



Harry Turner - 75



WYNO

GHUCEPHALUS

an almost non-heading for an editorial which has been squished a bit by lack of space; my major bash at the way SF publicises itself will have to wait until next time.

Maya has changed format, once again: for which my apologies to the conservatives and conformists among you. There are a few good reasons for it, though. Firstly, there is more print-space for words this issue than last, despite the loss of two A5 pages (or equivalent) to the larger cover — this is because those enormous wasteful margins have been put to good use, and the degree of coverage of the paper is nearly 20% up. (Wow.)

Also, it's bigger and more impressive to look at.

And I like it.

I do give you my solemn word, though, that next issue will have the same size of pages as this one. More than that I'm not telling now, though — you'll just have to wait and see.

I must also apologise for the change of format to Harry Turner, who thought he was doing a wraparound cover for an A5 fanzine not an A4 one, hence used coarser Letratone than he would have done: he would also have made other changes. It's still a cover I'm exceedingly proud to use, though. (Apologies also to Harry Bell for making him do his three illoes in less than a week after he came back from holiday.)

I hope you all approve of the method of mailing: if any copies arrive in tatters and shreds, please let me know.

Now you can start paying attention:

I've decided that I might accept *ADVERTISING* for Maya if anyone out there is foolish enough to want to sell something to 400 SF fans and fanzine editors.

There now, that didn't hurt too much now, did it. What are you all screaming for?

Yes, I know about the almost Olympic ideal of the Pure Amateur in SF fandom — a tremendous contrast to comics fandom — which is held with particular force by faanish fans, and I appreciate and hold to some extent the view that advertising renders a fanzine impure, as if a quality of innocence had been lost — but I don't think that's important enough to stop me doing what I like to help

me afford to publish more articles in Maya. The lack of substance of the zine has been one of the recurring criticisms people have made, and this is one way I can do something about it. I make a net loss of £40 on each issue at the moment — there will be a capital outlay of about £70-75 on this issue — which is rather a lot of stuff, see? I don't intend to get anywhere near making a profit; I'll adjust the size of the issue to make about £40 loss each time — by publishing a longer lettercol or editorial (I can usually think of something to say!), or by publishing an article/column one issue earlier than I would otherwise have been able to.

There still remains the much more valid objection that an advert messes up the layout of the magazine, which would otherwise form a reasonably consistent whole. Admittedly one can just skip an advert while reading — someone who objects to an advert's very presence is unlikely to respond to what he reads in the ad, if he reads it at all — but an advert has to become an integral part of the layout if consistency of appearance is maintained. This is easy for Sunday supplements and women's magazines — their layout consists of little else — but not for a fanzine, where an advert is a relatively rare occurrence.

The solution to this, the Impecunious Layout-Freak's Dilemma?

Flyers. Separate from the fanzine, so people can chuck them away if they don't like adverts, and can respond (or just read) if they do. This way the fanzine itself at least looks pure, even if its editor has sullied himself by not paying for all of its production himself.

And he can produce a Bigger and Better fanzine, with longer editorials, more loccol (both of which I'd have liked this time)...

Bigger and Better, I hear you cry, is a dangerous road for a fanzine to travel, with many wrécks in the ditch.

Ar-har! Help is at hand, in the form of Gannetfandom, who have already given valuable assistance in sending out Mayas 7 & 8. Now Irene Bell is taking a typing course, and doing well by all accounts... Fancy a go at a nice IBM Executive, Irene?

If it all becomes too much I can always become Smaller and Worse, cutting my mailing list, going to mimeo, etc. (It probably won't happen until I do something drastic like Find a Woman, and knowing my total lack of machismo that won't be for a while yet...) Maya 9 will be the Fifth Annish. Virtually guaranteed is a Goblin Towers by Ian Williams looking back over five years of Gannetfandom and Maya. (Try not to make it five years of Ian Williams, Ian...) The rest I don't know about yet, BECAUSE MY STOCK OF ARTICLES IS VIRTUALLY NIL.

Especially funny fannish ones.

Surely there are some Fabulous Fannish Article Writers among you who nurse a secret, shameful desire to see your articles prettily presented instead of banged onto stencil with specially incorporated typesets and duplicated with proudly added smudgy backprinting? (Messrs. T. Hughes and M. Gorra, please note: my secret mad jealousy of Mota's and Random's disgusting ability to grab the best, funniest articles by the best, funniest fanwriters is starting to show. And you get sent a fair amount of the best artwork as well, which makes it worse... Actually, Mota and Random are both really rather well produced; the above is just a potshot at two of my Elders and Betters. No, hang on, that can't be true either. Mike Gorra has the reputation of being aged around four, and Terry Hughes... well, he's so depraved he's BAD!)

Anyway, I want to publish Nice Things of all kinds, so please treat this editorial as an open begging letter. I will, though, be writing to some of those I am particularly anxious to get articles from.

If you think Maya 8 owes something to Outworlds in layout, presentation, and maybe even in ambiguity of editorial policy? — you might just be right. My admiration for virtually everything about Outworlds knows no bounds. (Even for the fact that Mike Glicksohn is Associate Editor.) (The only thing wrong is that he hasn't published Steve Fabian's address recently, so that I can send him a copy of Maya. Hope springs eternal — I might get some artwork.)

I like Roy Tackett and Dynatron too — a good, articulate writer and giver of opinions — but I personally would like to see Bill Bowers at Mancon. (Partly because I want to know how he does it.)

Enclosed is a TAFF form for you to use to vote for Bill or Roy, whomever you want to see come over to England and Mancon. Please vote if you're eligible; whether or not you vote, however, TAFF is a worthy cause and donations are welcome and worthwhile.

This is Maya 8, and it contains the following articles.

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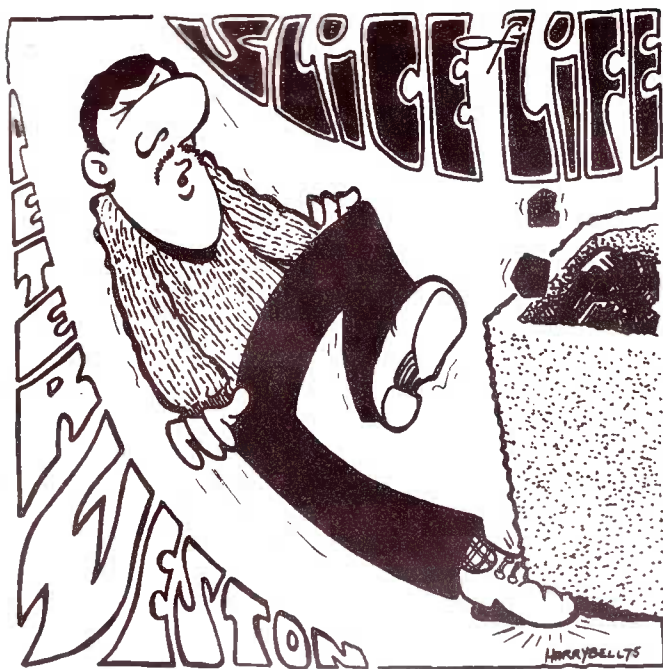
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Fanzines for review to Malcolm Edwards, 19 Ranmoor Gdns., Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1UQ, U.K. Reviewed this issue are: Triode 20 & 21, from Eric Bentcliffe & Terry Jeeves, 17 Riverside Cres., Holmes Chapel, Cheshire CW4 7NR. £1.00 for 3 issues, or the usual Amor 6 & 7, from Susan Wood, Dept. of English, Univ. of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6T 1W5, "For friends, relatives, and people to whom I owe letters".



When Rob Jackson telephoned I'd just dropped a concrete coal bunker on my foot. I hopped and screamed at the top of the garden among the dying weeds and decaying grass-cuttings as my wife Eileen put her head out of the kitchen window and told me he was on the 'phone. It's a big garden; she had to shout.

"I thought it was Patrick," she said, as I hobbled in. "It sounded so faint and faraway and I didn't catch his name. I said 'We've been expecting you,' and he said, 'Have you?' and I said 'It is you, isn't it Patrick?' and he said 'no...'"

Any day now we're expecting to hear from Patrick McGuire, an American exchange student who has been studying Russian science fiction at Moscow University for the last ten months, would you believe. He passed through on the way out there, last summer, and being an old *Speculation* correspondent had asked if he could come up from London to see us.

Having had some experience of travelling fans we didn't invite him to stay the night, especially since Eileen was eight months pregnant at the time, and not feeling terribly energetic about cooking meals and making up beds. But as it turned out, Patrick was very nice, well-mannered, friendly, and we had a pleasant day taking Alison round Lichfield Cathedral. So we'd agreed to accommodate him for a few days when he returned. At the time of writing he is somewhere in Europe, and expected momentarily. Wonder what he'll think of Lucy? A rosy-cheeked new baby conjured up while he's been away.

"Hello Rob," I said tersely. "I've just dropped a concrete coal bunker on my foot."

"Er, hello," came the answer. "Er, Peter Nicholls can't come up to Newcastle to talk to the SF Group and I wonder if you'd like to take his place? First week in July?"

Flattered, I paused for reflection. I like the Gannet fans and am not exactly averse to talking SF for an evening.

"No, he can't come," said Eileen firmly. "He spends too much time on science fiction as it is."

There then ensued an argument broken by frequent asides to "hang on, Rob, we're discussing it," until my wife played her trump card (which she'd only just remembered). "Anyway, we're going on holiday that week."

So I had to decline the kind invitation. But I'd meant to call Rob anyway. I've missed the soapbox which writing editorials used to provide, and I want to keep in touch with British fandom. Besides, my pal Vernon Brown keeps saying I've gaffed, that I've got mercenary these days and only write for *SF Monthly*. So, would Rob like a column for *Maya*?

He would, and here it is.

I thought I'd begin by talking about some of the things which happen to me, and perhaps start to unravel some of the tangled threads which seem to weave through my life.

For instance, last weekend I'd invited a chap called Adrian Mellor to come along to the house. Adrian has been attending meetings of the Birmingham Group (henceforth to be known as 'BSFG') for six months or so now. Goodness knows how he first heard of us, but he's the sort of person I always wanted to attract; someone with interests of his own, anecdotes to tell, able to contribute something rather than just coming along to listen to the programme as many of our other 'recruits' still tend to do. Like me, he lives in Erdington, which is convenient.

