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'65

BEYOND 8

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ARTWORK IN THIS ISSUE:

Front Cover: Joseph Zajackowski.	Page 33: Dick Howett.
Page 4: Justin De Syllas.	Page 37: Dick Howett.
Page 14: Dick Howett.	Page 42: Dick Howett.
Page 15: Dick Howett.	Page 45: Sheila Carrington.
Page 23: Anthony Barter.	Page 46: Sheila Carrington.
Page 24: Dick Howett.	Page 50: Juliet MacMichael.
Pages 26-29: Ivor Latto.	Page 53; "Nej".

All unsigned work is by the editor.

BEYOND is produced by Charles Platt,
325A Westbourne Park Road, LONDON W.11.
Note: after May 17th my address will
be 18E Fitzjohns Avenue, LONDON N.W.3.
BEYOND is available in exchange for
letters of comment or the sum of 2/6d.
This issue is numbered 8 and dated 16th
April 1965: the morning of the Brumcon.
Your comments will be appreciated but
send no contributions, this is the
last issue!

preliminary note of apology

Twenty pages of this issue of BEYOND should have been done in offset litho, combined text matter and illustrations, reduced from actual size to $\frac{2}{3}$ size. It was to have been done through my college, the London College of Printing, absolutely free... ..until They found out, three days before the production date, that it was not a group project but purely a private-produced magazine.

The result is that I have 20 negatives, 3 offset litho metal plates, and 20 pages of typed matter and illustrations on my hands. Amongst the stuff that should have appeared this issue is an article on drug addiction, presenting the contemporary picture of the addict's life; an article by Archie Mercer surveying the first 6 issues of NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY; an article by Beryl Henley dealing with Time; three poems by Bob Parkinson; a short story by James Colvin; and a survey of William Golding by Richard Mayall. Also there were three terrific Joseph Zajackowski illos; one of these will be on the front cover, duplicated, if the electro-stencil arrives tomorrow. The other two are too detailed and too black for duplicating. There was also artwork from Dick Howett, and from art students at my college...

Of course, I didn't take defeat lying down, and argued like hell. It didn't do me any good, merely caused them, in their phrase, to wonder if I was really suited to the college...

Consequently, as a result of all this, the Last Issue of Beyond (see editorial) is only half what I had hoped it would be. One day when I'm old and rich perhaps I'll be able to get plates made from the negatives I have, and then get said plates printed professionally. The cost, however, would be considerable.

In the meantime, sincere apologies to all the contributors who, as a result of this, will not be seeing their contributions in print. If they so desire, I'll return the pieces of work concerned and they can re-submit them to other fanzines.

See you at the convention perhaps?

Charles Platt

EDITORIAL:

Page 1

A FINAL EVALUATION

FANDOM IS ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN. IT IS AN ESCAPE, AN EXPRESSION, AN OBSESSION, A DIVERSION, A HOBBY... I HESITATE TO ADD, A WAY OF LIFE. DURING MY BRIEF STAY TO DATE IT HAS AT VARIOUS TIMES MEANT EACH OF THESE THINGS TO ME, BUT IT IS NOW VERGING ON THAT LAST AND MOST FATAL STATE, A WASTE OF TIME.

THAT LAST STATEMENT NEEDS TO BE QUALIFIED. I FIND FANDOM ITSELF IS AN INVALUABLE INSTITUTION IN MANY WAYS. IT CAN PROVIDE AN EMOTIONAL LIFT, FOR INSTANCE IN A DEPRESSED STATE OR WHEN ONE IS HOSPITALISED. IT CAN, WITHOUT BECOMING TOO POETICAL, PROVIDE A FEELING OF FRIENDLY ONE-NESS. IT HELPS YOU MEET PEOPLE, IT'S FUN.

BUT WHEN ONE IS FACED WITH CONFLICTING SPARE TIME INTERESTS CERTAIN ASPECTS OF FANDOM AND FANAC SUDDENLY SEEM TO LOSE THE IMPORTANCE THAT THEY USED TO POSSESS. TO BE SPECIFIC, I MYSELF AM FACED WITH THE ALTERNATIVE -- AND IT IS A DIRECT, EITHER/OR ALTERNATIVE -- OF SATISFYING A CREATIVE URGE BY PRODUCING A FANZINE AND WRITING FOR OTHER FANZINES, OR BY USING MY TIME FOR PROFESSIONALLY-AIMED WRITING. WHETHER THE LATTER SELLS IS IMMATERIAL TO THIS ARGUMENT, THOUGH OBVIOUSLY IT IS MORE REWARDING TO GET REMUNERATION FOR ONE'S WRITING THAN TO SINK ONE'S OWN MONEY INTO PUBLISHING IT.

SO THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY THE LAST ISSUE OF BEYOND, (UNLESS SOME UNFORESEEN EVENT IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD ENDS ME WITH UNEXPECTEDLY MORE FREE TIME), AND COMPANION FANZINE GARBISTAN ALSO TERMINATES HERewith. IN MUNDANE TERMS, THIS INSIGNIFICANT STATEMENT SOUNDS RIDICULOUS, BUT SOMEHOW IT SEEMS IMPORTANT. ANYWAY, THE P.A.D.S. AND MY PRIVATE LETTER-WRITING WILL CONTINUE, BUT THERE'LL BE NO MORE GRAND-EFFORTS.

THIS ISN'T A FAREWELL TO FANDOM; I HAVE MET AND MADE TOO MANY FRIENDS AND FOUND TOO MUCH TO SATISFY ME IN IT TO UP AND LEAVE. BUT IT IS A GENERAL STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT

that, when you don't get another Beyond, you'll know why.

At this stage, having met most every kind of fan and having, as I said earlier, because of personal circumstances, been involved with fandom in several different ways in the recent past, I feel a final comment is in order. (As always happens when GAFIA threatants, the GAFant feels he sees things in a New Light that should be brought home to fans in general).

Outside of its wonderful friendly services as a meeting place and its astonishing diversity, fandom is disappointing. Science Fiction should be adventurous and ahead of the rest of mainstream authors; my dictionary (Webster) defines it as "Fiction dealing principally with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals; broadly, literary fantasy including a scientific factor as an essential orienting component." Thus when sf is doing its job properly it is dealing with the stuff that contemporary fiction will be concerned with in the future. Yet as soon as one actually finds true originality and forward looking ideas in sf, fans as a near-united body make ill-considered and backward looking comments. The reaction that there has been to J.G. Ballard recently has been a lot less coherent than Terry Jeeves' more reasonable -- though still limited -- arguments contained elsewhere in this issue.

One is reminded of Ballard's reported stupefaction upon attending the first day of the last British Worldcon. Expecting to find intellectual men representing all that is interested in the advancement of fiction, he found card-playing socialites and unintelligent in-groups, with the occasional goshwow neofan. When faced with the thoughtless condemnation of what is incontrovertibly good literature -- irrespective of its obscurity -- that has been published in some recent fanzines, I think I understand a little of how Mr Ballard must have felt.

Another part of fandom that is wrong, and in addition disturbing, is that which possesses genuine talent. Every time I read a talented fanzine feature I cannot help feeling, this talent is wasted. True, fandom needs skill and professionalism more than any other quality, and there is nothing so depressing as receiving a fanzine containing utter muck which the editor obviously thinks is good stuff. But what I would like to see is something of a compromise, with people like Archie Mercer, Beryl Henley -- yes, Walt Willis -- and on the US scene, people like Richard Bergeron, Bill Mallardi, Ed Meskys, doing stuff for professional outlets in addition to fandom. The readership of a fanzine is usually at around the hundred mark, and this is a pathetically small audience compared to the potential public

that Archie's humour, Beryl's arguments or Walt's reviewing could achieve. It seems a shame that such talent is devoted solely to a field where controversy rages but is never brought to a conclusion, where microscopic battles and intrigues cover hundreds of fanzine pages, and where there is little demand for high standards. Fandom is an ideal training ground (I have found) for young writers. But there comes a time when one is really able to meet the harder training ground of professional writing and publishing, and at this stage it is surely a mistake to write only for the uncritical audience of kind fandom -- where most work is received with praise to avert hard or hurt feelings -- instead of branching out into a world where there are higher standards and genuine quality. One argument against the BSFA 'Orbiter', where amateur writers contribute their own work and criticise others', is that it provides a pool of low-standard work where one can very happily stagnate; there is little incentive to improve one's writing.

Lastly, I would criticise fandom for its isolationism. To some people, fandom is a minor field of recreation; but to others who, as I have in the past, immerse themselves fully, it becomes a haven which mundania cannot touch in any respect. Perhaps such escapism from temporary hard times into a private world is good therapy in moderation; at times, I know, letter-contacts provide an invaluable reliable means of morale-boosting when all else has gone to hell.

But the means of recovery should always be present, else the 'temporary immersion' is likely to become an addictive submersion. So I would like to see the occasional voice from outside heard within fandom, and listened to, rather than shouted down. In the world of the insane, the single sane man is classed as 'irrational', and it is easy to apply this analogy to the neofan lost in fandom. (Although the neo's propensity to criticise everything obscures and weakens his comments when they concern really pertinent issues).

From a literary standpoint, I would like to see more evidence of good outside writing, perhaps replacing some of the fan fiction, so that fans have something better to aim at than, for example, 'Tangent'.

Concluding, I'd say that as a society of devotees to imaginative fiction, fandom and the BSFA are both failures. Both entities collect as permanent members (perhaps the intellectuals are the ones who never renew their first subscription) the Poul Anderson enthusiasts, rather than the type who appreciates adventurous ideas in writing

as well as the proverbial "Good Plot". Since its members are not really interested, as a whole, in progress in sf, (fans tend to judge fiction on its sense-of-wonder content first and foremost), the overall standards of literary appreciation are depressingly lacking.

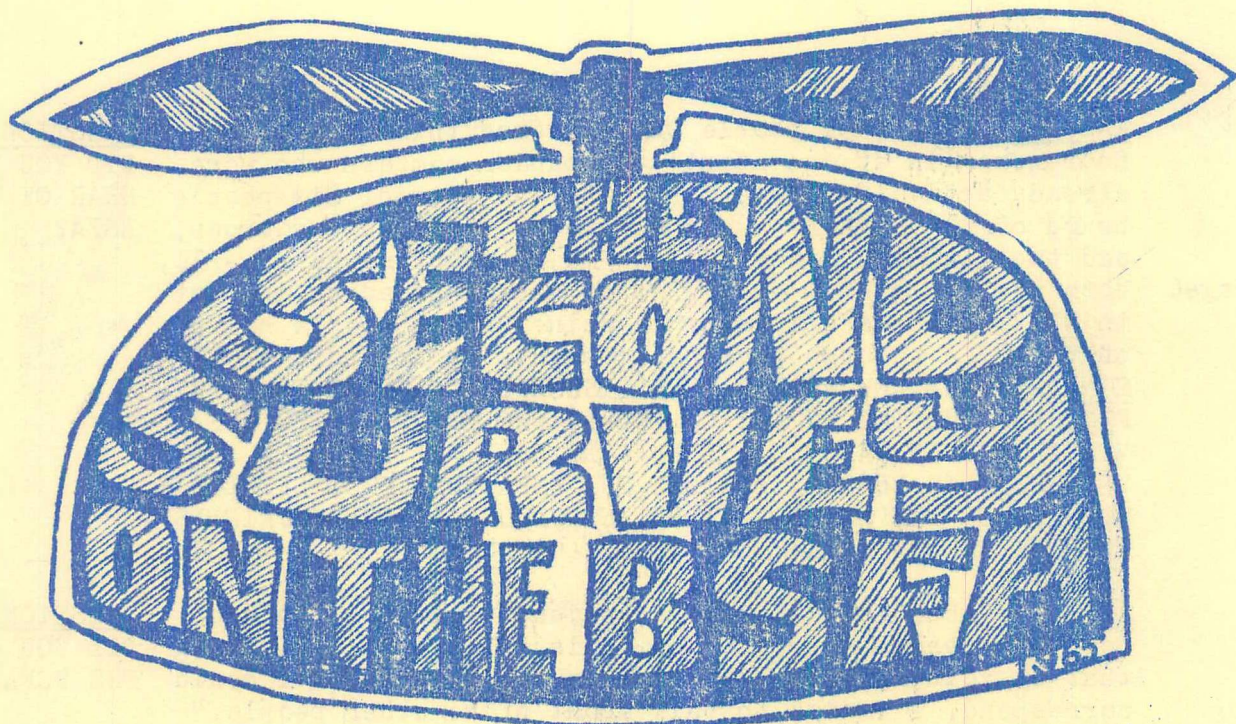
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As a social-society fandom is wonderful; I don't think anyone could dispute this. And as an outlet, it is unique: you can say what you like about it, but it always bounces back

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So perhaps the BSFA should be re-titled the BSFPFA (British SF Pen Friend Association) and and fandom called socidom. Then we could start recruiting a higher per centage of trufan material from the beginning, leaving the people interested in the serious development of sf to form and join another society -- if they have the time to spare for such an unrewarding and unnecessary enterprise.





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LAST YEAR Beyond CONDUCTED A SURVEY OF FAN-OPINION ON THE BSFA. THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN WERE TWOFOLD: THAT TO GET MORE MONEY, NECESSARY FOR THE EXTRA FACILITIES WANTED BY FANS, MORE NEW MEMBERS WERE REQUIRED; AND THAT TO GET THESE NEW MEMBERS, MORE MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT ON ADVERTISING.

THE PAST YEAR -- POSSIBLY THE BEST EVER FOR THE BSFA -- HAS SEEN THESE TWO AIMS PARTIALLY FULFILLED. AN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB NEWSLETTER NETTED A RESPONSE LARGE ENOUGH TO PROMPT THE SECRETARY TO RESIGN, AND BSFA MEMBERSHIP HAS IN FACT INCREASED BY ABOUT 50%. THE EXTRA REVENUE THIS HAS AFFORDED, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES, LEAVES THE BSFA IN A BETTER FINANCIAL POSITION THAN EVER BEFORE.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH THIS MONEY? WHAT DO MEMBERS -- AND NON-MEMBERS -- WANT? AT THE END OF FEBRUARY I CIRCULATED 65 QUESTIONNAIRES THROUGH FANDOM. BY THE CLOSING DATE, ABOUT HALF OF THEM HAD BEEN RETURNED COMPLETED--- A SUBSTANTIAL FIGURE SHOWING THAT FANS ARE INTERESTED IN THE TOPICS RAISED. THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS, ARE PRESENTED ALMOST VERBATIM IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, FOLLOWED BY A SUMMARY. IT IS HOPED THAT THIS MAY BE OF USE TO THE NEW BSFA COMMITTEE.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE SILENT RANKS OF THE BSFA, THE INACTIVE MEMBERS WHO ARE NEVER HEARD FROM AND WHO OFTEN LEAVE AFTER THEIR FIRST YEAR, CANNOT BE REPRESENTED IN THIS OPINION POLL. HOWEVER, THE RANGE OF PEOPLE AND OPINIONS COVERED IS PERHAPS WIDE ENOUGH FOR IT TO BE POSSIBLE TO SEE WHAT THE MAJORITY OF FANS WANT FROM THE BSFA.//////

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ANSWERS: Of the 31 people who answered this question, four were 'in at the start' -- founder members who were already active fans when the BSFA was formed. Six people heard of the BSFA from miscellaneous or obscure sources, and two couldn't remember. The majority of members -- 11, both new and old -- joined after seeing an advertisement in NEW WORLDS or companion magazine. Seven people heard of the BSFA through personal contacts or friends.

