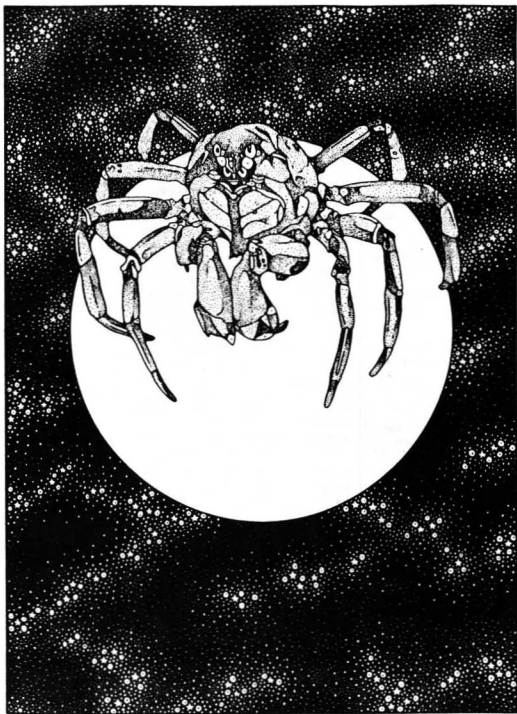


Matrix 105

The news magazine of The British Science Fiction Association



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Determinants

This is being written on 'No Smoking * Day' — incidentally the magazine deadline — shortly after reading a report which suggests that the Isle of Wight is aiming to be a totally smoke-free zone by the year 2000.

To have one day in a year when people can think about a particular habit and use it as a kicking off point for either modifying or continuing it seems to be quite a good idea. But I would question whether it is feasible to attempt to interfere with private habits on a regional level.

I acknowledge the reasons against smoking: the smell, the litter, the health complications including the noise of hacking coughs, the high price of cigarettes. I further admit that smoking is a habit which affects communal air and that non-smokers can get more than a little upset by returning from an otherwise pleasant night out with their clothes smelling of smoke: and that non-smokers may also contract diseases considered to belong exclusively to smokers. Lung cancer springs to mind immediately.

The reasons for smoking centre around the right of an individual to partake of any legal substance where and when he or she pleases with the caveat that if any laws get broken because of this, the individual must take the consequences. It's a weak caveat, as smoking in public places is not normally perceived as being a major sin and there are rarely people prepared either to suggest that it is or to do anything about it. In a driver-only bus working to a strict timetable, the driver may be reluctant to confront a smoker in the smoke-free upper deck and passengers who may find this unpleasant have the option of moving downstairs, traditionally a non-smoking zone.

In addition, smoking is a habit which allows a period of relaxation, both physical and mental for the user. To inhale smoke can be pleasant and smokers may find that food tastes edible, rather than subtle — a distinct advantage with most institutional food. It may be a great help with weight control and can be considered an addiction as harmless as television watching, cake and chocolate eating or reading Science Fiction.

Looked at from that angle, it seems that the Isle of Wight health authorities are over-reacting in seeking to expel tobacco from their district. Their aim is to start by encouraging businesses and offices to become smoke-free, then move on to shops. Assuming for one moment that all this works and that all residents on the Isle of Wight see the light and convert to non-smoking, provided they have not already — a vast and dubious generalisation in itself — how is this going to affect the tourist industry? The Isle of Wight depends heavily on visitors who will feel relaxed and in a suitable mood to spend lots of money on essentials. I would question whether even a non-smoker would feel relaxed enough to enjoy a holiday in a place where smoking has been forbidden.

Making another generalisation, namely that the health authorities are concerned for their residents' health in seeking to create a smoke-free zone, it is interesting to conjecture what future plans they may have for improving community health. The British diet is already attracting some disapproval in failing to meet European standards of hygiene and content, particularly such British delicacies as custard pies and sausages. In addition, regular reports deplore the standards of beaches, or the quality of water.

The moral maze here questions whether the individual has the right to pursue habits which may be harmful to him/herself and possibly to the community. To balance that, the maze wonders just how much an authority, health or otherwise, can dictate the individual's lifestyle. The Isle of Wight may find that the year 2000 brings a distinctly mottled look, smoking-wise, to their island and this is important because of current plans to introduce the universal smoke-free zone to British Science Fiction conventions. "When a smoker lights up a cigarette, he has just taken everyone around him hostage" writes Kelley James, who has several lung-related disorders, while asthmatic Andrew Adams comments that "Your right to smoke stops at my lips and nostrils".

Although a few people attempt to scatter red herrings like car exhaust, over-strong perfume and scented air fresheners, there is a confrontational situation developing at conventions and perhaps also at the Isle of Wight. "Interesting things happen when society gets bored" comments Sarah R Rogers when talking about enforcing smoke-free buildings, hopefully the things will be interesting in a positive way, rather than in a negative one.

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The BSFA Annual General Meeting will be held at the Cornelian Room at the St Nicholas Hotel, Scarborough, at 12 noon on Sunday May 30 1993.

Note: Anyone wishing to attend Mexican who has not yet received a Progress Report 2 with hotel details, please telephone Mike Ford at 0532 753663.

Deadline
13 May 1993

News

From Patrick Nielsen-Hayden, A T Campbell III, Nigel Parsons, Harlan Ellison, Peter Ceresole, Amerika Mark, K V Bailey, Cory & Alexei Panshin, Jeanne Gomoll, Bill Humphries, Peter Tennant, David Zink, Steinn Sigurdsson, Chug Von Rospach, Robert J Sawyer, Jane Yolen, Rick Russell, John Gribbin, Molly Brown, Tara Dowling-Hussey, Ann Whitfield, Ellen Key Harris, Karl Schroeder, Jessica Yates, Mark Bernstein and your editors

Awards

James Tiptree Jr.

The 1993 James Tiptree Jr Award was presented to Maureen F McHugh for *China Mountain Zhang* on March 6 1993 at the convention Wiscon in Madison, Wisconsin, together with a cheque for \$1000 and a trophy created by artist Nevenah Smith. The book, a first novel, follows the career of China Mountain Zhang, a gay man who struggles to live and make his mark in a world which is both similar and very different from our own. Maureen McHugh acknowledges Tiptree's influence both on the creation of the book and in the choice of her pen name and writes that "When I published my first short story I published it under a male pseudonym and when I sold my first short piece to *Asimov's Science Fiction*, I submitted it as M F McHugh and received an acceptance note that began 'Dear Mr McHugh'. I had to stop and think about why I was doing it, and I thought a great deal about James Tiptree Jr. and about the assumptions people make when something is written by a man and when something is written by a woman. And I decided that at this point in time, it was important to be perceived as a woman".

This award is presented annually to a short story or novel which explores and expands gender roles in Science Fiction and Fantasy and the short list consisted of Carol Emshwiller's *Venus Rising* (Edgewood Press USA). The judges "liked the alien sense of Emshwiller's amphibious people, and the way that the story can be read both metaphorically and as a 'pure' Science Fiction story"; Ian MacLeod's *Grownups* (Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine) which described adolescent fears about adulthood and the perception of growing up as a loss of identity and vitality; Judith Moffett's *Time, Like an Ever Rolling Stream* (St Martin's Press USA), described as "a good Science Fiction novel about incest or the threat or possibility thereof" plus the author "does a good job of showing the connection - for many conservative Christians - between religion, consumerism, disrespect for the planet and fear of different people"; Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars* (HarperCollins UK) where the judges liked "the openly sexual interpretation of human power ... and the way that sex-drive scrambling for dominance is shown as being destructive on

every possible level"; Sue Thomas' *Correspondence* (The Women's Press UK) which was perceived as being "thoughtful, philosophical, intelligent exploration of human/machine interfacing and transformation"; Lisa Tuttle's *Lost Futures* (Grafton UK) found to be "mildly yet pervasively eerie and disorienting"; and Elizabeth Vonarburg's *In the Mothers' Land* (Bantam Spectra USA), much liked by the judges who said that "moral issues and intellectual debates are an important and exciting part of her work". The judges were Eleanor Arnason, Gwyneth Jones, John Kessel, Michaela Roessner and Pamela Sargent and financed by bake sales, resulting cookbooks and, currently, a quilt. Debbie Notkin, judges' panel chair, wrote in 1991 that "The James Tiptree Jr Award was started by visionaries, supported by nourishment, and selected with passion, patience and respect for difference. Alice Sheldon would have a lot to be proud of".

The Tiptree Quilt is a new cooperative project, designed by Jeanne Gomoll and Tracy Shannon. It will be a king-sized quilt, composed of 304 six-inch, nine-patch blocks and Tiptree's 1985 novel, *Brightness Falls from the Air* provides the inspiration for this compelling design. The central image will represent an exploding star's aurora approaching a planet and will be made up of twenty different colours, including shades of fuchsia, teal, violet and periwinkle. Sewing and quilting is going to be a group effort. It's easy to get involved. You don't have to live in Madison, buy cloth or cut it out (that's all done), but finished blocks do have to be returned by May 31 and the final assembly and quilting will be done during the summer at some date in Madison in time to be auctioned at ConFrancisco, the 1993 San Francisco WorldCon. Anyone interested, write to the SF address or telephone Elspeth Krison (hand sewing) at 608-255-3396 or Lucy Rhonur (machine sewing) at 608-249-3460.



The cookbooks available are *The Bakery Men Don't See*, nominated for a Hugo and including the 1991 Wiscon GoH speeches by Pat Murphy and Pamela Sargent (\$10 plus postage) and *Her Smoke Rose Up From Supper*, a main course cookbook with an introduction by Karen Joy Fowler (\$10 plus postage). These are available from SF, Tiptree Project, PO Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624. For 1993, Pat Murphy and Karen Joy Fowler will continue to serve as primary administrators and welcome recommendations for the next award from any Science Fiction readers. Send nominations to Karen Joy Fowler at 3404 Monte Vista, Davis, CA 95616, USA.

One of last year's winners, Gwyneth Jones, will be a Guest of Honour at ArmadilloCon in Austin this October and her winning book, *White Queen*, will be published by Tor this summer.

Nebula Final Ballot

Novels

John Barnes: *A Million Open Doors* (Tor, October 1992)
Karen Joy Fowler: *Sarah Canary* (Henry Holt, October 1992)
Maureen F McHugh: *China Mountain Zhang* (Tor, March 1992)
Vernor Vinge: *A Fire Upon the Deep* (Tor, April 1992)
Connie Willis: *Doomsday Book* (Bantam, June 1992)
Jane Yolen: *Briar Rose* (Tor, September 1992)

Novellas

Emma Bull: *Silver or Gold* (After the King, Tor, January 1992)
Bradley Denton: *The Territory* (Fantasy & Science Fiction, July 1992)
Maureen McHugh: *Protection* (Asimov's SF, April 1992)
James Morrow: *City of Truth* (St Martin's Press, May 1992)
Jerry Oltion & Lee Goodloe: *Contact* (Analog, November 1991)
Lucius Shepard: *Barnacle Bill the Spacer* (Asimov's, July 1992)
Michael Swanwick: *Griffin's Egg* (St. Martin's Press, January 1992/Asimov's, May 1992)

Novellette

Gregory Benford: *MatterUs End* (Full Spectrum 3, Bantam, April 1991)
S N Dyer: *The July Ward* (Asimov's SF, July 1991)
Carolyn Gilman: *The Honeycrafters* (Fantasy & Science Fiction, October/November 1991)
Pamela Sargent: *Danny Goes to Mars* (Asimov's SF, October 1992)
Susan Schwartz: *Suppose They Gave a Peace* (Alternate Presidents, Tor, February 1992)
Walter Jon Williams: *Prayers on the Wind* (When the Music's Over, Bantam, May 1991)

Short Stories

Michael Bishop: "Life Regarded as a Jigsaw Puzzle of Highly Lustrous Cats" (*Omnif*, September 1991)
Paul DiFilippo: "Lennon Spex" (*Amazing*, July 1992)
Nancy Kress: "The Mountain to Mohammed" (Asimov's, April 1992)
Kim Stanley Robinson: "Vinland the Dream" (Asimov's, November 1991/Remaking History, Tor, December 1991)
Martha Soukup: "The Arbitrary Placement of Walls" (Asimov's SF, April 1992)
Connie Willis: "Even the Queen" (Asimov's SF, April 1992)

Note: There are seven works in the Novella category because of a tie for fifth place in the voting, plus the addition of the jury nomination. Jury nominations were added to all categories this year. The Nebula Awards will be awarded

at the Banquet, probably April 17, while guests eat (or digest) medallions of beef with crawfish.

Philip K Dick Award

This was awarded for the best SF paperback original of 1992 at Norwescon (March 25-28). The shortlist was:

Richard Grant *Through the Heart* (Bantam Spectra)

Colin Greenland *Take Back Plenty* (Avon)

Elizabeth Hand *Æstival Tide* (Bantam Spectra)

R A Lafferty *Iron Tears* (Edgewood Press)

Elizabeth Vonarburg *Into the Mother's Hand* (Bantam Spectra).

The judges were Sherwood Smith, Martha Soukup and Gregory Feeley.

Arthur C Clarke Award

This award, for the best Science Fiction novel published in the UK during 1992 was presented on March 25. It was won by Marge Piercy for *Body of Glass* (Michael Joseph). The runner up was Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars* (HarperCollins) and the third equal places were awarded to Ian McDonald's *Hearts, Hands and Voices* (Gollancz) and Sue Thomas's *Correspondence* (Women's Press).

The judges for the next Award will be Mark Plummer and Maureen Speller for the Science Fiction Foundation, Catie Cary and Chris Amies for the BSFA and John Gribbin and Jeff Kipling for the International Science Policy Foundation. The administrator remains David V Barrett (23 Oakfield Road, Croydon, Surrey CRO 2UD tel: 081 688 6081).

Previous winners are:

1992 *Synners* by Pat Cadigan (HarperCollins)

1991 *Take Back Plenty* by Colin Greenland (Unwin Hyman)

1990 *The Child Garden* by Geoff Ryman (Unwin Hyman)

1989 *Unquenchable Fire* by Rachel Pollack (Century)

1988 *The Sea, The Summer* by George Turner (Faber & Faber)

1987 *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (Jonathan Cape).

World Fantasy Awards

Dianna Wynne Jones has withdrawn from being a judge for this due to illness and her place has been taken by Barbara Hambly.

Aurora Awards

These Canadian awards were presented at the Science Fiction convention Wolfcon 6 on 14 March as follows:

Best long-form work in English 1991-92: Sean Stewart *Passion Play*

Best short-form work in English 1992: "The Toy Mill" by Nickle and Schroeder (in *Tesseracts 4*)

Best work in English: *Tesseracts 4* edited by Toolis and Skeet

Meilleur livre en français 1991-92: Vonarburg

Chronique du Pays des Meres

Meilleur nouvelle en français 1992: Diona "Base de Negotiation" (in *Solaris 101*)

Meilleur ouvrage en français (autre): *Solaris* edited by Champotier

Artistic Achievement: Lynne T Fahnestalk

Fan Achievement (fanzone 1992): *Under the Ozone Hole* edited by Karl Johanson and John Herbert (4129 Carey Road, Victoria BC V8Z 4G5, Canada)

Fan Achievement (organisation 1992): Adam Charlesworth Noncon 15

Fan Achievement (other 1992): Louise Hypher, SF2 Show.

UPC SF Award

This is awarded by the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya and is judged by Lilius Anglada, Miquel Barcelo, Pete Botella, Josep Casa Novas and Domingo Santos. Any unpublished narrative work which comes within the Science Fiction genre is eligible and must consist of between 75 and 110 pages, written Catalan, Spanish, English or French, with a prize of 1,000,000 pesetas and publication by the UPC through the Edicions B, in its collection "NOVA Ciencia Ficción". Closing date 30 August 1993. Send manuscripts to Consell Social de la UPC, Edifici ETSAB, Diagonal 649, 08028 Barcelona, Spain.

The Shock of the New

Alexei Panshin has just broken his leg in three places from a snowstorm accident while returning from a bookselling jaunt in Boston, and says that he is troubled that "SF, of all literary forms, should more and more be finding itself in a situation where it is judged by how safe and conventional it is, and not by whether it says what most needs to be said at a given moment in the best way some writer/artist can find to say it. We could use a new John W Campbell".

One recommendation he would make as the most stimulating work he's found in the last twenty years would be the Sufi books, especially for anyone "seeking to see beyond the limited of what A E Van Vogt has called 'the do-be-and-have world'; also M Mitchell Waldrop's *Complexity* "which generalises on studies of chaos theory and the theory of dissipative structures to suggest a pathway by which more and more might be accomplished with less and less — in short, a means by which true evolution might be a natural accomplishment of life in this universe, and not an accident or an aberration".

On long term projects, both feel somewhat burned out after labouring for a decade on *The World Beyond the Hill* and for the past few years they have been recharging their batteries by reading "all the new work that has come out during the time [they] were locked into their study of Campbellian Science Fiction". Both of them are working on two writing projects — one is a book discussing non-Campbellian SF, particularly 1945-1970 and the other, more Alexei's than Cory's is a novel set against the

same general background as *Rite of Passage*, but earlier in time and much stranger.

John Shirley's new collection of stories, "New Noir", is part of the new Black Ice Books series. A new work by Samuel Delany is part of this series too.

Chris McKay, the leading NASA guy on Martian terraforming read *Red Mars* on a field trip to Antarctica (where there was easily time to read 500 pages) and is apparently helping Kim Stanley Robinson with ideas now.

Greg Bear's next novel also concerns Mars. In the midst of a political crisis between Martian colonists and the central government of Earth, the Martian colonists discover the Faster than Light travel is possible. The trouble is — it isn't possible for itty-bitty objects like space ships. The title is *Moving Mars* and the hardback will come from Tor in the autumn. (For a further comment on Mars, see Gillian Rooke's cartoon in the letter column).

Vincent di Fate recognises the dramatic impact the computer will have on art and literacy, but says reassuringly: "There'll always be those among us who understand the fundamental difference between seeing something on a screen and seeing something in the mind's eye".

David Brin's next *Uplift* book should be ready in about 12-18 months. He complains that he "writes awful damn slow". It will be a *Starline Rising* sequel following the crew of the *Streaker* among others.

The next Brin book is *Glory Season* coming from Bantam-Doubleday-Dell in May. It is not an *Uplift* book, it is set in a "new Universe", chunky, but not as big as "Earth".

Julian May was in a car accident that (naturally) slowed down her writing. *Diamond Mask*, the sequel to *Jack the Bodiless* is now almost finished and will probably be published by Knopf this winter and will hopefully come from Del Rey in paperback during the autumn of 1994.

Pat Murphy once sat next to a writer who politely pointed out a problem in *The Falling Woman*, that it had no strong male characters in it. "Now I found it interesting that he perceived this as a problem" said Pat "I've never heard anyone criticise *Moby Dick* on the grounds that it has no female characters - no female characters at all, except for a couple of whales with bit parts.