Adrian is studying at the University for a doctorate in sociology, and for his thesis is examining the attraction SF seems to have for its enthusiasts. Nothing 'trendy' or pretentious here, though; he is genuinely fascinated with fandom and reads SF himself. He is also not a mock-sociologist of the Stephen Pickering type; he already has a master's degree in the subject.

Actually Birmingham University is slowly and unwittingly gaining a vague background involvement with science fiction. Adrian's thesis will be the second on SF to come from their Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (though they don't talk about the first), while the name of Tom Shippey still rings hollowly down the corridors of the English Dept. Over in Bio. my mad friend Jack Cohen conducts his experiments into human reproduction, while the Extra-Mural Department still fondly remembers the *Speculation* III Conference and the course on SF which we ran for the two following years.

Back to Adrian. He'd been interviewing other local fans and now it was my turn. He also wanted to inspect some of the items in my collection, in the end borrowing 'The Enchanted Duplicator', 'Fancylopaedia II', and assorted current fnz including *True Rat*, *C*, and *Zimri*. But of course as Vernon will bear mute witness, Saturday afternoons are a busy time for me. If the weather is fine, I said to Adrian, you'd better bring your boots because I'll be digging. If it's dull then I shall be working on the bathroom.

As it turned out the bathroom won that weekend. We carried on a splendid fannish conversation while I hammered away, replacing floorboards. Our house is nearly forty years old and needs things doing to it; recently we demolished a wall between toilet and bathroom proper to make one much larger area which now needs re-tiling, painting, etc.

But we did have a merry chat. We unearthed my own file of *Speculation*, beginning with that tiny purple copy of *Zenith*-1, from 1963. Each issue stirred fond memories, though I haven't opened some of them for years.

There was that time when we collated an issue in Bob Rickard's crummy flat on the Hagley Road (one of a long series of Bob's crummy flats) during a bitterly cold week, Bob coughing and wheezing with 'flu before staggering off to work nights at the sorting office. We had another Adrian in those days, a faceless little nebbish, lacking any obvious personality, who used to come along with the old Aston Group and never say a word but who could collate at twice the speed of anyone else. We used to face him towards a wall and leave him to it. "Are there any more at home like you?" Bob once asked him when we were doing a particularly thick issue.

Happy days! The times we used to bluff our illegal way into the print room at Aston University on Saturday mornings and duplicate away, on tenterhooks in case a patrolling caretaker caught us. Bloodstained issues of no.18, when the stapling machine ran amok. The time Rog Peyton and I hauled a huge pile of paper all the way to Bristol to use Archie Mercer's duplicator, and then ran out of ink on a Saturday afternoon with all the shops closed!

Speculation always was a team effort, though the actual composition of those teams fluctuated wildly over the years. But I can recommend this peculiar satisfaction to any aspiring faned; stick at it, there is a special, proud feeling when looking back over 32 issues of your fanzine (33, really, but we don't talk about the last issue).

Funny, the only other time I've seen this described was in Greg Calkins' *Oops!*, which also reached 33 issues.

There we were, Adrian sitting on the W.C. lid reading old *Zeniths*, me nailing down floorboards, talking SF.

"I'd better be careful or I'll hit a pipe," I said, hitting a pipe.

A fine jet of water under incredible pressure hit me in the face. I pulled up the board again and found I'd put a nail into a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch copper pipe. Swearing, laughing, crying, I told Adrian to put his finger over the hole while I found the stopcock.

I turned off the main in the garage. Water continued to flood out and through the kitchen ceiling. "It's starting to get warm," called Adrian from upstairs.

Damn! I'd holed the central heating system!

Panicking now, I switched off everything that could be switched off in the boiler-house.

"It's getting very H-O-T now," wailed Adrian in anguish.

I ran back upstairs. He was sitting in a puddle, trying to hold a sponge over a geyser of hot water erupting merrily from the floor. Wasn't there a valve on the hot-water cylinder somewhere? There was indeed, and it slowly cut off the pressure. "My wife will kill me," I said. "Must get a plumber."

The first three I called were out or watching football matches. The fourth was more helpful. "Knock the nail all the way into the pipe," he explained. "That will hold it and I'll come on Monday and fix it properly." He lived in the next road.

Finally I found a little man who came along and soldered up the damage, giving me a look which seemed to say: 'I've met idiots like you before.' Vainly I mumbled something about having done some plumbing myself (true: two washing machines installed at different houses, now). He didn't believe me, but at least while we were waiting it gave Adrian and I a good chance to talk about the mysterious lure of science fiction.

That's really what I wanted to write about. Last winter I gave a lecture to Coventry Astronomical Society, and was so intrigued by the parallels between their Astronomy fandom and our own that I did a little article for their magazine. I've been meaning to revise it for Rob ever since, and the subject had been brought back into mind by Bob Shaw's talk at the BSFG, the evening before my plumbing fiasco.

Bob is one of the nicest people I know, and he seems to get even nicer the more I see of him. That very Friday morning I'd by coincidence received an 8000-word story MS from him, via his agent Les Flood, which he'd submitted for the *Andromeda* anthology project. Needless to say I'd read it over the cornflakes and that evening was able to tell him personally that I'd accepted it for the first volume.

Naturally Bob was pleased.

"I'm writing a novel," he said, "but I stopped and did the story instead because you were saying at Coventry how disappointed you were with the stories you were getting."

How kind! And I, drunk no doubt at the time, have no recollection of actually asking Bob for a story at the last Convention.

That night he chose to talk about writing. It was a mixed talk, part serious, part comic, with some excellent advice buried in it for aspiring writers. (I think one of the lads in the Group will be reprinting it in an upcoming fanzine.) He remembered the days when the young hopefuls of the 1950's set themselves writing exercises by taking very simple opening lines and attempting to develop them into stories.

(The very next day Adrian and I found an example of this in *Zenith* 3, in Ted Tubb's piece in that issue. This was the very first item I ever received from a real-life professional writer, and it gave me such a thrill at the time. It begins with the simple words, "He lit a cigarette." Remember, Ted?)

Bob's example was, "He sat on a rock and looked down at the floor."

So far, so good. But then Bob seemed to start talking wildly out of context.

"Floor?" people began to ask. Heads turned in puzzlement about the room.

"Flaw?"

"What flaw?"

"What's he on about?"

I turned, very casually, towards the delectable Sadie who was sitting on my left.

"Er, does he mean flower, do you think?" I asked.

"Why of course," she replied in surprise.

The word spread around the room like a brush-fire. "He means flower."

"Oh."

Satisfied, attention went back to the talk.

Later, in the bar, we mentioned this to Bob.

"But we don't sound the middles of words in Northern Ireland," he said.

"But you're living in England now, Bob," I pointed out gently.

"You're right," he said in a very Northern Irish way.

"Floor. Floore. Fl-ahwr."

"Don't you get talking like that Peter Weston," said Sadie.

But the best bit of Bob's talk that night was when he described his childhood and his awakening interest in SF and allied subjects. This really set my mental bells a-ringing. The parallels were quite striking between our experiences. And, listening to Bob tell of the way he tried to make his own telescope, I thought again of the little piece I wrote for Coventry Astronomical Society.

(They've asked me to talk to them again in the autumn. When I accepted the date I asked if they had ever used my article, and if so could I have a copy of the magazine. Eventually the issue arrived. Some helpful soul had written on a compliment slip "There will be no charge for this issue." They obviously have a lot to learn about pubbing their ish!)

My theory was that pretty much the same sort of people seem to be attracted to the three allied subjects: Astronomy, Space Travel and Science Fiction. Many of us start with one of these and gravitate naturally to the area which suits us best. Being a bit metaphysical for a moment, I'd like to suggest these are but slightly different expressions of a common inner motivation; an idealistic, almost visionary desire for wider horizons.

Like Bob Shaw, I began with Astronomy. Like him I procured a set of lenses from a neighbourhood optician, and like him I found the nett increase in magnification hardly worth the trouble. Then however, while he only managed to buy just the eye-piece of a real telescope, I was able to get the complete thing, a magnificent brass monster all of three feet in length when fully extended, purchased from an Army and Navy surplus establishment and paid for out of pocket money in 26 weekly installments. (£7.50 was a princely sum when I was 13.)

And, as Bob said, it is amazing how suspicious the local neighbourhood becomes when they know you have a telescope. If I'd ridden noisy motorbikes up and down the street, or tied cats to lampposts in the rather poor district where I was brought up, there would have been no criticism. But I came in for much abuse because I used to set up my prize on a convenient dustbin in one of the mean yards and try to peer at the constellations. One man even threatened to set his dog on me unless I cleared off, and he didn't even live around there!

How this adds spice to the thrill of discovery! To see the Pleiades from a coalshed roof, or Jupiter from a bedroom window, how this stuck in the mind of an adolescent starwatcher!

I still remember encountering Fred Hoyle's *Frontiers of*



As a follow up to the electronic ping-pong games that can now be seen at most amusement arcades, some bright guy brought out an electronic display game called SPACE WAR. There don't seem to be too many of them around as yet, but it is probably only a matter

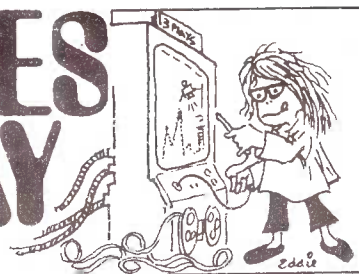
of time until they are fairly commonplace.

The idea is fairly simple. Flying saucers move across the screen in a random pattern and periodically, from different directions each time, a rocket ship moves onto the screen. You control the rocket with four buttons (one to turn it

right, one left, one for increased thrust straight ahead, and one to launch missiles from the nose of the ship to zap saucers) and have to zap as many saucers as possible in the 100 seconds of the game. What complicates matters is that the saucers can also launch missiles and are out to

SPACE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

MARSHA ELKIN JONES



zap your rockets. And since the rockets appear on the screen from a different spot each time, you are likely, unless you're very alert, to find that you've had a rocket zapped before you've managed to get it oriented. If you are real good, or real lucky, and zap more saucers than you've had rockets zapped, the black and white

of the screen reverses to a negative picture and you have been put into hyperspace. You then have a further 100 seconds to zap saucers. All in all it's a nice complicated game and one that demands a fair degree of skill.