SUMMARY: THE NEW WORLDS ADVERTISEMENTS CONTINUE TO BE EFFECTIVE, BUT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HEARD OF THE BSFA VIA AN ACQUAINTANCE IS STILL VERY HIGH. STILL MORE ADVERTISING IS NEEDED; PLAINLY THE BSFA WILL GROW SLOWLY IF WE RELY ON NEW MEMBERS BEING INTRODUCED BY THEIR FRIENDS ALREADY IN THE BSFA.

QUESTION: HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR OF THE BSFA?

ANSWERS: About 40% of the respondents said they joined for this reason expressed by Chris Priest: "I was hoping that by joining I would encounter fans with whom I could correspond. I wanted to talk about sf to other people." Or Mike Moore: "Because of sf loneliness". 33% mentioned only sf as their reason for joining; Gerald Kirsch: "I joined mainly to get access to the library." Dick Howett: "It just sounded attractive; a chance to read and learn about the sf world." Or Mary Reed: "Because I was interested in sf -- wanted to find out more about it."

QUESTION: WHY DID YOU JOIN THE BSFA?

Four respondents joined out of a sense of duty -- they felt that the BSFA deserved their support, because of what it was trying to do. (These were Ethel Lindsay, Archie Mercer, Terry Jeeves and Phil Rogers). In some cases curiosity played a part: people joined just to find out what it was all about, on impulse.

SUMMARY: MORE THAN HALF OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED THIS QUESTION JOINED EITHER OUT OF NEED TO MEET FELLOW FANS OR PURELY FOR THE FACILITIES. MOST OF THOSE IN THE LATTER CATEGORY EXPLAINED THAT THEY LATER FOUND THE SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE AND INTERCOMMUNICATION VERY WELCOME. THUS THIS FACTOR MIGHT BE STRESSED MORE IN FUTURE ADVERTISING ("Meet People Like Yourself!"), SINCE IT SEEMS VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL.

ANSWERS: Everyone who answered this question was glad to have joined. But 60% expressed some form of disappointment in that the BSFA did not live up to their expectations. Bill Aitken: "There are too many petty wars about subjects remote from sf...No VECTOR article stays in my mind over the past years, which indicates a general level of mediocrity." David Orme: "I expected something more organised and cohesive. Of course, it's up to the member

QUESTION: ARE YOU GLAD YOU JOINED? DID THE BSFA FULFIL YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

to put in what he expects to get out, but membership can easily mean only an expensive subscription to an (at present) not very interesting magazine."

But most people found initial disappointment offset by unexpected advantages; Terry Pratchett: "I had expected a much more professional organisation, crowded with authors and editors. I thought VECTOR would be a glossy magazine. But I'm glad I joined, for all the social aspects." Many other members reconciled initial disappointment with phrases like 'once I realised how much time the committee had to spend...' and 'now I know more about the BSFA...' but the fact remains that newcomers still expect more from the organisation than they find upon joining.

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SUMMARY: VERY PROBABLY MANY OF THE INACTIVE BSFA MEMBERS, NOT REACHED BY THIS SURVEY, WERE DISAPPOINTED UPON JOINING BUT DID NOT FIND THE SOCIAL ASPECT A PALATEABLE ALTERNATIVE. HENCE THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP TURNOVER. PERHAPS THE BSFA SHOULD ADOPT AT LEAST AN APPEARANCE OF 'NORMALITY' IF ONLY TO CUSHION THE BLOW OF FINDING OUT WHAT IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT.

QUESTION:
WHAT ARE THE
BEST FEATURES OF THE
BSFA?

ANSWERS: 40% of those who answered this question agreed with Archie Mercer: "The best feature is the opportunity it affords one to get to know people of similar mind to oneself." 30% thought VECTOR the best feature of the BSFA, and about 25% placed the library service first, though many of these people said they didn't use it. John Barfoot: "The library is the best, of not the only one, of its kind. Charges are minimal, negligible compared to the range of material." The remaining 5% response consisted of Brian Aldiss, who thought that the constitution ("A fine piece of Moorcock prose") was the best feature, "...which is not, and can never be, adhered to."

SUMMARY: THE NEED FOR COMMUNICATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF 'VECTOR' IN THE MINDS OF MEMBERS IS EMPHASISED. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT VECTOR IS ONE OF THE FEW TANGIBLE REMINDERS THAT THE BSFA EXISTS AND ONE IS A MEMBER OF IT.

QUESTION:
WAS THE
RECENT RISE
IN MEMBERSHIP FEES
JUSTIFIED?

ANSWERS: Nearly 45% thought that the rise was definitely justified. 37% gave a qualified -- in some cases very heavily qualified -- 'yes'. 12% said they didn't know. Two people thought the rise unjustifiable.

Ethel Lindsay's response -- "If they need more, they need it" -- was characteristic of those who considered the rise excusable. There was also a slightly resigned note to the capitulation (Brian Aldiss: "We are inured these days to a 15% surcharge on anything") though three younger fans were more forthright; John Barfoot: "VECTOR improves every issue, not to mention TANGENT, and this is

bound to cost money. Yes, the increase was definitely justified." But Dick Howett had a different opinion: "With over 300 members I would have thought any price increase unnecessary. The higher rate will not hold the 'non-fannish' membership. One non-fan I know at the BBC said that the BSFA just isn't worth that much."

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SUMMARY: IT IS LIKELY THAT THE BSFA WILL LOSE A FEW OF ITS LESS-ENTHUSIASTIC MEMBERS, AS A RESULT OF THE INCREASE. BUT PROVIDING THAT THE PER CENTAGE OF THE MEMBERSHIP THAT IS LOST IS SMALLER THAN THE INCREASE (30%) IN THE FEES, THE NET RESULT WILL BE GREATER REVENUE. AND WHILE MEMBERS ARE A LITTLE DOUBTFUL, THE MAJORITY HAVE ACCEPTED THE INCREASE AS INEVITABLE. STRESS WAS, HOWEVER, LAID ON THE FACT THAT THE EXTRA MONEY SHOULD BE USED TO GOOD EFFECT.

ANSWERS: 45% gave three or more reasons why they weren't satisfied with VECTOR. 40% were reasonably pleased with it (ie ranged from total satisfaction to mentioning two points of displeasure). 10% were guarded in their opinions. About a quarter of the total response was in favour of shorter book reviews, and several mentioned they would prefer more shorter articles and fewer letters.

David Redd just supplied two definitions: "To the best of my knowledge, without looking it up, a vector is either a) something which transmits a virus or b) something which has magnitude and direction. Which definition was the original editor thinking about?" This was very clever but not very helpful. Ken Cheslin represented the "Everything is all right" faction: "From the point of view of SFictionally inclined members, VECTOR has been steadily improving." Chris Priest thought there was 'something wrong', possibly a lack of humour. "It is self-consciously serious about sf." Dick Howett was, again, outspoken: "It's not dynamic enough. Too sloppy in presentation and it doesn't widen its sights. All we seem to get is 'why so-and-so author is a good bloke.' Let's have a science page. More film news. Interviews with sf authors, publishers and editors. Better artwork and more general interest. Enlarge 'For Your Information'. KILL PERISTYLE!" These improvements might require more than one editor. Brian Aldiss was more reasonable and balanced: "VECTOR is a fanzine with all the glories and limitations of fanzines but pretensions above its station. For instance, as a professional critic, I weep to read its terrible book reviews; they are so limited and so imperceptive that whether they award praise or blame (always for the wrong reasons) they can only make any sensitive author or publisher bleach at the word 'fandom.' VECTOR has improved this last year, although the

QUESTION:
ARE YOU
HAPPY WITH
'VECTOR' AS
IT IS? HAVE
YOU ANY
SUGGESTIONS?

lack of intellectual vitamins is still apparent." Terry Jeeves placed emphasis elsewhere: "The current and previous editors have done their best under hard conditions and it is now up to the members."

SUMMARY: WHILE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SATISFY EVERYONE, ONE WOULD HOPE FOR LESS THAN ABOUT HALF OF THE RESPONDENTS EXPRESSING THREE OR MORE SERIOUS ITEMS OF DISSATISFACTION. ONE IS HEARTENED BY THE FACT THAT THIS SURVEY LAST YEAR FEATURED MANY MORE SERIOUS GRIEVANCES, SO PROGRESS IS DEFINITELY BEING MADE; BUT THERE ARE STILL DEFICIENCIES.

THIS QUESTION NETTED MORE RESPONSE THAN ANY OTHER IN THE SURVEY, AGAIN ILLUSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE MEMBERS ATTACH TO 'VECTOR'.

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QUESTION:
WHAT DO YOU
THINK OF
THE NEW FIC-
TION MAGA-
ZINE,
'TANGENT'?

ANSWERS: 35% expressed the opinion that TANGENT was a good idea, in several cases avoiding mention of the actual contents. Gavin Dixon: "That it will encourage people to indulge in artistic creation themselves rather than remain in the audience all their lives is important, however unhappy the resultant literature may be." 30% were definitely in favour, and expressed sincere appreciation of the contents. Steve Moore: "I think TANGENT is very good, and I am pleased with it so long as it is free." 20% said it was too early to judge, and 10% were in opposition; Terry Jeeves: "In general I dislike fan fiction. The pro variety is bad enough." (But would Terry have used his famous phrase, 'Utter twaddle defying description, rating E cubed', on TANGENT? Unfortunately he didn't say). Phil Rogers thought it would be cheaper to drop TANGENT but maintain a fiction market for budding authors in the established fanzines. The remaining 5% of the response was Ethel Lindsay, who said simply, "I pass".

SUMMARY: The response was moderately favourable, though many members seemed unwilling to be at all positive. Some had 'great expectations'. Its value for embryo writers was stressed, but no one seemed to consider the BSFA Orbiter when viewing TANGENT in this context.

QUESTION:
SHOULD THE
BSFA BE
IMPERSONAL
OR FAN-
NISH?

ANSWERS: About 50% were satisfied with it as it is, 20% afraid of it becoming more fannish and 20% afraid of it becoming too impersonal. (Thus 90% of the members were happy, 40% choosing to qualify their statements). 10% or so definitely wanted the BSFA to be more impersonal, but no one wanted it more 'fannish'. Comments ranged from David Redd's "I hate the idea of an impersonal organisation, because what I've seen of fandom is the exact opposite of impersonal" to the dislike of fandom expressed by Gerald Kirsch and William Aitken, probably shared by

other less-active members. Chris Priest mentioned that a good humourous article can be no less science fictional than a library list, but more readable. Brian Aldiss recommended adhering to the constitution. Alan Furns advised simply to "Scrap it" (the BSFA), and Ethel Lindsay avoided -- or invalidated -- the question by saying "It will evolve of itself. I doubt the efficiency of shoving."

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SUMMARY: The APPEARANCE OF THE BSFA -- IMPERSONAL OR FAN-NISH -- IS DECIDED VERY LARGELY BY THE TONE OF VECTOR, SO THIS IS WHAT THE QUESTION WAS REALLY REFERRING TO. OPINIONS VARIED WIDELY BUT WERE NOT PARTICULARLY STRONG IN EITHER DIRECTION. MOST PEOPLE WERE SATISFIED, AND CONCERNED MORE ABOUT WHAT THE BSFA SHOULD NOT BECOME. NO ONE CONSIDERED THE FINANCIALLY NECESSARY RANKS OF INACTIVE BSFA MEMBERS, WHO WOULD PRESUMABLY FAVOUR A MORE ORGANISATIONAL BSFA.

ANSWERS: Three people wanted better punctuality in VECTOR. Two others said duplicated material, even when well done, didn't make a good impression. Otherwise no two suggestions were alike. Ken Cheslin implored the committee to use its power to depute helpers. This is a good point. Brian Aldiss recalled presidential embarrassment over being asked about the BSFA 'Central Office' by publishers and recommended a permanent professional London secretary. "Tom Boardman outlined how it could be done, at a recent convention". Steve Moore said "Perhaps the BSFA needs decentralising. Everything is controlled by the Brum fans." Gerald Kirsch suggested keeping book reviews out of VECTOR, in a topical magazine consisting of reviews alone. The recent TOMORROW-SCOPE magazine I've started myself performs exactly this function, but is not bsfa-sponsored. John Barfoot wanted a more extended welcommittee welcome, to acclimatise the new fan more fully, not realising that the system is stretched rather far at present

SUMMARY: Ken Cheslin and Brian Aldiss made suggestions that deserve consideration. The rest were all desirable, but difficult to put into practice.

QUESTION:
WHAT IMPROVE-
MENTS SHOULD
BE MADE IN
THE BSFA AS
A WHOLE?

ANSWERS: Four people felt the BSFA should expand its services and be more enterprising. For example, David Redd: "The BSEA has been going for some years now. But has it had any effect on sf publishing in this country? None that I know of, unless Victor Gollancz is a member...
...shouldn't it blackmail a publisher into putting out a series of sf paperbacks which have not previously appeared in this country? I'd like to know if the BSFA could possibly do anything for the public, and not just for the small body of fans." When the BSFA is much larger, these ideas

QUESTION:
HAVE YOU ANY
OTHER COM-
MENTS?

may be more feasible. For the time being the ctte could perhaps lay foundations (if they aren't already doing so) and perhaps Terry Jeeves' comments apply to David Redd: "Everyone has his view of what is wrong, but how many people run for the committee? If the BSFA is to improve, only member activity can do it. Committees are to coordinate such work, NOT TO DO IT ALL." Page 11

Chris Priest suggested more fanzine reprints; excellent idea. Mike Moore suggested running VECTOR's letter column as a separate magazine (presumably a kind of sercon CRY). But is there the necessary material and inspiration? Good lettercolumns aren't planned, they just happen. Terry Jeeves had some more to say: "What about lapel badges? And convention awards for fan-eds, -writers and -artists instead of for the professionals." But would you advertise your dangerously offbeat tendencies by wearing a BSFA BADGE? Brian Aldiss, in a passage too long to quote verbatim, spoke out against the old type of fan, 'clutching their pathetic wartime copies of Astounding', and welcomed the Golden Age we are entering, where sf is 'a fine, sharp fragment of contemporary life' as fans are concerned with the future of sf rather than its past. This sounded like wish fulfilment to me...