"Here again, the writer was interpreting my work according to an underlying set of expectations and assumptions, according to his knowledge of the way the world worked. A good novel has strong male characters. So, of course, the absence of such characters was a problem. Obviously, not everyone agreed with that assessment, but it startled me that anyone - especially an intelligent writer - would be thinking that way".

Robert J Sawyer talked about his current project in a recent interview: "*Hobson's Choice* is my attempt to write a novel that SF readers will unquestionably recognise as being part of the genre, but that mainstream readers will also find appealing. It's set in the very near future, deals with a lot of ethical issues, and is my most-intensive character study to date. It's got a truly high-concept SF idea at its core, but will hopefully reach a wider audience. It could be categorised as a medical thriller, a mystery novel, or an SF novel. I'm doing this partly to stretch my wings as a writer, and partly as a form of outreach on behalf of SF: the field needs more books that will draw readers from the outside into it". He went on to talk about his favourite authors: "My favourite SF writer is Arthur C Clarke; no one else captures that sense of wonder, and that exquisite rationality, the way he does. I was greatly influenced by Larry Niven when I was a teenager, but as I've got older I've been less impressed with him as an artist. Outside of SF, I can see the influence mostly of mystery or crime writers, including the Americans Robert B Parker, Scott Turow and Dashiell Hammett and the Canadian Eric Wright. Most writers like to cite Shakespeare as an inspiration, but I'll go farther back and cite the plays of Sophocles and Aristotle's writings about drama".

Colin Greenland, when conversing with Tara Dowling-Hussey at Octocon, said "I find it very nice to write about somebody who is not totally in control of their life and destiny: then work out what happens, bit by bit. Writing *Harm's Way* was strange because the story is about an orphan of the spaceways. She had to go on a long journey to find out who she was. The funny thing was that I didn't know who she was. I had to do quite a lot of work until I found out who she was. Usually I have character in mind first, then release who they are and where they live and then imagine change and upheaval in their lives, as I think of them. One character generates the rest".

Larry Niven is one of the Guests at ConFrancisco this summer. Steven Barnes wrote a piece called *Making Mr Write* on him for the latest Progress Report, describing Niven's lifestyle: "During his formative creative years, he was a dreamer, spending countless hours stretching his imagination, dreaming up aliens and languages and cultures and plots in which they interacted. Note: Larry isn't a hog for research. He is more likely to craft plots and situations which grow organically out of subjects he has been researching casually for years.

"Larry WRITES. Almost every day. He indulges in the discipline of putting words on paper — or upon computer disk. Every damned day". *The Moat Around Marcheson's Eye* is published by HarperCollins at the beginning of April (£14.99), a thought-provoking and long-awaited sequel to *The Mote in God's Eye*.

Jane Yolen has bought a house in St Andrews where she hopes to live for part of the year. She started writing in first grade, when she wrote the class musical, which was about

vegetables. She played the lead carrot and the finale was a great salad. When older, she went to a costume party disguised as a swamp and then used this experience in *The Acorn Quest*. In fact, she says "my real life gets mixed up into my magic, and vice versa". Science Fiction, which she considers to be the folklore of the future, is just one of her many interests. Throughout her writing career, though, she has remained true to her primary source of inspiration: folk culture and writes that "Folklore is the 'perfect second skin'. From under its hide, we can see all the shimmering, shadowy uncertainties of the world".

Harlan Ellison says hello to all his friends though he is on a horrendous deadline, trying desperately to get work finished before they cart his body off to have a possible heart bypass. He's just given an interview to David Ian Salter, containing much information unknown to UK readers and says that it has "turned out to be an amusing and very wonky piece".

Ron Goulart is currently doing a comic book based on the Shatner Tek books, for which he acts as consultant. He describes this as "kind of fun".

John Gribbin will be sharing the platform with Ben Bova in Edinburgh to discuss the science in Science Fiction. His new novel, *Inversions*, which grew out of a story in *Analog*, will be published by Roc in May, shortly before his new non-fiction epic, *In the Beginning*, comes from Viking. This proves, it seems, that God does not exist and it deals with the Universe as a living entity subject to Darwinian evolution. And he is just finishing his next novel, involving time travel, the solar neutrino puzzle, climatic change and where Newton got all his ideas from.

Pamela Sargent muses "Back in the Pleistocene, when I started writing, some of us considered various earlier SF books and stories passé or irrelevant — but at least we knew about them, or were dimly aware of them. Recently, it seems that more and more newer writers are ignorant of what came before, and this isn't entirely their fault; a lot of past work simply isn't reprinted. I had expected that a time might come when my work and that of some of my contemporaries might be ignored, criticised for various reasons, or considered old-fashioned by young Turks, but hadn't anticipated having it treated as if it had never existed".

Chris Bunch and Allan Cole, the authors of the Sten adventures are currently writing a fantasy trilogy, tentatively titled *The Anteros*, beginning with *The Far Kingdoms* from Del Rey. They now give an irreverent explanation of the Sten inspiration:

"The Sten series was born out of many long weeks of heated discussion, a bit of which was even sober. On the verge of quitting our straight jobs in journalism, we both wanted to vent our years of frustration at the bald lies told in banner headlines and the evening news. Like most journalists who enter the fiction world, we

were out to get even with the Powers That Be. But we were much too cynical to take the usual route, which is to have a noble hero with a halo tilted over the eyes to give a hint of the rogue. Science Fiction seemed the ideal genre to accomplish our aims — because from the beginning, much of it has been fascist in nature. It also has a tendency to worship at the feet of Perfect Technology, and as the sons of cynical engineers (one of whom was a spook), we knew from early childhood that most things are doomed to break when needed the most. So we thought we'd turn the whole thing upside-down to get a protologist's view of the world we live in and how it came to be.

"The next thing we struggled with was making the hero interesting enough to us — never mind the reader — to carry us through the eight books we needed to tell the tale. Doyle grew to loathe Holmes, as did Fleming James Bond. And both killed their heroes off at one point with much relish (both to be revived in totally unconvincing manners). We seized on Forester's *Horatio Hornblower* series, which followed the title character from midshipman to admiral in the 19th century British navy. If our hero, like Forester's, started out as a kid and we grew him to adulthood (marching him up the ladder of authority), we just might make it to the end without killing the little bugsnipe.

"From the beginning, however, we knew the whole thing had to be a hustle. It is basic to human nature to ignore the shit that goes on around us when things are going well; we accept the platitudes of our leaders and all their lying idealisation of public and private institutions, swallow heroes and their creeds whole, and rally happily behind men on white horses. We're also aware that there are two and ONLY TWO reasons for empires to succeed and grow. The first is at gunpoint — let's face it, nobody in his right mind volunteers for the gig of *utermensch* in the Third Reich. The second is for inherently economic reasons — the empire either offers you slightly better living conditions (like the Ottoman Empire in its early Balkan expansionism being preferable to Christianity and its taxes) or else it has something you need (like the Johns Company or Hudson Bay Company having transportation and access to idiots who thought chutney and furs were inherently valuable). So we created an empire designed to seduce as many readers as we could put the long con on. And we gave the Eternal Emperor some endearing, if eccentric, qualities. We tried to make people feel sorry for poor orphaned Sten. But it was all sugar on the pill. The Emperor was as great a fascist as Stalin or Hitler, with far more victims to him — he just wasn't quite completely bonkers in the beginning. And Sten, his right-hand man, was his loyal assassin. But, to be fair, we made sure there were clues planted all the way — clues many of our readers caught from Day One, to our great delight.

"And it's done even better than we imagined — not just the sales, but the great reactions we've received from readers who have joined us in our anarchist conspiracy. Of enormous help and

inspiration has been the twelve-year right-wing rule [in the States], and the even longer conservative domination abroad. Most of all, we were happy to make it through without killing the little shit off before his time. But, we fear, one more volume would have done it".

Terry Pratchett's novel *Guards! Guards!* is being staged at the Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon, Oxon from June 8-12 by the Studio Theatre Club, who have previously performed *Wyrld Sisters* and *Mort*. Details from Stephen Briggs (Tel: Oxford 69625).

Light Pollution is the subject of a conference run by The British Astronomical Association in Reading on July 3. "A little over three years ago" they write "few people had even heard of 'light pollution', but today the problems arising from urban sky glow, obtrusive light and light trespass are of international concern. The subject of light pollution has now become of great importance to all those interested in preserving the night-time environment, not only astronomers, but also conservationists, environmentalists, naturalists and those keen to resist further 'urbanisation' of rural villages and the countryside". More information from Ms Barber, The Assistant Secretary, British Astronomical Association, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 9AG.

Shared Problems

Marion Zimmer Bradley has not previously objected to people writing "shared world" books set in the universes she created — she occasionally said that she liked people "playing in her back yard". But it has turned sour suddenly when she incautiously and politely acknowledged a story written by one of her fans and said the idea was quite neat and she would probably incorporate it into her current novel, which was set in the same universe at about the same time. Not so, said the fan, and requested that if this happened, that she should be acknowledged as co-writer and get half the royalties. This is being backed up by a serious threat of litigation. Although one would naturally turn to the Berne Convention for assistance here, it does not apply in differences of opinion between two people of the same nationality, besides it only applies outside the original author's home country. American laws tend to be "ridiculously liberal" concerning copyright, mostly due to authors having their books "adapted" into films without attribution.

Anne McCaffrey and **Mercedes Lackey**, both of which had words to be "shared" are alleged to have orders from their agents never to acknowledge receiving or reading any relevant fiction sent by their fans.

Obituaries

Isihiro Honda died on Tokyo on February 28 1993, shortly after completing the shooting of Akira Kurosawa's new movie, *Madadayo*. But he'll be remembered for *Gojira*, *Godzilla*, the vengeful monster whose popularity was perhaps caused by people seeing it and feeling able to

endure their own lives a bit easier. In post-War Japan, there was great comfort for people to see an inhuman (and therefore irresponsible) monster destroying the consumer candy architecture of Tokyo. *Godzilla* eventually evolved into a UN peace ambassador in *Godzilla 1985*, but Honda had moved on to fruitful and long-standing collaborations with Akira Kurosawa, in particular *Kagomusha* in 1980.

Paul Dorrell, a writer and BSFA member who regularly attended the London BSFA meetings at Marylebone station, died on January 19 after a long illness. During the last year of his life, he attended the Eastercon in Blackpool, a crime-writers' convention in Nottingham and the Fantasycon in Birmingham. He was also a member of the British Fantasy Society and regularly attended their open evenings in London. He went into hospital shortly after his return from the Birmingham Fantasycon, and never went home again. Originally a children's writer, a few years ago he made a switch to writing horror fantasy and crime. His recent short story sales included *Scheherazade*, *Constable New Crimes* (Constable, edited by Maxim Jakubowski), and *Royal Crimes* (New American Library, edited by Maxim Jakubowski and Martin H Greenberg), and at the time of his death, he was working on an novel.

Trevor Jones, publisher of *New Moon*, died on February 26, 1993. The magazine has ceased publication. He had been seriously ill for a long time.

Magazines

The *Starburst Yearbook* for 1992/93 included a list of the 1992 awards with commentary. Commenting, for example, that Lois McMaster Bujold won the novel Hugo for *Barryar*, the article commented that this is the first time a Hugo has been awarded several times for books with the same character (she won the Hugo and Nebula awards in 1990 for the novella "The Mountains of Mourning", then won the Hugo in 1991 for *The Vor Game*). Pan have already published *Borders of Insanity* and will release *The Vor Game*, *Barryar* and *The Spirit Ring*, her first fantasy novel, later this year.

Commenting on the Nebula winner, Michael Swannick's *Stations of the Tide*, Colin Greenland compared it to "some sublime, imaginary collaboration between John Crowley and Iain M Banks: a wild, graceful book, sexy and wise and sad and strange, with the virtues of SF and Fantasy in a very potent mix and a clarity of imagery that's sheerly hallucinatory. It would make a brilliant book by Moebius; an even better animated film".

Helen Stirling commented on the BSFA Award's Short Story award for Molly Brown's "Bad Timing" describing it as "an excellent working of the Time-paradox idea". Liz Holliday described the Philip K Dick Award winner, Ian McDonald's *King of Morning*, *Queen of Day* as "not an easy book to summarise; not without giving too much away".

John Gribbin also commented on the Arthur C Clarke shortlist novels in *New Scientist*. He tipped Lisa Tuttle's *Lost Futures*, saying "There is a sound scientific speculation at the heart of the story, we care about the characters, and the narrative pulls you along like a runaway train". He then concludes by saying "So — is science important in SF? Very much so, but only provided that the speculative science is woven into a good story. The story, and the characters we care about, can compensate for some iffy science, but impeccable scientific credentials can never compensate for a lousy story".

The new magazine *Science Fiction Age*, is now on the fourth issue. Write to Science Fiction Age Circulation, P.O. Box 749, Herdon, VA 22070, USA for information.

Phantasy Province 3: A5, 56pp, £2.50 or £9 for 4 issues from Wolfe, PO Box 6, Fraserburgh AB43 5ZX. Fiction by William Meikle, Alan Toner, Philip Holmes, Simon Shaw, Malcolm W Offiler, Cherith Baldry, Steve Roach, Marc L Harns and James McKenzie. Artwork throughout by Kerry Earl. Book reviews, letter page, competition. Articles on Aleister Crowley, imaginary creatures and Peter Jackson's film *Braindead*.

Dementia 13 No 10: A4, 56pp, £2.30 or £7.50 for 4 issues from Pam Creais, 17 Pinewood Avenue, Sidcup, Kent DA15 8BB. An illustrated journal of the arcane and macabre. Fiction by Julie Akhurst, D F Lewis, William Smith, Steve Green, Mark Samuels, Paul E Pinn and Stuart J Hughes. Artwork by Rik, Lawrence Kenny, Kerry Earl, Don Ganzelli, Steve Lines, Stephen Skwarek and Dallas Goffin. Interviews with Ramsey Campbell, Dave Bell and Stuart Hughes. Letter column, magazine listings and reviews of "obscure" books. Articles on alternative realities in fantasy and horror fiction, Robert E Howard and the horrors of personal experience.

Peeping Tom 9: A5, 48pp, £1.95 or £7.25 for 4 issues from David Bell, Yew Tree House, 15 Nottingham Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leics LE65 1DJ. British Fantasy Award for Best Small Press Publication. Fiction by Stephen Laws, Paul Pinn, Martin Peckins, Rhys Hughes, David Franklin, Steve Harris, Hawk Hellson, Graham Farrow and Conrad Williams. Artwork by Dreyfus, Andrew Haigh, Chico Kidd, Mike Philbin and Dallas Goffin.

Ghosts & Scholars 15: A5, 48pp, £2.75 from Rosemary Pardoe, Flat One, 36 Hamilton Street, Hoole, Chester CH2 3JQ. Dedicated to the Jamesian ghost story tradition. Fiction by William I Read, John Whitbourn and Antonio Monteiro. Artwork by Nick Malore, Alan Hunter, Douglas Walters, Dallas Goffin, Simon Rowson and Jim Pitts. Reviews, Jamesian notes and news, an appraisal of William Croft Dickinson and a tribute to Fritz Leiber.

Scheherazade No 6: A5, 36pp, £1.99 or £7.50 for 4 from Elizabeth Robinson, St Ives, Maypole Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1HL. Fiction by Sebastian Wildish, Paul Dorrell, Alison Brooks and Graham Andrews.

Artwork by Brian Combe, Tim Pieraccini and Paul Vernon, "King's Daughter", a graphic series by Jane Gaskell and Deirdre Counihan. Fran Polanski discusses clothing in SF.

Overspace No 15: A5, 44pp, £1 from Sean Friend, 25 Sheldon Road, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 0BP. Last issue, but back issues still available. Fiction by Stan Darnbrook, John Townsend, Sean R Friend, D F Lewis, Bruce P Baker, Stuart J Hughes and Geoffrey Maloney. Artwork by John Light, Kerry Earl and Sean Friend. Poetry by J F Haines, John Light, Steve Sneyd, A Lee Firth, Ann Keith, Matthew Lee and Dave W Hughes. Letter column, article on John B Michel and appraisal of *Richie Blackmore's Rainbow*.

The Blind Spot is an annual publication with a circulation of 3,000. They are looking for stories in the SF/Fantasy/Horror genres or anything that might possibly fit into those genres. They prefer stories or poems of 10,000 words or less. If accepted, they will pay a flat rate of \$10 plus contributor's copies. If rejected, they will give a full edit plus the reasons they couldn't use the story. If you want to see an issue first, send £2 to the mailing address, *The Blind Spot*, PO Box 9193, Duke Station, Durham, NC 22706-9193, USA, with a sae and/or postage if you're sending a story.

Storytelling wants to put together a feature article on filking and the story-telling aspect of the art and on story-tellers who also filk. Write to Suzanne Martin, She'sat, Route 1, Box 365, Wills Point, Texas 75169, USA.

Lateral Publicity

The Del Rey electronic news letter was launched in February. Tor and Ace already print regular bulletins on Genie, so it was interesting to see the Del Rey material. Ellen Key Harris, Assistant Editor, explained the aims of this: "Sure, we want you to know about our books and our authors, but we also want to give you a way to ask questions about publishing and get the real story. If all we wanted was to sell more books, it would be easy to post a message every once in a while about when the next David Eddings, Terry Brooks or Anne McCaffrey hardcover was coming out. But what we're trying to do — and this may be too ambitious, but you never know until you try — is open up a channel of easy, inexpensive communication between you, the readers, and us, the publisher. We know from experience that it's frustrating to be a reader if you don't know what's going on. Why aren't books in a series published all at once? Why do book prices keep going up? Why do books become unavailable a year or two after they're published? So we'll do our best to answer questions like these — and give you a real look behind the scenes". [Ellen Key Harris, Associate Editor, Del Rey Books, 201 E 50th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA].

The newsletters seem so far (February and March) do not list prices, and little information about individual books which is not already on the jackets. That could be an advantage:

William "Shakespeare" Goulthard snarled across the Atlantic that "This way we don't have to look at those damn lying cover illustrations that fantasy/scifi books always have. There should be a law saying artists must read the book they do the cover art for".

The March newsletter has a piece "Adventures in the Slushpile" on unsolicited manuscripts which gives the Del Rey method of reading: "We start at the beginning and read as much as we need to read to decide whether the manuscript has the potential to be a good book. Sometimes that means the entire manuscript, possibly more than once; sometimes that means just a few pages. If the author puts a comma after every two words, and those two words are usually misspelled, we don't need to see more than a handful of pages (from the middle and the end as well as the beginning of the book, just to be fair) to know that this will not be the next Del Rey Discovery. Unless, of course, the story is so good that it grabs us even though the writing is terrible — which doesn't happen very often. For some strange reason, mastery of the mechanics of writing often goes hand in hand with storytelling ability and imagination! So the people we publish have all achieved some minimum level of writing competence and almost all of them write much better than that".