However, this wasn't good enough for some American computer program-

mers. Apparently, a group of them got bored with one of their standard spare time activities (trying to make a better chess/cribbage/draughts/other game program) and decided to turn out a better space game. The result was an incredibly complicated thing called LUNAR LAND-ING. (Contd. overleaf)

Astronomy, a non-fiction book absolutely full of the wonders of the Universe. I still remember the precise moment when I finally understood Cecilia Payne-Gaposhkin's explanation of the Cepheid Variable method of measuring the distance of stars, in her book Stars in the Making. (I can still just about explain this technique: ask me at the next convention if you're really interested.)

Astronomy made a deep impression on my soul, and after a brief and abortive effort to organise a group at school that year, I finally found the Birmingham Astronomy Group and became for a while their youngest member.

I didn't get very much out of the B.A.G., unfortunately, through a combination of extreme youth and diffidence, and also because their energies seemed mostly to be consumed in the grinding of a 21-inch reflector, a project which they had started at the formation of the group in 1951, six years earlier.

I wasn't too enthusiastic about this, having already spent many hours in the school basement in an unsuccessful attempt to grind my own 8-inch mirror. I'd seen enough carborundum powder to last me a lifetime, so within the year had drifted away from the Group. To this very day, so I understand, they are still busily grinding away. If only they had possessed an operational telescope things might have been different for me.

But before I left, two things had struck responsive chords. Several of the members were preoccupied in making small rockets, and secondly, there was a tattered heap of coverless 'yank magazines' in a box in the Group's library. The latter now gave me my first bemused sight of adult science fiction, which I now recognise through hindsight to have been old Astoundings, containing parts of Grey Lensman.

First I flirted briefly and spectacularly with rocketry. I discovered there were thousands of rocket enthusiasts in the United States, building from approved kits and firing from U.S. Army bases. However in the U.K., the Fireworks Act of 1888 threatened instant imprisonment for anyone who messed around with bangers. No distinction was made between fireworks and scientific research, and feeling this was unreasonable I wrote politely to the Air Ministry asking permission to conduct a series of firings from an old airfield at Castle Bromwich.

They declined to answer, but passed my letter to the Chief Constable of Birmingham, who very politely asked me to drop in and see him at the police station.

Diplomatically, he didn't actually say I shouldn't make rockets (I'd already discovered the many propellants which can

be made from simple household ingredients) but instead showed me photographs of what had happened to previous experimenters.

So effective was this persuasion that I never made another missile. And I later learned that one of my heroes at the B.A.G. had lost most of one hand through an accident on the launching pad.

Washed up at 13! Nothing was left but to join the British Interplanetary Society, but they turned out to have little to offer. I wanted the dreams of space: all they offered was a Journal rich in the realms of higher math with exciting papers like 'Specific Impulse Ratios of Configurations Using Dimethylhydrazine.' Their other magazine, the recently-begun Spaceflight, was better but still very much a compendium of launchings and hardware data.

For things were happening. Suddenly the Space Race had begun, with the advent of Sputnik 1 on October 4th, 1957. Suddenly the newspapers were full of it all: scornfully I said that I'd known all along it had to happen.

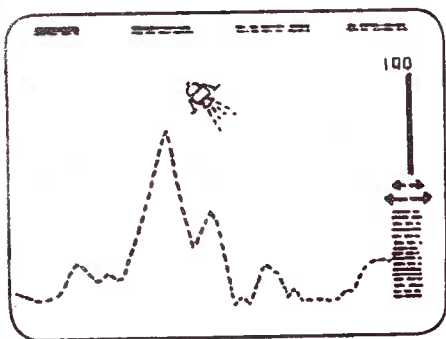
Various strands of my life began to come together. The old magazines at the B.A.G. hadn't stirred immediate action, but an advert in Spaceflight for the SFBC brought me my first hardcover title, the Robert Heinlein Omnibus. This prompted a descent upon local junk shops, producing a number of copies of Galaxy and Astounding to be carted home and devoured. This was the real stuff!

By late 1957 I was hooked on science fiction, hanging around Birmingham's Rag Market every Saturday afternoon to buy old magazines, ransacking the public libraries, and finally taking the monumental step of subscribing to the above two magazines. I also collected If, but was never very impressed with the British magazines, thus not until 1963 did I discover that I wasn't alone.

Then I found a little pink slip in one of those Rag Market acquisitions, "Are you interested in science fiction...." it began, and in that way I was introduced to the Erdington Science Fiction Circle, later to grow into the BSFG. But that's another story.

So what's my point? Only this, I think. All of us have similar tales to tell, and it seems to indicate that SF fans must almost be born with this odd craving, and manage to find their own ways towards fandom no matter what their circumstances. It will be interesting to see what Adrian Mellor discovers about us, won't it?

The basic idea is quite simple. You are piloting a ship coming down to the lunar surface on a slant (the starting vertical descent and horizontal drift speeds are always the same). The computer of your ship has just conked out and you have to land the LEM manually or crash. After an opening message on the computer display screen informing you of these facts and wishing you good luck, the display shifts to show you the opening situation: mountains on most of the left of the screen (impossible to land on), a small irregular plain (difficult to land on) and the start of more mountains on the right. You also have on the extreme right a column with 100% at the top and 0% on the bottom. This indicates your % of thrust and you are always started at 75% of thrust capacity. You alter this upward or downward with the light pencil which is your only control instrument. Along the top of the screen you have three information readouts. To start with, they give horizontal and vertical velocity and altitude, but any of these can be changed for one of the alternate readouts listed on the right, below the % of thrust column. (The only one of the alternates that I found of much use was the one giving the amount of fuel remaining.) The remaining items of control are two pairs of arrows pointing in opposite directions. If you touch the smaller arrow pointing left with the light pencil the ship will turn slowly left for as long as the light pencil touches the arrow. The larger left pointing arrow turns the ship to the left more quickly. The right pointing arrows turn the ship to the right at the appropriate speeds.



When the game starts, the ship is coming onto the screen from the upper left corner at a high vertical and horizontal speed. The thrust is set at 75% of maximum. All you have to do is cut the horizontal drift to zero by the time you are over the plain that is the only possible landing place, slow the vertical speed down to a point where you can land safely when you reach the lunar surface, and make sure during all this that you still have enough fuel to land when you've accomplished these things. Sounds simple, doesn't it? After all, you basically only have two controls to worry about, the % of thrust column and the sets of arrows to change the angle of the ship from upright to the left or right.

Happily for those of us who like complicated games, it isn't that simple. The first time I tried it I concentrated very

hard on cancelling the high vertical speed so I wouldn't crash. Unfortunately, I forgot about the almost equally high horizontal drift and discovered what happens when you make that mistake. Your ship hits the right edge of the screen, bounces, and falls slowly downward (picking up speed as it goes) with the controls out of commission, crashes, and explodes. The computer flashes you a message that you've just crashed the ship into the edge of the moon and kill everyone aboard, and the program starts over with your ship coming into sight on the top left of the screen.

At this point I made the next typical mistake. I managed to get my horizontal speed cancelled out nicely, and suddenly realised that my vertical speed had gotten even higher and I was getting close to the surface. So I straightened up the ship and moved the thrust up to 100% of capacity and watched the speed slow down. And then the thrust stopped because I had used up

my total fuel allocation. And once again I got to watch the ship slowly pick up speed, crash, and explode. And got to read a new, rather condescending message from the computer informing me that I had rather stupidly run out of fuel and crashed the ship and that there were no survivors.

And at that point I decided that I needed a rest and turned the light pencil over to Eddie. He crashed two ships into the edge of the moon in quick succession and then proceeded to discover a new method of crashing the ship. He was doing quite nicely on his third try until he got a little too enthusiastic with the thrust control and sent the ship upwards. He cut the thrust off as the ship headed off the top of the screen, figuring that when it reappeared he'd still have enough fuel to actually land the thing. Unfortunately for this piece of reasoning, the computer informed him that when a ship goes out of television coverage it is automatically out of fuel,

an alternative to grief by CHRIS MORGAN

It is 1988 and Jason Taverner has it all going for him. Thirty million people watch his weekly TV show (9 thru 10 each Thursday night — don't you dare miss it, now! he is a "six" — genetically superior to most of the human race; his ten LPs are all in great demand; his latest single, "Nowhere Nuthin' Fuck-Up", is racing up the charts. In a harshly authoritarian, police-controlled USA, 42-year-old Taverner is one of the lucky few who can afford to do and say what he wants, without fear of the police, because of his popularity, his personal charisma and, in particular, his vast income.

Then Jason Taverner wakes up in a cheap hotel and finds that nobody has ever heard of him. He is still wearing his expensive silk suit and he still has the wad of money which he normally carries (\$5,000): in fact nothing about the world seems to have changed except that he has been edited out of it. (Once more into the alternative reality, dear friends, once more!) He has no identity cards, his friends don't know him and he has no file in central records.

This is the racy opening to a fascinating but maddeningly inconsistent book, in which Dick breaks some new ground as well as returning to most of his regular themes (though he gives both religion and omnipotent aliens a miss this time around). The most unusual feature is that Jason Taverner is the main character (to begin with, anyway). Normally, Dick's protagonist is an insignificant, downtrodden anti-hero who becomes important only through his interaction with a figure of power. By contrast, Taverner is a figure of power. Although he is suddenly without official existence he remains a hero: fast-thinking, fast-moving and attractive to women.

In the ensuing race against time, first to obtain some forged identity cards before he is stopped by the police, and then to discover why this has happened to him, Taverner meets up with a variety of psychotics and drug addicts — the magnificently surreal and yet frighteningly believable characters with which Dick always populates his novels. Kathy, who does a brilliant job of making false identity cards, is a tiny, unstable 19-year-old, prone to screaming fits, who is sometimes frigid, sometimes randy. Taverner is appalled by her and by the fact that his life is in her hands. He is offhand and patronising towards her, thinking of her as a prostitute of the mind.

"Guess what's at the top of my shopping list for tomorrow,"

Kathy was saying. "Dead flies. Do you know why?"

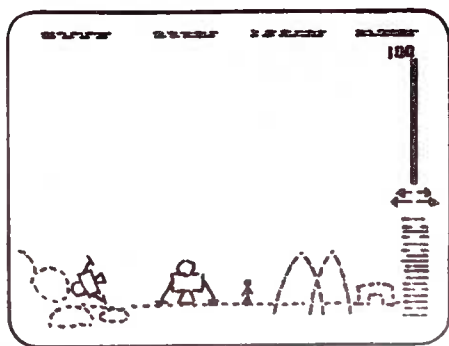
"They're high in protein."