SUMMARY: THAT THE BSFA SHOULD EXPAND ITS SERVICES IS DESIRED BY MEMBERS, BUT ALREADY APPRECIATED BY THE CTTE. THE PUBLICATIONS OFFICER MIGHT DO WELL TO TAKE NOTICE OF CHRIS PRIEST AND DO SOME FANZINE REPRINTS, AND IF THE VECTOR LETTERCOL EVER BRIGHTENS UP MIKE MOORE'S IDEA IS AN INTERESTING ONE. LASTLY, WOULD TERRY JEEVES'S CONVENTION AWARDS BE POSSIBLE? I DON'T SEE WHY NOT.

QUESTION:
FOR NON-MEMBERS, WHY
AREN'T YOU IN
THE BSFA?

ANSWERS: Only three non-members returned their forms. Jim Cawthorne explained he just wasn't the organisation type, Alan Burns said "I regard the BSFA as unnecessary and anomalous and the means by which a few hard-working fans get all the kicks and no kudos." But how else are people going to meet each other? One can hardly imagine "Join the ranks of Fandom" or "Fandom needs you!" ads in NEW WORLDS. John Ramsey Campbell said: "I left the BSFA simply because I wasn't getting anything out of it. The flaw seems to be in the whole construction. It's fine for hooking neofans who want to belong, but for the person who has graduated into fandom the attenuated structure of the BSFA obviously forbids meetings. As a LiG member I feel I don't need the BSFA."

SUMMARY: JRC SUMS UP EXCELLENTLY THE REASONS FOR NOT JOINING. SOME PEOPLE JUST AREN'T THE TYPE, AND NO CHANGE IN THE BSFA WOULD ENCOURAGE THEM TO JOIN.

CONCLUSION



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There have been great changes and developments since the last BEYOND survey, which was more a collection of a few monologues than an analysis of opinion. Last year, I summed up: "With an energetic and enthusiastic committee, inside a year the BSFA could be transformed. This is unlikely to be possible unless the rule that committee members must be over 21 is discarded; this is a first step that would lead to a younger committee with more ideas and plans."

To some extent this vision has been realised: the mere fact that the Birmingham group wanted ctte posts, unlike previous years, when people had to be press-ganged, was a step forward, as was the possibility of actual committee meetings. The result was quite a good committee, of the standard that one should expect, at least, of the BSFA, and no one can deny that progress has been made.

But what lies ahead? Can this organisation expand, and mature, to the point where it has, as David Redd and others mentioned in the survey, an influence over publishers and the science fiction market?

So far as I can see this depends on the structure and makeup of the thing. I would venture to predict that the committee will be strained to the maximum extent by the end of next year, if the BSFA continues to expand and committee members to take their work conscientiously. So long as the jobs are split up as at present, and so long as their holders are part-time unpaid volunteers, it is unfair to expect the BSFA to become really 'professional' and operating on a large scale. Division of labour is a good enough answer for the time being, and Ken Cheslin's suggestion that the committee members should co-opt help surely needs to be considered. It may be that organisers feel this or that job is theirs, and would even resent the help of an 'outsider', but delegation of authority (as opposed to that of responsibility) is a concept essential to the smooth and efficient operation of any large organisation. If it is in the interests of providing the membership with a better service, then personal foibles such as job-possessiveness should be sacrificed.

I would suggest that the editorship of VECTOR and TANGENT (if the latter is to continue) should be separate, and that a typing agency be used to produce the stencils and do the duplicating. The first matter is, I believe, already under way; as a substitute for the second, if the

BSFA continues to grow, offset litho production throughout VECTOR should surely be possible. It's been done before, when the BSFA was a lot smaller. Recently, other fanzines -- this one, and 'ALIEN' -- have also featured text-and-illustration in litho. Why not VECTOR? Further, I suggest that someone be consulted who has some kind of design training, to organise layout, headings and presentation. At present, they aren't bad, but are so obviously amateur. Going back to fundamentals, the size of VECTOR, too, should be reviewed. The 10x8 size is more convenient to type, but there is no denying that folded-foolscap format looks neater and more professional, especially since staples are through the spine and not stabbed down a quarter inch in from the left hand edge of the magazine.

Lastly, of course, (and one would have thought this an elementary recommendation), someone should check for spelling errors. They are bad enough in the text, but when 'In Memorium' in a heading is seen by countless publishers, one winces at the state of the BSFA's reputation. VECTOR is, after all, representing the BSFA to the world at large.

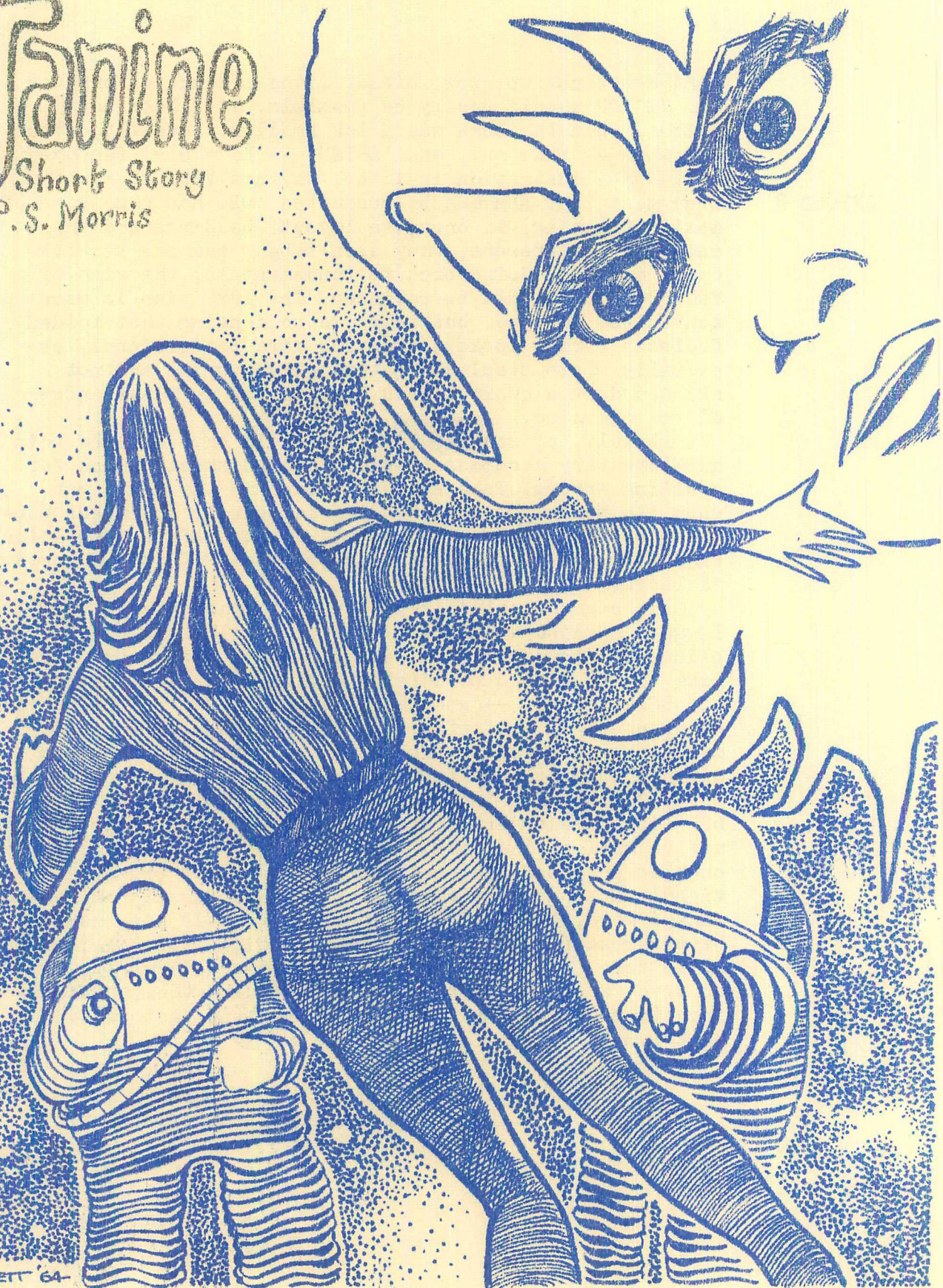
As regards public relations with the outside world, I would suggest a new committee post. Already VECTOR is being sent to publishers, editors and authors, but I would like to see a more personal and direct contact made. If the BSFA expands -- and everything devolves to this point -- enough to be an influence, it will need a means of making this influence felt. And mis-spelt duplicated circulars won't be effective.

Its character need not change radically as a result of these developments (and there is evidence that the active half of the membership does not wish it to). The changes proposed are, rather, extensions of present trends. Most members who returned their questionnaires wanted more, better facilities, a better-looking and better-reading VECTOR, and a more influential BSFA; and it is this that one hopes the committee will strive to achieve, with the members strongly behind them, continuing the start that has been made over the last twelve months.

Tammy

Short Story

By P. S. Morris



When she looked at me with those wide grey eyes, so warm and friendly, I forgot that I was usually shy with strangers. It seemed she'd known me always.

"I'm called Janine," she smiled.

Even her voice was familiar. Looking at her in the morning sunshine, her long hair a liquid gold in the breeze, I sighed with bliss. It was the most beautiful sight I had seen in all my seven years.

"My name is Nicky," I said. "Do you live near?"

She sighed. "Very far away."

"It is nice here," I said. "We come up to the bay most weekends. Your dress is a funny colour." I blushed. "Sorry, I mean it's pretty; but what colour is it?"

Teenage girls often dislike remarks about their clothes, but Janine only smiled. "It changes when I move," she said; Obliging she spun, and indeed the colour flowed from shade to shade.

At that precise moment Dad crunched around the rocks. Seeing Janine spinning as prettily as any fairy he stopped. I waved. Janine gave him a special smile. Dad just stared owlishly. He's like that when he is surprised.

"This is Janine," I said importantly.

"Hullo there," he said at last. "I suppose it's rude, but I must ask. When we drove up, well, the beach just couldn't have been emptier."

Janine's lips parted mischievously. "I did arrive rather suddenly."

Dad put the picnic basket down. His thick brows were forming one straight line. His eyes were bleak. Suddenly he grinned. "Very well, so it's none of my business." He squatted beside the basket.

"Care to join us for lunch?"

"May I?" she breathed, her slim fingers clasped.

"Mind if we go for a paddle first, Dad?"

"Of course. I'll light a brush fire and get things ready. Go ahead, I'll call when it's ready."

We scampered madly over the soft sand, glad of the cool sea breeze and cold, gurgling water. Hand in hand we splashed along, flirting with the tide.

"Dad's upset today," I confided. "Mum usually comes with us, but she's been ill this last



HOWETT

JANINE

week."

"Oh," said Janine, not casually, but as if she really cared. "No wonder he is so serious."

"I'm not supposed to know, but our doctor has a loud voice. He says she must rest. Something about her blood. He used a long word."

"Leukaemia?"

"That's it." Janine looked grave.

We watched two seagulls swooping low over the white caps. "Have you ever heard of radiation?" asked Janine.

"Oh yes, atomic bombs and things."

"Not altogether." She motioned at the sea. "See all the seaweed and rubbish which is washed up on the beach? The tide flushed it out of the water. Some radiation does that with the blood. An invisible pulse which literally vibrates the germs out of the veins."

"Why doesn't the doctor use some on Mum?"

Janine put an arm around my shoulders. "It is something very new." She fumbled with her necklace, and then detached a sort of locket. I noticed that there were two of them, identical in fact.

When she handed it to me I stared. It was exquisite. There was something about the design... I blinked.

"It is quite all right," she said. Take it; we always have two, just in case one becomes detached. Be sure you give it to your mother. If she wears it she will get well."

"Is it a magic charm?"

She regarded me fondly. "In a way I suppose you might say it is, magic."

I was so enthralled I didn't see the rock. It was sharp, it was very sharp. My skin tore. Blood gushed. I rolled up on the wet sand and squirmed with pain.

Janine quickly dropped to her knees beside me. In her hand was a clear plastic rod. She smoothed the wound with the rod, and the pain just faded away. So did the blood. The flesh closed as if I'd only suffered a bruise.

I looked up in wonder. "More magic?"

She ruffled my hair playfully. It was then I first noticed her 'watch'.

"How do you ever tell what time it is with that? What a lot of dials and buttons."

Janine pursed her lips. "It doesn't really tell the time, not in that way. It's a..." She shrugged, helplessly.

"I know," I laughed, "A time machine."

She smiled. "How did you guess?"
Of course, I knew she was teasing me, but it gave me an idea. "I bet you know some super stories."

"You wouldn't be hinting?"

"Oh please. Mum tells me terrific yarns about time machines and space travel."

"Indeed, you have a most understanding mother." She moistened her lips. "I'll do my best. Once there was a girl."

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"Like you?"

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She nodded. "She was an orphan. She lived in a large house with other boys and girls who were in the same position. She hated it."

"What had happened to her parents?"

Janine's eyes looked moist. "They died soon after she was born. She never knew them at all."

"Were they cruel to her in this home?"

"No, not cruel. Not kind either. Just well organised. Very well organised."

"Sounds awful. Did they all hate it?"

"Not all. Most were quite content. They liked being told what to do. The girl read old books about the far off twentieth century. She fell in love with the past." She paused and glanced back at the white spray beating off the black rocks. The shingle rattled under each boisterous surge of the tide. I fidgeted; she seemed to be far away, her eyes misty and pensive. I coughed.

"You want to know what happened next? Very simple. A group of clever scientists and their robots made an invention. They needed someone to prove it. The girl knew the danger, but she was desperate. She volunteered."

"They were cruel. Suppose it failed?"

"She volunteered. She was carefully trained. If the present didn't suit her, perhaps the past might."

We both watched as seagulls swooped low, mewing defiance at the waves. Janine sighed. "She arrived safely. For the first time in her life she was happy. To see wild creatures, not robots. Birds flying freely. Skies empty of all but clouds. Forests straggling where they grew. Whole wide areas without a sign of people. Natural, and the silence, the blessed silence."