Of the questions asked, one is "Why do publishers let authors write series first, instead of starting with stand-alone novels or short stories" to which the answer is basically that authors do not tend only to write what the publishers want. "The authors are not our slaves — most of them write what they are most excited about writing. (And most of us like it this way)" writes Ellen Key Harris "And we try to judge books on their merits. If an author sells us a first novel, then writes a sequel as a second novel — and it's good — we'll publish it. If the author writes a bad sequel, on the other hand, we'll try to help fix it or suggest the author try another idea for the second book. David Eddings, for example, wrote a successful first novel, then wrote an equally fine sequel. It would have been foolish of us to tell him we wouldn't publish it just because it was a sequel!"

Stephen Lawhead talked recently of his love affair with the Celtic world, which is particularly noticeable in the *Song of Albion* series. "Mallory, Tennyson and Walt Disney have made us think of Arthurian legend as courtly medieval romances" he said. "That's far from the truth. As I read the old Welsh and Irish legends, I found myself face to face with a fiercer, darker world, the world of Arthur the Celtic warlord, battling for Britain's survival in the power vacuum left by the withdrawal of the Roman legions. ... Because while the Celts had a vibrant love of life, they were also sure that this world was not the be-all and end-all. Running through all their mythology is a belief in an otherworld which is the source of everything noble, valuable, meaningful. When I got to the end of the *Pendragon* books, I realised that I was still only on the verge of exploring the Otherworld and all that it meant".

Paperbacks Coming

Just what was published in March, don't overlook *Murasaki*, edited by Robert Silverberg, published by Grafton at £5.99 and described as "a novel in six parts". *Murasaki* is star HD 36395, whose vastly different alien ecologies have evolved on two closely revolving planets which are both host to intelligent, though strange, forms of life. Then the human explorers come ... Robert Silverberg writes the introduction in which he suggests why Science Fiction authors welcome the chance of writing for a shared world: "The answer, I think, lies in the challenge. Of course, any good Science Fiction writer would rather work from his own ideas than from anyone else's, and most of the time, that's what they do. But there's an element of sport — of risk, even — in being handed a prospectus and asked to fit one's own literary personality into preconceived modes and structures. And, too, there's the aspect of expressing one's creativity within the preconceived structures, by interpreting them, by transforming, by extending, by stretching the boundaries of what's been given". The stories are: "The Treasure of Chujo" by Frederik Pohl, "Genji" by David Brin, "Language" by Paul Anderson, "World Vast, World Various" by Gregory Benford, "A Plague of Conscience" by Greg Bear and "Birthing Pool" by Nancy Kress.

April: Gore Vidal features in the Abacus promotion with *Messiah*, a savagely funny fantasy of the future; *Duluth*, with more than extraordinary special effects; *Kalki*, another black comic fantasy and *Myra Breckinridge* in one volume with *Myron* (all £5.99). Distinctive storytelling comes from Jonathan Carroll's *After Silence* (£5.99). There's horror coming from Gollancz: Harry Adam Knight's *Bedlam* (£3.99), a gory shocker which contrasts nicely with David Gemmell's *Morningstar* (£4.99) from Legend, recounting the tale of a Robin Hood type, as perceived through the eyes of a minstrel, one Owen Odell, whose songs first made him noticed and who first knew Jack Mace when the reluctant hero was but a thief and a philanderer. Michael Moorcock's *Gloriana* (£5.99) comes from Phoenix, an imprint of Orion.

May: Robert Harris' *Fatherland* is the Arrow superleak here, as people prepare to celebrate Adolf Hitler's birthday in 1964: a book to read with some care. Gollancz goes for the dark side with T M Wright's *Strange Seed* (£3.99), a supernatural chiller, and S P Somtow's *Valentine*, a continuation of the vampire saga with nightmarish overtones. Christopher Coe's *Such Times* (£9.99) may be one to look out for: it's described as "an examination of the intricacies of the human heart and a celebration of lost innocence in the context of a whole generation redefined by AIDS". Another one to find could be Warwick Collins' *Computer One* (No Exit Press £6.99), which appears to be half Science Fiction, half technological thriller and half book of ideas. By contrast, Andrew Harman has *The Sorcerer's Appendix* (May, Legend, £3.99) featuring lemmings, a

magician, a pisan and heavy earth-moving equipment (fantasy and funny) and there's Harry Harrison and David Bischoff's *Bill, the Galactic Hero on the Planet of the Hippies from Hell* (Gollancz £3.99), these titles get longer and longer.

June: This starts with a virtual reality thriller, Denise Danks' *Frame Grabber* (Allison & Busby £4.99). The anthology *New Worlds 3* edited by David Garnett with stories by Brian Aldiss, Michael Moorcock and Paul McAuley (£5.99) is the main lead from Gollancz, though there is also a space opera, Philip Mann's *Master of Paxwax* (£3.99) and romantic fantasy from Sean Green's *Blood and Honour* and Paul Kearney's *The Way to Babylon*. John Grant returns to Albion for his latest fantasy, *The World* (£5.99 Headline). There's a futuristic fable from David Ely, *A Journal of the Flood Year* (£5.99 Phoenix), plus another Michael Moorcock, *The Brothel in Rosenstrasse* (also £5.99) where Count von Bek remembers pre-1914 Mirenburg.

Publishers' News

Bantam lead the way with Anne McCaffrey's *Crystal Line* (April, trade paperback £8.99) and the *Hand of Chaos* by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman (£14.99) will come in July. This is the fifth volume of the *Death Gate* saga where Haplo returns to the Nexus.

Deutsch have a collection of short stories by Stanislaw Lem, *Mortal Engines* (May £12.99), fourteen stories which reveal Lem's fascination with artificial intelligence.

Doubleday just managed to get *Forward the Foundation* (April £14.99), Isaac Asimov died a couple of weeks after completing it. It is the seventh and final novel of the *Foundation* series.

By contrast, in June they are publishing Robert Rankin's *The Book of Ultimate Truths* (trade paperback £7.99) about the quest to recover the missing chapters of *The Book*. Terry Pratchett has said some nice things about Robert Rankin's power to make him (TP) laugh.

A Mars book comes from **Gollancz**, Paul J McAuley's *Red Dust*, set in a Mars in decline some five hundred years after the Chinese have terraformed it. Back to comic fantasy for Colin Webster's *Merlin and the Last Trump* (April £14.99), this was the runner-up for the Gollancz/Bookshelf First Fantasy novel competition. One of Harry Harrison and David Bischoff's *Bill* adventures comes in paperback (see above), the other *Bill, the Galactic Hero: The Final Incoherent Adventure* (£14.99) is alleged to conclude the series. More alternate histories: look out for Christopher Evans' *Aztec Century* (£14.99, paper £8.99) set in a modern Britain, but conquered by the Aztec Empire and then for Philip Mann's *Into the Wild Wood* (June £14.99), first of the series *A Land Fit For Heroes*, again a modern Britain, but this time still ruled by Rome. Then Bob Shaw's long-awaited sequel to *Who Goes Here?*, *Warren*

Peace (£14.99) comes in July and *Who Goes Here?* is also reissued in paperback.

HarperCollins will publish Sheri S Tepper's *Sideshow* in April (£14.99), a novel exploring freewill, then June will bring *The Broken God* (£14.99, trade paperback £8.99), first volume of a David Zindell new trilogy: *A Requiem for Homo Sapiens*. Paul Park's *Turn Away* (£14.99), also coming in June, uses parallel events in America and South Africa to echo political metaphor and classical SF. Then Brian Aldiss' *A Tupolev Too Far* (£14.99) will come in July, it's his fifteenth collection of short stories.

Headline forthcoming books include Tanith Lee's *Elephantasm* (May £15.99) as protagonist Annie is catapulted from exploited poverty in London to domestic service plus at a remote country estate. The fantasy gets darker as playbacks reveal increasing secrets: an obsessive read; and Bentley Little's *The Revelation* (May £15.99), where horror comes to the little town of Randall in Arizona and a wave of animal and human killings precede "an implacable force of evil as old as the world and as relentless as the desert sun". Graham Joyce's *Dark Sister* (April £5.99) warns against herbal remedies, here the harbinger of witchcraft: "For no witch ever acts alone, no witch it held unaccountable, and Bella's dark sister has malice in her heart" says the press release. Also in April, comes Roger Taylor's *Valderen* (£16.99), part two of the *Nightfall* series (the first part, *Farnor*, will be published as a paperback in April too at £5.99), fantasy in a violent power struggle as Farnor lies hidden in the Great Forest cared for and feared by the Valderen and chased by the increasingly unstable Rannick. Finally, another Dean Koonz, *The Door into December* (£5.99, April), domestic horror as kidnaper victim Melanie McCaffrey is found and returned home while the mangled remains of her kidnapper father are also found and presumably buried. But Melanie has blank eyes and a secret in her soul which will be released in a "bloody torrent".

Stephen King is the main attraction from **Hodder & Stoughton**. *Dolores Clairborne* was published in hardback in February, now *Gerard's Game* is the May lead from New English Library with a national TV advertising campaign and window displays. C J Cherryh's *Helburner* is the NEL June lead, with F Paul Wilson's *Nightworld* where the Evil Being gradually gathers his monstrous powers for his final triumph of darkness and *The Tomb*. In June as well is Carlene Thompson's psychological chiller *All Fall Down* (£4.99) and then in July James Herbert's *Portent* (£4.99) will give a series of terrifying natural disasters which could, or rather would, threaten the existence of this planet. The New English Library was re-launched on March 4, in a joint celebration which also publicised the publication of Michael Slade's *Cuthroat*.

Legend has the conclusion to Tad Williams' *Memory, Sorrow and Thorn* trilogy, *To Green Angel Tower* (£16.99) in April, as the

Storm-King's forces gather for the final battle, as Simon and Prince Josua desperately search out the three swords which are their only hope of victory (and it's a very thick book, so there's lots of time to do so). Tad Williams is currently on an author signing tour, which will probably be over by the time this magazine is published, but you may catch Terry Brooks whose tour starts in London and can be found in Reading and Oxford (April 20), Nottingham and Leicester (April 23), Birmingham (April 24), Exeter (April 26), York and Leeds (April 27), Newcastle (April 29), Aberdeen and Dundee (April 30 and Edinburgh (May 1). He will be publicising *The Elf Queen of Shannara* (£4.99) and *The Talismans of Shannara* (£14.99) both of which were published in March. In May, there is *Moonblood* by Phillip G Williamson (£8.99), high fantasy and mystery, with his merchant-spy Ronbas Dinbig. Another alternate history comes from Harry Harrison in June with *The Hammer and the Cross* (£14.99, paper £8.99), set in a ninth-century England with a couple of alterations, which lead to massive changes in every part of normal life (quite a change from *Stainless Steel Visions* which Headline published in March (£14.99 hardback, £8.99 trade paperback). In fact, Harry Harrison went over all these stories prior to publication and discovered, to his shock, that "some editor, unbeknownst to me, had changed the name of the lead character in 'The Streets of Ashkelon' and had bawled the religious discussions. If I ever discover who did this, I will his, her or its heart out". The stories are: "The Streets of Ashkelon", "Toy Shop", "Not Me, Non Amos Cabot", "The Mithalbed Spaceship", "Commando Raid", "The Repairman", "Brave Newer World", "The Secret of Stonehenge", "Rescue Operation", "Portrait of the Artist", "Survival Planet", "Roommates" and "The Golden Years of the Stainless Steel Rat". Finally in July, Peter Morwood concludes his *Prince Ivan* trilogy with *The Golden Horde* (£8.99), with magic and war in medieval Russia.

Millennium have a strong Science Fiction schedule, with John Barnes' *A Million Open Days* (June £14.99, trade paperback £8.99) about far-flung colony worlds and universal conflict, to which *The Washington Post* gives a seal of approval. There's soft SF with Tony Daniel's *Warpath* (April £14.99, trade paperback £8.99), a journalist of the far future searches for his love, crossing both wars and worlds and as comic relief there is *The Galaxy Game* (May £13.99, trade paperback £7.99), an idiots-in-space book with Arnold, the computer who never recovered from seeing HAL in 2001. The Michael Moorcock Uniform Editions also continue with *The Dancers at the End of Time* in April, *Etric of Melniboné* in May, *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* in June and *The Prince with the Silver Hand* in July.

Orbit has a hard Alan Dean Foster, *Codgerspace* (£4.99) in April, telling of how an alien threat to man and machine has put the fate of the Galaxy into the rather unlikely hands of five senior citizens (and their food processors) and then in May Iain M Banks' story collection, *The State of the Art* (£5.99) is published

simultaneously with his new hardback *Against a Dark Background*. Tom Holt's *Overtime* (£4.99) will come in May with a Michael Scott Rohan and Allan Scott collaboration, *The Ice King* (£4.99) coming in June.

From Pan comes the Asimov/Silverberg collaboration, *The Positronic Man* (June) based on Asimov's classic short story "The Bicentennial Man", plus *Child of Time*, based on a different Asimov classic "The Ugly Little Boy". More intriguing is another June publication, David Profumo's *The Weather in Iceland* (Picador) set in 1998 where exile Richard Slade (last Duke of London) narrates his family's history.

Peter Hamilton's *Mindstar Rising* was also published in March (£4.99) set in the 21st century where "Governments have come and gone, the fall of the People's Socialism Party was followed by the second Restoration of the monarchy, but in the wake of demilitarisation, the credit crash and industrial collapse, only the corporations remain, exploiting the new technologies and as hungry as ever". The threat of global warming has become reality, salt water laps in the deltas round Wisbech — something of a tragedy for this Peterborough based author, who made careful use of local maps to chart the possible consequences of global warming and who asked his editor for the names of bio-geneticists with whom he could discuss his ideas.

Freda Warrington's *A Taste of Blood Wine* comes in July, described as "combining the best of Anne Rice and Stephen Donaldson", together with her fantasy *Sorrow's Light*, both in hardback and trade paperback. More fantasy comes from Deborah Grabien with *And Then Put Out the Light*, a contemporary horror story starting with Emily Bourne-Moon escaping from an unhappy marriage (coming in July).

Viking have two June new books: Will Baker's *Shadow Hunter* (trade paperback £8.99), a story of chase in a futuristic place where the animal kingdom is rising against the human domination and William Gibson's *Virtual Light* (£14.99), a portrait of life on the edge of the twenty first century.

The Women's Press publishes a novel of a lesbian Utopia, *Daughters of the Coral Dawn* (£5.99) by Katherine V Forrester in April. Related by Minerva, the historian daughter of an astoundingly beautiful alien smuggled to Earth by a young entranced Earthman, it relates the difficulty of adaptation to a new world where whooping during moments of sexual ecstasy and giving birth to multiple female superhumans may result in having to flee away from Earth to a virgin planet where the daughters can work, play, love and procreate together while the mother looks on, the sole heterosexual in a manless planet.

Also in April comes *Evolution Annie and other stories* (£6.99) from Rosaleen Love, a collection of sharp humorous stories, four of which have already won Australian literary awards.

Science Books

This Summer, Gollancz publish an Arthur C Clarke double, with *By Space Possessed* (June £14.99), a collection of essays with most of his best factual writing on space and *How the World Was One: Beyond the Global Village* (July £6.99), a history of the communications revolution.

There's also the story of manned space flight, *Reaching for the Stars* by Peter Bond (Cassell, May £14.99), with colour and black and white photographs and *Everyday Wonders* by Barry Evans (Contemporary Books June £9.75), a collection of thirty essays and interviews with some of the world's most creative scientists, including Stephen Jay Gould and Philip Morrison. One more to look out for would be John Gribbin's *In the Beginning: The Birth of the Living Universe* (Viking, May £16.99). Here John Gribbin draws on the "ripples in time" that mark the birth of the universe to formulate a controversial vision of the universe as a product of evolution by natural selection. Last of all, Professor Taylor makes a "brilliantly accessible attempt to tackle the problem of what is certain in humankind's knowledge of the universe: and where that certainty can lead" in *When the Clock Struck Zero* (Picador, July, hardback).

Information Service

Phil Nichols

Book Search

Who can you count on to supply an obscure book? Who can you trust to fulfil a transatlantic book order? These aren't rhetorical questions, folks: I really want to know! We all know that an in-print British book can be bought in (or ordered through) any high street bookshop. And that mass-market US books can be had in specialist SF shops, like Andromeda in Birmingham or Forbidden Planet in London. The problem comes when you want that in-print but more obscure volume: from the smaller publisher, by the less well known author, or generally not to the popular taste. There are American dealers who will trade direct with Britons — and one ought to expect that any dealer who accepts credit cards would happily fulfil an order from anywhere in the world. But who are these dealers? I have asked in the past for such information, but, like many things in life, this soon dates. So if you can provide current details of any British dealers who succeed in obtaining American books, or any details of American dealers who will trade transatlantically, please let me know. And if you, particularly, can make a personal recommendation, so much the better.

What was that title again ...?

Oh, how I love these little teasers! Trying to identify a book from a description is like trying to identify a *Crimewatch* villain captured on

timelapse video. With a cheap camera. With guano on the lens. If it's a book you've never read, the description is a mere blur; and even if you know the book, chances are you won't recognise it. However, there's always someone out there who can see through the fog, straighten out the distortions, and identify a tome from an inaccurate eye-witness account.

Upon which basis, I now burden you with the following plot description, with the question: what's the name of the book (and who in their right mind would have written it)?

"... features Earth settlers who meet up with the Plovers, a race of telepathic 'dogs' all built like the Hound of the Baskervilles. Ultimately, they meet up with the Kival (?) enormous sentient cats, and form an alliance against alien nasties".

The book, I am told, is "fairly old", and has a title that may be something like *Hell Planet*. Suggestions, anyone?

Anyway, if you need the help of the Information Service or even (gasp!) would like to help it, kindly drop a line to Phil Nichols, 17 Allsops Close, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Midlands B65 8JB — enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. And now for another in the series of Authors One Has Enjoyed.

Robert E Howard

Neil McEwan

Robert E Howard was born of Scottish and Irish parents — although he lived all his life in Texas — and must have been imbued with a Celtic love of poetry and the music of words. His stories written for the American "pulp" magazines of the '30s demonstrate his belief that the best yarns are larger-than-life "lies" — perhaps told over a tankard of ale.

He wrote for almost every genre — from Western burlesques set in and around the state he knew, to horror fantasies of the macabre and grotesque, to heroic adventure romances set in the mythical "Hyborian Age". Howard outlined the history of his "Hyborian Age" in his essay "The Nemedian Chronicles" and his hero Conan appears in stories written by other authors. Sphère has published a list of these stories, including Howard's eighteen originals — but only Orbit books' *Conan Chronicles* (volumes I and II) are currently available. Howard's horror stories were published by Panther in *Skull Face Omnibus* (volumes I to III) and volume I contains an essay on Howard by H P Lovecraft, whom he knew. Baen books in the States propose to publish eight volumes of non-Conan tales, of which one is currently available — "Cthulhu: the Mythos and Kindred Stories". Howard's fantasies have a lurid sense of the grotesque not unlike those of a Gothic melodrama. In his best stories, the encounters of his primeval hero with the refinements and wizardry of sophisticates — have an element of a duel, precisely choreographed and staged, but with a Poesque weirdness.