"Yes, but that's not why. I'm not getting them for myself.

I buy a bag of them every week for Bill. my turtle."

There are many delightfully zany exchanges of this type scattered throughout the pages, but much of the dialogue is heavier and more philosophical, as between Taverner and Ruth (a has-been at 39, but rich through countless marriages; an ex-mistress of Taverner's). Although she doesn't know him, of course, she finds Taverner very attractive and he picks her up, using her flat as a means of keeping clear of the police.

FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID by Philip K. Dick (Gollancz £2.20, 231 pp., ISBN 0 575 0180 1).



and he got to sit there and watch the ship come back into sight, pick up speed and crash.

Eddie turned the light pencil over to my sister Sheila. She crashed three ships. Sheila turned the pencil over to her husband Mike. He crashed three ships. Mike turned the light pencil over to me again...

It is in a conversation between these two that Dick introduces the central statement of the book. Taverner says: "You love someone and they leave... ..and there they go, out of your life forever, and after that until you're dead you're carrying around this huge hunk of love with no one to give it to. And if you do find someone to give it to, the same thing happens all over." Then Ruth points out that love is not just selfishly wanting somebody, but doing whatever is best for them, even if it kills you. And when you lose somebody whom you love, she says, you must grieve, because grief is "the most powerful emotion... ..a good feeling... ..the cycle of love completed." The necessity of grief, due to its cathartic effect, is what FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID is all about.

But where does the policeman come in? Well, on page 51 Dick introduces us to Police General Felix Buckman, who slowly takes over from Taverner as the novel's main character. True, this enables Dick to complete his study of grief and to justify the book's title (a misquotation from John Dowland, 1563-1626) but it makes for a most peculiar and irritating structure. I found that I wanted to return to the exploits of Jason Taverner, but was forced instead to stick with Felix Buckman, a deeper yet less interesting personality. Buckman's appearance is necessary, since he is the link between Taverner and Alys, Buckman's sister. Alys is an incestuous, lesbian, sado-masochistic drug addict; she is also a key figure (plot-wise, as they say). I found her frightening and the only character in the book whom I was unable to relate to real life.

The relationship between Taverner and Buckman is interesting, because as long as nobody remembers Taverner, Buckman can have him arrested, killed or released just as he wishes, and Taverner's only card is his extra ability due to being a six. But when Taverner is in his own reality he has the weight of public adulation behind him and is in the more powerful position.

The explanation for Taverner's sudden non-existence, when it finally comes, seems too facile and unsatisfying (in the same way as the explanations in MAZE OF DEATH and UBIK), though in FLOW MY TEARS there are no major loose ends, which must be something of a record for Dick. He even provides an epilog (sic) which describes briefly the fates of some of the major characters (and objects) in the book.

FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID is not Dick's very best, but it must find a place among his top half-dozen works (and among the top half-dozen SF novels of the year). Its relative lack of fantasy makes it all the more grimly believable, though it is certainly not his most down-beat novel. Well, it couldn't be, not with that bag of dead flies and walk-on appearances by a gelatin-like Callisto cuddle sponge and a couple of ceramic pots.

And my friend Leslie, who'd gotten us into the computer room at her office so we could try the game, stood there and giggled.

And I gritted my teeth, increased the thrust briefly to 100% to cancel out the horizontal drift quickly, slowed the vertical drift somewhat, and watched the ground get closer. And all of a sudden the whole picture changed and I was looking at a close up picture of the ground, littered with crashed ships and the occasional rock. I was so startled by this that I forgot to check my descent speed and, naturally, crashed. This time, however, the ship didn't explode and the message was a bit better. It told me that it would have been a pretty good landing if I'd been going a bit slower, but unfortunately I hadn't and everyone had been killed when the hull cracked open.

Encouraged by this lesser fiasco, I tried again and this time I succeeded in

getting close to the ground at a slow speed and with some fuel left over. The ground looked totally impossible to land on, and Leslie informed me at this point that if I started the ship drifting to the side I'd go onto a new picture of ground when the ship got to the edge of the screen and I might find a spot there (if my fuel held out). So I started drifting and, sure enough, when I got to the edge of the screen the picture changed and there was a funny structure, looking like a simplified outline of a MacDonalds (an American chain of roadside equivalents to Wimpy's), with some clear ground nearby. So I landed the ship, the computer congratulated me on a pretty good landing, and a little man got out of the ship, walked over to the MacDonalds, ordered two cheeseburgers and a Big Mac (milkshake) to go, got back into the ship and took off again. I had succeeded.

Eddie passed up his next turn in favour of taking pictures of the rest of us crashing ships, so I turned the light pencil over to Sheila who crashed some more ships. Then she turned the light pencil over to Mike and he became the second one of us to succeed in landing a ship on the Moon. His message said he'd made an excellent landing and, since there was no MacDonalds in the area in which he'd landed, his little man got out and planted a flag. His ship did not get a new allocation of fuel to take off with and remained as a hazard to future landings.

At this point we'd been there for quite some time and had to think about leaving shortly, so Leslie took over the light pencil and showed us some of the other variants on the program. If you are unfortunate enough to crash on the MacDonalds you get a very nasty message saying: "You clod! You have just destroyed the only MacDonalds on the moon! Now what are you going to do for food?" If you land on a flag that someone has previously planted you get chewed out for destroying your country's flag. And, if by some truly incredible series of mistakes, you run the ship off the left side of the screen before getting to a close up picture, the computer flashes "inept, inept" at you.

From what we were told, there were still dozens of variants that we hadn't gotten through yet and the program continues to grow in complexity every time a programmer with the facilities available has a new brainstorm. I've asked Leslie to send me a copy of the program. Now, does anyone out there have access to a computer with a display console?

At the last Boskone, one of the committee managed to get a display console with the necessary attendant hardware (not a full computer) to have the game available to the con attendees. It was so popular that they quickly had to put up a sign limiting people to three tries at a time. And by the end of the convention (without the computer proper they couldn't restart the program minus crashed ships) the ground pictures were so covered with crashed and landed ships that it was totally impossible to land another ship.

THE *SEXUAL
SIMPLISM*
IN THE
ARTICLE
ESCAPE
ME...



THE DISSECTING TABLE

at which MALCOLM EDWARDS picks apart a couple of fanzines, his victims kicking and struggling the while

I was recently reading the Preamble to the rules for the new Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards, and I came upon their definition of what constitutes a fannish fan and a fannish fanzine. It makes interesting reading. Did you know that a fannish fanzine fan is 'a devotee of literary Science Fiction who manifests that interest by involvement in publications dealing with literary SF and with the doings of amateur and professional literary SF personalities'. Wow. Next time I get caught reading *Multimedia* again, I shall have my explanation all ready.

Well, I have also lately been reading some fannish fanzines (i.e. publications of the above type 'which do not pay their contributors and which are published for enjoyment to which any financial profit is incidental') and I'm mortified to have to tell you that the extent to which an interest in literary Science Fiction is manifested in their pages is severely limited. These poor guys still think that fannish fanzines are simply fanzines by, about, and for fans, and nothing more pretentious than that. They approach that aim in different ways, of course, which is just as well for the would-be fanzine reviewer.

Take *Triode*, for instance. Now *Triode*, as its editors and correspondents never cease to remind us, is a miraculously re-born fanzine of a decade or more ago. *Triode* 20, the second in the new incarnation, is full of letters congratulating Eric Bentcliffe and Terry Jeeves on showing young fans how it ought to be done. This is a pity. *Triode* is pleasant and enjoyable, with a peculiarly anachronistic charm, but it isn't the be-all and end-all of fanzines. It shows one approach to fanzine publishing — one which has fallen into neglect of late, but which seems capable of revival (hence *Triode*), which is a welcome thing as it adds to the variety of available fanzines.

Its approach differs in several ways from the mainstream of present day fanzine publishing. There is, initially, its appearance, relying entirely on hand-cut illustration. Other fanzines still use handcuts, of course (*Scottishe* springs to mind), but only as fillers: *Triode* tries to revive them as a fannish artform. The instrument for this is Jim Cawthorn, who in both nos. 20 and 21 (the two I have in front of me) contributes covers and full-page illustrations of quite remarkable delicacy and complexity. Technically, of course, this is a much more limiting medium than the more-common electrostencilling of black and white originals, and I admit that I find it difficult to understand why an artist should deliberately choose to work with such a self-imposed handicap (I'm sure financial economy isn't that crucial). The results are admirable, as are scale models of cathedrals built with matchsticks.

Much of the material in *Triode* is humorous. The styles are moderately heterogeneous, but the one method they don't encompass is the one which is characteristic of most current fan humour, which is low key, Monty Python influenced, and tends to recount anecdotes in a humorous style without much exaggeration. In *Triode* we encounter humorous fictions of various kinds, the most successful being Michael Moorcock's self-parody in no. 20, and the least amusing being Archie Mercer's Post Office story in the same issue. We also discover articles which feature entirely apocryphal adventures, greatly exaggerated, of actual fans. Archie Mercer's piece comes into this category, as does Eric Bentcliffe's episode in the history of British fandom (which intersects with reality here and there — but not too often). I don't know why nobody does this sort of thing any more, but it's certainly true that they don't. It must be attributable to changing influences in humour, but I don't know enough about the subject to point with great certainty to them (though I think it must be the Goons and Monty Python). Whatever the reason I find I can read such pieces, where successful (as Eric's mostly is) with some enjoyment, but without actually being made to laugh (as, say, Roy Kettle's work makes me laugh). There is a contrast to be drawn between this sort of thing and material which fails to induce laughter because it simply isn't very good (e.g. Don Allen's series of feeble puns disguised as a convention report).