"Is that all?" I asked. "She didn't do much. No space monsters or fights. Just like a girl!"

Elegant, Janine uncurled and rose. She extended her soft arms to help me up. "No, she didn't fight. She ran away, escaped, in fact. When it was time to return she made a decision. She decided not to return to her own time"

"She stayed where she was?"

"No, they could have found her there. She made..."

Dad's shout cut across her story.

She pressed my hand. "That's another story. Perhaps later I'll tell you."

Dad had produced a huge mound of roasted, toasted and fried food. We all hunkered down around the fire and clutched tin plates. As we ate, the coffee pot bubbled out a fragrant promise.

Page 18 Janine used her fork daintily, but as if she were unsure of it. Several gulls, attracted by the food, had squatted in closing circles around us. Their black eyes were hard, unblinking. BEYOND 8

"Are they quite safe?" asked Janine.

"With my son's appetite they are even safe from my cooking." Her eyes were large and uneasy until he laughed at her. Then she smiled again and her colour flushed back quite strongly.

Dad reached over with the spare food. He glanced again at Janine, "more for you?"

Sh blinked shyly. "Am I being awfully greedy?"

"In this family, seconds are traditional."

"Especially Mum," I put in.

Dad looked at Janine for several long seconds. "She loved this spot," he said. "This and the mountains over there." He turned and pointed to where the pineclad slopes merged into smoke-grey mistiness. "This is the first time she has missed our trip. Insisted that we came, though."

Janine lowered her gaze and looked serious.

Dad relaxed. He always did when he talked of Mum. "This is where we spent our honeymoon. We took a room in the village, but many a night we camped out in the mountains. It was she who first showed them to me. She was fascinated by the place."

Janine stood and gazed. "I can understand why." She drew a deep breath, tangled her slim fingers and sighed. "Even at this distance there's an air of tranquility..."

Dad rubbed his chin. "Funny how we met. I run a real estate office in Riverdale, down on High Street. One morning the door opened, and there she was, asking for a job as secretary." He chuckled. "Oddly enough I was without a secretary at the time. I engaged her on the spot."

He took a long drink of coffee. "Within a very few months I needed a secretary again, but had gained a wife. I've never known her have a day's illness in all these years. But now, suddenly." He gestured helplessly.

Janine changed the drift quickly. "So you've known her now for how long?"

His face cleared. "Ten years, on the 11th August. I'll never forget that date."

"Is it clouding over?" asked Janine.

"Not for rain," said Dad. "We rarely get much this time of year. Anyway, we don't have to worry up on the

mountain. It's very sheltered."

We all stood and he poured the rest of the coffee. Janine sipped slowly, her long tresses loose in the wind. She spoke wistfully. "It all sounds so wonderful. What a lucky thing it is to have a family like yours."

It seemed such a shame to leave her on the beach.

"Can't Janine come along, Dad?"

She brightened and peeped shyly at him. He knuckled his chin. "I don't mind. Not at all, but maybe Janine has folks wondering where she is now."

Janine answered so quickly she stuttered. "Mm, my time's my own." Then she blushed at her boldness and added timidly, "If you'd rather I didn't come, I don't mind."

He nodded. He abruptly extended his hands. "I'll get the dishes washed up."

He is a very good driver, careful but not cautious. As he says, "It's no good going unless you see where you've been." There was plenty of room in the rear seat, but we all squashed into the front. Dad smiled at Janine, windswept but impishly fresh. Her arm was soft around my shoulders.

Janine smiled at me. "I'm not crushing you, am I?"

As if she could. I was aware only of her warmth and fragrance. The ride was over far too soon for me.

Dad drove well off the dirt track to our usual parking spot among the trees.

On the river bank it was cool, secluded and quiet. Dad slumped back against his favourite pine. He propped a book against his knees. As usual he did not read, but gazed contentedly at the sparkling water.

Janine stretched out full-length beside me and we peered down into the sepia world along the steep bank. Here where the thick fronds resisted swift currents was a domain of tiny fish.

"This would be a fisherman's paradise," mused Dad.

Janine raised a hand to her throat as she half-turned. "Who could be callous enough to bring death to this haven?"

Dad started. Her voice, though soft, had been sharp. He rose from his cushion of pineneedles, throwing a long shadow across us. He looked restless.

"It isn't time to go yet?" pleaded Janine.

"Heavens no. I just thought you might like to ramble upstream. It's worth seeing."

Janine rose daintily. Dad steadied her with his finger tips, but did not look at her as he would have looked at Mum. We went upstream as far as the old rotted treestump.

Janine and I talked all the time. She had quick eyes, and was as excited as a little girl to see the shy

woodland creatures scuttling about their daily routines. All too soon it was time to leave.

Dad drove back and pulled up at the beach. In the still Summer evening shadows spliced across wet sand in unreal, uneven stripes. He was uneasy.

Page 20

"Are you quite sure this is where you want to get out?"

BEYOND 8

Janine nodded definitely. "No other place will do." She kissed me high on my cheek under my eye. To Dad she held out a slim hand. He held it briefly, released it with reluctance.

The car powered off along the coast road. We slowed to take a last look. Janine stood, a striking silhouette in the deep glow of setting sunlight, waved once, and we saw her no more.

"Where did she go, Dad?"

"Blessed if I know. Just vanished. Probably has a car parked nearby. I remember when we drove up this morning she appeared just as suddenly."

There was nothing more to say. We had enough to think about on the long drive home without wasting words.

Mum's nurse slipped into her car as we drove up. "Right on time," she said cheerily. "Your wife has been no trouble at all. She's looking forward to seeing you both."

We went upstairs.

It was strange to see Mum propped up in bed. She was always so lively.

I held out the locket Janine had given to me and watched to see her reaction. To my surprise she merely unlinked her slim fingers and smiled at me as I surrendered the gift.

Dad frowned and leant over. "Why, that is the locket you lost, dear. Where did Nicky find it?"

She shook her head slowly. "Not this one, dear. This is a token I gave away -- once. Now, I shall get better."

It was then that I understood, even before Dad.

He calls her Nina, but her full name is Janine.

Before embarking on the seeming innocent game of airing my preferences and tastes... (anyone not liking the same things as myself seems always to assume they are being personally attacked, and rush to arms in order to prove my idiocy)I would like to reiterate that these are my personal tastes and opinions, aired here to show that I do have reasons for my views and am not just condemning many moderns out of hand.

Speaking loosely, readers can be divided into two groups: those who place priority on the story and plot content, with literary fluency having second place; and the other camp, preferring glowing word pictures and vivid imagery to be evident before worrying about plot. Obviously writers such as Ballard, Cordwainer Smith, etc, belong to the latter school, and since I am very definitely a lover of the other group and value plot before verbosity, I dislike their work.

Before getting down to cases and examples, it is essential to realise that, while we plot-lovers still enjoy only stories with an 'end' to them, we have no objection whatever to the author who proceeds to clothe the plot skeleton with flesh and words. Clarke and Clement give us, for example, good flesh on an excellent skeleton, unlike Ballard & Co. who deal in flabby flesh only, and drop it haphazardly on to a heap of unconnected or dislocated bones.

I have been brought up in the tradition, both at school and in private reading, that a good story should have a starting point, progress logically to a climax, and from there reach a sensible end as soon as possible. There are variations on this theme, of course, as in the serial story with its ascending magnitude of several climaxes, but the basic, start-climax-end sequence is the one on which all good stories

have been written, and I doubt very much whether that is going to change now.

Having made my accusation, now to attempt to justify it. If you feel that some of the good stories I cite are not old at all, but are 'modern', bear in mind that I am not claiming that all modern sf suffers from the same 'plotless fault', only that the plotless story is appearing more and more in the modern magazines. You can still find the occasional pearl of plot wizardry around, even today.

Let's start with Ballard's serial in NEW WORLDS, "Storm Wind". Here we have the inexorable daily increase in wind strength gradually ending civilisation in a new facet of the old catastrophe school. Interwoven with the disaster plot is the bad-die determined to see that he survives and prospers. So far, so good. A reasonable skeleton, and on to it Mr Ballard proceeds to graft excellent flesh. The story would have been a winner in both word- and plot- first schools, had he not left several nasty fractures in the skeleton. ONE: No attempt is made to explain the origin of the wind; like Topsy, it just happened. TWO: The climax uses an entirely unacceptable

coincidence. The wind has risen sufficiently to turn over the concrete fortress-pyramid of the villain "Like an enormous wounded mastodon the pyramid reared up into the wind..." Our hero is then left under the shadow of a 20-ton concrete block about to be blown over on to him. What happens? "Miraculously the toppling wall section had reversed itself the wind was dropping." If you can accept such split-second timing as that, when the wind has been rising for months, then you probably believe in father Christmas.

THREE: No explanation is given for the wind dropping again, either,

Now you may say that these are minor quibbles, but for me they

**one
man's
meat**
LAST WORD ON
THE BALLARD
BUSINESS BY
TERRY JEEVES

ruined what could have been a great story. The same author's "Equinox" suffers from similar faults, in that it has beautiful imagery and word power, better even than some of the excellent work in "Storm Wind", but lacks coherence. I disliked the idea of a crowded native bazaar open and flourishing in a 'half-deserted town', the semi-explained crystal life (Ballard doesn't seem to like explaining his gimmicks), the 'waves' of cold which wander in and out without any explanation, and many other unresolved loose ends. I couldn't accept the coincidence that allowed Doctor Sanders to wander blithely through the jungle for an hour and wind up in the home of Ventress. And so it goes on, marvellous word pictures which should form jewels on a string ... only sad to say, the string is rotted and broken. If only Ballard could take a straight forward plot and cover it with words, it would be a memorable thing for us all ... and a classic of science fiction.

Cordwainer Smith, on the other hand, bothers far less with a plot. He writes well (though not as well as Ballard) in incidents, which he tries to connect as an afterthought as he rattles along. In "The Boy Who Bought Old Earth", the boy, Rod Mc Ban, has an interesting opening session with his family computer (which helps him buy Earth). A loosely connected 'test of manhood' ritual collapses by the wayside. Later he is attacked by a bird, and later still, inexplicably, dessicated and reconstituted on Earth as a cat-man. Whereupon, Smith seems to loose all interest in his semi-plot, and gets on to his favourite treatise of real-people and un-people. Apart from being an apparently thinly-veiled commentary on the colour problem, this has little or nothing to do with the story and tapers off into nothingness. And most of Smith's other stories have the same fault. Excellent writing, a starting plot based on loosely-connected incidents, and then boredom.

So much for what I call the 'imagery-first' dept. Now let's look at the other side, stories where the plot is of higher quality than the description... though often the description is pretty good too. First of all, you can mark up nearly all of the work of Arthur C Clarke, with particular respect for his first story in Astounding, "Rescue Party", and his more recent "Fall of Moondust".

Clarke not only has watertight plots, but terrific descriptive power.

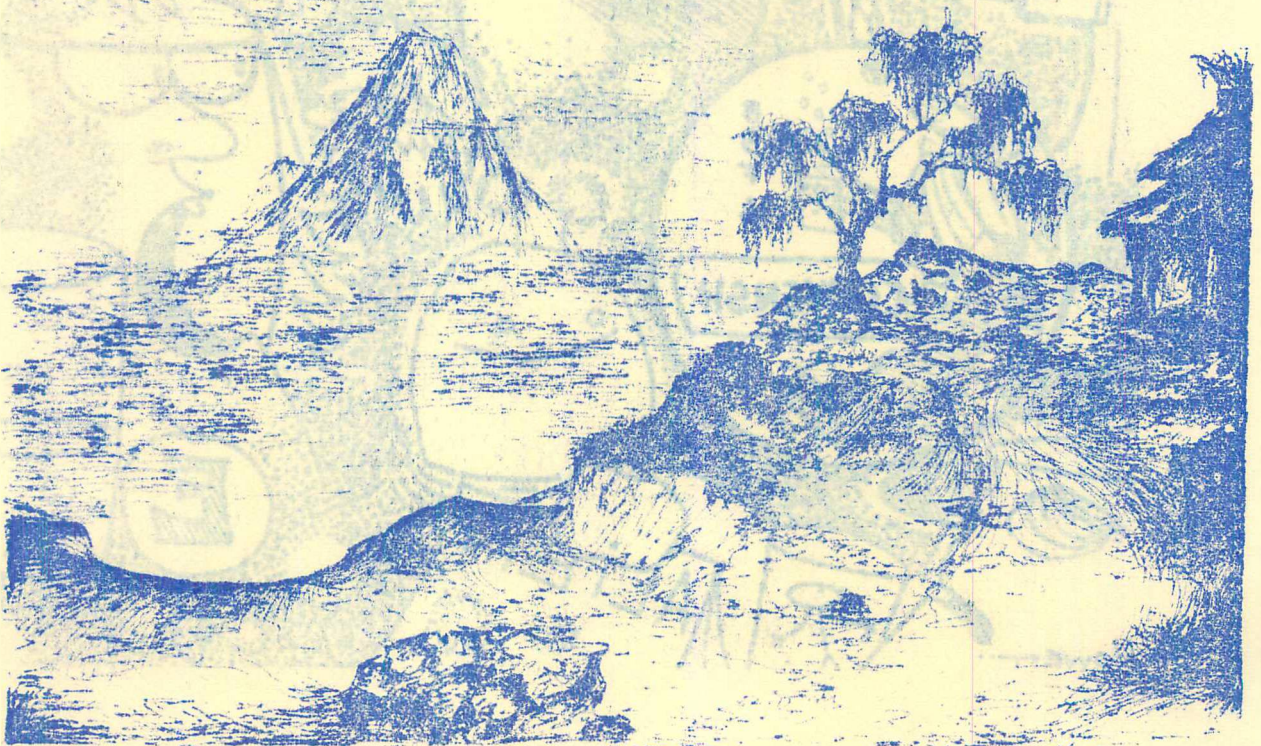
Then I'd also give top rating to Frank Herbert's magnificent "Under Pressure", alias "Dragon in the Sea". Robert Heinlein's earlier stories stand up well, and so do the 'alien' yarns of Hal Clement, such as "Mission of

Gravity", "Needle" and "Iceworld". Even old master John W. Campbell has two stories which not only seem undated in this day and age, but which also embody strong plot, and gripping description. Try "Moon is Hell" or "Who Goes There". Theodore Sturgeon's gadget stories are also excellent as you can prove by reading "Killdozer", or "The Chromium Helment". Henry Kuttner had a great story in ASTOUNDING called "Private Eye." Jack Vance's GALAXY yarn "The Dragon Masters" is another case of a good story covered in good words. If you want sheer whimsical poetry, then what could be better than that superb GALAXY story "The Gentlest Unpeople".