Although the Gothic element is most apparent in his (neglected) horror fiction, his primeval hero has his own barbaric version of chivalry and an uncomplicated sense of honour. In possibly his best Conan story, *Red Nails*, an ancient city has become a world of nightmare surrealism whose inhabitants exist to further the cause of an ancient feud. The feuding is made more grisly by the fact that the city is closed off from the outside world, its shadowy corridors and dank catacombs shutting off all sunlight. Howard's version of a Gothic fortress may have been borrowed from Mediterranean mythology and the labyrinth at Knossos — the Minotaur being replaced by the bull-like form and bestial strength of Prince Olmec. The surrounding wilderness is occupied by Dragons which both guard the city and prevent the inhabitants from escaping.

Unlike Tolkien's fantasy world, which is an entirely self-contained 'alternative universe', Howard's stories interweave Christian themes with Celtic mythology and the beliefs of the Pagan — in best Gothic tradition. In his ballad poetry, his vagrant heroes seem to be haunted survivors of the past, rather in the manner of Byron's 'Childe Harold'. The same melancholy mood is found in his archaic use of language — words, names and images being transmitted from one culture to another, from one age to another, in best classical tradition.

Eyes Down: Click

From: Graham French, Ian Pollard, Jan Ledger, Mike Stone, William Powell, David Cleden, Martin Ferry, Garry J Malyn, Matthias Hoffman, Caroline Needham and Hervé Hauck. Illustration by Pavel Gregoric, Jr.

The scene is a crowded bookshop, the focus shelves marked (preferably) Science Fiction, but more usually Science Fiction with Fantasy and Horror. A wave of humanity, shopping bags, small children and dogs is shuffling round about, some stubborn individuals resist all attempts to be moved on. Given this deviation from the ideal, the potential SF buyer has to rapidly prioritise a large number of factors. In this article, a random sample of buyers speak out.

Starting from a global view, the willing SF consumer researcher has stepped through the doors of his (or her) local book store. Specialist shops are mostly out of the scope of this article, possible because most of the contributors live more than a reasonable distance from one. The scanning eyes tend to search out sections specifically marked 'SF' or 'New'. Dedicated researcher, David Cleden, headed off to his local shop, to analyze his book buying habits: 'Okay. I've just paid Hammecks a quick visit (well, I never did need much of an excuse). Trying to be as objective as possible, I've discovered a couple of surprising things. The shelf I'm most likely to make for is the 'New Titles' — chiefly the paperbacks, but I may look wistfully at the new hardbacks if a

favourite author has a new title out. I think this is probably because I tend to frequent bookshops far more often than I need to (defining 'need' in terms of having reduced the backlog of books waiting to be read to something close to single figures). As a consequence, I tend to get pretty familiar with the book displays in my local shops, so I'm on the lookout for what's new'.

The main comment about local shops is that staff tend to lump SF/F together (horror seems to have broken away and seems to be rapidly swallowing the supernatural section), which may be a distinct improvement on such books being crammed away at floor level in the section marked 'Horror/Astrology' continually under pressure from the 'Sex' books above. (OK — I'm thinking of one particular bookshop and one particular time). 'Most of the bookshops in and around Thatcham and West Drayton' wrote Garry J Malyn 'do not tend to have shelves full of SF; more like shelves full of Fantasy. I have to agree with Sturgeon's theorem but it's more like 95% is Fantasy rather than c**p'.



Staff lack of knowledge and lack of interest can lead to strange bedfellows in the SF department. 'I know only too well how public opinion places genre fiction in the *Batman/Dr Who* category' comments Jan Ledger 'My local Waterstones chain bookshop had Judge Dredd next to Beatrix Potter. When I pointed out Judge Dredd was not exactly for small children, the assistant told me, in rather a snotty tone, that 'It's a scifi cartoon book, Madam, of course it belongs in the children's section!'. The assistant probably strode back to the cash register, flushed with victory, leaving a stunned customer 'I stood back aghast. Did she really say 'scifi'? Yeah! I didn't pursue the point, but her attitude to SF is typical. In fairness, the same shop has several shelves labelled SF, but 95% are 'known authors' or reprints (or both) and over half are high Fantasy and all are tucked in the darkest corner at low average eye level'.

So, in pure self defence to over-stimulated eyes, there has to be a rapid winnowing

process. 'I avoid 'Series' books' writes Graham French firmly 'particularly trilogies (and decalogues). This combines well with hate number two, which covers anything with the words 'Dragon', 'Sword' or 'Space' in the title — to which I should also add any title which contains the name of a planet'. Hervé Hauck goes further: 'If the author is on my 'BEUARK' list, drop it. It consists of writers who write only fantasy or horror, authors who are too militaristic (or other-istic things) for me like D Drake, D Ing or simply authors I dislike on the basis of their previous texts (a long list, this one!)'. 'If the TSR or the collection is labelled Horror or Fantasy or Heroic-Fantasy or Dark Fantasy or Gor or Dragonlance: drop (well, I'm sorry, but I'm a narrow-minded Science Fiction fan)' concludes Hervé. Hervé also adds that he disregards any books he has already read in French.

William Powell agrees that the type of book affects his choice and after mentioning that he doesn't buy Dragonlance type books either, he adds 'I usually ignore the *Star Trek* novels. I say 'usually', for *Star Trek* because I have read some that were enjoyable. The reasons for this were due to them being written by one of my favourite authors and being lent to me by a friend'. But, William adds, 'I will pick up anything with a time travel or an alternate history plot'.

Alternate history seems very popular, regardless of the genre classification. Mike Stone puts it succinctly when commenting on author loyalty. 'I probably don't always give new authors a 'fair go', since at current prices, even on paperbacks, I am often hesitant about paying for stuff I may not like. The best way for a new author to break this barrier is to write an alternate history novel. I tend to buy these regardless of authorship, but, except for David Brin's *Practice Effect*, tend to avoid alternate Universes where magic works. I prefer 'straight' history change'. It's surprising how often alternate history echoes military history, though the latter can be liked for its own sake. Ian Pollard, for example, follows his interests into his SF: 'I have always been interested in military history, so if the title appears to be related, I will give it a close look (for example *The Man-Kzin Wars* by Jerry Pournelle, *The Amtrak Wars* series by Patrick Tilley, *Last War* by Melissa Michaels and *A Talent For War* by Jack McDevitt). I am an avid *Star Trek* fan, so anything related to that classic series I automatically buy. My interest in space and space exploration will also influence my interest in a title (for example *Contact* by Carl Sagan and the *Kinsman* series by Ben Bova). I'm very interested in most aspects of science and this will affect my choice (like *Blood Music* by Greg Bear). If the story concerns the Earth of the future, then I will look at it closely (for example, Greg Bear's *Eon*, *Eternity* and *The Forge of God*'.

Author loyalty also plays an important part in choice. 'I've always tended to follow authors like Clarke, Asimov, Heinlein and Silverberg'

reading certain authors at an impressionable age. "I tend to be 'loyal' to authors I liked in my youth" continues Mike Stone. "I still religiously buy every new Poul Anderson, though I fear that, like a lot of old-timers, he may be past his best. Likewise, I tend to keep abreast of Arthur C. Clarke, and while they lived did the same for Heinlein and Asimov, though I don't think any of them were at their best in later years".

I questioned if the actual feel of the book played any part in the decision-making process. Thick books can be daunting, their spines can be extra vulnerable to folding, the very weight of them can be disconcerting. But David Cleden disagrees: "There is nothing like the feel of a thick paperback to give you that warm feeling. It conjures up those dark evenings when you throw another log on the fire, snuggle up with the cat and get lots in a really thick paperback. If you need two hands to pick the book up, even better". So there.

Hervé Hauck uses up a disproportionate amount of his browsing time being fascinated by blurbs, which French books lack. Well, they occasionally have a sentence of two of plot or the first sentences of the book: "Take the cover of Jack Vance's *Araminta 2*, which is actually the second half of *Araminta Station*. Hervé explains "The text is the first sentences of the book and there is a second cover just behind with the illustration spreading on a full page. For me, this is a quite awful and silly presentation quite typical of the 'pseudo-intellectual' and the 'no such primitive things like rockets and BEMs' school of thinking which dominates the French scene".

And finally, Graham French also complains about the covers and the blurbs: "Covers have a wide scope to upset and/or offend, but as a general rule, the more 'traditional' the picture for a SF/Fantasy book, the less likely I am to present it at the cash desk. I suppose this is really embarrassment for the stereotyped image of the genre(s), but a cover should be designed so you can judge the book by it (or rather so you can judge the book before you buy it). A variation on the same theme is designing a book cover so it is very like one that is already a good seller (for example, the numerous Pratchett-esque covers nowadays).

"So there's only the blurb left to check. Once again it's the stereotypes that put me off. It's not that I can't imagine a good story about elves and warriors (or spaceships and aliens): it's just that I can imagine so many bad ones. Similarly, if you are going to have a main character who is The Only One (to save the world, complete the quest, with the secret, etc; it doesn't matter which) then you'd better have a bloody good story to go with it".

And now, space for people to voice their pet gripes: Caroline Needham kicks off with a cautionary tale. "Interestingly, here is an example where some unwinning covers and blurbs did put me off, but the day was saved by an excellent Guest of Honour speech. The author is Orson Scott Card, and his amusing

and eloquent performance at Octocon last year converted me to the *Enders* series, which I had dismissed undeservedly because of its sensationalist titles and artwork, and a blurb more suggestive of a Pournelle-style epic than a thoughtful and compassionate story which is obviously against war and xenocide".

Matthias Hoffman puts in a quick word about his own tastes: "I don't like movie novelisations of any kind. I also dislike never-ending series in the vein of *Conan*, *Star Trek*, *BattleTech*, *Shadowrun*, *et cetera*. There are authors I ignore because they have written militaristic bullshit (for example Jerry Pournelle) or bullshit in general (L Ron Hubbard or John Norman). Other than that, I am open to everything".

Which leaves Jan Ledger to conclude the poodles, for now. "Amongst the human element in publishing, there seems to be two factions working against it. Those who hate SF and want the space given to SF used up by contemporary fiction, and those who are SF snobs only willing to look at Booker prize-literary style offerings. Neither can afford to be elitist in the current financial climate. When will Britain learn from the USA that success comes from giving the public what they want, not what so-called experts think they should have? 'Selling out to commercialism'. I can hear the purist ranting on already. I am not suggesting 'Jackie Collins in Space': an interesting concept that some would say Storm Constantine has already done, very well. I don't deny Ms Collins, I don't personally relish her writing style, but I do recognise her power over the cash till. I am not advocating a return to 'Doc' Smith's simplistic styles, though again I have no axe to grind with the *Lensman* series, as such. I can enjoy reading them occasionally if I don't want to tackle anything that needs concentration. I am talking about success versus extinction. It is as cut and dried as that. Perhaps Stephen King is a better analogy. You could name Bova, Eddings, Pratchett, McCaffrey or Clarke as easily. The point I am raising here is that named authors sell because people know what they are getting. Even the most rapid EFS victim has to recognise money as the direct result of public appreciation. It represents gaps on bookshop shelves and bumps on cinema seats".

Thanks to the above contributors and if there is anything there which you should agree or disagree with strongly, then please write in to the editorial address, either purring or flaming, it's on to the next article.

Roll over HG

A review of *War of the Worlds* (1989 Paramount Pictures Corporation/Central TV) Barbara Davies

First came the book, then Orson Welles on the radio and a Hollywood film, and more recently the hit LP by Jeff Wayne. Now comes the TV series. Those who watch (or video) Central TV

in the early hours will have seen the latest incarnation of *War of the Worlds* earlier this year. Each episode is introduced with a clip from Byron Haskin's 1953 Paramount film of the same name, with the following voice-over:

"In 1953, Earth experiences a war of the worlds. Common bacteria stopped the aliens but it didn't kill them. Instead the aliens lapsed into a state of deep hibernation. Now the aliens have been resurrected, more terrifying than ever before. In 1953, aliens started taking over the world, today they're taking over our bodies".

Evidently the series owes very little to HG Wells's original novel — the tripods and the England of the 1890s are nowhere to be found. The reference point for this work — "created by Greg Stangis" — is the film, and the setting the present day.

The film ended with the hero and heroine huddled inside a church, while outside the Martian died "of the littlest things God in His wisdom put on the Earth" (something the atheistic Wells would never have written). In the TV series, the alien remains have been stored in steel drums, at a secret dump-site in the Nevada Desert ... until radiation destroys the bacteria keeping them in hibernation. The message is clear — man has brought about his own destruction by messing with nuclear weapons; what God has done, man has undone.

A team of assorted experts spend each episode tracing and attempting to destroy the aliens. There's Dr Harrison Blackwood (Jared Martin, of *Dallas* fame), a super-intelligent, off-the-wall vegetarian whose parents were killed by aliens; Dr Suzanne McCullough (Lynda Mason Green), a single-parent microbiologist; Norton Drake (Philip Akin), a crippled black computer whiz; and Colonel Ironhorse (Richard Chaves), a gung-ho, Cronerose army type. Something for everyone, in fact.

Tracing the aliens is difficult because they can now merge with humans ("by osmosis" we are told) destroying the body's former occupant in the process. The host body tends to decompose after several days and is also radio-active — facts that seem conveniently forgotten until the plot calls for them.

We never see the alien bodies, as they wear heavy leather gear and breathing apparatus as defence against Earth's bacteria. However, the episode "The Last Supper" (well into the series) tells us they are more like jellyfish than animals, with a liquid core and web-like muscular structure, with three arms, two legs and a cyclops eye. When an alien dies, the host body dissolves in "an exothermic reaction". Isn't this scientific gobbledygook terrific?

The aliens travel in threes, usually two men and a woman. They say "To life immortal" a lot, both in English and a glottal-stop speech, like that from *Alien Nation*. This patois must have been an afterthought — during the hisses and gulps, you can clearly see the actors speaking the subtitles.

Each episode sees the aliens trying something new, like subliminal phrases in pop music or deadly bacteria in a new wonder food supposed to cure world famine. Their two aims are: a defence against Earth's bacteria (which is understandable), and the total annihilation of humanity (typical, but never explained). Perhaps there is something wrong with the alien's home planet ... but that would create sympathy for them, and we couldn't have that. Instead, we are presented with brutal killers who despise humans as inferior. And in case we don't get the message, recent episodes have started likening them to Nazis.

Sometimes our heroes succeed in foiling the latest alien evil scheme, other times they fail. The rate of progress they're making at the moment, *War of the Worlds* could go on for ever.

The series owes a huge debt to *The Invaders* (1967-68) with its themes of aliens in disguise who dissolve when dead, and to the paranoia SF films of the fifties.

But the whirring noise you hear is not the alien war machine — it's just HG Wells spinning in his grave.

Marvel's Marvellous Melodrama

A review of *The Invisible Man* at the Vaudeville Theatre, London

Ian Mundell

Rather than being a straight adaptation of HG Wells' 1897 'grotesque romance', Ken Hill's stage production takes a line from the epilogue as its frame: 'And then a gentleman gave me a guinea a night to tell my story at the Empire Music 'All — just tell 'em in my own words — barring one'.

So Thomas Marvel, the gentleman of the road pressed into service as the Invisible Man's valet, tells his story direct to the audience, while the events are acted out as a music hall turn. The actors appear in multiple roles, there is a cruelly alliterative MC and a couple of songs — Marvel appears as himself. The novella is presented as a journalistic account of real events, and it is interesting to see the music hall production as part of the same world. How do the ordinary people react to this sort of happening, what do they want to hear, what is omitted and what is embellished in the retelling?

On the stage, the focus becomes the people of Iping, the small village where the scientist Griffin seeks refuge in order to find a way of reversing the process by which he has made himself invisible. Added to the cast of locals provided by Wells as a Scottish suffragette school mistress, a buffoonish local squire who pursues her, and the squire's batman who, thanks to the British Empire, has been everything from a male nurse in Johannesburg to a cryptographer in St Petersburg.

Most of the second part of the novella — Griffin's transformation and escape from London, narrated to Doctor Kemp — is gone, and Kemp is transformed from a local doctor who Griffin stumbles upon to a cowardly ex-confederate of the Invisible Man who insists on being locked up in the jail for his own protection. Where in the novella Griffin's reign of terror goes no further than an attack on Kemp, newspaper vendors on stage tell of a nation-wide crisis that might have come from *The War of the Worlds*. The threat gets bigger, the role of the people in solving it more important and their actions less vicious (in the novella Griffin is beaten to death by a group of navvies with shovels). The very real threat of the Invisible Man is reduced to a comic bogey man that is easier for the public to deal with. Where Wells presented a startlingly cruel and misanthropic maniac, the stage has him a melodramatic madman — Griffin definitely twirls his invisible moustache ends.

The comedy has an odd double edge on it, with some of the period jokes about the class system, the judiciary and the police seemingly aimed at now as well as then. When Marvel protests the lack of evidence when he is arrested, the bobby replies 'We suspect you, and in this country that's enough ...'. Wells himself also gets a mention as a social pioneer (the performance date is 1904), at which the vicar dismisses the scientific plausibility of Wells' ideas.

However, the main entertainment in *The Invisible Man* comes with the special effects, designed by illusionist Paul Kieve. There are self-rifling drawers, knives that float in the air, dancing empty nightshirts and a dramatic unmasking, after which Griffin headlessly smokes a cigarette. Easily as convincing as most film effects, they put an added Gothic spin on the music hall setting.

[More media later on — and no linking to the fanzine article, but here it is anyway].

Fire and Hemlock

This review starts and finishes with censorship and already there are conversational hooks hovering for the next review. *The Texas SF Inquirer* was the most recent fanzine to arrive and raises two important points. First of all, there is Loyd Penney in Canada who has the ideas for a fanzine, but not the finance: how economically can anyone do a fanzine and will it be worth it? The second point may be connected: editor Alex Slate apologises for the thinness of the issue, but he's had very few contributions and articles. Ways of tackling these issues while surviving and having fun will be the starting point of the next issue. But now for:

Censorship: when a child says "Fuck"

The reasons for lack of reader response in fanzines have been chewed into shreds,

occasionally forming letter columns of their own. *Cube*, the fanzine of SF, subtitled 'The Official Publication of the Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction', addressed the problem with vigour by creating a sub-editor whose aim is to select a theme per issue, commission articulate articles (if necessary, write them himself) and basically stir things up. It's a successful ploy: the current letter column is reacting to the last theme, that of relationships.

