank you for sending me your very interesting ASFR: it is a good work, which I personally consider at a level often higher than some professional publications. I have informed my readers, the readers of GALASSIA, about the great Australian "entrée" into the sf field, and I would very much like to translate some of your material. I particularly appreciate your reviews of current sf titles, and I agree with most of your judgements. :::: You have asked for a short outline of the Italian sf situation. I hope you will find the following remarks of interest. :::: The oldest sf magazine is published by Mondadori and caters mostly for lower tastes - very bad French juveniles, AMAZING serials, and suchlike. Now it is reprinting old classics. The other two magazines differ in quality; one is devoted to juveniles, the other - our main competitor - publishes only stories, most of them reprints and of variable quality. :::: The CASA EDITRICE LA TRIBUNA, in which I work as sf editor, is entirely devoted to sf works. It has one hard-covered series - THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB - which appears bi-monthly with an introduction by some well-known mainstream critic, or by Mrs. Roberta Rambelli or myself. This series includes only adult sf; recent titles have been PLAYER PIANO, THE STARS MY DESTINATION, THE LOVERS, A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ, A MEDICINE FOR MELANCHOLY, THE SILVER EGGHEADS, and a Simak story collection. We have a pocketbook series, called LA BUSSOLA SF, which also features adult books with critical introductions. Twice a year in this series we produce older classics, such as MONSTERS by Van Vogt or C.L. Moore's NORTHWEST OF EARTH. :::: Then there is GALASSIA, a monthly magazine which I edit. This contains each month a novel, a story, some columns, an editorial in which I discuss sf news or problems, and a special section for the most promising young Italian authors - called ACCADEMIA. For this section I select the best stories submitted by readers and present them to the judgement of their fellow readers. I have been fortunate in discovering four or five quite promising young writers. Most of the novels and stories in GALASSIA are, of course, translations - Simak, Sheckley, Pohl, Asimov, Leiber, Farmer and Dick are very popular - but we also publish original Italian work. For some time I have been the only Italian professional sf author, but others are on their way. (My novel, SATANA DEL MIRACOLI was awarded a special prize by Italian critics.) I started writing before I became editor of GALASSIA and LA TRIBUNA; in fact I have practically had to stop writing novels to keep up with editorials, criticism and essays. :::: I'm happy to say that in my eighteen

months as editor GALASSIA has reached top sales and gained the appreciation not only of fans but of mainstream readers as well. :::: Soon I will be publishing a new magazine, which I call a "reviewzine," for which I have as Foreign Advisers, among others, Brian Aldiss, Walter Ernsting, and Donald Wollheim. This magazine is called NOVA SF, and will include stories, novellas, critical essays and news. It will not be sold on the newsstands, but by subscription and direct sale. If there are in Australia any Italian sf fans, or Australians who read Italian, they may be interested to see NOVA SF.

FELICE ROLFE - 1360 Emerson - Palo Alto - California 94301 - USA: I've just been reading the latest issue of ASFR (no.4), and it occurs to me that I've never told you how much I enjoy it. Well, I do. Only I never have time to say so. This condition shows no signs of ameliorating, so: where do I send a sub? Does the new Australian dollar correspond closely enough to the American one that I can send a cheque directly? (Those who care enough to give the very best, give money.) :::: John Foyster's article on Campbell's editorials is very good. He misses a few points, not all of which I'm going to go into, but a few of them struck me. :::: Perhaps Campbell used the argument he did about Viet Nam because the American public (of which John C. is a member, however loudly he denies it) is being told that we are in Viet Nam to be gallant, charitable, Defenders of the Poor, and all that rot, strictly for the sake of the poor Vietnamese. You don't believe it, I don't believe it, and for that matter I can't think of anyone who does - but that's the propaganda and I suppose JWC felt it needed to have holes punched in it. I suppose we must be told something - the war obviously isn't doing this country any good. :::: Campbell's math leaves something to be desired, too. There are two ends to a distribution curve, and both of them are low. That's why they're ends, for God's sake. Besides, anybody who thinks that engineering techniques "always work:" ... words fail me. Believe me, they don't. It's just that a systematic (or engineering) approach has a somewhat better chance of success than completely random experimentation. :::: Your reviews are good... wish I had time to submit a few to you ... you wouldn't believe the work I've gotten myself into lately; although I love every minute of it, it's completely blown my mind. Know anyone with a good 48-hour day for sale?