A consequence of this different approach is that the material always tends to have a beginning, middle and end (unlike

much fan-writing just rambles). There's something to be said in favour of either approach (basically, that either approach is worthwhile in the hands of a good writer). The weakness in *Triode* may be that it becomes liable to publish articles like Alan Hunter's "It's A Comic World" in no. 21. (On the other hand, it may just be that Eric Bentcliffe and/or Terry Jeeves liked this particular article. I'm aware of the dangers of generalising too widely around something as capricious as fanzine editorial policies: nevertheless, if a review is to be more than a tabulated list of contents, it is a risk the intrepid reviewer has to take.) Hunter's article goes through the traditional ritual of stating a thesis, presenting arguments in support, and arriving at a (hopefully) logical conclusion. It really is such a feeble mess that it seems a shame to spend much time on it. Hunter's premise (well, one of them) is that SF and its attendant fandom has had its day and that the future lies in comics and comics fandom. His argument that SF is dead has something to do with writers having nothing central left to write about once man went into space: his arguments in favour of comics fandom seem entirely to do with collecting: nowhere does he consider even for one moment the possibility that one might be an SF fan rather than a comics fan for the simple reason that one likes SF but not comics. Comics have 'the latest ideas of combining art and literature as communication' — well, they may combine art and words, but not literature, I'd have thought. You should collect them because the chances are you can make money: you should join comics fandom because it still has every one of the ghetto characteristics SF fandom has gradually shrugged off. It certainly doesn't seem to have occurred to Alan Hunter that there is nothing like *Triode* in comics fandom — but maybe he was too busy watching his Conan comics appreciate in value to notice. This is the fanzine article in its most debased form (i.e. closely resembling a school essay) and it is, frankly, rather a surprise to find it in a fanzine which otherwise seems as sure of its direction as *Triode*. It's a direction at a tangent to that which I habitually follow, but it provides a piece of variety which I have found myself enjoying more, perhaps, than I would have predicted when I picked up the first revived issue.

At the other extreme of the fannish spectrum there are fanzines like *Amor*. Not that there is another fanzine quite like *Amor*. Most of the time it is a personalzine, and furthermore one which is always briefer and more compressed than one would like it to be. It also happens to be just about my favourite fanzine of the moment, though if you pressed me I would be very hard put to say why. I don't know Susan Wood; her writings don't have much specific common background for me to relate to. Yet I greatly look forward to each new installment and become oddly involved in Susan's personal world of Canlit, friendly fur coats, and Humphrey and the Dumptrucks concerts.

Triode is, as far as these things ever are, a formally-structured package: the contents and means of production may be different, but in other respects it is typically a magazine. *Amor*, on the other hand, is more of an open letter from its editor. It rambles; it interrupts itself; it changes mood; it comes to abrupt ends. In the wrong hands such a format is a fatal temptation to self-indulgence; in the right hands it provides a uniquely personal form of mass-communication. A couple of years ago everybody started doing personalzines. Most of them, thankfully, have fallen by the wayside, and nowadays you find people saying that they can't bear personalzines. That's silly. They're good if they're good, to coin a sharp critical phrase, and *Amor* is about the best there is. Fanzines like this succeed precisely according to the extent of their editors' writing abilities. Susan Wood writes very well, in an unspectacular but effortlessly expressive style which makes the magazine a responsive paper extension of her personality. Much of the pleasure in reading it is that it expresses such cheerfulness. *Amor* 6 is the most purely joyful fanzine I've ever read, overflowing with it to the extent that it put me in a good mood all day just reading it.

Sometimes it turns into a Proper Fanzine too. No. 6 has a cover and a contents page and articles and a letter column. It's appropriate, though, that one of the 'articles' should turn out to be a long extract from a letter. This is the style in which many contributions to fannish fanzines tend to be written: direct, conversational, loose. It's the other approach from article-writing; it gets put in fanzines and called a 'column'. A short column could equally well be a longish letter-of-comment, and vice versa (see, for example, the Gary Hubbard column in *Mota* 9 and the



MARK ADLARD
reviews
a gloomy
book

Do not be put off by the cover, which shows desperate men with guns patrolling round Sir Alfred Gilbert's Eros in a deserted Piccadilly Circus; and which carries a blurb by Asimov testifying that he has never been so convinced and frightened "at one and the same time." Roberto Vacca is an expert on computers and electronic systems, and in this book he gives facts and reasons for the imminent collapse of our civilisation.

Vacca argues that the general catastrophe is now unavoidable, and that it will begin between 1985 and 1995, starting in Japan and America. Britain is somewhat comfortably down the list of countries which will follow, because of its slow rate of growth. The basic reason for the collapse is our increasing dependence on increasingly large systems which are becoming increasingly unstable. Examples of such large systems are: communications by telephone, telegram and telex; railways and their auxiliary services; airlines and methods of traffic control; vehicles and road networks; systems for generating, transmitting and distributing electrical energy; postal systems; mechanised production processes; military defence complexes.

Such systems have proliferated until they have reached critical and unstable dimensions. They are about to go out of

Gary Hubbard letter in *Mota* 10). The example in *Amor* is a fine specimen of this kind of writing. The author, David Emerson, spends a couple of pages describing a Sunday afternoon walk round Greenwich Village in the course of which he succeeds not only in evoking the atmosphere very expertly, but also reflects on the passing of a whole generation. It's worth quoting him on the counter-culture that he never quite made it into:

"For a time I almost succeeded. I wore jeans, but I didn't have any desert boots. I was an impoverished student, but I wasn't a radical. I was away from home but I hadn't run away. I had day-glo posters on the wall and acid rock on the stereo, but I also had a fellowship at the university and an account at the bank. I never once went to the Fillmore East, never ate brown rice, never took acid. I didn't make sandals and I didn't play rock'n'roll. I was a fake freak. In fact, almost everything I knew about the counter-culture I learned from *Rolling Stone* and the underground comics."

I'm sure I can't be the only *Maya* reader in whom that strikes a responsive chord, and I've never seen it better put. Still, that's what you come to expect from *Amor*, whatever its guise: good writing breeds good writing. You can't subscribe to it, and I'm not sure what you have to do to get it — but if you don't get it you should find it worth your while to do so.

control. It might be argued that computers and management science can save us. Vacca shows that they can't.

We have, Vacca says, been conditioned into expecting far too much from computers (that they will produce automatic translations of high quality, demonstrate new theorems, develop new concepts etc.). He traces our misplaced optimism to the work of Norbert Wiener (who I believed invented the word "cybernetics", although it appears Ampere beat him to it by almost a century). It should now be clear, however, that computers cannot in themselves solve management's problems.

The charge against management is more far-reaching. While the size and complexity of large systems have outgrown what were once regarded as their upper limits, the ability of management to control and direct them is not growing but declining. I would guess that Vacca is at times drawing on bitter personal experience of "top" management making administrative decisions on the basis of technical advice it doesn't understand. During the New York blackout of 1965, we are told, turbo alternators at power stations were seriously damaged because the pumps for the lubrication of their bearings were powered by a hookup to the very network that the alternators fed.

The book by James Burnham, says Vacca, should have been called not *The Managerial Revolution* but *The Managerial Involution*. Evidence of growing cynicism about managerial performance is now common — Parkinson's Law, the Peter Principle, Robert Townsend's *Up the Organisation*. The main causes of managerial incompetence are said to be lack of information; lack of imagination; and lack of courage.

We have had a foretaste of what form the disaster will take. In 1965 the network carrying electrical power throughout New England, New York and Ontario became unstable: in New York City 600,000 people were marooned in the subways. In 1969 a large part of the New York telephone network became overloaded and was inoperative for several days. In 1970 there was a crisis on the Penn Central Railway: out of 413 trains 117 didn't run at all, and almost all the others suffered serious delays.

Vacca's argument is that such breakdowns will become more frequent, and that it is only a matter of time before two large systems collapse simultaneously with catastrophic consequences. For example: there is a coincidental traffic jam and railway standstill in New York during January. The next shift of air traffic controllers cannot go to work, and the previous shift has to stay on duty. An exhausted controller makes a mistake. Two aeroplanes collide, hit a high voltage line and break it. The overloaded network collapses and there is a blackout. It snows. The snow ploughs cannot operate because the roads are blocked with abandoned cars. Many of the cars have kept their engines running, in an attempt to keep the occupants warm. When they run out of petrol they cannot refuel because the electric motors of the petrol pumps will not function. City workers cannot return home by either car or train, and they light fires in their offices. Some fires spread, and the fire-engines cannot reach them. Everyone is trying to telephone at the same time, and the entire network is blocked. The looting of supermarkets begins...

The ensuing collapse of the economy will be on an immensely greater scale than that of 1929. There will be a sharp drop in population, with most of the early deaths occurring in hospitals. There will be a rapid glut of consumer goods, durable goods, and all industrial products. The big systems will break up into small, self-sufficient subsystems. The new society will develop new methods of evaluation. Used clothes, for example, instead of being bought by the poor, will be the heirlooms of the more fortunate classes...

And so we enter the scenario of the innumerable "catastrophe" novels. Roberto Vacca's description of how it will start is the best I have come across.

I can think of only one way in which the catastrophe might be avoided. That is the development of a genetically improved Executive class, using techniques of Management Science more sophisticated than anything employed at the present time. Only my own modesty prevents me from naming the novels in which such a solution has been implemented.

THE COMING DARK AGE, by Roberto Vacca. (Translated from the Italian by Dr. J.S. Whale. Nonfiction. Panther 1974. 176pp. £0.50 paperback.)

Fifty-three locs to date on Maya 7. Quite some difference from the mini response last issue. Very nice; this should be a good lettercolumn, if I've edited and ordered it properly. Read it and see. Before you go, though, some comments from me on recurring themes in the locs. Firstly, the way my editorial moaning about the paucity of British fanzines coincided with a revival of such size that it almost amounted to a boom. I know, I know. It's the Geis trick of producing tasty words just in case they need eating later. Secondly, one or two people misread my editorial to mean that I actually felt an inferiority complex had affected fandom in Britain. No. I quote: "Such an inferiority complex would be totally groundless." I never meant that it had actually developed. Thirdly, the theme recurring most often of all ran: "Bob Shaw — marvellous — best thing in the issue." And then usually stopped, worse luck. Forgive me, Bob. If I don't actually print forty-three separate little doses of egoboo: "Bob Shaw — great" can become a little monotonous if chanted repetitively enough by enough people. They didn't make any other comments, the fools.

Finally, one last reason why there weren't many locs last issue — a spe tells me that there are still a couple of piles of Maya 6's, in stamped addressed envelopes but unposted, at Mauler's flat in London. I'll strangle 'im on your behalf, if you thought you were entitled to one and didn't get one. Write to him, not me. ... Wotthehell, that's all in the past. Take it away, Susan.

Susan Wood,
Department of English,
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Canada.