But there are two immediate and obvious flaws: how do you get a controversial but balanced coverage and how can you rely on everyone who says they will produce an article in time? *Cube* missed out on a relationships essay from the traditional monogamous marriage viewpoint and this weakened the force of the argument.

This issue, the theme is censorship, with its companion, pornography, and the initial difficulty is defining 'censorship' without dragging in the red herring of 'censorship'. Censorship is perceived as a strongly political and normally repressive tool of government — Joe Adams comments that 'censorship ... uses the local mores as an instrument of parochial control'. There's an attempt to remind people of Tom Lehrer's attitude that 'dirty books are fun' concluding that porn is intentionally escapist and probably innocent before a long anti-censorship article from Avedon Carol calling on women to fulfil their sexual pleasures and not let the government get in the way.

With strong meat like this, editor Steven Swartz's postman is probably grumbling at massive mail deliveries. Just on the off chance, though, that readers may exist unstirred by censorship, among the book reviews is Joe Adams describing *Consider Phlebas* with such satisfaction that his four year old son's interest is piqued (but they eventually decided it was unsuitable for bedtime reading — for now) and Andy Hooper discussing Terry Bisson's brand of alternate history.

Another place to look for strong meat and serious writing is Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas' *FTT*.



The name has evolved from the start "Fuck the Tories" to a different name, but keeping the same initials, each issue. This issue has Mr Toad in political garb illustrating the *Fatuous Turgid Toads* (as above).

Inside, the main article concentrates on how the "market" Adam Smith and other early economists envisaged, has been taken over by huge multi-national companies. Judith Hanna then considers Local Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS). If only they could work. The idea is that there is a group of people with a co-ordinator and assorted skills, which can be bought in exchange for other skills, thus reducing the need for real money.

The post-Hot Fudge Sundae world of *Lucifer's Hammer* found that good administrators were worth their weight in gold and that is probably the most important factor in determining the success of a LETS. It is the administrator/co-ordinator who would have the headache of balancing the price of physical needs (like doctor or dentist) against the mental needs (granny-sitting, agrariantherapy) with the third dimension of luxuries (dog walking, for example, or guitar lessons). In addition, there needs to be a communal agreement on the cost of new materials (mercury amalgam for the dentist, as opposed to new guitar strings), agreed standards about the quality of work (whether cakes should be made with butter or margarine) and length of time required for one sample credit.

In theory, LETS exist as a series of exchange transactions and can avoid the sordid financial complications of tax and interest. Unfortunately, it is probably that resentment could mount very quickly with unused LETS credits and a priority order might very quickly be established whereby the people with more general skills, like dog-walking, might not get many LETS credits or, worse, might become a luxury. Some people may argue, anyway, that owning a pet is a luxury, and that the owner should take on the responsibilities of exercising it along with the pleasures of companionship and cuddling.

Judith doesn't suggest LETS as a universal solution, rather as a probable beginning in the regeneration of an endangered world. She quotes an Eric Frank Russell story about a planet where the LETS system was used — and that, unfortunately, may be where the successful LETS system will need to stay: in fiction.

The letter column in *Cube* appears more as a series of conversations with the editor; *FTT* also adopts that approach with editorial comments from Joseph Nicholas. Greg Benford comments that the current major problem of humanity is "how to uplift the majority, mostly in the tropics, to a minimally decent level" and argues for technological solutions in space. He then compares space exploration to the conquest of the New World, but then talks of "your enclave Europe", a definition with which both Judith and Joseph (and probably plenty of Europeans) take immediate exception. Most of the rest of

the letter column concentrates on the problem of traffic and the environment sparked off by an article of Judith's in the previous issue.

Even so, the letter column is slim compared to that of *Stet* which occupies two thirds of the 90 page fanzine. In the remaining third, Laura Resnick, who normally goes to romance writer conventions, but who has sold a few SF/F short stories recently, comments on SF conventions and basically says that SF readers just don't appreciate their luck. This is followed by Lyn McConchie on the difference between Science Fiction and Fantasy. She perceives SF as possible and Fantasy as being eternally unreachable, saying

"In the future, there are doors through which we may stride to take ship to the moons of Jupiter, to see close up the rings of Saturn. There are no doors to Arvon and the Dales of High Hallack. Only windows we may peer through. The windows of the mind. And that is the essential difference".

The letter column bounces from one subject to another. Steve Jeffery suggests that a fanzine's identity is formed largely by its letter column, Harry Turner reminisces on rejuvenating duplicators (which ties in with an article on hectography by Mae Strelkov earlier in the fanzine). Gary Hubbards discusses Space Turkeys. Abhrvid Engholm considers the necessity of a common language being the more important recent invention. You never know just what will come next in the *Stet* letter column, and that is part of its excitement.

Pabulum contrasts neatly with *Stet* (above) and *Mimosa* (below). It's a first issue, so there's no letters, instead editor "Cuddles" tries out the Femidom contraceptive and gives it the thumbs down. Then she rages against the bureaucracy of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama which first commissioned an exhibition on the horrors of war from John Riddell and Jim McKenna, then took fright when they saw what was produced.

Dick and Nicki Lynch's *Mimosa* has the opposite balance to *Stet* and perhaps also to how *Pabulum* will evolve. The bulk of the fanzine consists of articles: more hilarious anecdotes of medical life from Sharon Farber, Charlotte Proctor on her problem neighbours, juxtaposed with some moving passages on feline mortality. John Berry, Walt Willis and Harry Warner Jr provide fanfannish nostalgia, with some help from Dave Kyle and the letters are firmly grouped by subject. Readers were impressed by David Thayer's experiences in Vietnam and he has another episode here, on training and ambushes. *Mimosa* won the fan Hugo at the Orlando Worldcon and it is easy to see why: there's lots of smooth, high quality writing, reading the magazine is like being stroked into a sleepy contentment. It seems ungrateful to prefer the acerbic comments of *FTT* or the deliberately provocative articles in *Cube* — or even the emotional stammering of *Pabulum* — but that's individual fanzine tastes for you.

Cube 40: SF, The Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction, PO Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624, USA

FTT: Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas, 5A Frinton Road, Stamford Hill, London N15 6HN
Mimosa 13: Dick and Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875, USA
Pabulum 1: Michelle "Cuddles" Drayton, The Batcave, 10 Atlas Road, Springfield, Glasgow G21 4TE, UK

Stet 7: Dick and Leah Zeldes Smith, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling, IL 60090-6415, USA

Fanzine Listing

Factsheet Five 46 (Seth Friedman, PO Box 170099, San Francisco, CA 94117-0099, USA, send \$4 p&p). Well, *Factsheet Five* is finally back, after being on hiatus since August 1991. As always, an excellent source for getting in contact with independent publications. Reviews of publications from practically every sub-community in the world. Everything you could think of is reviewed here.

Profane Existence 18 (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN, USA, \$2 p&p). It seems like everyone's been slugging this one these days. I've heard everything from "boring" to "close-minded" and back, but it seems a bit unfair. Those of you who are prone to dismissing such things should probably try to put out your own zine before you cut this one down. It takes an unspeakable amount of work, dedication, and thought to do this, and they don't show any signs of giving up in the near future. Aside from that, this issue seems promising. Apart from the interviews, I especially enjoyed the pages by Gary Indiana, as well as the LA and SF scene reports. Keep it up Al and crew!

Chipstar 2 (Reuben Chipstar, 4857 Saratoga Ave, San Diego, CA 92107, USA). Japanese cartoon report, scene report, comics, and assorted artwork.

Pagan Zines A good first line of enquiry for anyone interested in pagan fanzines is Kati-Ma Koppa, who produces *Starlight* (Mandranga Dimensions, PO Box 452, 00101 Helsinki, Finland £10 or £5 for 2 issues).

Ethel the Aardvark (Melbourne SF Club, PO Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia \$20 for 6 issues — also an active club).

Spud 1 (Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Ave #9-B, Trenton, NJ 08618, USA). Brief fanzine with a vignette of his school teacher, memories of coffee scented cleaning fluid (great idea), an attempt to increase communication between fanzines and readers. He has also produced *Spudnet* 1, a letter supplement. That coffee scented cleaning fluid caught people's fancies, and there is also discussion on the current state of fanzines.

Eyeballs in the Sky (Tony Berry, 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 4EP). Loose related theme of dreams and illusions,

starting with a strong editorial where Tony looks at a future which has been stolen from him. SF readers "see such great potential for the future, if only it gets the chance. And when it doesn't, we get disillusioned and cynical and so fucking angry".

The Right Stuff 7 (Rhodri James, 25 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3JD). This continues the religious thread of previous issues with "Science and god: are they incompatible" by Carl Lydyck. Valerie Housden comments that her previous fanzine reading has led her to consider 90% of them to be "cliquey, elitist, exclusive and written for a limited readership of which I did not feel a member". Worrying.

Erg 121 (B T Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, N Yorkshire YO12 5RQ, please send 3 x 2nd class stamps or a dollar bill with request). Worrying article on the power of TV to deprive people of wanting to do hobbies, also an amusing but all too true to life account of hospital life in the '90s.

The Texas SF Inquirer 48B (Alex R Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge, San Antonio, TX 78239, USA). Great art, but little else. Big trades list, the fanzine is getting all over the world.

Black Hole 33 (Black Hole, LUU, PO Box 157, Leeds LS1 1UH) Interesting mix of the fanish and the serious with many light touches, such as the personal column ("Balding spaceship Captain (50) socks Older Woman ...").

WriteBack

If you have anything you want to say following on from the topics here or on SF in general, this is the place to send it. Please write to Jenny and Steve Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP, by the deadline:

May 13, 1993

Writing Groups

From: Sharon Hall, 45 Broad Oak Drive, Brinsley, Notts. NG16 5DJ

Carol-Ann Green is no doubt correct in saying (*Matrix* 104) that there are no women-only Orbiter groups, however John Madracki was half right: there is a women-only Mercury group run by the Cassandra Workshop. The group was started a few years ago at the suggestion of the then Chairman, following a conversation about writing experiences. He was surprised by my admission to self-editing contributions to postal workshops with regard to content and theme so as not to bore the men. This led to speculation that whereas women write with an awareness of an audience of men and women, men more frequently write for men and assume that, since male experience is widely available to women, women will also relate to their concerns. An assumption that male experience is human, but that women's experience is uniquely female. A women-only Mercury, it was reasoned, might go some way

to freeing women writers from this constraint.

To what extent the women-only group has been successful would require a length of discussion beyond the bounds of the *Matrix* letter pages. Suffice to say that it suffers from the same problems as most postal workshops, and is successful in similar ways. The work is not all "radical-feminism" as some might think, and the criticisms whilst constructive, are not overly supportive or sycophantic. Women are people; writers are writers; and freedom, I have discovered, is more a matter of approach than content. For an example of the problems see *Vector* 171, page 7, where Lois McMaster Bujold talks about male/female readings of a scene involving pregnancy.

Steve Palmer's suggestion that there are no men-only workshops because mixed workshops are already in a sense men-only groups, has some validity. However, I would hesitate to suggest that it is as simple as this. All writers work within constraints, some internal, some external. Whilst I cannot, of course, speak for male writers, it seems unlikely that the presence of women in a workshop has no effect. Or is that just wishful thinking?

The question of sexist language so far as it has been discussed appears to be largely a matter of cosmetics: whether we use "Ms" rather than "Miss" or "Mrs", "humankind" rather than "Mankind". Steve Palmer seems to be the only one who has addressed the core issue - if, and to what extent, language shapes thought and attitudes. I notice that those who favour the use of Mankind, despite denials to the contrary, as (perhaps unconsciously) influenced by its usage. To explain. If we assume for a moment that a word has a single meaning which is true for all and can be defined within the hard covers of a handy dictionary, we can then arrive, via the Pocket Oxford, at:

Mankind = human species; men in general.

We can further suppose that women are implied in "human" and that therefore Mankind = men + women. (The position taken). Where then is the logic that "frequent" mentions of feminism, feminist authors, or the use of "Ms" are unsuited to *Matrix* or the BSFA? The fear seems to be, as accusations of bias also suggest, that in the BSFA at least: Mankind = men + WOMEN. The logic goes something like: feminism is about women and not men: therefore it is a women's issue: therefore it does not belong in a human organisation. Let's try writing that another way.

Mankind = men [+ women].

This equation will hold for as long as we can talk about women's issues (*aka* feminism) being separate to human issues without forming a tautology. (As with men's issues/human issues - where the distinction makes little sense).

Similarly, whilst I can of course make the effort to constantly remind myself that an author referring to he also means she, the effort itself merely demonstrates that she is once-removed

and needs to be constantly reinstated. (To a position on the page where often she sits uncomfortable in a context that doesn't quite fit).

It is interesting that the arguments of John Madracki and Hervé Hauck (who is only half serious) seem to align most closely with a Radical Feminist position (which is of an order not found in *Matrix* or the BSFA) in that both apparently argue a separatist solution 'No men, please, we're feminists': 'No feminism, please, we're men'. Personally, I prefer the middle ground.

[John replies and goes on to consider attitudes towards books].

From: John Madracki, 17 Goldrill Ave, Brightmet, Bolton, Lancs. BL2 5NJ

So Carol-Ann Green would love to know where I got the idea that there were any "women only" groups in Orbiter. Well, there may not be any at present, but they were certainly on the agenda. In *Matrix* 101 (page 6), the new co-ordinator, having taken over from Sue Thomason, outlined her plans for the future. She said, and I quote, 'I'd like to propose setting up new groups: for women only, for disc users ...'. The new co-ordinator being, of course, Carol-Ann herself.

I now feel that I should point something out. And in this I am including Pam Baddeley. And it is that, while I make no apologies for my anti-feminist stance, and still hold that for most people the word "mankind" encompasses all humans and is therefore perfectly adequate, my original letter was written with my tongue firmly in my cheek and was intended to add a touch of levity to a sometimes overly serious letter column. Obviously, I didn't take into account the ultra-sensitivity of politically correct libberoids. Or perhaps they just don't recognise a joke when they see one. But then, humour and wit were the first to fall victim to the pervasive Word Police. As for the so-called "debate" that has now arisen, no-one is more bored with it than I, and I refuse to be drawn into it any further. (Well, for the time being anyway).

But there is one thing that we in the BSFA all have in common - a love of reading, and I am in full agreement with Philip Muldowney when he argues that books are now far too expensive. The majority of people are, by nature, intellectually slothful and will always prefer to sit glassy-eyed in front of a flickering screen rather than address the demands upon their concentration when presented with a written text. And asking someone to fork out a fiver for a paperback, which could probably be read in one sitting (providing they had the faculties to do so), when for the same money they could hire seven videos and have a different film each night, is hardly likely to encourage a shift in this regrettable trend.

This imbalance can be illustrated by the fact that, currently, Network TV has no less than fifteen programmes each week concerned solely

with cinema, videos and TV itself. Not to mention the "specials", the numerous magazine programmes that carry regular features pertaining to same, or the half dozen arts series that often devote entire editions to the visual media. But what is there for the literary-minded? At present, only *Bookmark*. An occasional programme that doesn't even review new books. Of course, there will always be something to read because there will always be a hard core of incorrigible writers who would, if necessary, find a way to publish their work themselves. But for the moment, it would mean that the (square) eyes have it.

Finally, a word on fannishness. Excluding SF (which invented fandom, and is a special case), fans and fan clubs really got underway with the idolism of film stars. Now they are mainly generated by TV series.

But what of literature?

Well, books too have their devotees. Sometimes it is a fictional character that engenders the enthusiasm (Dracula, Sherlock Holmes, *et al*).

Other times it is the author itself (Wilkie Collins, Philip K Dick, *et cetera*). And these admirers often form fan clubs and publish their own zines. The only difference is that their groups are called "Appreciation Societies" and what they circulate as "Newsletters".

A closing thought: no doubt, James Joyce has his fans, and if they took his *Ulysses* as their flagship novel, then they could call themselves "Bloomers". But I doubt if they would.

Books, and books

From: Philip Muldowney, Golden Harvest, Tamerton Foliot Road, Plymouth PL6 5EG

Was there ever really a Golden Age when people read hundreds and hundreds of books? You might well find, that some SF fans like the way the situation is going. [Perhaps] it is much better to be a small fish in a smaller pond.

Of what value, though, was that phenomenon of the eighties, when SF headed the best seller lists? When Heinlein, Asimov and Clarke sold books for multi-million contracts, and even ordinary SF writers had wondrous sums waved in front of their eyes? In effect, I think that the whole South Sea Bubble SF bestsellerdom was another curious example of the excesses of the eighties. It could not go on, and unfortunately the recession has bought reality with it. The whole inflationary house of cards came tumbling down. [Or] whether literacy in our society? That is a complicated one, because it is an argument that has a goodly number of skins to it. The generational one, fings ain't what they used to be: the political one: it's all the government's fault *et cetera, et cetera*. Don't ask me which one is right.

The graphic novel are a new saviour? Who knows? I suspect, though, that the price that they sell at means that the only people buying

them, are the adults or near adults who have the substantial amount of cash to be able to afford them. I do not think that they are reaching their natural audience, of teenagers.

Indeed, the whole comics market as such, may be another aspect of the post-literacy generation. The type of comics that we used to think of as comics, for children. *Beano*, *Dandy*, *Victor*, *et cetera* are either dead or dying on their feet, the only successful ones seemingly in the Judge Dredd and their like, which completing the circle, are dominated by SF titles. Maybe there is hope.

[Turning away from the graphic novel, back to the search for good books].

From: Hanna Worrall, 119 Welwyndale Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B72 1AL

I never write to magazines! But recent changes have compelled me to do so and I will tell you why.

When informed people tell me that a book is worth reading, I take their word for it. When a book has any kind of Award logo on the front cover, I will probably buy it. I might not enjoy it as much as I thought I would, but at least I have had some independent guidance in choosing it. The publisher's blurbs are unreliable and have excerpts which are often out of context. In my search for good SF, I read as many book reviews as I can by as many different reviewers as possible — opinions vary, but a unanimous thumbs-down can save time, money and temper.

In Germany in the fifties and early sixties, I read all the [German] SF I saw. It was easy, there was not much about and as a lone SF enthusiast, I was belittled and laughed at by people who read "real" books.

Then there came a time when all SF seemed to be very depressing with lots of nuclear wars and mutant survivors — maybe I just got all the wrong books — and I started to read "real" books.

About ten years ago, I came back and now that SF is more or less respectable, there is so much of it. Confronted by walls of books, the task of finding the good ones has become daunting.

Over the years, I have bought books on SF, found the Andromeda shop, bought more reference books, eventually discovered *Paperback Inferno* and joined the BSFA. I then ordered all the available back numbers of *Paperback Inferno* and thereby enlarged my reference library. (The alphabetical index on the back cover is/was great — no laborious flicking through magazines!).

Now *Paperback Inferno* has gone and its transformation into "Paperback Graffiti" with *Vector* has reduced the amount of reviews by half! They may be easier to read (better print) but now there is no more than I can read in *Locus* or even *Interzone*.