Most of the above have upbeat endings, but top quality stories have been written with unsecured endings or even completely downbeat conclusions. They may vary in content, but they all have one thing in common: a plot which proceeds logically, to a logical conclusion. The special bonus you get with them is the good-to-excellent imagery employed.

That's what I call the old school of sf; why settle for less?

-----TERRY JEEVES.





HOWETT...

UNCLE IVOR'S NEOFAN GUIDE

IVOR LATTO
CONDUCTS AN
ARMCHAIR TOUR,
OF FANDOM-AS-
HE-SEES-IT,
FOR THE NEO
LOST AT BRUM.

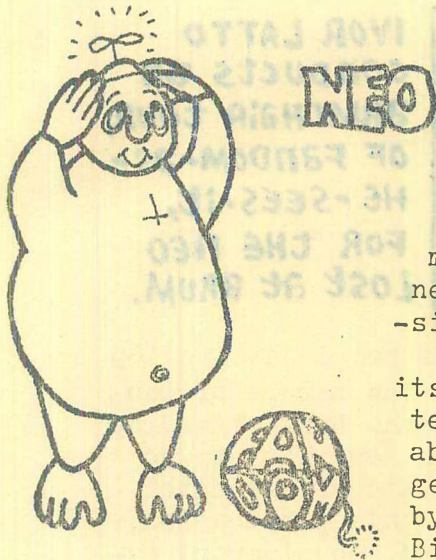
It may be that there will be some people at the '65 convention who will be unfamiliar with the nature of fans and fandom. They may be refugees from the BSFA attending the con under the delusion that it has something to do with science fiction, or simply residents of the hotel who have been intimidated into buying this publication. To these souls, I extend a guiding hand, considering myself uniquely qualified as an unbiased observer, in that I have never actually met a fan of any sort and am thus in no danger of confusing the wood with the trees.

First of all, you will want to know why people become fans, won't you?

Well, it is unfortunately the case that, whereas those who find their enjoyment in the reading of westerns, who-dunnits, historical romances or pornography are accepted as normal, responsible members of society, those who confine themselves to the reading of science fiction are usually regarded by their associates with some degree of suspicion. To be considered offbeat by one's colleagues (with all the hidden implications of mental, political or sexual instability this conveys), cannot but have the effect of throwing the sf reader on the defensive. It is useless to attempt to convert the sceptical by declarations that sf is the literature of the future, that it has many imaginative minds working in the field, that Kingsley Amis likes it, that it puts hair on your chest and makes you see in the dark. At best, the Unbelievers will regard you with veiled tolerance; at worst, they will back into a corner when you enter the room. (Would you let your daughter marry one?)

Man is a gregarious animal (a lovely fannish phrase) and to be regarded as an escapist pariah cannot but build a fearful burden of guilt in one's mind. It therefore comes as an immense release to discover that there are others like oneself, scattered up and down the country, united against the unfeeling taunts of the persecutors. These are the fans.

There are too many varieties of fen (plural of fan:



ie, one fan, two fen, three or more, a feud of fen) for me to cover entirely. But basically there are two types, young fen and old fen; or, as this depends more on time spent in active fanning, rather than on physical age, one might define them more closely as neofan, and don't-disturb-me-while-I'm-sitting-here-all-comfortable-fan.

BEYOND 8

The pyramid of fan hierarchy has at its base the sercons (serious and contemptible fen) who never laugh, talk about sf all the time, and don't even genuflect when their superiors walk by. The higher ranks of fen are the Big Name Fen (BNF's, UFO's, or 'those snide, toffee-nosed old has-beens', a termsin sommon usage amongst neos). At the very peak of fandom, lost in the mists, is the semi-mythical figure of Walt Willis, the Leader. No one can say whether Willis, like King Arthur, is merely a manufactured folk-hero; some credulous fen even claim that whenever fandom is threatened by the hordes of the sercon, a note on the harp will bring Willis from under the hill where he sleeps, to defend all of fandom with his enchanted duplicator. How ever this may be, the neo need know only that Willis is pre-eminent among fen, wither as totem or as target.

Before venturing into fandom, it should be realised that, curious as it may seem, the main object of this body of people with keen interest in sf as a common factor is to discourage the too-fervent discussion and propagation of sf within their fronteirs. To this end many stratagems are employed, the crudest of which is to treat the guilty parties with ridicule, patronage and contempt. This is by far the least effective device in use, as it tends to drive the culprits into defiant splinter groups, a danger to the unity of the faithful.

Much subtler is the manoeuvre by which the critical values of the neo are assaulted. He comes into fandom with certain sf writers firmly established in his mind as heroes. By playing on this, the fen employ what is known as 'trial by tedium'. One of the biggest



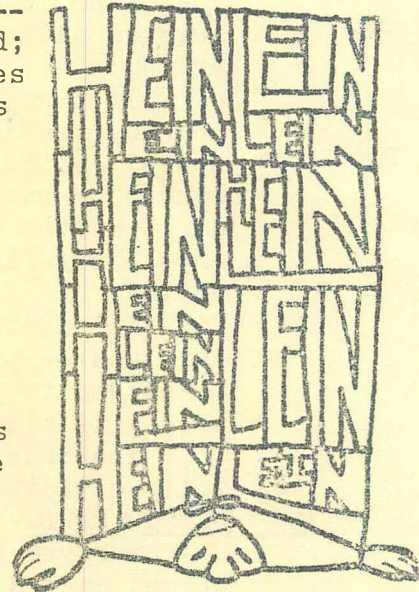
BEYOND 8

names in sf -- let us say Robert Heinlein -- is discussed in the fanzines; and discussed; and discussed. After having read 47 articles on "Starship Troopers" and 65 on "Farnham's Freehold", the neo is so conditioned that the very word 'Heinlein' becomes for him a synonym for repetition and boredom. From there it is but a short step to replace 'Heinlein' with 'sf', and disintegration soon follows. So effective is this device that full-grown men have been known to run screaming from the room upon the mere mention of "Glory Road".

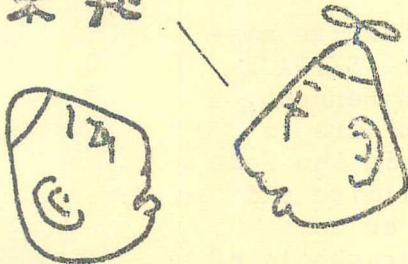
Having renounced sf, and all interests thereto, the neo must submit himself to the time-honoured ritual initiation ceremony by which newcomers prove their fanhood. He must be not only willing, but able to support the continued appearance of the fanzines by contributing literary or artistic work to fill their pages, or by writing letters of comment. Unless he contributes in this way, the prospective fan will never gain acceptance; as the prophet Jeeves has said, "For unless a neo give himself unto fandom, his voice shall be as of one who crieth in the wilderness. Yea, and his LoC's shall fall on stony ground, even!"

Once he has gained acceptance, the fan can indulge in a number of diversions, the ~~most~~ intellectual being 'esotericisms'. You may have come across this word before, but until you enter fandom, you can't know what it really means. Fanspeak, as it has been called, is more exquisitely mystifying than anyone would expect of the private language and jokes peculiar to any small group of people. Fandom, alone of all minority groups, is dedicated to the great God of Baffle, and this is what gives it its special aura -- the mystery ingredient, one might say -- and also what keeps it a minority group.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that fanspeak is used principally to unite the fen against prying outsiders, or that it is an instrument by which the senior fen uphold their moral superiority. Esotericisms are not a means to an end, they are an end in themselves.



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FANSPEAK

Just bear in mind that the first ambition of a fan is to make an allusion which only he himself and one other can appreciate.

If fanspeak is fandom's answer to the crossword puzzle, feudism is its equivalent of the great spectator sports, although one can't make an exact comparison to soccer or rugby. However tough these sports may be, they don't convey the same air of guilty relish in the audience. Cock-fighting or public hanging suggest this aspect better.

It's best to recognise the inevitability of being involved -- possibly unwillingly -- in a feud at some time, and to prepare yourself beforehand. If nothing else this will allow you the possible advantage of first hit.

The code of the feud is quite precise and must be followed faithfully.

ONE:WHEN TO FEUD.

Whenever you are slighted, think you have been slighted, or can make it appear reasonable to think you have been slighted. If no such excuse offers itself, choose a moment to start the feud when the fannish scene is unusually dull, when your fanzine is sagging, or when you feel that you are not receiving your rightful quantity of notoriety and egoboo. (Egoboo: when Beryl Henley calls you a crackpot. Beryl Henley: a cross between Aimee Semple MacPherson and the Gypsy Petrulenge. Aimee Semple oh, to hell with it!)

TWO:CHOOSING PARTNERS.

It is advisable to pick on someone of standing in fandom since feuding with neos offends the convention of not shooting at sitting ducks. (Though there is a short season for neo-hunting immediately after the annual con

. Choose an adversary who will respond to your charges with retaliatory venom, for if he simply ignores you, or (horror!) admits your case and apologises, the feud will be dead before it has begun, and your reputation as a controversialist with it.

THREE:THE CHALLENGE.

Take issue with your victim over some purely fannish misdemeanour, such as "He tried to buy votes in the SKYRACK poll (a fannish Top Ten, presided over by Ron Bennett, fandom's answer to Jimmy Saville); "He doesn't dare to send his fanzine to Buck Coulson!" (cowardice in the face of the enemy). Just remember to keep it as childish and trivial as possible; for some reason, fen grow more heated as the point of issue approaches the threshold of puerility. Accuse someone of being a junkie, and he will answer reasonably and with great dignity; accuse him of

bad spelling, and he will go out of his mind with fury.
FOUR:CHOICE OF WEAPONS.

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Being fandom, this inevitably means duplicators at two hundred miles. The only possible weapons one can employ are written words, though innuendo and a nasty mind come in handy. It takes some time to master the art of fannish insult, but with experience it will come. It is best to refrain from drawing attention to the fact that your opponent is a homo, a lush, or a commie... one meets all sorts in fandom, and you may find yourself outnumbered. If you must drag in personal references, they should point to the fact that your opponent picks his nose, his stomach rumbled, or he eats soup with his fingers.

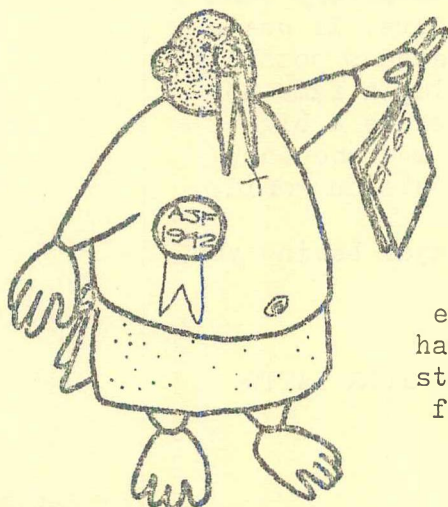
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FIVE.THE VICTOR.

It is irrelevant who wins the final point. By the time the feud closes, no one will remember what started it, nor will anyone care just who finishes it off. The honour is not in the winning, but in the playing.

Still, a fan's life is not all laughter and amusement; there are duties which many must satisfy. One of these is to review fanzines, fandom or the entire science fiction field.

There are two main types of review, the first designed to cater for those fen who have stubbornly maintained an interest in sf. You can tell them by their speech, their mannerisms, the way they cross their legs; they say it takes one to know one. These lonely outcasts ask only that a review give them some idea of whether the work in question will be of interest to them.



THE REVIEWER

However, this shabby and pathetic group, more worthy of pity than condemnation, are but a small proportion of the reviewers of fandom, who are mostly very conscious of their positions in the front line of the holy crusade against sf. These reviewers were introduced to sf by the work of the very earliest writers in the field, and they have striven valiantly to maintain the standards set by these pioneers. It is not fully realised how much strain the reviewers willingly undergo; as they readily admit, they would much rather be re-reading their back issues of ASTOUNDING of the mid-forties than be obliged to read what is being produced today.

They accept this burden only to try to prevent the upstart newcomers in the field from taking sf out of its tried and proven path, in which it has given us all, all two or three hundred of us, such entertainment and recreation. They see the danger that threatens the medium: of its becoming closer to the main body of literature, or becoming so refined that its principal quality of a rattling good story will be lost in a mess of poetic subtleties and obscure allusions. Fortunately, these reviewers have some reward for the tiresome task in that, like Canute, they are helping to stem the tide. Also, their consistent denigration of the new stuff is encouraging neofen to overcome their addiction to the medium, and moreover the reviews ensure a secure standing in fandom; for among fen, the ability to attack consistently what is being produced indicates a mind of great discrimination and high critical standards.

To sum up; as individuals, fen are isolated from their colleagues in everyday life by their queer affection for sf. The moment they become a member of the fannish body, the situation is reversed, and it is the rest of society which is outside in the cold. The fen have their own secret language to talk, private amusements and occupations to enjoy, and are in a position of power over future outsiders wanting to enter the exclusive club: the neos, the mainstream johnnies. United we stand.

More important, fen are enabled to exercise what creative abilities they may have, secure in the knowledge that, even if their talents are criticised, fandom is, after all, only a hobby, and no one need take very seriously the adverse comments of fellow-amateurs. If one's work is appreciated, of course, then it becomes possible to achieve some degree of fame in the field, a fame not attainable outside it in many cases; to become a big frog in this little pond, to make friends and enemies, and always be able to escape back to the outside world, if threatened.

So come on in... but leave the door ajar behind you.

-----IVOR LATTO

FALSTAFF

SHORT BY CHRIS STORY VALARS

BEYOND 8

A matted bed of plankton could be seen, far off, slipping along the lip. The water, calm and still, radiated erratic patterns on to the hanging orb. To starboard a hot current disturbed the glassy surface, sending a tumbling plume of prismatic water high into the sultry air. Another, further away: a horse's tail, lashing furiously, splashing the rusty ball of Old Earth.

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The spectrum of light, diffusing through from the depths of the ocean, turned each wave into a kaleidoscope of wriggling colour. A plume, on the lip, transformed into a fountain of beautiful, twisting radiance. Small white clouds scurrying across the ruddy sphere. Biting through the rocking patterns, obscuring in their path the fantastic remnants of a race. Tall, crumbling buildings sunk in a sea of drifting sand. Twinkling glass domes, scratched and grooved by the coarse, red granules. A sad mask of death. The vestigial remnants of civilisation.