JOHN FOYSTER: Re Mike Moorcock's letter, pp.28-30: Scientists are indeed interested in the writings of J.G. Ballard: well, the editor of SHELL BITUMEN REVIEW is interested. His article, THE CHANGING DREAM, appeared in NEW SCIENTIST for December 22, where Ballard's was described as a name to watch. Unfortunately, Menzies only quotes Moorcock in support of his contention that Ballard's work is the musique concrete of sf. Is that what's wrong with it?

JB: Thank you, ladies and gentlefen, for your letters. Mr. Wodhams mentions a publication called THE COSMIC DUSTBUG, and its purpose - to save me writing so many letters. Interested parties are welcome to copies, but are warned that it is more-or-less a circular letter, mainly intended for contributors. Norma, I don't really follow what you and Mr. Escot are debating, but then I'm only the editor; I'm waiting to see what readers think. Looking forward to your piece on THE KRAGEN. Signore Malaguti, welcome to our pages, and good luck with your ventures. I have taken some liberties with your English, but hope I haven't changed your meaning anywhere. Felice, welcome - and when you find a 48-hour day, save one for me. U.S. dollar is worth 90 Australian cents, but for subscription purposes we don't discriminate. If you - or any of our overseas readers - care to submit reviews at any time, I'll be pleased to see them.

LAST-MINUTE POSTSCRIPTS JB: Easter Monday, and I'm up on a plank painting (house, plank, ladders, and myself: as a handyman I make a damn good editor) - contented in the knowledge that ASFR9 is not only stencilled and run off, but collated into the bargain - when around the corner of our street appears the venerable Lanchester 24 which I know, even before I see his rosy countenance through the windshield, can only be driven by the eminent Kelvin U.F. Widdershins, D.Sc. & Bar. I descend the plank somewhat too rapidly (still, what's another gallon, the way I go through it?), delighted at the good doctor's unwonted sociability, and incur his wrath immediately as I open the car door for him - having neglected to wipe half a pint of quick-drying super-gloss from my hands. (The pale green smudges relieve the sombre black of the Lanchester's impeccable duco, but Dr. W. is unable to appreciate this.) This untoward incident smoothed over, I invite him to join me in a glass of milk and a cold sausage (all the Bangsund larder runs to, since ASFR started), and before long we are deep in heady talk of this and that. After a while, he expresses an inclination to view our latest issue - and, his request happily complied with, he proceeds to fulminating bitterly against our eminent correspondent, Mr. Keith Roberts. Forthwith he bundles me from my room and wastes half a mile of my expensive plastic carbon ribbon on the following (slightly edited) reply...

K.U.F. WIDDERSHINS: So that's how Keith Roberts reacts to a review fairly oozing with praise! May I construct the essence of the review? I suggested that the PAVANE stories were the best things to come out from IMPULSE. That all the stories were worthy of expansion, and that I looked forward to this. And that I look forward, in general, to seeing more of the same. I did complain that the stories almost seemed cut off in the middle, but what I had in mind there, and the thing which unfortunately was left out when I actually wrote the review, was that this was the way history reads, and is therefore realistic. :::: Well, you wouldn't have guessed it from his letter, would you? Actually I have the feeling that Mr. Roberts lives in an alternate universe. Let me just make a few points. "I've said quite clearly at umpteen places in the book just why my postulated Church behaves the way it does." Here a little bell starts to ring: I wasn't talking about a book, I was talking about a short story. Nevertheless I point out that "Roberts saying" and "facts emerging from the story" are rather separate things. :::: Then he says that they are written in the future (which I didn't complain about, or even realize, or for that moment even care about - the stories are good enough in themselves without any gobbledegook) and that he doesn't care that the stories wouldn't have appeared in UNKNOWN. I don't either. I wouldn't have been able to read them if they had. Nevertheless, for the reader of this review, this says a great deal about the nature of the PAVANE series. :::: Then, he claims, I say that THE SIGNALLER is not a novel, and that I grotched because it wasn't. Ye gods! What is this, Bangsund? - Some kind of gag? And I said that it was worth expansion, because I wanted to read more about these people, you *@#*%#%*@X*#! Then he says (and this got him really angry) that I suggested that he couldn't write a decent ending and so just tacked on the first two which came into his mind. Actually I said: "Doubtless this has something to do with the unexplained 'people'." Clearly I'm not casting any aspersion on Roberts - just suggesting why it might seem that there are two endings. :::: After that he really goes off the rails to discuss some things which were not really in the province of the review: after all, I was surveying the year's serials, and there was some need for condensation. I said that "it was as though the author himself didn't really want to finish off the stories." This does not mean, no matter how you