Many thanks for Maya 7, which has been sitting waiting patiently for me to work down through a 7" stack of mail. I've just finished marking termpapers and exams, you see, and can take a rest, believe me, ever

andazines are more interesting than the fiftieth termpaper on "The Ending of Heart of Darkness". ("Kurtz dies and Marlow goes home and I felt confused" is what I usually get.)

Not that I mean to suggest that Maya is a crudeline. The layout, not to please even Mr. Glicksohn... the material is excellent... there's even artwork (and you pretended to be a British fanzine!)

What I find most interesting is your editorial, because I agree with it precisely:

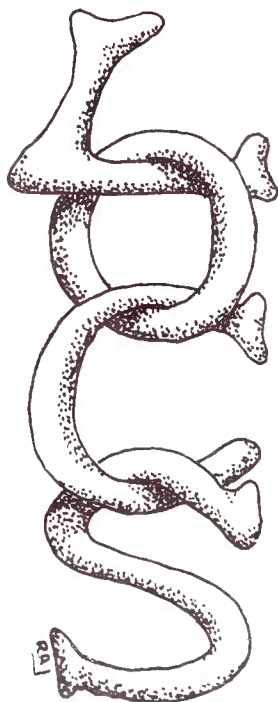
I'm an academic myself: I have taught sf, and hope to do so again. I teach it for the same reasons students take it, or so I hope: we think it's worth taking seriously, and we enjoy it.

Now a good many sf readers — and writers — are worried about academics "exploiting" sf: writing boring, incomprehensible little papers merely for academic credit; giving classes that succeed only in making readers loathe sf (or convincing them to take it only because it seems a cheap, easy credit — Mickey Mouse classes they're called in North America, I don't know what you call them); and jetting off on the university's money to pontificate at each other.

The problems of which you rightly complain seem far, far more common in the North American academic journals. Initially, as a neo, I was thrilled that Those Erudite People took sf seriously (instead of telling me not to "waste time on that sci-fi stuff." Both times I have been interviewed for an academic position, the English department chairman has been careful to make sure that I am a serious scholar, not someone "going to waste all your time on that sci-fi stuff." Sigh.)

As I met more people in the sf field, and especially as I

CIRCULATION:



read fanzines, though, my interest in the academic-crit aspect waned. I spend my working hours reading and writing lit-crit; if Hiram Q. Scholar, pontificating on "Continuity and Discontinuity As A Structural Principle in Lucky Starr and the Pirates of the Asteroids" can't hold MY interest beyond the first specialised and jargonistic paragraph, then what hope does he have of interesting the non-academic reader? Boring writing is boring writing, whether it's a con report that doesn't come off, or nonsense dressed up in a pedantic costume. (Or maybe I just have a lower tolerance for the sercon-sf equivalent of unrisen bread-dough; I find I tend to read, and write, "fannish" material as a reaction against my working life, and as relaxation.)

To the critics-of-critics, I have always replied by pointing to the British serious (as opposed to "sercon" which has all sorts of deservedly bad connotations) journals: Speculation, which I admire extravagantly; Foundation, which for me is the epitome of what a fanzine-about-sf should be, intelligent and witty and especially un-dull; Cypher and Vector. And now Maya, though with Bob Shaw (Bob Shaw!!) and artwork and all you're more in the well-balanced-genzine tradition. In these fanzines people talk about sf. They do NOT lecture, or bog the reader down in a forest of undigested symbols and undigestible academese and unintelligible subordinate clauses.

The British (and Australian) mags continue to interest, delight and stimulate my mind, though you'd never know it from the absence of locs. Once upon a time I thought I'd never have anything intelligent enough to say to Speculation's readers; I still feel that way, a little. ((So do I — a lot!)) Furthermore, until this month, when I mailed off my thesis, I haven't had time. Maybe next year.

I wonder if your fears of an "inferiority complex" are justified? The trend in North America of late has been to smaller, informal and usually personal fanzines. As Mike points out, his current zine is mimeoed, editor-written and produced to satisfy him and interest his friends; so is mine; it's a far cry from our Energumen days. I shouldn't predict, though. In the past few months, I seem to have been getting a large proportion of serious-study-of-sf zines (one of which, Dave and Beth Gorman's Gorbett, lamented the dearth of serious-commentary fanzines in the fannish universe! Ah, the wheel of fandom turns again...)

It has just hit me that I haven't commented on anything else in the issue: Shaw was a delight (Both Eli and I get Random, but since Gorra prides himself on his peccable mimeography, it was easier to read it in Maya). Priest was interesting as always. But Ian Williams... more, more! Having experienced the same situations and emotions, at about the same time, I was impressed mostly with his ability to recapture and communicate the experience. I could have reacted with mindless nostalgia for the good old activist days; instead he made me think.

Keep it Up.

Peter Roberts,
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London W.1.

I think you have a good point concerning the dangers that academic sf journals present to serious sf fanzines, and I'm glad to see that you didn't attack this threat from the

wrong angle (i.e. criticising the newcomers as ill-informed literary trendsetters). The trouble, as you say, lies in the possible lack of confidence by fanzine editors and contributors in their own abilities to discuss science fiction well and usefully. One of the major problems, I believe, is that academic jargon is off-putting and intimidating — the layman is either falsely impressed by such language or considers it pretentious (and starts flinging words like "pseudo-intellectual" around in an attempt to dismiss the whole thing). In addition, the majority of sf fans come from or still inhabit the scientific world and are therefore highly suspicious of anything connected with art or literature (and that split is not to be underestimated — it starts in school and becomes a gulf at university level, continuing thence into the professions). But the academic literary journals and their contributors have no god-given insights or rights to discuss any form of fiction; they are no threat to the serious sf fanzine unless fans consider themselves inferior or inadequate. Fanzines are produced for fans and not for students of literature — fanzines should not, therefore, seek to mimic the journals or compete with them. If they do, they'll produce a piti-

ful half-breed failure — like *Riverside Quarterly*. Fanzines should follow their own distinctive paths (as they always have done) without attempting to emulate any professional magazines (literary or otherwise). The serious sf fanzines may well find that they've lost their unchallenged lead in sf criticism and comment — but that's the price of literary and popular respectability.

That was a serious comment on science fiction by Peter Roberts. Read it, and feel confused.

((I don't — I just feel in agreement.))



Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Ave., Toronto M6P 2S3, Ontario, Canada. Facts would seem to bely your editorial remarks on the sad state of British fanzine fandom. In the week I was away visiting England and Seacon, I received just six fanzines in the mail from the thundering hordes of North American faneds while I was handed seven new issues of British fanzines. (And since I've got back I've gotten three more English zines!) Perhaps everyone made a special effort to Pub Their Ish by Seacon (ho ho, Peter Egg, ho ho!) but I gather that certain fans such as the Pardoes are pretty regular publishers all year round. To this external observer, British fandom seems healthy enough and if you can keep Maya to a regular schedule (and a frequent schedule, too) you just might help improve things even more. In light of the old adage "Tis better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness.", you'll probably accomplish more to rejuvenate Anglofandom (assuming that it needs any such stimulation) by leading the way than by simply writing about the moribund state of the art. And you've made a good start with *Maya* 7.

I couldn't agree more with your analysis of the only sensible reaction to other people's fanzines. Hell, no fanzine is essential; only three or four are Where It's All At: and there are better fanzines around (in some way or other) than every fanzine that has ever been published or ever will be published; and what does that have to do with publishing a fanzine? Absolutely nothing, of course! As the locs this issue agree on, the main purpose of putting out a fanzine is to satisfy yourself, and this seems to be essentially what you're saying. Strive to do the best you can, working on those things you think important, and allow yourself to be satisfied by your own accomplishments. What the hell, if I stopped to count up how many people are better editors than I am and how many can write better than I can, then I'd toss my typer and my mimeo out the window and collect tropical fish instead. As it is, I write as much as I can, and think a quarter of it is pretty good, and I publish whenever I can, and I always think the results are fucking magnificent! That's part of the fun of the whole thing.

While I can appreciate intellectually the basic truth of your remarks about the desirability of a strong sercon fandom to attract and maintain the critical status of fandom, I can't get particularly emotional about it. As a fan who was never all that concerned with sfnal criticism, and who has lately lost most of even that slight interest, I can't find myself overly worried by the thought that Fandom As An Informed Source of Serious Critical Reaction might wither away. If it did (and I agree it's highly unlikely) that would leave me more time to enjoy and participate in the fannish exchange which I find far more enjoyable and rewarding. I know that it's

an incredibly provincial outlook, and I'm certainly not saying I'd do anything to try and achieve such a state, nor that I'd begrudge any other fan his or her interest in or love of sercon material, but I suspect that it might be more common than you might suspect. Still, we'll never know, so let us cease such idle speculation.

((My statements on the need for sercon fanzines weren't meant to praise SF criticism in fandom as an end in itself, but rather as a lead-in to the "hard stuff", the fannish communication which is the reason we're all in this game. Me included, I need hardly add. The SF criticism is the initial attractant, the light in the moth-trap or the pictures in the brothel window.))

Bob Shaw's reminiscences on Tynecon show why he is considered one of the best fanwriters of all time. One can almost hear Bob's soft melodic voice speaking these words, and his sense of humour retains its fine edge splendidly. Having heard Bob at Seacon, I'm anxious to read his speech in *Triode*, and I hope he writes another convention report this year.

Good luck with *Maya* and I hope it attracts the degree of response you need and deserve. Remember, too, that good solid printing is the key to fanzine success. So if you want to build a large *Mayan* empire, don't forget the inca.

((Ugh. A joke like that aztec ome someday, I suppose.))

Darroll Pardoe, 24 Othello Close, Hartford, Huntingdon PE18 7SU. You have really worked yourself up into a gloomy mood in your editorial, haven't you? Time after time British fans start moaning about how British fandom is dying, and how few fanzines there are around. I think they suffer from restricted mental horizons in two ways: (1) timewise, in not looking at British fandom in a sufficiently large historical perspective. There was a time, for instance, around 1962-3, before the new blood, Weston and all, appeared on the scene, when British fandom was down to about three fanzines (outside the apas, that is). We're doing much better than that today, yet you are still worried. I don't think you need to be. And (2) spacewise, in trying to see British fandom as an entity standing on its own. British fanzine fandom has never been big enough to do that: it has always been a part of the whole international complex of fandom. World-wide fanzine fandom is doing very nicely, as well as it has ever done; the accident that there happen not to be all that many British fanzines coming out at a given time isn't that important, though to several of the current British fan-publishers, who wouldn't dream of sending copies to the States or Australia, the ebb and flow locally in England may seem of more crucial importance than it actually is.