The galley rocked as a current surfaced on the port bow, a jet of flowing, liquid colours. Falstaff awoke from his meditation as the streams of swirling water fell back, striking stinging blows on the naked torsos of the sweating rows of slaves, pulling on the oars.

In, out. In, out. In, out. The crack of a whip. A shriek. High ululating pain. In, out. In, out.

Falstaff fell back into his reverie. Down in the blue-tinged water a shoal of fish surfaced and streamed down again silently to an unknown destination; a bed of plankton, the slaughtered crew of an ill-fated galley.

He glanced up past the low, fast-moving cloud at the world of his great ancestors. What a paradise it must have been, could have been. Damned bombs! Played with fire,

burned their fingers!

A shout from the poop deck brought him instantly awake. There, bearing down on them through the luminous haze: two black galleys.

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The ship was suddenly alive, men running. Would they fight or flee? The ship lurched, turned ponderously towards the attackers; fight.

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Falstaff ran down to below decks, dishes to wash, boots to shine.

A thin trickle of light filtered through a small open panel in the upper wall, a beam of spinning colours down on to the scullery floor. Wooden panels, pitch-inlaid. Falstaff worked steadily as the ships neared each other.

The first he knew of the battle was a grinding crunch that sent him headlong across the room with an accompanying clutter of assorted utensils. He staggered to his feet. The ship lurched again and he slipped back. From above came the sounds of bitter fighting; musket fire rang through the bowels of the ship. The clashing of steel and cries of pain. Falstaff acted quickly; he clambered up on to the small porcelain basin and managed to hoist himself up to the skylight. With effort, he wriggled out.

Clinging to the window ledge, he looked about. The three ships were thoroughly entangled. From the deck above the sounds of the bloody battle could be heard. He glanced down at the water, and let go.

With a rush of warm, tingling water, all noise was killed. He entered an exquisite world of misty blues and greens. Heaving currents wrenched his body. Small multi-coloured fish lazed past. He plunged deeper. Deeper still.

The light is up, up.

The light began to dazzle him, playing mysteriously in the murky depths. Objects become indiscernible in the heaving water. A hot current plummeting surfaceward, soon to erupt in magnificent splendour, brushed him aside.

He felt he could not return. The light played hypnotically amongst the weed and fish, drawing him down... past large reclining monsters; dark ominous forms. The light refracted into a rainbow of colour. The heat stung his skin. Light, odour, heat...

Suddenly, the sea ended. He bobbed around in the bubbling water. The sun. Myriads of stars, points of light. Beauty.

His limp body drifted slowly in the water of Earth under an enchanting spectre of stars. They stung his eyes as he vomited into peaceful oblivion.

-----CHRIS VILLARS'



NOT SO MUCH A GHODDAMN HOBBY...

BY REUBEN MEYER

Closeup of Mrs Beryl Henley singing:

"Not so much a ghoddamn hobby, more a way of life,
and a way of looking at the Cosmos.

VECTOR open wide, LES SPINGE closed,
That's the way a fan-dom gets composed."

(Sound of shots left, off camera. Mrs Henley disappears
right, pursued by Mr James Colvin carrying a miniature
dummy of Mr Michael Moorcock. Camera pans to David Frost).

FROST: And good evening. Our guests tonight are no new-
comers to the programme. First we have Mr Harvey Orkin.
(Camera to Orkin, who draws on king sized cigarette). Next
Mr Denis Norden. (Camera to Norden, fidgeting with pencil).
Then we have Mr Patrick Campbell. (Camera to Campbell, who
nods meaninglessly). And last, and definitely least, Mr
Thomas Trinder (Camera to Trinder who for some reason looks
pleased.) We'll start with you, Harvey. Didn't you once
edit a fanzine in New York?

ORKIN: Well, David, we did something. I suppose you could call it that.

FROST: Would you care to explain, Harvey?

ORKIN: There's nothing to explain, David. Sam Moskowitz and I used to churn out a couple of sheets occasionally.

FROST: And what happened to this zine?

CAMPBELL: ...It f-f-folded...when they were...sued...by Ted White. (Hoots of laughter from audience).

ORKIN: It wasn't quite as bad as that, Patrick.

FROST: What about you, Paddy? Haven't you had experience of working with Irish fandom?

NORDEN: Irish fandom never works. It comes naturally to them. (Audience breaks into applause).

CAMPBELL: I was once...in Cobh...when a w-w-...a woman ...came up to me...and said...she said...'Can I have ...your auto...graph...Mr.....Charters?'

NORDEN: I had the same experience one time in Kettering.

ORKIN: Someone took you for Charters? (Titters from audience)

NORDEN: No, I was taken for Ted Tubb. I had a marvellous time. (Audience titters give way to convulsive laughter).

FROST: What about you, Thomas?

TRINDER: The only time I've been in Kettering was when they were trying to buy Johnny Haynes... What's the matter with this audience? That was supposed to be a joke.

NORDEN: I once wrote a radio script with jokes filched from Hyphen, and it was turned down as too sophisticated.

ORKIN: That was always my trouble, Denis. Sophistication. People were always taking me for Harrison.

FROST: Harry Harrison, Harvey?

ORKIN: No, David. Bill Harrison. (3 or 4 people laugh).

FROST: Somehow I think, Harvey, that you were being serious, there. Still, we move over now to our own convention ctte chairman, Mr Roy Hudd.

(HUDD, at desk labelled ConComm, i.e. fiddling with a pile of papers which look very much like front covers of fan-zines bearing Cawthorne illos. There is a knock at the door, left. Camera swings over. JOHN BIRD enters).

BIRD: (With heavy accent) Is this party headquarters?

HUDD: We'll be having a party all right, but what's worrying us now is who to have on the pro panel.

BIRD: This isn't party headquarters?

HUDD: I wish you'd make up your mind. There'll be quite a party at the con, believe me. (Whips eyebrows up and down several times as camera comes in for closeup).

BIRD: I was told the headquarters were in New Farm Road. Is this New Farm Road?

HUDD: Yeh, sure. Can I sell you a convention membership?

BIRD: Convention membership?

HUDD: Sure, the sf convention. We're meeting at Easterin Birmingham right here in the centre of England.

BIRD: The centre of England? A science fiction convention?

HUDD: That's right, yes. Why the emphasis on science? Are you interested in science?

BIRD: That's right, yes. I am. Very. Very interested.

HUDD: You'll enjoy it, then. We have a famous scientist, Dr Mc Aulay, coming along, and a computer expert, Mr Edward Forsyth, and...

BIRD: Enough. I'll have a membership. I'll have four thousand memberships.

(Hudd gives him a pile of tickets. Bird leaves).

HUDD: Funny fellow, Wish I could think of who to have on the pro panel.

(Applause, begun by a tape recorder switched on by David Frost, breaks out in the audience).

FROST and guests swivel round several times to face audience, quaking as they do so in order to convey that they a) understood the sketch and b) thought it funny.

FROST: John Bird and Roy Hudd. Harvey, do you think that sf conventions are out of date?

ORKIN: There's no better chance on the fan calendar, David.
(Audience is silent for a moment, then breaks into gusts of embarrassed giggles, punctuated by hearty guffaws from Frost).

CAMPBELL: I keep wishing...that the Belfast....group....
..would put on a....convention.

FROST: Why is that, Paddy?

ORKIN (together) He wants to meet John Berry.

NORDEN It's his only chance of meeting Berry.

CAMPBELL: N-not at all...I'd like...to meet John...Berry
...but I was thinking...of...having...a convention
..attended by leprechauns. (Laughter from audience).

ORKIN: What kind of corns?

TRINDER: Are you getting personal, Harvey? (Laughter). Oh, they are awake, after all.

FROST: Do you think conventions are out of date, Tommy?

TRINDER: It's a very controversial subject, David.

NORDEN: We have to keep conventions.

FROST: Why is that, Denis?

NORDEN: It makes sure that one issue of SKYRACK is worth reading a year. (Laughter).

CAMPBELL: More...to the...point...David...is whether...
science fiction....is out of...date.

FROST: A very good point, Denis.

NORDEN: Well, of course, fact is catching up with sf. All these Russians walking about up there and all that.

ORKIN: But the public doesn't want to know about that, Denis.

NORDEN: About what?

ORKIN: About the factual side, the scientific side, of sf.

They want to keep sf for the laughs.

CAMPBELL: And they do ...laugh...all these films.

Page 36 ORKIN: Exactly. The Beast From Outer Space and all that. BEYOND 8

NORDEN: Or Harry Nadler Meets Wolfman. (Laughter).

FROST: Or I was a Teenage Donaho. (Laughter).

ORKIN: For a moment I thought you were going to say something else, David. (more laughter).

FROST: I was, Harvey. (Laughter continues for seven and a half minutes -- seven minutes from Frost.)

TRINDER: It's more the fault of television than films, David.

ORKIN: Leave Harlan Ellison out of this. (more laughter).

CAMPBELL:... ..understand...that Forry...Ackerman is... standing in...for Vincent....Price, these days.

ORKIN: That's another good reason why the Worldcon isn't giving a Drama Hugo. (applause from audience).

FROST: What do you think, Thomas?

TRINDER: That's another very controversial subject, David.

FROST: And what about fan parties? Do you enjoy going to fan parties, Harvey?

ORKIN: Not too much these days, David.

FROST: Why is that, Harvey?

ORKIN: The life went out of them when Shirley Marriott left fandom.

NORDEN: I think you should stick to remarks that Charles Winstone can understand.

FROST: Patrick?

CAMPBELL:I don't think...we're the right people,... to discuss...fan parties.

FROST: Who is, Paddy?

CAMPBELL: ...Well...to start with... that chap...who makes ...that delight...ful wine...Norman Shorrock. (applause).

ORKIN: Any group discussing fan parties should include Ella Parker and Charles Platt. (Stamping and applause from audience).

FROST: And on that note, we end tonight; we'll be back tomorrow night when the subject will be the BSFA -- should it hire a public relations officer.

(Not So Tune from orchestra. Shot of Archie Mercer riding round the studio on a scooter).

(Note: Peter White wishes to thank Brian Aldiss for his generous help in answering questions and supplying material for this article.)



Nearly all science fiction is rubbish; not only the operatic pulp productions, but work by many accepted masters of the genre, fail on all levels except that of the most superficial storytelling. Content is sensational, thought is naive, and style is professional at the best. But more than these, the real fault with science fiction is more basic and more disastrous. SF is not contemporary, it contains nothing relevant to here and now. With no other particularly noticeable merits, most science fiction will be remembered as nothing more than escapist pop literature. When I read a book I expect to be able to tell whether or not the author is alive without searching for the biographical blurb; despite the fact that the technical problems of writing will always be the same, and that writers have solved them in basically similar ways, every work of fiction should reveal unmistakably the age in which it was written. When I read a piece of modern fiction, I expect to be able to tell whether, like me, the writer has struggled under the weight of the Sunday Supplements, or watched suburban lawns being mowed, or seen the neon arabesques through the windows of a passing car. Not that I think he should necessarily write about reading the newspapers, cutting

grass, or driving past supermarkets -- and I certainly don't want him to be 'with it'. But he should show an awareness of the human situation, and particularly those aspects of life that concern us most today. Too much sf could have been written by zombies, for all the life it contains. The works of Poul Anderson, for example, could well have been written by a soulless hermit living deep underground. Sexual elements, and all other portrayals of human experience, are treated in an entirely conventional manner, and derive from other works of science fiction rather than from a direct response to life itself.

Several science fiction writers have been trying to escape this type of conventional superficiality. The two most important men in this small group are writers working in Britain. J.G. Ballard's heroes, hysterical, obsessed with nostalgic responses and a sense of helpless drift, fighting the stereotyped motives of their inner-selves as they wander across the arid dunes of evaporated lakes, are -- symbolically, at least -- figures that belong as unmistakably to the present as the screaming Popes in the paintings of Francis Bacon.

In a somewhat different way, Brian Aldiss is also a writer who expresses a powerful response to life here, now.

Aldiss has not always been this kind of artist, for his aims have changed somewhat since he began writing, and it is possible to follow this development in his work. He is blazing a trail that leads away from science fiction as it is today: away from the contrived action of the sf thriller, and the contrived problems of the sf brain teaser, towards a more serious -- and more fully entertaining -- form of writing. He says himself: "At first, in the 'Space, Time and Nathaniel' era, I just wanted to be clever. Now I want to try and get an insight into life. I still want to be clever too..."

His earliest stories adhered to the strict logical conventions of 'pure sf'. He says he saw sf as "A kind of poetry", and his stories were as formal as classical verse. "T", first published in 1958, and the first of his stories to be accepted for publication, was about semi-sentient missiles that travelled in time. It cleverly avoided any time-paradox by assuming a rigidly deterministic universe in much the same way as Heinlein's similar stories. As a contrast, "Poor Little Warrior", published three years later, is another time travel story, but concerns itself with the nature of a human being rather than the nature of time. It would be quite wrong to suggest that this represents a simple and orderly progres-

sion, for Aldiss' work has progressed in idiosyncratic jumps, and he produces work today that is occasionally similar to his earliest material. However, it is true to say that he is now primarily interested in character, whereas his main interest used to be the plot.

He has also said that many of his early works were ther apeutic fantasies. In stories such as "Outside" and "The New Father Christmas" there is an almost hysterical sense of isolation and ennui. "Dumb Show" is amongst the best of these, and must be one of the most lyrical horror stories written. Aldiss claims to have run out of phobias around the time of "Space, Time and Nathaniel", and is now concerned with writing itself -- art, if you like -- rather than self-ther apy.

He is probably one of the most talented stylists writing sf today. His moods range from the nostalgic lyricism of "Old Hundredth" and "A Kind of Artistry" to the power of "Faceless Card". He has a genuine depth of feeling, as in this passage from "Non-Stop":

" I could sit here forever. The breeze is so slight, never changing its temperature, the light only seldom dark. The ponics rearing up and falling, decaying around me. I should come to no harm but death...

Only if I stay alive can I find the something missing, the big something. Perhaps now I'll never find it, or Gwenny could have found it for me -- no she couldn't: she was a substitute for it, admit it. Perhaps it does not exist. But when something so big has nonexistence, that in itself is existence. A hole. A wall. As the priest says, there's been a calamity.