look at it, "The author was fed up with them." Obviously, it means the exact opposite. There can be no question about this. :::: I am, of course, quite shaken by this. I feel, and felt then, that my review was straightforward, unabashed praise. I admit no other interpretation. Roberts has, almost paranoically, misinterpreted and confused what I wrote. This is intensely disheartening, and almost shakes my faith in the ability of Roberts as a writer. :::: Nevertheless, Keith Roberts, torture me if you will, pull out my hair, my fingernails, cut off my feet! Still I shall protest that I liked the PAVANE series - that I was so attracted that I'd like to see more - and that they constituted the best sf I read in 1966.

JB: That was yesterday. Today, again wobbling on my lofty plank, I am seconds late when the postman arrives, and before I can warn him that I've just painted the letter-box, a good handful of mail goes into it. From the colour the various envelopes have now assumed - not to mention their contents - this is what one might call a red letter day. The latest HABAKKUK, which breaks my heart (where does Bill get that paper?) A lengthy epistle from my sister, just returned from Samoa. (And there's samoa where that came from.) A letter from Uncle Tufty. (?) And another from John Brunner - in the course of which is the following...

JOHN BRUNNER, London NW.3: I've just had in copies of the Signet edition of my novel, THE PRODUCTIONS OF TIME. You're lucky - Australia falls into the distribution zone for the Penguin version, which will be set from my original typescript. But just in case you get hold of a copy of the American edition and are thinking of running a review, please note the following facts. :::: The text of the American version has been - not edited, but - mutilated. I have neither the time nor the heart to count all the changes, but there are fifty-five in the first chapter alone... Errors not only of usage and language, but even of story detail, have been put in which weren't there before. I can't find one change which is an improvement over what I originally wrote. :::: And I didn't get the proofs which the publishers' contract assured to me. :::: Come to think of it: even if you're not proposing to run a review, you'd be doing me a considerable service by quoting the foregoing and appending a note asking other fanzine editors to give the facts maximal exposure in their own publications...

JB: How distressing for you, John. We wondered, you will be interested to know, just how much THE PRODUCTIONS OF TIME had been altered when it appeared last August/September in F&SF. (We're still interested.) Lee and I discussed it at the time, and felt that something had been dropped between chapters 13 and 14. We were both very impressed by the novel, but agreed that somewhere along the line something was missing - not necessarily from the text. We also agreed to resist the temptation to review it until the paperback version came to hand. We probably will see the Signet version (it was interesting to see Max Harris complaining some months ago that Australia wouldn't be getting a paperback LORD OF THE RINGS, when every second bookshop here seems to have it, zone or no zone!) but we'll wait to compare it with the Penguin.

And that, I hope, concludes this issue. The afternoon mail included letters from Al Andrews (USA) and Bruce Taylor (UK). These, unfortunately, must wait until another time. (Until I've figured out some way of cleaning off the paint without deleting the type, in fact.) Other recent correspondents have included Jannicke Storm (Denmark), Jack Knight (NZ), Gary Woodman (Melbourne), and Alan Dodd (UK). Thank you, one and all.

ASFR CHECKLIST
of new and forthcoming books : sf and fantasy : including new editions