I joined the BSFA to get some help in finding good books because I thought that Science Fiction was all about BOOKS! I have learned since that there is more to the BSFA, but I am no joiner of activities nor letter writer nor contributor. I am not good at that.

But reviews are important and *Paperback Inferno*'s format with short and precise opinions and a few longer in-depth reviews was wonderful — how else can I hit on another Ian Banks or Dan Simmons?

So please reconsider. After two editions of the new *Vector*, I am disappointed. I do not mind the higher membership fee, but I feel I am being short-changed.

By the way, if my way into the BSFA is anything to go by, then it seems to me that advertising is the most important way to get more members. There must be thousands of confused readers out there wishing for guidance and who could be reached through the books they read.

PS When I read "Dead Wood"''s letter in *Matrix* 102, I could have hugged him!

From: Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 9ES

Taking the viewpoint of the ordinary bookshop browser and gazing at the serried ranks piled up in WH Smith's or Waterstone's, it doesn't look as if SF publishing is fading away for any lack of best-sellers. (Well, widening the definition to include Fantasy). And then, with such shops now being run by hard-headed accountants, they wouldn't give it floor space if it wasn't profitable. Just like the crime and mystery fiction alongside. It seems to be selling steadily, if not spectacularly; and isn't that what we want?

Of course, we'd all like to have an acclaimed best-selling author in the field, someone who'll raise public awareness of SF, just like John Wyndham did in the fifties, and Isaac Asimov since; but my observations of public awareness indicate that the emphasis has shifted from literary to visual SF; and that never again can we count readership as the pinnacle of success.

Well, when we're more likely to gaze avidly at the latest *Star Trek* or *Terminator*, see the worlds of Science Fiction visualised, literature and our imagination come a very poor second. Unless we pick up a book of the film, are interested enough to look elsewhere, see what else has been published: I've long tended to look down on such "novelisations", but with this purpose in mind, there's much to recommend them.

Though in spite of the rise of videos, a generation more likely to turn to a computer game than a book, I wouldn't yet call it the Death of Literature. There'll always be throwbacks in every generation who prefer the written word and enough of them to still make publishing a viable proposition. And then, what

happens when the computer crashes or the tv breaks down, and neither can be repaired for a fortnight? (Apart from withdrawal symptoms, that is). Mind you, I'm not too sure about going back to the grass roots; if Nicholas Fisk and Diana Wynne Jones aren't enough, what hope is there? And surely juvenile SF readers are more likely to progress straight to the adult variety; well, if my generation is anything to go by. Perhaps 'Young Adult' reading was a category too far.

From: Daniel Buck, Croft of Kincardine, Boat of Garten PH24 3BY

I read almost anything, fiction or not, but watch only a select amount of the 'visual media'. The fact is that most of the worthwhile tv/films are boring and it all boils down to attention spans. I can sit for a whole day and read books about cosmological theory, the life cycle of an ant or anything equally intense, but *Horizon*, *Life on Earth* and similar programmes hold no interest. When reading, one can pause momentarily and daydream, take the information at a pace suited to yourself, but the tv supplies it at a predetermined rate and a second of lapsed concentration can throw your whole understanding of what is being described.

The same applies with fiction. I definitely struggle to sit through many of the so-called classic/art movies, but read *Crime and Punishment* or *Kafka* for pleasure. To appeal to me, something visual has to have action, comedy or bold effects, whilst any deep meaning or intellectual message which may lie hidden beneath this will pass me by. Yet I doubt I would enjoy reading *Indiana Jones* and I read very little comedy. Of course, there are exceptions: I went to see *JFK* with trepidation and sat glued to my seat for the whole time.

So I would say, let's not campaign for the most challenging SF to appear unadulterated on film, but to persuade those who might gain something from it to read the books. Perhaps if reading was introduced in schools with material slightly more interesting and relevant, more youngsters might be bitten by the bug of the written word. For me, no *Dune* in pictures will ever compare with the book, for who will create a world that compares with my imagination of Frank Herbert's meaning.

From: Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ

The Nicola Griffith quotations on women, men and attitudes in the last *Matrix* showed one of the most balanced comments I've seen in ages. None of the "Women are good, men are bad" — *vice versa*, but a clear statement that we're all people and both sexes can exhibit courage, stupidity, skill, ineptitude and so on. It should be required reading for sexists of both types.

Having said that, I was slightly puzzled by a later (Pam Baddeley) quote to the effect that an acceptable alternative to the word 'humankind' was 'humanity'. I presume the first was objected to by someone because of the 'man' bit — if so, what makes the second one an



Gillian Rooke comments on possible terraforming of Mars

'acceptable alternative'?

I shudder at the thought of someone suggesting 'hypersonkind' or 'huperonity'. I fully agree with Pam that 'Ms' isn't pretentious. Lacking prior knowledge, it seems simply better to be polite with a slightly vague honorific than to irritate someone who may be touchy on the incorrect use of Miss/Mrs.

On Carol Green's comments on the sex of SF writers. It doesn't really bother me whether the

writer is male or female if I enjoy the yarns. I avoid certain writers (of either sex) simply because I can't abide their stuff — and others I welcome because in the past I've found I enjoy them. To be honest, when magazine reading, I seldom look at the author's name until well into the story — just as with films, I seldom notice the director's names. A lowbrow, that's me.

Four pages of anime? I had to work hard to work out what they were. I suspect anime means animated cartoons (?) and manga are

Japanese comics — big deal, they're as interesting to me as animated versions of Star Trek or Laurel and Hardy.

Stephen Payne - Profile

Stephen Payne took over the *Paperback Inferno* section of paperback reviewing from Andy Sawyer and has his own section within *Vendo*.

It all started with my father. Every couple of weeks my mother would take a trip to the local library and borrow books for us all. She would get historical romance for herself, I got the kid's stuff (of course) and Dad always got those Gollancz hardbacks with the yellow covers — SF. SF. I can still recall those two characters embossed on the spine, like a literary calling-card literally calling me.

So I must have been twelve or so when I realised that (a) SF existed and (b) it was pretty good really. And I started reading it. Voraciously. And like all reading binges I couldn't stop, consuming all that I could lay my hands on. Now, over 20 years later, the only books I can distinctly remember from that period as the Asimov anthologies: *I, Robot*, *The Rest of the Robots*, *The Early Asimov*, and so on. He may not have been a great writer of prose, but he sure knew how to tell a story.

As I grew older, I flirted with other genres. Ian Fleming's *James Bond* novels and Alistair Maclean's adventures (perhaps too young to realise how preposterous many of these stories were) spring to mind. Then, through my teens, I strayed into choppier waters. For a level English Literature, I had to study Shakespeare, Hardy and Jane Austen. I failed (which I like to put down to a difference of opinion, though others may differ), but this did not deter me. I continued with Beckett, Rimbaud and Jack Kerouac, thinking I was a right cool dude.

And in the background, I was still reading SF. P K Dick impressed me so much that I read practically all of his novels that were then available. Ian Watson too. And Frederik Pohl, Barry Malzberg and James Blish. Even in my twenties, I continued to "binge" different authors. Around 1982, I read all of Stephen King's novels that were currently in print — so I have read all of his novels up to *Firestarter*, but nothing that followed. The same happened with Robert Heinlein, though I have to say that in his case, the standard Heinlein character (Olympic Gold winning, triple genius with nine degrees) did start to get on my wick after a bit.

In between times, I read more mainstream work: Graham Greene, Iris Murdoch and Martin Amis (even poetry), but as always (I must be a big softy or something), I came back to SF.

About five years ago, I picked up my first copy of *Interzone*. Before then, I must have had a dim idea that SF existed outside the confines of

the paperback book, but it never really occurred to me to investigate. So five years ago, I had a look. I discovered the BSFA and it was good.

Now I'm here. Still reading SF. Still managing to get through a few novels a year, but devouring many more magazines, both small press and large. Now I'm here and have the opportunity — finally! — to pontificate at length about SF. It feels pretty good.

The Periodic Table

On the Hugos

Matrix 103 included a letter from Philip Muldowney who commented on the high cost of voting for the Hugo Awards, which are awarded at Worldcons. There was almost immediate reaction from David Clark, Chairman of ConFrancisco, the 1993 San Francisco Worldcon (September 2-6 1993, if you haven't already joined) who says:

"Since I, too, would like to see as many people vote for the Hugos as possible, I'm here to remind readers that supporting memberships are available for Worldcons. Those who want to participate in the Hugo Awards and the site selection process but who don't have the desire or money to purchase an attending membership should consider this option.

"Even though this letter will be reaching you too late to encourage readers to join for the Hugo nomination ballot, I do hope that people will be joining in time for the final ballot".

But this generous letter didn't impress Philip Muldowney overmuch, it merely confirmed his opinion that: "... someone else thinks that the Hugos are dominated by a narrow elderly clique. Dave Clark obviously regards supporting memberships as a bargain. The £15 to £17 price tag may not seem much to him, but to the point that I also made in *Matrix*, to young people it is a great deal, for what is in the end a minor luxury. The equivalent of a BSFA membership, a sub to *Analog*, eating for a week — the Hugos are failing to engage the younger audience, and Worldcons themselves have become a middle-aged chorus of self-indulgence".

Andante

Chris Croughon

The con was good. Oh, you want *details*? [Pentatonic, the filk con in Weston-Super-Mare in February]. Personal information costs you one trillion stars... Well, good food, superb staff, little winding stairs that you couldn't get guitar cases round, a lift (US tr. elevator) that wouldn't come unless the doors were closed (by hand) properly, plenty of function space (and bar)...Mushrooms for breakfast...

Attending were around 120 people (I heard), including a couple of Germans representing the rest of Europe, several Scots (and English

living in Scotland) representing the Dominions and Principalities, and J. Spencer Love representing the US east coast. Other parts of England were of course generally represented. I'm not sure about Ireland...

The programme: Friday evening was pretty general, with one group downstairs in some sort of circle, and some up in the bar area with the piano and guitars. Saturday started with two individual spots before the big "concert" after lunch. And at that, not everyone got to do the two songs allowed for. Possibly a problem for future cons.

Sunday morning were the two filk-rock bands (or rock-filk - take your pick) Razing Arizona and Phoenix which were good (in my opinion not loud enough) - several other people thought they were too loud. Sigh. Followed by tear-down, the raffle for the 'filk' (not a misprint - it's a quilt with squares made by filkers) and the auction for the Flying Filk Fund (formed to bring filk GoHs here from abroad).

Food again, and the 'Dead Cod Filk' (note - since we were at the sea, it was cod not dog - it seemed like a good idea at the time...). Once again, in at least two places - a circle and a less formal thing in the bar area.

Contour Mapping

Icekon (no date specified, venue one of Peterborough's Night Clubs, details from Flat 4, 101 Park Road, Peterborough, send sac. Guests Sophie Aldred, Ian Hogg, Sylvester McCoy and Mary Tamm, subject to work commitments).

Mexicon (May 28-31, Hotel St Nicholas, Scarborough, details from 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley B66 4SH) Guests of Honour Pat Cadigan, Norman Spinrad and Ian Macdonald.

Lunicon (July 30-August 1, Leeds University Student Union, Guest of Honour Roger Zelazny, Michael Scott Rohan and Colin Greenland. Attending membership £12 attending, £2 children, students 50% discount. Details from LUU, PO Box 157, Leeds, LS1 1UH) Themes: Lunacy and Lewis Carroll, especially *Alice in Wonderland*.

VoCon (October 1-3, Tollgate Hotel, Gravesend. Attending membership £18. Details from 17 Guildford Street, Brighton BN1 3LS). Guests are still under consideration, but the committee are aiming to cover all the *Hitchhikers* genres as well as Douglas Adams' other work (*Dirk Gently*, *Doctor Who*, *Last Chance to See*, and his work with John Lloyd, Monty Python and anything else they can think of). The programme will range from a serious consideration of the background to *Hitchhikers* and the other material through talks and panels to very light-hearted games, competitions and more relaxing items.

Octicon '93 (October 30-31, The Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin,

Guest of Honour Storm Constantine, Special Comics Guest Steve Dillon, other guests to include Michael Carroll, Diane Duane, Katherine Kurtz, Morgan Llywelyn, Anne McCaffrey, Scott MacMillan, Peter Morwood, Michael Scott and James White. Details from 20 Newgrove Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4). This is the fourth National Irish Science Fiction convention.

Vibrphone ♫ (February 4-6 1994, Brighton, Guests Tom Smith and Talis Kimberley. Membership £22 waged, £18 unwaged, details from 'Minas Istarion, 2 Duncan Gate, London Road, Bromley BR1 3SG). The committee consists of Smitty (Chair), Valerie Housden, Minstrel, Martin GK and John English.

Intersection - 1995 Glasgow Worldcon

Just a reminder here, to start thinking about it. This will be the first time a Worldcon has been held in the United Kingdom since Conspiracy in 1987, and the material so far available looks good: twin themes of time and space.

1995 is the fiftieth year after the end of the second World War and a century after the publication of HG Wells' *The Time Machine*.

Both of these anniversaries have real significance for SF. Wells brought SF out of the industrial revolution into the 20th century and the scientific age. The end of World War II, half-way through the century, saw the beginning of the nuclear age and the cold war. From that came the space race and our first small steps on the moon. Now at the end of the century, the cold war seems to be over. The only place left for dashing suntanned all-American heroes to battle cold ruthless Russians (whether labelled as such or not) is in the tropical swamps of Venus.

1995 seems the best time to look forward to the 21st century and SF's predictions, to look back at what SF inherited from the 19th, to look around at what our neighbours are doing with SF.

INTERSECTION
The Glasgow Investigation



Affordable Cons

John English

Vibrphone treasurer:

I was very interested by a letter in the December issue of *Matrix* which raised the point that, unlike many other activities, conventions do not usually offer discounts for students or the unemployed. There are of course many such people in fandom who are struggling to get by on very low incomes. The 1994 filcon (Vibrphone ♫) has therefore decided to give a membership discount of £4 for the unwaged. This discount is available to anyone who can show a student card or UB40 (or photocopy if registering by post). The Vibrphone committee hopes that future conventions will want to follow our example (especially since we have three unwaged committee members!).

George Alec Effinger

Medical Fund

David Lubkin

As you may or may not know, George Alec Effinger, Nebula award-winning Science Fiction writer, has, for most of his life, suffered from a seriously debilitating medical disorder. In the years I've known him, it always has seemed like he was either in the hospital, or out and unable to write. He has been forced to call upon the Science Fiction Writers of America Emergency Medical Fund for financial assistance on three separate occasions. George's medical bills currently stand around \$40,000. Because his condition is chronic (and is listed as one of the so-called "orphan" diseases), no medical insurance is available to him. Since one cannot expect constant aid from an emergency fund, however willing or understanding its Trustees might be, a special medical fund has been created solely for the purpose of paying the illness-related expenses of Mr. Effinger.

It's a non-profit trust, executed by the Niagara Falls Science Fiction Association. The Administrator is Mary Stanton. Trustees are Science Fiction writers Pat Cadigan, Nancy Kress, Pamela Sargent, Joan D. Vinge and George Zebrowski. As an additional incentive to people to donate to George's fund, they've set up a raffle. \$20 a ticket. Max 1000 will be sold. Winner gets two round-trip American Airline passes good to anywhere they fly world-wide.

Write to: The George Alec Effinger Medical Fund, c/o Niagara Falls Science Fiction Association, Box 500, Bridge Station, Niagara Falls NY 14305, USA.

Allegra

Nigel Parsons

For many the highlight of the weekend of Pentanotic was the well-subscribed raffle. It is unusual, to say the least, to have a raffle where one is restricted to five tickets, but the first

prize was a "quilt" of squares of cotton, with members' individual motifs inscribed: which, if not embroidered, would be embroidered by Chris Bell as a labour of love. This "Quilt" or "Filt" (or any other combination of Filk and Quilt) was accompanied by a scroll listing the various contributors. With one square, traditionally, Anon.

I missed the wind-down into the "dead cod filk". It was suggested that this would end up as a mainly percussion event, due mainly to the morning session in the alternative programme which include a drum-making workshop. A visitor, Tichona Shervington, would have done *Blue Peter* proud, with drums made from cardboard tubes, sticky backed plastic and Rip-stop nylon. She claimed experience working with five year olds, and this made her eminently suited for our gathering.

The only delay in the proceedings was due to the presence of only one staple-gun. The drums made were to a generally high standard, with decoration in varied hues. Discussions were held as to the Heraldic validity of some designs, with Teddy and Fantom holding forth at length. All in all, a fine time was had by all, with many thanks to those who gave their time and effort to organise what has now become an annual event.

SF University Challenge

Martin Sutherland

Saturday 27 February saw the first occurrence of what will hopefully become an annual event: the Scottish Universities SF Club Challenge. This first Challenge was hosted by the St Andrews University SF&S Society, and four Universities fielded seven teams (one from Edinburgh, and two each from Aberdeen, Dundee and St Andrews) to take part in it.

The quiz consisted of six rounds of 'bells and buzzers' questions. Owing to a lack of technical expertise, however, several hapless supporters ("volunteers") had to take the place of buzzers, sitting in front of each team's desk and emitting a characteristic wail upon getting whacked by a member of the team who knew the answer to a question. This caused no end of confusion, as there were always at least two teams who buzzed (or baa'd or said "Ni" or went "katchangkatchangkatchang" like a pressure-drill on speed) simultaneously, but competent compere Dominic Hall and his beautiful assistant Nik Whitehead were fortunately able to make some sense out of the chaos. (When there was some doubt as to who buzzed first, the question usually went to the teams that buzzed most loudly). Two points were given for a correct answer, but only one if the first team fluffed it and the question had to be passed on.

St Andrews B-team boldly took the lead in the first round (Fantasy literature), amassing an

amazing 8 points, but failed to score at all in the next round on television SF&F and lost their advantage to Dundee's A-team. Edinburgh, who had been trundling along quite inconspicuously so far made their move in the third round on comics, and rushed to the front of the pack with 20 points, leaving their closest rivals (Aberdeen A and Dundee A) kicking their heels at 13.5. The final three rounds (SF literature, films and *pot pourri*) were hotly contested, but in the end Edinburgh came out tops with a magnificent 34.5 points. St Andrews B came second and Dundee A third with 31.5 and 25.5 points respectively. (In case you are wondering where the half points came from, they were given for having a sense of humour, so in response to "Who was Captain Boomerang's arch-enemy?" points were given for "A small terrier that used to catch him on his way back". And in answering "What musical instrument does William Riker play?" with "Commander William Riker plays the field", Edinburgh's buzzer was allocated several points of his very own).

The prize, a small shield to be engraved with the names of the winning teams, was gratefully accepted by Edinburgh captain Hendrik Steven Little on behalf of his team-mates Alan Wyllie, Adele Hartley, Tim Chapman and buzzer James Pengelly. The ritual exchange of insults took place in the pub afterwards, and plans are already being made for next year's challenge. Hopefully more universities will be able to attend then, but the "battle of the buzzers" may become a permanent feature, as it was much more fun than an electronic system could ever have been!