So, to sum up, I for one am not worried. And as for your possible external influences (*Foundation* and so on) I'm not worried there either. You still seem to have the hang-up (more common among neofans) that SF is somehow the hub around which the whole of fandom revolves, and that if the number of sercon zines and SF discussion diminishes, then fandom will fade away. It's not true, you know: many fans have only a passing interest in SF itself. Sercon fandom blends by easy stages into faandom and from there into fantasy fandom and into the fringe interests. I for example am a member of an apa whose members would certainly call themselves fans, yet almost all of whom have an interest in SF which is at best minimal. They're fantasy fans. In Britain, a comparison of the relative strengths of the British Fantasy Society and the (ha!) BSFA will show which fandom is the stronger.

And me? I'm a faan. I worship Roscoe.

((My "hang-up" is not that SF is the centre around which fandom revolves, but that it — and other interests such as fantasy, wargames etc. are the gateways by which one enters fandom.

Your little dig at the BSFA isn't logical. That organisation (if indeed one can possibly apply the word "organisation" to such a shapeless, inert object) cannot possibly be taken as a true indication of the strength of British SF fandom. British fandom, despite my editorial remarks lastish, is doing very nicely without a central organisation. Look at the attendances at cons — and, if you like, the increased numbers of fanzines this year.))

Ian Williams's column was interesting but suffering from the usual eversion of his soul.

John D. Berry, c/o 35 Dusenberry Rd., Bronxville, New York 10708, USA. You write well; this is the kind of literate analysis and synthesis that I thoroughly enjoy. It amuses me, though, that an old pattern has recurred: an editorial complaining about the sad state of British fanzines arrives in a veritable flood of fanzines from England. Happens every time.

((Quite so. Let that be the last word on that fictitious lack of fanzines from the U.K.))

BoSh's conreport is fine, fine writing, and Hagen's heading is brilliant. So is his accompanying *Life for Ian's column*. In fact, you have generally a good sense for what a fanzine is, particularly like what you did with small lines in the letter column. (It was also one of the best-written *Lettercolumns* I've read in a long time.)

((Thanks. "Thanks" that reminds me to tell my *SPARK* who may be reading that I've NEARLY USED UP all my best *SPARKS* on this, and I DESPERATELY NEED *ILLUSTRATIONS*. Ian's piece is a very well-rounded, well-realised tale of his first involvement with student radicalism.



Jon Harvey, 18 Cohn Rd., Mynachdy, Carmarthenshire CF4 3HS. To be quite honest, Rob, the magazine was not the most interesting that I had ever read. I have something of an antipathy towards SF fandom and SF publications. I believe that this arises from the so-called "intimacy" of British SF fanzines that you mention in your extensive editorial. The "intimacy" that I find in SF fanzines is mainly in the name-dropping of friends and the slandering of enemies, who then slander you back in their own "intimate" fanzines. Don't get me wrong — I'm not saying that *Maya* has slandered anybody, Heaven forbid! — but the name-dropping certainly rears its ugly head in Robert Shaw's article.

((I didn't have an article by Robert Shaw, who is a very well-known actor and non-SF novelist. I had an article by Bob Shaw. Kindly have the courtesy to get his name right.))

The "intimacy" that I abhorred the most was that to be found in Ian Williams' article. While fellow fans are interesting people, I would certainly prefer ((to hear)) of the subject of which he is a fan, rather than what a naive twenty year old did when confronted with militant student action. You may counter that it is fun to read; I found it all farcical, and I've never liked farces.

((You're right — it is an antipathy that you have. The way you express it makes me think you genuinely can't see or understand — i.e. are literally blind to — any of the values of SF fan communication other than the cheap jollies of seeing each other's names in print. The value lies in the communication. There are subjects for discussion other than SF/fantasy/comics/whatever your literary poison is, you know. Those of mutual interest include one's own fellow-communicators; it's an exchange of ideas. I'd be bored stiff if newspapers contained nothing but news, or women's magazines nothing but articles about women. (Not that I read the latter much, but a breadth of interest is needed, both by me and by the editors of such magazines.... On to the other side of the personal-name-dropping-vs.-impersonal argument.))

Brian Parker, Flat 2, 11 Fairfield Rd., Bradford 8. I agree that most of the fannish fanzines I've seen of late are concerned mainly with gossip about various personalities and I agree that it is possible to write about people without making use of gossip, but why should I or any other faned do so if we do not wish to write in this manner? It all comes down to whatever turns you on. I write for

me and I write in the way which comes naturally to me. I try to amuse my readers in the process but if someone doesn't like it — tuff — take it or leave it.

((I wasn't giving orders, although you seem to have decided I was. I was only saying what I felt I wanted to do. One of the reasons why I want to do it is illustrated very nicely by the following letter.))...((I still very much enjoy gossiping about personalities, by the way — I don't want to write one, thassall.))

Leslie Beck, 12 Knowl View, Tooting, Surrey, S.W.19. I am a newcomer to the world of SF fandom and wholly agree with the point made by you in *Maya*. During the last few months I have obtained a number of fanzines and almost all have seemed alien and incomprehensible to me as a newcomer.

Surely the way to give the SF fanzine a more needed boost is to attract more people to the field. Long into lecture reviews and discussions are not going to bring a flood of new blood to fandom.

So far *Maya* is the only fanzine I know of that I can read through with ease and pleasure. The articles and reviews are well written and manage to make their point without becoming boring and degenerating into lecture-like prose.

((See, Brian? My editorial policy is the possibly rather bland one of attempting to please and entertain a wider readership than many fanzines. That's my thing, and I'm doing it. The other thing which I'm doing is to be a layout freak, as you may or may not have noticed this issue — I like a pretty fanzine. It's fun for me — a point which has some relevance to Dave Rowe's letter below. But first...

Pauline Palmer, 2510 48th, Bellingham, WA 98225, USA. I agree with the philosophy of attempting to cover as wide a range of fandom's activities as possible — this may well be a "vague" conclusion in a philosophical sense, as you say, but as an editorial policy it's one of the most practical and practicable I've seen. Sometimes I think even editors forget that they themselves need a bit of room to move around in — an editorial as well as a psychological looseness — some creative freedom of their own. In other words, you damn well should be able to justify anything you like well enough to want to publish — and a rigid philosophy that doesn't allow for that simply isn't trufannish, now is it?

Dave Rowe, 8 Park Drive, Ilford, Essex. We seem to have lost sight of what fandom is really about. No, not SF. Fandom is FUN. Taking fandom "seriously" is like trying to psychoanalyse a banana skin or a custard pie. Why do you go to fan-meets and cons etc? Because you enjoy yourself. Right? Unless you're a masochist (and looking around at fandom I have the suspicion that I've just disproved my own theory...) but enough of this derogatory cynicism: let us agree, fandom is fun, or should be.

Therefore the next step is: fanzines should be fun; and here is where the pitfalls really begin. Fanzines should be fun to read (as well as produce) therefore I think the editor should think of his readers but there are times when he seems to be thinking more of just filling his fnz. Also I suspect that the vast majority of fnzs are made simply because "everyone else does", and only a few editors in the U.K. seem to have a purpose or direction for their fnz. So if the fen really buckled down to what they did/can do best and worked at it, instead of all playing follow my leader and all going over to non-appearing personalzines, perhaps we might get somewhere. Fanzines are the hobby-side of fandom. To get the most fun out of a hobby you've got to be serious about it, so let's be serious about format, layout, writing standards etc — that's what I mean by thinking about the reader — but let's not blame every U.K. zine for not-being-a-Nerg, and let's try and get some fun and enthusiasm back into fandom.

((I agree with every word there.... Also in Dave's letter(s) were some adverse criticism of layout, article choice and the fact that *Maya* has become a genzine rather than a faan zine, but the above seems to stand on its own and is very relevant to this local and to U.K. fanzines. Nice one.))

Bryon Farney. Maya 7 is a beautifully produced fanzine. Maya 7 50 Caerleon Rd. has one of the best editorials I have read in a Newport. long time. What a shame it had to be followed by Quest NPT 1BY. such pedestrian contents. It is damning praise for me to say that you included nothing even worth condemning, but such is the case. An aura of competence prevails. Nothing sparkles.

All rather sad, especially when Ghucephalus indicates a very lucid awareness on your part. You seem to have fanzine fandom well worked out and clearly state the ailments currently pervading the scene. Prior to reading the rest of the issue this gave rise to the hope that here was an Editor willing and able to provide a much needed boot up the arse. But it wasn't to be. The issue was as lacking in direction and personality as the other genzines around today. An expected event in most cases, but a disappointment this time because of your editorial.

I know the difficulties that apply to fanzine editing. How do you tell Big Names that their contributions are either light but trivial or long and boring? Very difficult. Should you publish fairly regularly by using the best of poor contributions, or wait until you can put together an issue more worthwhile? There are no easy answers.

As you know, I am making something of a return after a lengthy absence by joining Lisa as co-editor of the next Zimri. My way was to pick the people I wanted on my contents list and talk them into writing for us. The issue will be made up by selecting what we consider the best of contributions received in the ordinary manner. It might be a good Zimri, it might be a poor one. Only time and readers' reaction will tell. But maybe I am more of a cynic than you, Rob. I'm not out to cure ills nor crusade on behalf of fanzine fandom. All I want is to put out an issue both Lisa and I can feel pleased with. If that can be achieved, then we will willingly take knocks such as I'm directing at you. I'll look forward to receiving your LoC. and I'll look forward to Maya contents more in line with your real aims.

((From my reply:

It is excessively difficult to get any better writing than that contained in Maya 7 out of British fandom nowadays; people just aren't used to looking for brilliance, or to trying to provide it. Those who can best provide brilliant writing are busy putting most of their energies into pro writing rather than fanzine writing. Those who wrote for Maya 7 did what they — and I — consider to be their more careful work for it, despite the above; in particular Bob Shaw, Chris Priest and Ian Williams. Chris sweated blood over that review. Most of the locs I've received will do absolutely nothing to change any high opinions they may have of the work they produced. When I received each of those three articles, I was jumping for joy at the thought of publishing them, which I considered to be a privilege; with none of them did the idea of rejection enter my head for a minute. Call this uncritical acceptance if you like. I enjoyed the hell out of those articles and reckoned that my readers would too. On the whole, I was right.