ALDISS, B.	Non-stop.	Faber	$ 2.30
ANDERSON, P.	Trouble twisters.	Gollancz	2.30
-	World without stars.	Ace	0.60
ASIMOV, I.	I, robot.	Dobson	2.65
-	The rest of the robots.	Dobson	4.45
BALLARD, J.G.	The disaster area.	Cape	2.65
BESTER, A.	The demolished man.	Penguin	0.65
-	Alfred Bester Omnibus: (Dem.Man, Tiger!, Dark Side of Earth)	Sidgwick	3.85
BLISH, J.	Star trek.	Bantam	0.70
BLOCH, R.	Pleasant dreams/nightmares.	Whiting	2.65
BRACKETT, L.	Sword of Rhiannon.	Ace	0.70
BRUNNER, J.	Out of my mind.	Ballantine	?
BURROUGHS, E.R.	John Carter of Mars.	Ballantine	?
-	Llana of Gathol.	4 Square	0.60
CAMPBELL, J.W.	The thing from outer space.	Tandem	0.60
CARTER, Lin	The man without a planet.	Ace	0.60
CHARBONNEAU, L.	Antic Earth.	Jenkins	2.65
CHESTER,	Hawk of the wilderness.	Ace	?
CHRISTOPHER, J.	The little people.	Hodder	2.30
CLIFTON, M.	When they came from space.	Macfadden	0.60
COMPTON, D.G.	The silent multitude.	Hodder	2.65
COOPER, E.	A far sunset.	Hodder	2.00
CREASEY, J.	The famine.	Hodder	2.00
DAVIDSON, A.	The enemy of my enemy.	Berkley	0.70
DAVIES, L.P.	Twilight journey.	Jenkins	2.65
DICK, P.K.	The zap gun.	Pyramid	0.60
-	The penultimate truth.	Cape	3.15
DICKSON, G.R.	The genetic general.	Ace	0.50
DIKTY, T.E.	Five tales from tomorrow.	Crest	0.60
DISCH, T.M.	The genocides.	Whiting	2.30
-	One hundred and two H-bombs.	Compact	0.60
-	Echo round his bones.	Berkley	0.70
DUKE, M.	This business of Bomfog.	Heinemann	3.15
FRIEDBERG, G.	Revolving boy.	Gollancz	2.30
GATHORNE-HARDY, J.	Chameleon.	H.Hamilton	3.15
GOLD, H.L.	The weird ones.	Corgi	0.60
GOLDING, W.	The pyramid.	Faber	2.65
GORDON, R.	Utopia minus X.	Ace	0.50
GREEN, J.	The loafers of Refuge.	Pan	0.60
HARRISON, H.	The war with the robots.	Dobson	2.00
HEINLEIN, R.	Unpleasant profession of J. Hoag.	Penguin	0.60
-	The moon is a harsh mistress.	Dobson	3.15
-	Starship troopers.	4 Square	?
HENDERSON, Z.	Pilgrimage.	Avon	0.70
HIGH, P.E.	Twin planets.	Belmont	?
HODDER-WILLIAMS,C.	The egg-shaped thing.	Hodder	2.65
HOWARD, R.E.	Conan the conqueror.	Lancer	0.70
JONES, N.R.	Planet of the double sun.	Ace	0.50

LAUMER, K.	The monitors.	Berkley	0.70
LEINSTER, M.	The time tunnel.	Pyramid	0.60
-	The wailing asteroid.	Avon	0.60
LONG, F.B.	Lest earth be conquered.	Belmont	0.60
LYMINGTON, J.	Ten million years to Friday.	Hodder	2.00
MADDOCK, L.	Agent of TERRA - no.1.	Ace	0.60
McINTOSH, J.T.	Time for a change.	Joseph	2.65
MOORCOCK, M.	The stealer of souls.	Lancer	0.70
NORMAN, J.	Tarnsman of Gor.	Ballantine	0.90
NORTON, A.	The X factor.	Gollancz	1.90
POHL & KORNBLUTH:	The wonder effect.	Gollancz	2.30
RANKINE, J.	One is one.	Dobson	2.30
REYNOLDS, M.	Space pion r.	4 Square	0.60
ROBESON, K.	Fantastic island.	Bantam	0.60
RUSSELL, E.F.	Dreadful sanctuary.	Lancer	0.60
-	Sinister barrier.	Paperback Lib.	0.60
SABERHAGEN, F.	Berserker.	Ballantine	0.70
SELLINGS, A.	The Quy effect.	Berkley	0.70
SHAW, F.	Envoy to the dog star.	Ace	
+ RICHMOND, W.& L.	+ Shockwave.	Double	0.60
SHECKLEY, R.	Mindswap.	Dell	0.70
SHIEL, M.P.	Lord of the sea.	Xanadu	1.80
SIMAK, C.	Why call them back from heaven?	Gollancz	2.30
SPINRAD, N.	Agent of chaos.	Belmont	0.60
STURGEON, T.	Starshine.	Pyramid	0.70
SUTTON, J.	Beyond Apollo.	Gollancz	2.30
TABORI, P.	The doomsday brain.	Pyramid	0.70
TUBB, E.C.	Death is a dream.	Hart Davis	3.15
TUCKER, W.	Wild talent.	Avon	0.60
VANCE, J.	The dragon masters.	Panther	0.60
-	The killing machine.	Dobson	2.00
VAN VOGT, A.E.	Empire of the atom.	Macfadden	0.70
-	Masters of time.	Macfadden	0.60
-	The winged man.	Sidgwick	2.00
VONNEGUT, K. Jr.	The sirens of Titan.	Gollancz	2.65
-	Player piano.	Macmillan	3.15
WADSWORTH, P.M.	Overmind.	Sidgwick	2.65
WHITE, T.	The sorceress of Qar.	Lancer	0.70
WILHELM, K.	The killing thing.	Jenkins	2.30
WILSON, R.	The girls from planet 5.	Lancer	0.70
WYLIE, P.	The disappearance.	Pocketbook	0.90
ZELAZNY, R.	Four for tomorrow.	Ace	0.60