Transcript of a Science Fiction Mastermind

[From one quiz to another, the special subject on "Mastermind" of 7 March 1993 was Fantasy and Science Fiction 1960-1990. The contestant was Selwyn Lane, a computer database specialist, who scored 14 on this special subject, but came third overall at the end. The questions were set by Tom Shippey. Questions and answers transcribed by Philip Muldowney].

- In Terry Pratchett's *Disc World* series, how are the utterances of death signalled?
- Who was the creator of the fantasy hero Elic of Melniboné?
- In the series of novellas by Fred Pohl what is the name given to the alien race who left behind the artifact known as Gateway?
- What is the name of the Northern Barbarian who accompanies the Grey Mouser in the Fritz Leiber series?
- In Poul Anderson's *Polisotechnic* League stories, what is the name of the head of the Solar Spice & Liqueur Company?
- The theory of Simultaneity developed

- by Shevel of Anares, in Ursula LeGuin's *The Dispossessed* leads to the creation of what device?
- What is the real name of James Tiptree, author of *The Women Men Don't See*?
- The recent film, *Total Recall*, was based on which story by Philip K Dick?
- In Cordwainer Smith's stories, what is indicated by the prefix "C" in names like C'Mell and C'William?
- The Wild Shore* and *The Good Coast* are two of the novels in Kim Stanley Robinson's *Orange County* trilogy. What is the third?
- The Difference Engine*, a novel about the origins of computer technology, was written by William Gibson and which other author?
- In *The Incomplete Enchanter* by Sprague De Camp and Fletcher Pratt, the story "War of Serpents" is set in a world described in the mythology of which nation?
- Who wrote the series of stories dealing with *The Sector General*, the hospital in space?
- In Frank Herbert's *Dune*, what is the name of the Emperor who is forced to abdicate by Paul Atreides?
- What is the name of the Sword of Severian in Gene Wolfe's fantasy series?
- In Roy Lewis's *The Evolution Man*, how did Edward, the greatest Ape man in the Pleistocene, meet his end?
- What novel features Ryda Wong, the most famous poet in the five explored galaxies?

So, how many can you answer? Bear in mind, this was in two minutes under pressure. Answers after next article.

Animé Column Geoff Cowie

March release: *The Sensualist* (dir Yuko Abe) Western Connection WEST 005, 55 mins. cert 18, PAL, £16 approx

This Japanese animated film opens a window on the life and culture of the Edo period, and in particular the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter. The libertine Yonosuke has spent his life in quest of sexual pleasure. Disowned by his father, he inherits great wealth at the age of age of 34.

When Yonosuke is 57, one of his tailors named Juzo comes to see him before setting out for Edo. Juzo has wisely made a bet with a rich merchant that he will sleep with Komurasaki, the most renowned courtesan in Edo, at the first meeting. If he succeeds, he will win a villa, but if he loses he will lose his manhood. Yonosuke is astounded as he knows how hard the high rank courtesans are to get. The best courtesans, *tayū*, as well as being beautiful, were highly cultured, being educated in poetry, calligraphy,

painting, tea ceremony and other arts. They would sleep with a client only on the third night, the other two nights being taken up with greetings and other social niceties. Humble men, to whom they were "untouchable" looked up to them with adoration and respect.

Indignant, Yonosuke takes Juzo to Edo and enables him to meet Komurasaki. Juzo is a laughing-stock at the tea-house because of his nervousness, and soon becomes drunk. He clumsily slips wine over the Courtesan's kimono. Unperturbed, she goes out and returns wearing a fresh, identical garment. The film is based on incidents in a novel *Koshoku Ichidai Otoko* ("The Life of An Amorous Man") by Saikaku Ihara (1642-1693).

The visual style of the film is quite startling, based as it is on the ukiyo prints of the Edo period; in fact those who something of the art can play "spot the print". According to the distributors, much more effort was put into making the cels than is customary in commercial *animé*. Cels were re-touched, or paper or cloth was put on the wet cels and pulled off again to create textures. Not much of this detail shows up on video, so it would be as well to see the film in a cinema, if the opportunity arises. What does appear on video is quite beautiful, if rather stylised, with rich blocks of colour. The design of the film lends itself very well to realisation in animated form.

Though this is certainly an erotic film, its main appeal would be to adults with an interest in history, art and the Japanese customs of the period. It also makes an interesting contrast with commercial *animé* which, with the probably exception of *samurai animé* (rarely seen in the West), is modern or futuristic in tone.

April release:

Eyes Part 1. Island World Communications Manga Video MANV 1007, 60 mins. PAL, English dialogue, cert. 18, £10.99

Previewed in *Matrix* 103. Having seen the Japanese original, I was astonished to see "cert. PG" in advance publicity material. Apparently somebody else realised this was a mistake, for a note later arrived saying that "3x3 Eyes has now been confirmed by the BBFC as certificate 18 not certificate PG as previously stated". I'd dearly love to know who was responsible for this snafu and how much it cost to put right. It would be obvious to anybody who previewed the film and had half a brain that it was unlikely to be a PG. White 3x3 Eyes is no *Urotsuki Doji*, it does have some rather bloody and disturbing scenes of a kind not found in the cert. 15 rated *Project A-Ko* and *Dominion*. On the other hand, the main characters in 3x3 Eyes are of high school age (Yakumo, the principal male character is 16 and Pai looks about the same age) so in Japan it was obviously expected that high school students would buy the OVAs. Indeed, the script gives some insights into the lives of Japanese school students.

Pai has met Yakumo's father in Tibet, and after a four-year search finds Yakumo in Tokyo. At

moments of crisis, Pai's 300 year old San-ji-yan (3 eyes) personality takes over and a mysterious third eye opens on her forehead and she acquires various powers. As for the Manga Video version, it is dubbed into American in much the same style as the *Project A-Ko* dub, and (invisibly to British buyers) the credits between the OVAs have been deleted, along with a short scene/credit sequence at the airport. Two different voices have been used for Pai as herself and as San-ji-yan, the former being very little-girlish. This makes Pai's dual personality much more evident than in the original. The voice of the frog-demon is so guttural as to be almost unintelligible. The plot of the first half-hour is as confusing as ever; and as that bit alone runs to ten chapters (five books) in the Studio Proteus translated *manga*, I can't explain it all here: you'd do better to track it down and read it.

It's a complex and interesting series and well worth a look.

Future Plans

Island World Manga Video indicate that they will release 1 or 2 videos a month from May:

May: *Vampire Hunter D*. This is a 90 mins. vampire movie; I saw a short clip of it last year and it looked interesting. Set in the far future, it features a half-vampire hero, cyborg horses and monsters, an evil and mysterious Count and a couple of strong female characters. It seems to have a decent script. Probably another cert. 18.

June: *Urotsuki Doji 2 — Legend of the Demon Womb*. In this sequel, the new Chijin is born from the womb of Akemi to wreak more scenes of graphic unpleasantness. Cert. 18. Also *Lensman (Power of the Lens)*. Dimwit space-opera inspired by the E E "Doc" Smith books.

July: *Heroic Legend of Arslan (Part 1)*. Not well known: apparently it's epic fantasy. Also *Veda (Part 1)*. Again not well known, epic fantasy as well?

The concluding part of *3x3 Eyes* will also appear, possibly in May. All these plans should be regarded as provisional and subjected to change.

Island World have released (not under the Manga Video label) the live-action *Ultraman*. This has Japanese co-producers. It's already in the shops at £12.99 so if this is your thing, go check it out.

In terms of play time, value for money of *Anime* videos varies wildly. Best "value" seems to be Vestron's *Nausicaa* at about £5.50 per hour, followed by IWC's *Akira* at £6.50. Worst offender is *Bubblegum Crisis* at £42 per hour. Most USA videos come at about £20 per hour.

Anime movies, OVAs and TV eps. are produced with remarkable results on very low budgets; the most lavishly produced was the much-admired *Akira* and even that only cost about £5 million, which on the *Terminator 2* or

Star Wars sets would have just about paid for the actors' makeup.

Manga:

Three new American magazines of interest to *anime* fans have appeared in British shops.

Mangazine. Antarctic Press, monthly, £1.85, 32pp. Vol. 2 features part of the Porco Rosso *manga*, *anime* news and a Urusei Yatsura TV episode guide, as well as American strips. Vol. 2 no. 20 features Miyazaki's early TV series *Conan, The Future Boy*, *anime* news and more of the Urusei Yatsura episode guide.

Dojinshi. Antarctic Press, 6 per year, £1.85, 32pp. This consists of reprints from Japanese fanzines. No. 3 consisted entirely of witty *manga* parodies of Hayao Miyazaki movies. It's essential to have seen the movies to get any of the jokes which range from feeble to wicked. I don't know how old the contributors are, but the artwork is good. I liked this magazine.

America magazine, \$4.95 or £3.45 from Forbidden Planet etc., 64pp. Monthly from March. The pilot issue featured two *manga* strips and lots of *anime* news. Recommended.

Contact Addresses for *Anime* enthusiasts:

Anime UK magazine (£3.50) if not available in shops, write to 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DP.

Anime Kyo UK (club) c/o Carlo Bernhardt, 4 St Peter's Street, Syston, LE7 8HJ, Leicestershire. AD File 3 convention April 17-18, 1993, Rutland Hotel, Sheffield. (*Anime* showings, dealers' room, etc.). Write to: 14 Cavendish Place, Maltby, Rotherham S66 7DW. (All rooms in the main hotel were booked by February).

Answers to Mastermind

1. By CAPITALS.
2. Michael Moorcock.
3. The Heechee.
4. Fafhrd.
5. Nicholas Van Rijn
6. The Ansible.
7. Alice Sheldon.
8. "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale".
9. Cat Ancestry.
10. Pacific Edge.
11. Bruce Sterling.
12. Finland.
13. James White.
14. Shaddam IV
15. Terminus Est.
16. Killed by an arrow.
17. *Babel 17* by Samuel Delany.

Skywatching

Mark Ogier

Fans of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* who had been following twice daily repeats on Sky One towards the end of last year must have gone weak at the knees when they saw that,

even though the third series had come to an end, the programme still occupied its twice weekly slot in the schedules.

Did this mean that Sky had brought the fourth season, and had thus scored a major coup over the BBC yet again? Did it heck. What it meant was that either a) the series had proved incredibly popular in the ratings, or b) Sky had nothing else to fill the slot, and had decided to run the whole first three seasons again. This means that over the last six months or so, each episode of the first three seasons of *TNG* has been shown four times. Coupled with the repeats of "classic" *Trek* on the BBC, *Trek*kers must have thought they had died and gone to Heaven.

But there was more. Out of the blue, the Movie Channel announced a "special screening" of a double length *TNG* episode, "Unification".

While this was to be celebrated, it did raise some interesting questions. First and foremost was "why"? The two Unification episodes come in the middle of the fifth season, so to those of us who have only seen the first three seasons, some of the themes and references in it are a bit baffling.

At the top of the "baffle" list is the appearance in the latter part of the film (?) of a character who looks like the long dead security officer of the *Enterprise*, Tasha Yar, but who is, in fact, a Romulan. Those in the know would realise that this was actually the half human, half Romulan daughter of Tasha Yar, but for those who are unaware of the fact, it must have made for confusing viewing.

On the whole, though, the Unification story is a good one. It centres on the fact that Romulans and Vulcans were once the same race, and efforts are being made by an underground on the Romulans' homeworld to reunite the two peoples. This gives an excuse for a Federation Vulcan ambassador to abscond from his home and visit his friend on Romulus to assist the "revolution". Captain Pickard and the android Data are disguised as Romulans and sent to find out what the ambassador is playing at.

The ambassador is Spock, and this episode marks another which sees a character from the old series meet characters from the new, and for this reason alone it was greatly anticipated by *Trek*kers. But while the story is ok, it is hardly the stuff of great *Star Trek*, and I am sure many *Trek*kers would have been disappointed. Still, it was great to see Leonard Nimoy talking to Captain Pickard about "another strong willed Captain" of his past acquaintance, and discussing the pros and cons of being human with Data. There was a lot to enjoy in this story, and I only wish Sky would buy up some more episodes of the series.

Two blockbusters have surfaced on the Movie Channel and Sky Movies recently, both of them sequels.

I had not seen *Predator 2* before, although I had been warned that it was essentially "more

of the same* as its predecessor. This was true to a certain extent, but this time the alien hunter was on the loose in downtown Los Angeles. Danny Glover replaces Arnie as the major human interest, with Gary Busey playing the special agent whose mission is to capture the alien alive.

The translation from real jungle to urban jungle allows the creature to run amuck far more than it did in the first film, and allows the film makers to play upon our fears of enclosed spaces by letting it loose on the subway, for example.

But the murder and mayhem is no substitute for a good plot, and apart from the conflict between man of action and man of science, there is precious little human drama here. The only thing that makes the movie worth the effort is the ending, which gives us a bit of an insight into the attitudes of the Predator itself.

Murder and mayhem is also high on the agenda in the other sequel to be screened in the last month or so, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*. Watching a film that works so well as a straight forward crash-bang-wallop affair on the big screen reduced to TV scale is interesting, for the lack of impact of the special effects is significantly reduced (and, let's face it, morphing is now about as common on TV as soap power ads).

The result is a strangely shallow experience that even feeding the sound through the hi-fi can't assist. There is a good attempt at creating a bit of drama, with the relationship between the Terminator and the young John Connor and the agony of the boy's mother when she is incarcerated because of her wild tales about the future, but these are never given much screen time before the action takes over.

Arnie Schwarzenegger is, as usual, the perfect cool and detached cyborg — clearly a role that he was born to play — and Linda Hamilton's heroine has developed both mentally and physically from the perplexed and reluctant target in the first film. But stripped of its admittedly superb FX and muscle man action, the film lacks the humanity that it needs to make one really sympathise with Sarah Connor and her son.

Golden Years

A review of *Stephen King's Golden Years* (Channel Four)

Barbara Davies

"I'll stick with you, baby, for a thousand years" goes the lyric from the David Bowie song played at the start of each episode. And it seems like a thousand years, though really it's only eight hours in total.

Billed as a thriller, *Stephen King's Golden Years* combines several elements: SF, chase thriller, caricature, and — at its heart — the relationship between an old married couple.

Briefly: Harlan Williams, janitor at a top-secret

laboratory, gets dosed when an experiment goes wrong. We're not quite sure what loopy scientist Dr Todhunter is working on — bodily regeneration is hinted at — but it involves a green glow. Harlan starts to get younger. Rather than trying to cure him, Dr Todhunter wants to observe his progress as part of the experiment ... so Harlan decides to run for it. From this point on, Harlan and his wife Gina have to stay one step ahead of the psychopath Jude Andrews, hired to bring both of them back.

If a complex detective novel can fit into two hours, then the same could go for this plot. Perhaps the author's name make the film makers stretch it out. It was a mistake. The pacing is erratic — while the first two hour episode sets up the tension, characters and plot nicely, the next five hours involve little more than a cross country car chase and the elimination by Jude of those who know too much. This is broken up by long lulls in which Gina and Harlan talk lovingly — and very slowly — to each other. Then, the last hour rushes past at breakneck speed, leaving lots of the plot ends dangling and the burning question "But what about ..." hanging in the air.

On top of this, King changes the rules half way through. It seems we're not talking about regeneration any more, which is just as well, because Harlan getting younger didn't seem to follow logically from this premise. Now we're talking about reversing time — the hands of a clock whizz round backwards until the clock disappears. Where to? Don't ask.

At one point, Harlan glows green, the sun moves backwards and there is an earthquake with him at its centre. And at the end Harlan uses this technique to rescue Gina and himself from Jude, moving from victim of an effect to control of it in a single bound. With no explanation.

Caricatures abound. Todhunter has frizzy hair, glasses, a white coat, a mad expression in his eyes, and tends to repeat his sentences. He is totally unconcerned with everything except his experiment — yet at the end he switches it off in response to a telephone call. Then there's the chase — swapping and stealing cars, among them a hearse (complete with occupied coffin) and a police car — across state lines by gun-toting agents who shoot anything that moves.

And in the middle of all this are Harlan and Gina, coming to terms with one growing younger while the other stays old. Sometimes they seem to be in a completely different series. Their thoughtful, melancholy nostalgia would be perfect elsewhere, but slows this "thriller" badly, until in some of their scenes, it's like wading through treacle.

Stephen King's Golden Years is a hugely frustrating and irritating disappointment — a waste of eight hours of Saturday night prime time. It was written for TV, and perhaps suffers because of it. I cannot imagine that a novel would have left as many loose ends, or been as badly paced as this.

Wax, or the discovery of television among the bees

Ian Mundell

(1991, David Blair)

Wax is a modern fable in which high tech video effects are brought to bear on elements from the best of the overworked big references (Burroughs, Ballard, Pynchon, Greenaway, Cronenberg). Missile target engineer and apologist Jacob Maker begins to hear messages from his bees — they tell of semi-intelligent weapons trying to escape from the Earth, of the souls of the dead trying to invade our world, and the crimes of his ancestors. They urge him to go on a journey, seeking out the one he must kill.

He wanders through the weapons test sites of the desert, finding at last a huge cavern/hive beneath the surface that is a gateway to the spirit world. Through a brief reincarnation as a missile in the Gulf War, he emerges into a parallel reality as a woman geneticist.

David Blair stacks the cards against himself by putting all of these elements into one feature-length film. While *Wax* shows considerable imagination, much of it is swamped, either by effects that have aged badly or appear to have no purpose, or by its obvious and prominent influences. Like the dead souls of the fable, they are massing on the outside of the film, waiting to take over.

(Retail only, limited edition of 500. Details from NSFA, c/o Chris Reed, BBR, PO Box 625, Sheffield S1 3GY).

The Terminal Man

Ian Mundell

(1974, Mike Hodges)

Following a car accident, Harry Benson (George Segal), mild mannered robotics engineer, starts having violent seizures — violent for other people. He can remember nothing, but develops a strong paranoia that machines are taking over the world. Strange, then, that he should elect to have a computer inserted into his body with electrodes leading to his brain that stimulate his pleasure centres every time an attack begins.

Over half the film — from a book by Michael Crichton — is taken up with preparing for the operation and the procedure itself. Full of dark and obscured shots, it is an almost balletic alienated medical horror. The operation manages to be futuristic and anachronistic at the same time — the uniforms are exaggerated from present time, and the two surgeons wear space suits. However, the computers are one-unit museum pieces, the key breakthrough is a X-ray that cuts slices through the brain (now routine with PET and CAT scans) and implant electrodes that can be seen with the naked eye. All this peaks with the doctors testing the electrodes, pushing Harry from one emotion to another.