Get up, you weak fool ... "

The phobias may have gone, but the major obsessions remain. Although Aldiss himself might dispute it, most of his work is pessimistic in the final analysis. Many of his heroes, such as Roy Complain in "Non-Stop", and Knowle Noland in "Earthworks", are intelligent Plebians; too repressed to be earthy, and without the well-bred grace of the aristocratic. Filled with a vague sense of loss, they search for a better life. Nearly every one of his major novels takes the form of a quest without any real conclusion. Perhaps it is this that makes his writing seem so valid to the world now, where the bright lights, dark and crowded dance halls, high-speed along the bypass, casual sex and beat music all seem like drugs to keep us going until we can get hold of something real. Like Kingsley Amis, Aldiss tends to write about limited people, bored by their environments.

"Non-Stop" appeared in novel form in 1958. In it the hero, accompanied by the cynical priest Marapper, sets out to explore his universe. They find that they are trapped in a vast interstellar ship. The novel ends in desperate uncertainty, lit only by the faintest gleam of hope.

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"Hothouse", published in 1962, is a lyrical adventure set in the distant future. At the conclusion, the hero feels that the best course of action is to wait passively -- without either action or thought -- for the universe to end. For me, this story is the most satisfying of all Aldiss' sf.

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The recently published novel, "Greybeard", also ends on a note of doubt, when the hero is forced to re-evaluate his motives. Particularly noteworthy in this novel is the way Aldiss contrasts the tetchy noisiness of the decaying oldsters with the quiet reversion of the countryside to hawthorn and flood-meadow. If it weren't for the rather annoyingly conventional use of flashback, this would be an almost perfect work.

The best novel Aldiss has written is the non-science-fictional "Male Response", published in 1961. It is a novel of sex, and concerns the struggle of an innocent Englishman to adapt to the freer life on an emergent African state. Eventually the hero dies from a nastily symbolic snake bite. Aldiss seems to be saying that it is already too late for our primitive society to throw off its inhibitions, and that the attempt could well be fatal.

His style is not without its faults; puns and aphoristic cliché often intrude into the most serious passages. "The Dark Light Years" failed as an attack on man's inability to accept the facts of his own organic existence largely because of this kind of fault. It is almost as if Aldiss becomes self-conscious when he takes himself seriously, and is forced to laugh like a teenager trying to discuss a deeply held belief. He says: "I don't write as a stunt. Often I long to write something else; but I write sf naturally. It is a vile medium, but it allows me to express myself most fully until I can break through into a larger formula; this is what I am trying to do now, but it means finding my own precedents. If only I could be satisfied with my limitations, I would produce more homogeneous work; but one day I will produce something splendid." Behind the ironic humour is a man who may well do just that.

Brian Aldiss was born 40 years ago in Dereham, Norfolk. He was educated at a "vile prep school", Framlingham college, and West Buckland School. He wrote pronography at school, did a section magazine in the army, and at home

wrote stories to amuse the family. After this, writing for outsiders and getting published seemed hardly different from what had gone before. He is now literary editor of the Oxford Mail, which takes up most of his time, though he does like sitting and chatting in bars. Although an unhappy private life has undoubtedly influenced his work, he remains a generally extrovert personality, and particularly enjoys travelling abroad. He feels that he has changed himself through writing: "...you have to be searching to write a novel, and whatever comes to light either withers and dies or flourishes." He is a little shy of discussing the influences on his work, and his own statement on this subject seems rather like an unconscious red-herring: "Thomas Hardy influenced me, so did Samuel Johnson and a thousand English poets. So did the tripe in boys' magazines." But among the most visible influences upon him has been the writing of Anthony Burgess. "The Male Response" shows this most clearly. The two writers know each other, and show mutual interest in each other's work, and Aldiss prefers the term 'cross-fertilisation' to that of 'influence'. He feels that a writer cannot help reading with prejudice, and tends to go to those people who offer him something. This means that Aldiss is particularly interested in writers such as Vonnegut and Ballard, though he also enjoys the work of Asimov and Harry Harrison: "The only man who writes with the old slam-bang zest of the forties and makes you laugh and makes sense".

He is able to ignore scientific inaccuracy, but finds it more difficult to forgive authors the "enormous psychological bloopers" that one finds in so much science fiction. Certainly, his own stories have always shown authentic feeling for the psychological motivations of the characters, and a sound awareness of analytical theory. In general fiction, he admires Amis, Burgess and Anthony Powell. Over the next few years, he intends to re-read all Dickens' novels in chronological order.

After completing "Cities and Stones", which is subtitle "A Traveller's Yugoslavia", his next novel may be called "Environs". It will be another book in the "Earthworks" series, coming first, chronologically, and dealing with the formation of the platform cities. Aldiss says: "I wish to continue to write as I want, and to be published, and to earn a reasonable income, and perhaps in this way to make a contribution to the rich and wonderful culture into which I was born and which, despite all its horrors, never ceases to delight me day by day."

-----PETER WHITE



LETTERS



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FROM GERALD COLE, 29 KINGSTON ROAD, ROMFORD, ESSEX:

In part of BEYOND 7 it was mentioned that there is a lack of stories dealing with likely psychiatric advances. There are I think more stories along these lines than was suggested, a primary example being Clarke's "Childhood's End", also Algis Budrys' "The End Of Summer" and "The Price", not forgetting "Brave New World" and "1984", and one story which I think appeared in one of the "Spectrum" series; it dealt with a world where everyone is schizophrenic, two personalities being alternately dormant and active in the same body. The difficulty in attempting to write about future advances of the human mind seems to be the fact that human beings do not seem to advance intellectually at all. Our stock of random information about the world might well increase but the average intelligent present day human being is no less thick, as far as general knowledge of himself and the surrounding world is concerned, than anyone else from the first Cro-Magnon onwards. Emotions too remain essentially the same. Proust managed to surprise people with his apparent insight, simply by realising that there are only about four basic human emotions which are common to everyone.

Consequently the sort of sf that deals with some unforeseen advance or change in the human mind becomes either an excuse for an unusual and sensational background, or it becomes a sociological fable.

Everything in the BEYOND 7 editorial is agreed with. (There was a particularly memorable paragraph on the front page of the Daily Telegraph some time ago, describing a crowd heckling Quentin Hogg; it went like "There were a number of young people in the back of the hall. Many of the men wore beards.")

The science fiction poetry last issue was all unfortunate. I don't honestly think there will be any remotely good poetry about space or other planets until a poet has actually been there. And it is wrong also to attempt or expect to create a genre of "SF Poetry". SF is rather a conventionalised and untried medium (we've had no Shakespeare yet) and it would be too much to expect poets to write good poetry on speculation alone; we have clear examples that this is rarely successful, in the hymn books.

FROM MIKE MOORCOCK, 8 COLVILLE TERRACE, LONDON W.11.

BEYOND is at last beginning to fulfil its early promise, building up a solid character of its own with a nice range of articles and some promising fiction. I'm even beginning to look forward to it now, and I can't say that about many fanzines. I would guess that Bob Parkinson is by far your most talented contributor, I hope you manage to keep him for a while. He has a tendency to shove in a fine-sounding line not entirely in keeping with the mood of the rest of his stuff, perhaps -- but that should be eradicated with practice and discipline. I like a nice piece of Romantic, myself, from time to time.

With respect to the correspondents in your letter column who referred to your interview with me and my editorial policy, etc: I anticipated a certain vehemence from certain kinds of sf reader, but I did not altogether expect it to be so incoherent. In a way it is encouraging, of course, to know that "New Worlds SF" is not appealing to children (I assume they are children?) because both Kyril Bonfiglioli and I, in our different ways, are aiming at an adult, literate readership. Comments like "Sheer muck" from BEYOND's readers aren't likely to make me seriously reconsider my editorial policy. As for Poul Anderson ... in most cases I find his writing mechanical, self-parodying, and seemingly ignorant of simple rules of syntax. I find the content of his work reactionary in the worst sense, sentimental, and, in a word, cheap; --there is no true observation of either individuals or the human lot. It compares on the same level as women's fiction in that it gives a romantic, distorted view of life likely to find an echo in the hearts of readers because it mirrors their own preconceptions about life. None of this would matter very much if Anderson entertained, but he entertains me about as much as a Godfrey Winn column, and for the same reasons -- sometimes it raises a sick smile. Ballard and Aldiss, on the other hand, can be compared to many of the best writers of the past and present in that they write exceptionally well and exceptionally powerfully about individuals, the human condition and all the things with which good literature should be concerned. Evidently I represent a majority view in this respect since Ballard and Aldiss sell considerably better than Anderson, appeal to an adult, literate readership, and are respected outside the field. Big sales are not always a criterion, but it pleases me when, in spite of the "Sheer Muck" brigade, our circulation has doubled and both NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY are able to go monthly in 1965.

BEYOND 8

FROM PHIL HARBOTTLE, 27 CHESHIRE GARDENS, WALLSEND ON
TYNE, NORTHUMBERLAND:

BEYOND 8

The dissertation on coloured artwork in BEYOND 7 was excellent, but, hell!- WHY, oh WHY was it illustrated with such downright shoddy stuff? I exclude the first multi-coloured job from this criticism; although the figures were poor and the composition stark, it was outstanding. But the cartoons were not true cartoons, they were merely poor drawings. There is a difference, you know. The woman's head was frankly repulsive. Granted you had to paint hurriedly and flatly in the face of sheer quantity, but that brown skin! And at least the basic black outline could have been of a fair standard, but the face is... well, hopeless. The reverse side of the page was, on my copy, covered with brown smears. I had thought that these were smears of brown paint, but I'm now not so sure. A chemical analysis would perhaps be illuminating. (Of course, even the hand-painted face shone above the following 'Howett 64' effort. Was this a misprint for 'Howett 46'? I can only describe it as an affront to vision).

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On the other hand, the remaining artwork was by someone whose work I hadn't had the pleasure of seeing before in a fanzine: Joseph Zajackowski. His drawing/design on page 21 gave a fine boost to Chris Priest's story. Joseph in his drawing on page 31 was very reminiscent of Julian S. Krupa, a mainstay of the Ziff-Davis pulp magazines in the forties and late thirties. It is intriguing to note that Krupa came from Poland too.

Peter White's conrep was notable solely in that it presented an excuse for a full page Zajackowski...

FROM CHRIS VILLARS, 90 HOUNSLOW ROAD,
FELTHAM, MIDDLESEX.

To comment on BEYOND7 part two first, two articles struck home, though for opposite reasons. Peter White's article "Naked Repetercon"; this in a word is Repulsive! I am comparatively new to SF fandom and have not as yet attended a science fiction convention. This probably explains my "outsider" attitude. No doubt I should have laughed at Peter White's crude and idiotic statements, but in my view this is the most pathetic and insulting rubbish I have ever read in a fanzine. Controversial, yes; but



not for BEYOND.

On the other hand, "SF and Advertising" really came in loud and clear. Indeed, I had visions of subliminal advertising reaching extremes. It is all too easy to imagine a baby's first words being, instead of the tradition "Da-da", a gurgled "Feckle Freezer"!

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BEYOND 8

FROM DICK HOWETT, 94 RAVENSBOURNE CRESCENT, HAROLD WOOD.

The overall production of BEYOND was a gem. The blue as well as the black printing had a richness seldom seen in fanzines.

The quality of written material was high also with interesting articles and competent fiction. But dear oh law, Bugs Bunny reared his head and to no avail. Alan Dodd in his "Macabre Mayhem" article chatted on like a kid's diary of "What-I-saw-when-I-went-to-the-pictures-with-mummy-and-daddy". Really, such articles have no place in BEYOND, if any other fanzine. What a jump, from mental illness to Saturday morning pictures all in one mag. I tawt I taw a pretty tatty article.

"The Marvel Age of Comics" also sent the shiver of long forgotten youth down my back, but Roy Kay made a queer subject entertaining, even though Comics after all are for children and Roy Kay realises this (I hope).

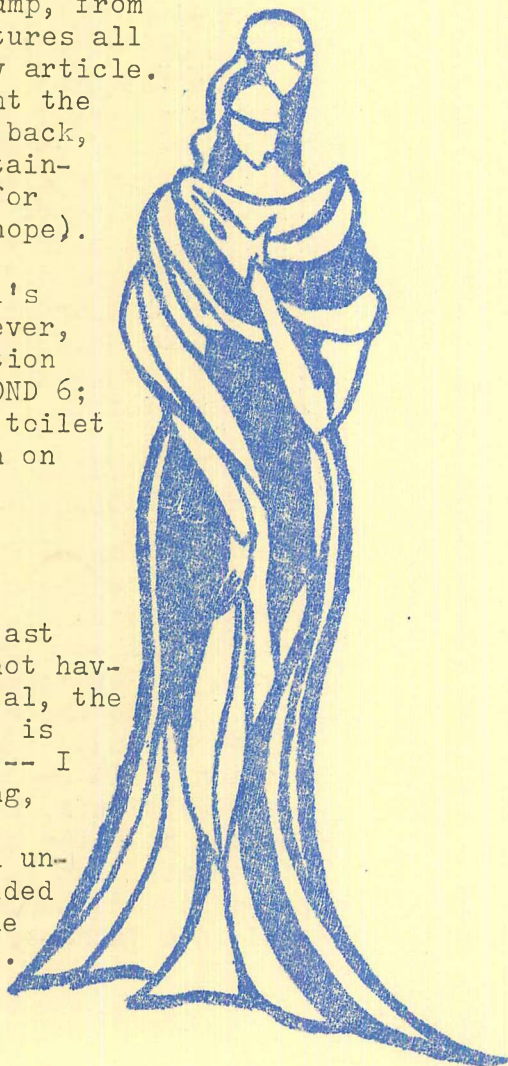
God! Beryl Henley again!

I rather like Joseph Zajackowski's art. It has originality and style. However, our Polish friend is under a misconception about my art on the front cover of BEYOND 6; as regards it being a "badly hashed up toilet doodle", I beg to say that it was drawn on the very best toilet paper.

FROM PETER WESTON, 9 PORLOCK CRESCENT, NORTHFIELD, BIRMINGHAM 31.

I feel that I ought to comment on the last BEYOND, even though I must confess to not having much in particular to say. In general, the appearance of BEYOND, as a friend said, is 'a bit tatty'. Offhand I don't see why -- I suspect the causes are some under-inking, ratty headings, buff paper.

...I don't see why the factual and uninteresting "SHENLEY" article was included (nothing to do with sf or fandom) or the dull, silly and stale "BEMs Not All SF".



If the editor is going to choose reprints from the popular press, why not get good reprints?

I see the letter column hotting up over poor old Beryl. But her new theory must be a tongue-in-cheek skit. She couldn't believe it! (Could she?)

BEYOND 8

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FROM IVOR LATTO, 16 MERRYTON AVENUE, GLASGOW W.5.