Anthologies:

Aldiss	INTRODUCING SF	Faber	0.80
Amis & Conquest	SPECTRUM IV	Pan	0.60
Boardman	AN ABC OF SF	4 Square	0.60
Campbell	PRELUDE TO ANALOG	Panther	?
-	ANALOG 1	Panther	?
-	ANALOG 2	Panther	?
-	ANALOG 3	Dobson	2.65
-	ANALOG 4	Dobson	2.65

Carnell	NEW WRITINGS IN SF - 1, 2	Bantam	0.60
Carnell	NEW WRITINGS IN SF - 8	Corgi	0.60
-	NEW WRITINGS IN SF - 11, 12	Dobson	2.00
Clarke	THE PROBE	Gollancz	2.65
Conklin	SEVEN COME INFINITY	Gold Medal	0.60
Davenport	INVISIBLE MEN	Ballantine	0.60
Davidson	BEST FROM F&SF - 12	Ace	0.60
Douglas	HORRORS!	Baker	3.85
Evans	SCIENCE FICTION THROUGH THE AGES - 1	Panther	0.60
-	SCIENCE FICTION THROUGH THE AGES - 2	Panther	0.60
Ferman	BEST FROM F&SF - 15	Gollancz	2.65
Harrison	BACKDROP OF STARS	Dobson	2.30
Hill	THE DEVIL HIS DUE	Hart Davis	3.15
Janifer	MASTERS' CHOICE	Jenkins	2.65
Knight	NEBULA AWARD STORIES	Gollancz	3.15
Merril	THE YEAR'S BEST SF - 10	Dell	0.90
Moorcock	BEST SF STORIES FROM NEW WORLDS	Panther	?
Pohl	NINTH GALAXY READER	Gollancz	2.65
-	IF READER OF SCIENCE FICTION	Whiting	2.65
-	SEVENTH GALAXY READER	Pan	?
?	PATH INTO THE UNKNOWN (Soviet SF)	McG & Kee	3.15
?	PLAYBOY BOOK OF SF AND FANTASY	Souvenir	4.45

MELBOURNE SCIENCE FICTION CLUB — MELBOURNE FANTASY FILM GROUP

THE CLUB meets every Wednesday night, about 8.00, at 19 Somerset Place, Melbourne C.1 (off Little Bourke Street, behind McGill's). Informal session. Extensive library open for your inspection. Visitors welcome.

THE FILM GROUP announces the following programmes for April, May, and June:

FRIDAY, APRIL 21 at 8:	SEVEN DAYS IN MAY
FRIDAY, MAY 19 at 8:	CHAPLIN'S FIRST FILMS: Lady of the Camellias. Mabel's Busy Day. Tango Tango. His Trysting Place.
FRIDAY, JUNE 16 at 8:	THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER

For further information about Club activities, Film Group programmes, and membership requirements for both groups, contact Mervyn Binns or Paul Stevens at 19 Somerset Place, or visit or telephone Mervyn at McGill's.

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NEW WORLDS LIVES!

A London correspondent reports the arrival of NEW WORLDS 171 and confirms that the magazine has received an Arts Council subsidy (for a limited period). IMPULSE 12, currently on sale in Australia, is the last issue of NEW WORLDS's companion magazine.

NEBULA AWARDS

Anne McCaffrey reports prize-winners announced at the Annual Banquet of the Science Fiction Writers of America (March 11th): Best Short Story: RICHARD McKENNA: THE SECRET PLACE. Best Novella: GORDON DICKSON: CALL HIM LORD. Best Novelette: JACK VANCE: LAST CASTLE. Best Novel (tied award): SAMUEL DELANY: BABEL SEVENTEEN and DANIEL KEYES: FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON.

AUSTRALIAN SF COLLECTION

An Australian publisher plans to issue a paperback collection of local sf later this year or early 1968.

More news on these subjects next issue.

(30/3/67)