It goes wrong, of course. Harry's brain likes having its pleasure centres tweaked, and the seizures become more frequent, until the electrodes themselves start to set off violent attacks. Harry escapes and goes on the rampage, and is eventually shot.

Outside the hospital, the film loses its edge — the thriller elements appear routine and the complexities set up for Harry's character are left to hang. Yet *The Terminal Man* is worth seeing for its medical dystopia and its art direction — in retrospect it looks like a graphic novel: every shot counts.

Recent SF Videos February—March 1993

Relevant:

Alien³ (1992, David Fincher): Almost certainly the final show-down between Ripley and the salivating one. Reviewed in *Matrix 102*. (FoxVideo).

California Man (1992, Les Mayfield): Two dudes dig up a frozen caveman. No better than it should be. (Guild).

Straight to video:

Critters 4: Critters in Space (1992, Rupert Harvey): Alien gets the treatment in this unsubtle sequel. (EV).

Prototype (1992 Phillip Roth): Ex-soldier is rebuilt, but is programmed to kill the one he loves. *Robocop* rip-off. (Vision).

Relevant:

Inseminoid (1980, Norman J Warren): Supposedly violent Alien clone. One of the original "video nasties", available for the first time in its theatrical cut. (Vipco £12.99).

Grey Areas and Other Genres

Relevant:

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1992, Fran Rubel Kuzui): Valley girl Buffy is called to a new vocation. Light-weight but enjoyable camp. (FoxVideo).

Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer (1986, John McNaughton): Desolate examination of motiveless crime. A classic for the future. Recommended. (Electric Video).

Sleepwalkers (1991, Mick Garris): Last of a race of shape shifters trying to get on in the USA today. Pacey, good looking horror that doesn't quite make it, from a Stephen King screenplay. (Columbia/Tristar).

Relevant:

Mask of Satan (1960, Mario Bava): Black and white resurrection horror with deserved cut status. (Redemption, £12.99).

Sir Henry at Rawlinson End (1980, Steve Roberts): Completely insane slice of Vivien Stanshall's personal mythology, telling a day in the life of the eponymous aristocrat. Recommended. (Tartan Video, £12.99).

Zero de Conduit (1932, Jean Vigo): Surreal tale of revolution in a boarding school, and the inspiration for Lindsay Anderson's *If...* (1968). (Artificial Eye, £12.99).

Clubs Column

Leeds University SF Society: Meets every Wednesday during term at the Packhorse Pub by the university. All welcome! Events: Weekly videos, library of 2000 books, clubzine (Black Hole), films.

ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha: This is The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Appreciation Society. More details from Claire Brailey (17 Guildford Street, Brighton BN1 3LS).

Peterborough SF Club: Club Chairbadger, Peter Cox has moved to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough (tel: 0733 370542). Future events: the club meeting at June 2 at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe, will have author **Steve Bowkett** as their special guest, while the July 7 meeting will have **Terry Hale** talking about 19th century French Horror Fiction. This meeting will be co-presented with the Gothic Society.

Following the success of the February Fantasy Fair, a third is planned for Sunday, September 26 with the usual mix of Guests, gaming and stalls. More details from Bruce King, 1 The Hallards, Eaton Socon, St Neots PE19 3QW.

Noticeboard

Wanted: anything connected with the Hitchhiker's Trilogy. I am looking for some helpful soul in Britain who could be persuaded to go to a bookstore and pick up the English printings of the 5 books of the trilogy, or anyone anywhere who can sell me something not on this list.

I am trying to complete a collection of the Hitchhiker's trilogy in every form of media it has been issued in, I have:

The radio series on tape, the radio series on CD, the TV series on VHS a poster of the cover of SLATFATF, hard and softcovers of all five books (US printing), the first three books in one HC volume, the first four books in one volume, with the short story about Zaphod, the radio scripts book "Don't Panic" by Neil Gaiman, softcovers of the first 3 (UK printing) (see above), an official towel, the INFOCOM computer game (I'm not interested in the Hypertext MH because I don't have a Mac), an audiobook (from the original sources) of the music used in the radio series.

What I'm missing, apart from the books above, is the records of the series, the singles of "Marvin" and "Marvin, I Love You." I'd also like to get any Hitchhiker's T-shirts, if someone has a source. I am only interested in books/records/et cetera that are in MINT condition. Please email any offers to: glazier@isr.harvard.edu or glazier@harvuxw (bitnet) (Andrew Baker Glazier).

Basement Full of Books

New Books available by mail, directly from their authors: Books by William Barton & Michael Capobianco, Bruce Boston, David

Brin, John Brunner, Jeff Carver, Valerie Nieman Colander, Dayle A Dermatis, Gene DeWeese, Harlan Ellison, Sheila Finch, James Gunn, Joe Haldeman, Gwyneth Hood, Norman F Joly, Eileen Kernaghan, Victor Koman, Edward M. Lerner, Vonda N McIntyre, Thom Metzger, Hank Nuwer, Alexei & Cory Panshin, Bill Ransom, Robert J Sawyer, J Neil Schulman, Richard Seltzer Dave Smeds, John E Stith, L A Taylor, Gene Wolfe, Jane Yolen, and George Zebrowski.

This list is compiled as a courtesy for readers and writers. All arrangements are between individuals, not through the compiler of the list and this information may be distributed wherever interest allows. Street mail copies also available; send SASE plus \$1 to Vonda N. McIntyre (PO Box 31041, Seattle, WA 98103-1041, USA). Requests for the current update of the list are welcome as are writers with books to include on the list.

Brazil: Brazilian SF readers are looking for contacts and fazines. Contract Clube de Leitores De Ficcao Cientifica, c/o Robert Cesar de Nascimento, Caixa Postal 2209, Agencia Central, Sao Paulo/SF 01060-970, Brazil; also Robert Schima, who drew the cover illustration for the last issue of John M Peters' *Flickers 'n' Frames* is also looking for SF fans and fazine editors to make contact with. His address is Rua Sao Serafino, 518 (Antigo 308-A), Vila Re, Sao Paulo/SF, 03664-000 Brazil.

Book Search: I offer a comprehensive search for those elusive titles. Whether you are trying to complete a collection of war a book which is just out of print, please send details to G Long, 48 Peabody Road, Farnborough GU14 6HA.

Proposed SF Anthology: Please note that Stephen Kruger has changed his address to: PO Box 116, Koror State Government, Koror, Palau 96940 (tel: 680 488 2439).

Channel 4 Science Club: Members get three newsletters a year, containing advance details of Channel 4 programmes, news of forthcoming events and courses and a range of articles; a free copy of the latest Channel 4 science booklet, discounts on other science booklets and discounts on admission to science club events through the country. Membership is £9 per year from Channel 4 Science Club, PO Box 4000, Cardiff CF5 2XT (tel: 0222 575444).

Reviewer request: I have become the SF/F reviewer for a New Age magazine called *Teh Monthly Aspetarian*, distributed out of Chicago with a 20,000 copyprint run and growing fast. I'm supposed to do at least two books a month, but it could be more. So I'd like any writer with a novel in production that uses any sort of metaphysical elements, vampires, ESP, gods/demons, divination, magic or reincarnation to be sure I get a review copy. Jacqueline Lichtenberg, PO Box 290, Monsey, NY 10952, USA.

Filk Music Paper: I'm working on an independent graduate study called "Problems in

Filk Music* and I need tales of filking, filk-zines and recorded copies of Filk. Thank you. Solomon Davidoff, Department of Popular Culture, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226, USA.

Cyberpunk mailorder: If interested, please write for a catalogue to Glenn Bruce, Prince St Station, PO Box 96, NY, NY10012, USA.

Radio plays: Anyone out there record radio plays for their own personal enjoyment? If so, please contact me Marise Morland-Chapman, 12 Marsh Court, 557 London Road, High Wycombe HP11 1EW.

Feline Advisory Bureau: This started out as a bunch of vets at Bristol vet school, but has gone far beyond. It produces a quarterly Bulletin full of cat gossip, boarding cattery news and scientific articles and is bound to interest anyone who is cat mad. It is holding a cat show for ordinary moggies in London on 14 August and there will be exhibition pens for pedigree cats. More details from Miranda Benson, 82 Catherine Street, Cambridge.

Late News

Bob Shaw's Latest: Bob Shaw's first novel for children, *Killer Planet*, was published by Pan Piper on 8 April (£3.50). Veridia is the killer planet: a remote, mist-shrouded world from which no one has ever returned. More than two years has passed since the killer planet claimed its last victims and no it wants more. Jan and his friend Petra set out to look for Jan's missing elder brother and find that the killer planet is even more terrible than they had imagined...

New Fiction: This was formed in January 1992 by Forward Press: publishers of *Poetry Now*. The imprint was established in response to demand from writers and readers, for a wider range of new short fiction outlets. It is often very difficult for new writers, especially, to have their work published; as the platform for short fiction has traditionally been very limited. New Fiction intend to continue with their popular general regional theme in 1993, following their 21 anthologies of short stories including "Shorts from Scotland" and "Shorts from The West Country". Now they are seeking stories with a holiday flavour or a foreign setting for a forthcoming anthology of travel stories: closing date 27 April 1993. Entries and enquiries to Suzi Blair, New Fiction Travel Stories, 4 Hythegate, Werrington, Peterborough PE4 7ZP (tel: 0733 333883).

Bed Time Tales: Scholastic and *The Independent* have launched a competition to find the best short stories for the 6-9 year age group of children. "The most common mistake made by writers for children is to underestimate them" says the press release "Children are likely to relish books that are written for a supposedly older age group than their own. The next most common mistake is to set the story too close to their everyday worries. Most children prefer stories that take them into realms of fantasy, where they can find the

space they need to develop, to rehearse life without danger. The setting can be as weird and wonderful as the adult imagination can devise. Write us such a story". Closing date 15 May 1993. Word length 1500-2000 words, typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the paper only. Send entry to Story Competition, PO Box 3018, London NW1 0AH.

SF at Liverpool: Liverpool University has taken over the collection of Science Fiction Foundation, the largest of its kind in Europe. It will be housed in the University Library as a research collection and, together with the already existing Olaf Stapledon collection, will form the core of an archive of SF and horror fiction which will be expanded in the next few years. In August 1993 an administrator will be appointed (fifty people applied from which a short list of six was compiled) with the special responsibility of cataloguing and over-seeing the SF collection and also of promoting SF events such as lectures or conferences. In October 1994, the English Department plans to launch a MA course in Science Fiction studies which will concentrate primarily on British and American writing. In order to ensure the success of this course, they are making an appeal for the donation of any SF materials (novels, criticism, *et cetera*) to the lending stock of the university library so that they can build up adequate holdings as quickly as possible. It will not be possible to thank donors, but every volume will carry a slip identifying the donor by name. Any enquiries or donations should be addressed to Dr David Seed, English Department, Liverpool University, Liverpool L69 3BX.

Competition Corner

"Xmas Presents"

The following were the entries of the two winners of the *Matrix 103* competition, which as you no doubt remember was 'suggest two presents, one useful and one useless for well known SF characters'.

Gully Foyle:

- + A year's sub to Lloyd's Register of Vorgan Shipping
- An A to Z of Yeovil

Bilbo Baggins:

- + A seasonal bunch of Mithrilroot
- A bunch of Smaugasbrod

Ender Wiggin:

- + Some LIVE people to speak for
- A bugger who is not a "queen"

Goll...ss...you know who:

- + A Fish Dinner in Memmisson
- A fried Frodo finger

Galactic Pot Healer:

- + A tube of Superglue
- A recipe for octopus "in su propria tincta"

DEATH:

- + A digital hourglass and collapsible scythe
- A travel bag with assorted holiday brochures

Darth Vader:

- + "Old Spice" metal polish
- A "father and son" weekend fishing break

Dr Who:

- + A 5 million year diary
- A voucher for Man at C&A

The Invisible Man:

- + A packet of day-glo condoms
- A shaving kit, with mirror

Robert Neville (The last man on Earth):

- + An inflatable sheep
- An address book.

Results of "Initial Reviews" (Matrix 104)

As I suspected, this competition received quite a few entries — a sample of them appears below. The standard was fairly consistently good throughout, with a good smattering of both high praise and vituperative condemnation.

The winners were **Graham Smith** and **Gwydion Williams** who between them covered the spectrum of Science Fiction — including McCaffrey, Zamyatin (the sortest review — of *We*), Pratchett, Tolkien and a host of others. Other entrants reviewed Heinlein, Blish, Wingrove, Budrys and another host of others.

Sample reviews, with those from the winners indicated by **:

- * Elongate orbital nasty.
- * This has everything — fantasy, excitement, terror. Congratulations, Holdstock.
- A clergyman amasses strong evidence of forbidden creation. Obeying natural susceptibilities, cleric invokes ecclesiastical nullification, counters evil.
- * This is great and no argument.
- Chinese hegemony unleashes numerous gory killings. Undoubtedly overdone.
- Wyndham's embarrassing bollocks.
- * Tolkien has excellent humour, observing Bilbo Baggins' interesting travels.
- Shocktrooperterrorise aliens. Reminiscence soon highlights intellectual pretension. Totalitarian ramblings often offensive. Psycho-Analytic extemporisation ruins story.
- This has everything? Lots of readers discover, on further thought, how elves rather irritate, never getting senile!
- * Wantonly irritating NASA, gnomes saucerise.
- * Flatulent rubbish — I dozed and yawned.
- * Faust revisited. A novel kinship experiment nearly succeeds. The ending is nasty.
- Calculated rambling — aberrant sexualisationist hokum.
- Utterly bizarre iridescent kalcidoscope.
- * Wholly humorous offering gives only enormous satisfaction. Highest ever recommendation — Excellent.
- Amateurish, tiresomely referential, alternative "now" satire. Agonisingly thin lampoon. America never took independence — colonial twit undertakes neither nonsense. Extremely limp Harrison — utterly ridiculous romp — absolutely humorless.

Crossword Winners

No one. Sorry about the glitch where the answers were printed alongside the diagram. Own up all those who struggled to do the crossword without realising how easy we had made it for you. I must, however, commend David Lewis who highlighted the answer to 15 Down (Ceres) as this was the only one not given in the list of answers. For all those who still await the answers to the crossword in *Matrix 102*, here they are:

Across: 1 Ansibles; 5 Party; 8 Gafiated; 9 Bester; 10 Sea; 11 Clarke; 12 Le Guin; 13 Nil; 14 Faded; 16 Saps; 17 River; 18 Bova; 20 Doegies; 22 Sun; 23 Ingots; 24 Farmer; 25 Ent; 27 Author; 28 Alchouse; 29 Story; 30 Unshaded.

Down: 1 A Fall of Moondust; 2 Spinrad; 3 Bath; 4 Ends; 6 Assigns; 7 The Dispossessed; 9 Ballard; 13 Niven; 15 Dresser; 19 Another; 21 Gerrold; 24 Flesh; 26 Tarn.

Wizard Wheezes

David Allsopp

For the trivia-minded out there, here is a little something to test your powers of recall. The following twenty questions all relate to wizards or magicians of one kind or another (using a very loose definition). Please give the name of the character, the book in which he/she appears, and the author; i.e. three points per question. The answers range from the pretty easy to the downright obscure.

- Who was the Wizard of Todos Santos?
- Who built the rooms named Memory, Fear, Heartbreak, Dust and Despair; and used his Attribute of Inanimate correspondence in a contest of Irish stand-down with one known as Kalkin the Binder?
- Who was Chief Forensic Sorcerer to HRH Richard, Duke of Normandy?
- What was the name and species of the sorcerer who helped a deposed Coronal regain his throne from a usurper?
- Who helped Paul Hoehler break the Peace?
- Name both of the sorcerous mentors of Fafhrd and The Gray Mouser.
- Which Heretic earned his sobriquet by declaring against the battle-religion?
- To whom did Turjan of Miir turn for instruction when none of his vat creatures proved to be viable?
- Who had 91 days, 3 hours and 5 minutes of life left when he decided to forego the usual professional privilege of being collected by Death himself, and became Death's servant instead?
- Who invited possession by an Egyptian god, thus opening certain Gates?
- Who enlisted the aid of axolotls to make a portion of the poultice, in order to cure Professor Wurzle's

- goblin scratches?
Which sorcerer/warrior possessed the Ring Of Kings, a potent artifact cut from a single Aetorios stone?
- Who, using the power of the spellstone Firefrost, held 140 pure warriors and their milk-white mares in an enchanted sleep, against the eventual arising of Nastrod, the spirit of evil?
- Who created a world supported by the monoliths Thyaphayawod, Abharphloonta, Doozvilnavava, and Idaquizzoorhuz?
- Who had as his Source the Dwarf Matt Soren?
- Who was this amphibious sorcerer, sometime follower and student of the demigod Orcher, had the power to animate clay, and used it to help Gene (a New Yorker) and the Princess Siwara of Nanich?
- Who sold the Duke of Ch'in the secret of immortality, among other things?
- What black magician was slain on 12th April 1771, managed to reincarnate himself via a descendant in the Spring of 1927, and was permanently destroyed on Friday April 13th 1928 by a spell mentioning the name Yog-Sothoth?
- Who invented 10-point steel?
- Who became resident Wizard in Gaea, with the unwanted side-effect of being forced to control the reproduction of a race of centaurs?

Have fun!

The prizes are of unsurpassed magnificence. Send entries this time to Jenny Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP by the deadline May 13 1993 (and not a minute later!).

Crossword

Across:

- Half of Thor's home is bathed in radiance by place of 25 27 (7)
- Beating heart, so near that it can be heard (7)
- We sots rue getting drunk at Eastercon! (9)
14. Angry red Norse berserker is guest of 25 27 (5,8)
- Cake or girl, last to first! (6)
- Ron lost chessmen to 7's neighbour (4,4,7)
20. 2 23's work rediscovered by 2001 computer using Greek in study (8)
- Bury this region's magazine ... (5)
26. ... in compose heaps; endless Arrakis diseases envelop Ghana (9)
- Dry into crumbly portion (7)
- Sunken city is lost by accident, initially 7's opponent (7).

Down:

- Porcelain ovoid's place of torment (8)
23. Prepared Sunday meal to include the Spanish guest of 25 27 (6,6)
- What's upset by band that's mown down? (5)
- Time machine made underground by Pratchett's trucker (9)
- Second-class villain has Irish accent (6)
- Remain at home by river, absorbed in gluttony for example (4,2)
- Hellenic Scot supports king of Europe (7)
- Has alien taken path beset by difficulty? (4-3)
- Rising like worker clutching opening of Childhood's End? (9)
- Disorderly gossip about nothing. Chip! (7)
- Raced up to Henry holding world's first sea-mammal (7)
- Richard meets Bob in carriage (8)
- First Doctor established to be most formal (6)
- Vampire repellent used in display of vulgar licentiousness (6)
- Massage half of knee and 'ighest point (5).

Crossword answers, however, to Roger Robinson (75 Rosslyn Ave, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG).