In response to the editorial on non-conformism, no, I haven't tried wearing a topless dress recently, it's too cold in this part of the world. But I think you were unfortunate in your examples of non-conformism. Take beards; although General Motors may not like them, in architects' offices they are accepted without much fuss; in the office I work in, three of us, out of 18, are hairy. No one has accused us of being a nest of Reds, so far, so apparently it depends what your profession is. Obviously cabinet ministers, for example, cannot be permitted to hide their light beneath a bush, as witness the fall of hairy Ernest Marples. And as for the poor old beatniks as persecuted rebels: part of my course training involved attending classes at the Glasgow School of Art, and I know from experience that the students who leave school as perfectly conventional creatures start an art course and adopt the accepted uniform: long hair, beard, sandals, and so on. When they gain their diplomas and venture into the world, they revert to a normalcy as conventional as the next man. It's a sort of chameleon reaction by which they adapt to whatever people expect of them, and it's not my idea of non-conformity. Non-conformity means not relating oneself to what anyone thinks; you can have a group of non-conformists, but not a non-conformist group.

The fiction in BEYOND 7 was a lot poorer than previously; it made me wonder what on earth the writers thought they were trying to do. SF poetry, amateur sf poetry especially, is a very dodgy thing to attempt, and didn't come off. One poem was quite evocative, the others just embarrassing. Apart from the letters, most of what I enjoyed was in the second part of the magazine.

FROM BOB PARKINSON, 10 BROADGATE, BEESTON, NOTTINGHAM.

Can it be that I am the only one who has found advantage in being non-conformist? No, of course not; for they must all find some satisfaction from it; but I believe that it can be turned to one's advantage as well. This in fact is Their fear (the vast impersonal Them); for Man is a social animal and it is by conformity that his society remains

coherent. The non-conformist is the potential anarchist -- the malignant, destructive spirit that would reduce all our achievements to dust and rubble.

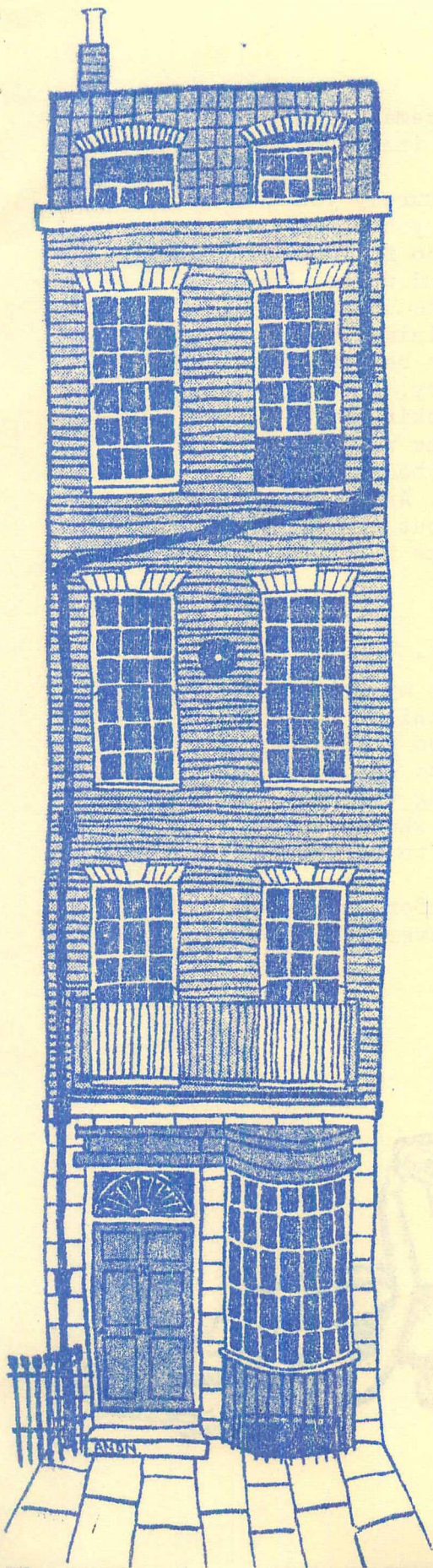
The average man -- that is to say, all of us -- develops a defence mechanism against other people as part of his adult structure. Daily, we interact with so many other people that we cannot develop close personal relations with all of them. Instead, we classify people according to certain broad divisions so that we may choose our actions accordingly. This process of classification is largest in a big city where we get to know almost no-one deeply, so that they all remain neighbours and shopkeepers and employers and negroes and Jews...

So that when we see someone with a beard and long hair, wearing a sweater and jeans, he becomes the Beatnik, and we know how to behave. I do not know whether this is a good thing or a bad thing; but it is so and it is probably necessarily so.

And now I reveal the trade secret ("What knowledge did the ancients possess that can only now be revealed to the chosen few" and all that jazz). My principle has always been to be not immediately classifiable. I have a beard, but keep it well trimmed, and wear a conservative business suit (looking, as one friend said, like a successful beatnik). There is one classification for the 'unclassifiables' of this world: the Eccentric. These are known to come in two types, the genius type and the genuine nut. All that has to be done, therefore, is to ensure that on any first meeting you make some eminently sensible, even witty remark (you can have a collection ready prepared), so that people immediately classify you as the genius-eccentric.

FROM TERRY JEEVES, 30 THOMPSON ROAD, SHEFFIELD 11.

The editorial on conformist society was interesting, but I don't entirely agree. Society we must accept as being better than anarchy, and therefore, to operate, we must accept some degree of conformity to enable it to function at all. Ignoring advantages of conformity such as everyone driving on the left hand side of the road, conforming to standard Greenwich Mean Time, mass produced conformity of consumer goods design, etc etc, will cause an individual far more inconvenience and hard cash than his rejection of conformity is worth. The often-bearded, unwashed and long-haired beatnik layabout who says he rejects society does not do any such thing; his rejection is of the duty side of it, where he ought to do his part. He will cadge and spend



conformist money on conformist fags. If moved on for being a nuisance, he is quick to point out his conformist right to stay where he is; if arrested, he demands his legal 'rights'. Oh yes, those beatniks are quick to reject work and obligations which they didn't arrange ...pity they are not so quick to reject the National Health, Legal Protection, and all other perks, while living as parasites.

...The only poor thing in BEYOND 7 was the wordy and 'with-it' thing about sociology and sf. I don't know what the author was trying to say, really, since he just couldn't hold my interest long enough for me to find out. It had nothing at all for me.

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FROM DAVID REDD, 66 AUGUSTINE WAY,
HAVERFORDWEST, PEMBROKESHIRE:

To comment on BEYOND 7. As for your editorial:

Your Story
Has Touched My Heart

never before have I met
anyone with more troubles than you

please accept this as a token
of my sincere sympathy

Actually I think the sort of trouble complained of in the editorial has always been with us.

Flashback: two yeomen are chatting on the village green:

CEDRIC Hast seen ye olde dame what doth
live alone in Gibbet Wood?

EDMUND Aye. 'Tis not natural, methinks. Why
should a - normal - woman dwell
alone, away from other people?

CEDRIC Mayhap she is a (shudder) witch? But
nay, surely not.

EDMUND Let's play safe and denounce her....

Of course, this conversation never took place, for linguistic reasons, but thousands like it did. And again, we had the religious merry-go-round of the 16th century. In fact the society the editorial so gleefully dissects is an im-

PROVEment on the earlier models -- those policeman didn't put you down for Trial By Ordeal to test your innocence, did they?

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The colour section was interesting, but surely you have to get pictures worth reproducing before you start printing them? I would say that if you can't do full-colour work -- and you can't -- stick to black and white. For Beyond this means blue and yellow. While on the subject of the art, my own reaction is to keep it to a minimum, say one illustration per story, if the artists can be found. Illustrations for articles: only when necessary. Spot pictures: leave them out unless they're worth looking at. Eddie Jones's reprinted illustration last issue was the best of the interior art, which was almost as bad as that of NEW WORLDS SF number 144, taken as a whole. And talking of this magazine, the stories in it are of about the same standard as those in BEYOND 7. Do you and Mike Moorcock ransack each others' wastebaskets?

FROM GRAHAM HALL, 57 CHURCH STREET, TEWKESBURY, GLOS.

The editorial was exceptionally incisive. Both my friend Paul Richardson and myself have been stopped whilst walking home late at night by bored and inquisitive policemen. Once, on one of our many abortive attempts to get to a London Ella Parker meeting, we were walking through a Gloucestershire town on a Sunday dinnertime when a policeman stopped us and asked what I considered to be impertinent questions.

Actually I long ago gave up trying to conform when I discovered I couldn't. I even walk funny. I never learnt to swing my arms and they just hang there.

I even look funny....

FROM ARCHIE MERCER, 70 WORRALL ROAD, BRISTOL 8.

At first quick reading, the editorial seems to hang together. At second slower reading, I'm not so sure. Take the police mentioned, for a start. If people with motor vehicles weren't in the habit of wrongdoing, police would take no interest in



them. Of course they picked the wrong one in this instance - while they were talking to you, somebody half a mile down the road with another motor vehicle was probably committing some unspeakable crime such as relieving himself on the verge. But at least the police were trying. ((I'll say they were... --CP)) And it's not your fault that you look like a hardened criminal.

I don't see any difficulty regarding the interpretation of the ending of "The Great Chan", by Archie Potts. The bloke turned out to be Cagliostro. Now I'm not entirely sure who Cagliostro was, but he's vaguely one-of-those. Like if Potts had made the bloke say that his name was Merlin Ambrosius instead, it would have come to precisely the same thing, and have been equally feeble.

"Naked Repetercon" by Peter White represents a piece of first-class writing. The notion that Ella Parker was erected by Trinity House, for instance, had me in something approaching fits. Actually, she was erected by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association, but don't tell Fred.

Pat Kearney's piece is charmingly naive. It's amusing to contemplate the existence of a Great Truth known to Pat and other "Left Wing intellectuals and radicals" but unsuspected by Orwell.

I suspect that a second reading of "Sociology and SF" would reveal whether or not Barnsley's actually saying anything. I'm not, however, tempted...

FROM RICHARD GORDON, CAIRNFIELD, BUCKIE, BANFFSHIRE.

The fiction was pretty uniformly forgettable, the art folio vaguely interesting and the letter column very so. Part 2 was by far the better part. Except for two things: another convention report??!!!!, and the last article in the issue. I had crept through the whole previous 70 odd pages with bated breath, wondering... were we to be allowed the luxury of a Henley-free issue? Then, of course, I fell at the last hurdle. She can't be serious, please say she can't. I don't think even she can be taking her theories seriously now, but just in case, here is a reply: were it in fact true that those killed in the war violently return, resurrected, as delinquents, the whole civilised world should be in the same state as Britain. Well, I have been in Belgium for nearly a month, and have seen no Mods, no Rockers, very little delinquency indeed. If delinquency occurred as a result of fear of The Bomb, well, Belgium would suffer as much as anyone from an atomic war. It is simply that, in Britain, children are brought up under

a different system, and not surprisingly a minority of them turn to violence. The very lack of anything similar in Belgium shows up the article.

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from HARRY MC GANNITY, 17 SOUTH MEAD, POYNTON, CHESHIRE:

BEYOND 8

I wish to fire a broadside in defence of Mrs Henley. Contributors to Beyond's pages should expect, and indeed should welcome, criticism good and bad, as I am quite sure Beryl Henley does. I thought, however, that the 7th issue of BEYOND provided an abnormal measure of masculine cattiness that was unfair, unnecessary and unworthy of our sex.

Look, the woman talks too much. OK? Some of you may even think she breathes too much. Fair enough. But remember, this is still a man's world and the BSFA has a membership that is predominantly male. Why then stamp on the first female who tries to penetrate our thick hides? If you doubt Mrs Henley's interest value, try writing to her on what does interest you and discover she is not just a chatterbox. Accept this as a woman's time-honoured prerogative and let's cease to be so blasted venomous. For when Mrs Henley decides to step out of BEYOND's pages they shall surely be the worse for it.

FROM MRS ELIZABETH BISCO, 48 BRIGHTON ROAD, RATHGAR, DUBLIN 6, IRELAND.

Among the interesting contents I thought the most interesting were the editorial comments on the effects of protection by the Welfare State. Pointing out that "security is something man has lacked throughout the whole of his existence until a few generations ago", our editor says that teenagers seek in violence the 'something missing' in their boring, over-protected existence.

I would go further and claim to see a positive value in the teenagers' discontent.

A few years ago I visited the Greek island of Santorini soon after an earthquake. Half a village had slipped down a cliff. The terrors of the disaster were added to grinding poverty for the survivors, who had no Welfare State to help them out.

"Yet nobody throws himself down the cliff," a Greek remarked, "whereas Sweden, the most highly developed welfare state, has the highest suicide rate. Why?"

"You tell us," I suggested.

"Because your Welfare State takes the challenge out of life," he answered.

Yes: the challenge is the 'something missing', but only temporarily, because we're in a transition period: a necessary painful pause while we must prepare ourselves mentally for the exploration of space, the greatest challenge our race has been privileged to know.

There are signs of such mental preparation, for instance, an increasing western interest in the personal disciplines of Zen Buddhism and Yoga; also the postwar interest in sf. It is interest in ideas that lifts mankind to a higher plane: "I think, therefore I am."

It is for this higher plane of living that the teenagers (usually subconsciously) are filled with divine discontent: a good sign because it is an aspect of the urge that will propel our race to the stars.

ROUNDUP OF REMAINING LETTERS, AND FINAL COMMENTS:

Fewer letters were received this time than last, perhaps because last issue was so large some people didn't get through it. Or perhaps because Beryl Henley wasn't featured so prominently... However, the letters that did come in were longer than usual, which was a compensation. Received, but with no room to put them, were LoC's from Roy Kay, who told me I wouldn't print his letter; from Gerald Kirsch, who, with respect to my editorial last issue, pointed out patiently that if police didn't stop to question suspicious characters they wouldn't catch many criminals; and from Bill Aitken, who commented at length on the artwork. Overall, reader opinion was in favour of more attention paid to layout and design. So I've taken a fair amount of trouble over this issue.

Though this is the last BEYOND I would very much appreciate letters of comment in the normal way and will, if a reasonable number come in, publish them and circulate them to the BEYOND readership. I think there are several features this issue which shouldn't pass without some sort of comment...

Lastly I'd like to say a sort of general thankyou to the many people who've contributed to BEYOND during the year-and-a-half of its existence. It's very satisfying when the give-and-take mechanism of fan publishing works out. And it's been great fun, in many ways.

See you in Birmingham at Easter?

--Charles Platt.