As to what the "aims", "direction" and "personality" of Maya are: who are you to say that Maya 7 wasn't in line with my real aims?? Are you an implant within my brain? Maya 7 was fairly close to what I want the zine to be, with only two or so regrets: (a) my editorial, which has been proved wrong-headed by an enormous flood of enthusiasm for fanzine production. (b) the Gelb article, which people considered beneath their notice, with reason — two wasted pages: (c) some minor points of layout, most of which I hope to have improved on this time. The three articles I mentioned in the paragraph above all satisfied me. The "direction" of Maya should be obvious for all to see in another couple of issues — it is impossible to turn a fanzine you have inherited into entirely your own gestalt until all the themes introduced by the previous editor have faded from the lettercolumn, and until you have published enough different articles to give everyone a pretty fair idea of your total range of tastes. All the same, Maya already reflects my range of interests: wide. I'd publish a fannish article on cricket if it was good and interesting, because I'm interested in cricket. Or soccer. Or politics: see Goblin Towers. Or SF. Particularly SF. In other words, I don't consider myself restricted to faanish articles, though I do want to publish them in fair quantity. I don't share Greg Pickersgill's rather parochial attitude that if it doesn't

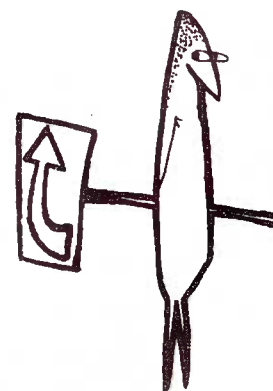
deal with fandom then it isn't worth publishing in a fanzine. As Harry Turner said in a letter, "Items that should be of interest to fans who have not lost all touch with the mundane world". This is a mixture, of course, and the resultant mix is bound to have an overall bland flavour because its interests are too wide-ranging to become obsessed with one particular aspect of fandom.

The same applies to "personality". Ian Williams, in a drunken moment once, told me my personality was too rounded. That may or may not come through in Maya, though judging by my record so far it shouldn't do so in the editorials. The editor's personality shows up far more in the editorial and his shaping of the lettercol than anywhere else; if he intrudes too much into the actual writing of the contributed articles (rather than the choosing of them) the personality of the original writer becomes obscured. You'll gather that I think "personality" with regard to fanzines is an ill-defined term. Do you mean "overall flavour" or "personalisation" — if the latter, do you mean you want more me in Maya? Ian Williams told me a month or so ago that he felt Maya (the Maule issues, as well as no. 7) lacked male hormones. That's a criticism I can accept, because it's a little more specific about the type of lack in the fanzine than "personality". I do accept it, though whether I am constitutionally capable of doing anything about it is another matter, perhaps... From Bryn's reply:))

A prompt reply to your...interesting letter.

All you say about fanzine editing hits the mark. No argument there. I know how difficult it is to get even good contributions — let alone brilliant. You enjoyed the three articles you mentioned, and thought your readership would too. That's not "uncritical acceptance", it's common sense. It's horses for courses.

Who am I to say that Maya 7 wasn't in line with your real aims? Nobody at all. Am I an implant within your brain? No way. It was your editorial, or the way in which I interpreted it, that said the issue wasn't in line with your real aims. It was based upon my understanding of your editorial that I saw fit to criticise the contents that followed and to think about your fanzine's "aims", "direction", "personality", etc. It was what I assumed to be your own criteria I was discussing, not mine — unfortunately. I am but a mere mortal.



Marion Linwood,
125 Twickenham Rd.,
Isleworth,
Middlesex.

I was interested to read Chris Priest's review of The Dispossessed which Jim bought me after Christmas. It was quite impressive after one quick read, but I finished it knowing I'd missed a lot of the implications. Dispossessed... is it really possible to live without possessions? Does owning things lead to owning people — children or partners? I don't think anyone should approach the novel with a feeling of awe for the sake of saying they have read it and then leave it on the shelf... it is the sort of novel that you get out of what you put into.

The Institute of Contemporary Art is currently holding a series of SF lectures ((March-April '75)) (Jim is eagerly awaiting the one by Phil Dick) and I went to the first one — SF and Mrs. Brown by Ursula Le Guin. I can't remember the lecture in full but she argued that SF should contain real characters (people like your mother) as opposed to stereotyped unbelievable plot props. She said that she originally conceived the idea of Left Hand of Darkness as two figures, so far away that their sex could not be determined, pulling a sledge across a snowy waste. She admitted with admirable honesty that in hindsight she would write LHOD differ-

ently if she had to do it again. Her method of writing, she said, was creating the characters first and then creating a setting for them. Shevek was originally conceived in an unpublished novelette about an escape from a Russian type prison planet... she finally tore this up. She came over as a writer with untouchable integrity, very clever, but showing kindness and humour when facing some of the idiotic questions put to her. The questions, put not by ten out by ICA pseudos, were long winded and hostile, asked by people who were not interested in the answer but in proving how clever the questions were.

Marc A. Bowden
Flat 11 Bristol Mans.,
19/20 Sussex Square,
Brighton BN1 3AA,
Sussex.

It is strange that criticisms which might be levelled against Fugue for a Darkening is-land are the ones which Priest chooses to take issue with The Dispossessed on.

(That's a rather personalised way of starting, isn't it?... carry on.)

Three main points are brought out in the review — that the language is too affected for the subject matter; that the images and descriptions are too detailed and extensive to enable the reader to absorb them fully; and that Le Guin lacks empathy.

The first two points are valid, but are overstressed because the wealth of relevant detail in the story serves to solidify the plot. Because of this the slight remoteness of observation is largely acceptable, and consequently the difference between attempt and attainment is significantly diminished.

((Succinctly put and very valid: although I personally agree with Chris that the book doesn't attach itself instantly to the reader's emotions, it is nearer for me than for Chris to the vast and complete intellectual attainment Mrs. Le Guin wanted. See Doug Barbour below on getting into the book.))

Jerry Kaufman,
210 W. 102nd St., Apt. 3E,
New York 10025, USA.

(Chris) managed to cover more angles of that book, to touch on more of the reasons I liked it than any other reviewer so far. He also managed to

touch on more of the reasons other people disliked the book than any other reviewer. (For instance, on the latter, Moshe Feder has been complaining that The Dispossessed isn't really sf, but rewritten current affairs with Solzhenitsyn as the main character, and Chris is the only other person to have made the comparison.

Richard Wilson,
1315 Euclid Ave.,
Syracuse,
New York 13224, USA.

Christopher Priest's irritation with Ursula Le Guin's "talk with" struck a chord of memory. For many years I was a deskman in Reuter's New York bureau, where I be-

came acutely aware of the differences between British and American English. We often say at the university where I work that a visiting professional will "meet with" students. Probably you would delete the "with". But to us the "with" implies a kind of interchange less formal and more friendly than a mere meeting. There are subtle nuances (there's a redundancy for you!) which do not always travel across the ocean, like some French wines.

Doug Barbour,
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Edmonton,
Alberta,
Canada T6E 1K2.

...very thoughtful review of The Dispossessed. It's a good review, and he makes perfectly clear — from a personal point of view — why he is complaining as he is. I think he whips through his final two paragraphs too quickly, and I'm not sure I under-

stand his use of "committed" in his last sentence, but I see how he arrived at his conclusion, and he does say a great deal about the book for those who haven't read it. I think, personally, that Ms. Le Guin does haul us in, in the first page, with the fantastic image of the spaceport on Anarres and the wall surrounding it (images which reverberate in the context of her other works) (Chris does realise how like the one earlier book he knows this one is). The best review of The Dispossessed is Joanna Russ's in the March F&SF, and she hits the nail Chris is pummeling at when she talks about the "show" rather than "tell" aspect of the sexual workings of the societies of this novel. For all that, it is a major sf work, and one we'll be reading for a long time.

Ian Williams, though: "Goblin Towers" was truly interesting. Something like this piece is one of the best reasons I can think of for fanzines. It wouldn't ever be published in a large circulation magazine (they only publish such reminiscences when they're by well-known people, I suspect), yet, Ian has told some very real experiences well, and thus illuminated aspects of personal experience for us all. I was especially taken with his honesty and clarity in describing what he felt at the strip show, but his analysis of the march emotions was also very good. I'm not one to pay too much attention to films, but Harry Bell's drawing of the marchers was beautifully right for the accompanying text.

((There. The perfect answer to Jon Harvey's squeamish nausea about "intimacy" in fanzines.))

Leigh Edmonds,
PO Box 74,
Balaclava,
Vict. 3183,
Australia.

Ian Williams's experience in Soho reminds me to say that when we were in Minneapolis we talked one of those crazy Minneapolis fans into taking us along to a strip joint, which he did. The place was called the "Pain Reliever" by virtue of being on Pain (or Payne) Street. Apart from a couple

of rather well put together bodies I must say that my reaction — and Valma's — was pretty much the same as Ian's — grand boredom. There weren't even any performances as Ian described, just women getting up and taking their clothes off with some musical background. One had massive tits but the way she waved them about I'm sure I would have found a bottle of milk more erotic. We stayed for about four hours ((something must have been keeping you there, then!)) and by the time we left I was convinced that when you've seen one naked lady you've seen the lot. The main entertainment was in Fred Haskell (who is a photographer) trying to convince the most attractive one there that he only wanted to take photos of her body, not use it for his foul and lustful ends. Valma and I believed him; she was not quite so convinced the last I heard.

Philip Stephensen-Payne,
28 Woodfield Drive,
Charlbury,
Oxford OX7 3SE.

Ian Williams is a good writer. There are a number of good fanarticle writers around, but few who can write autobiographically with any skill.

Probably the best touch was his admission towards the end of what he would have been capable of doing. Mob violence is a terrifying thing, but it appears to be with us to stay. I find it terrifying to realise that the average German who followed Hitler in the Second World War was much the same as you and me. We talk a lot about the enlightenment of Britain today, but we're not much removed from witch-hunters ourselves.

Keith Freeman,
128 Fairford Rd.,
Tilehurst,
Reading RG3 6QP.

If I can correct your editorial a little — Vector was going to be handed over to Chris Fowler after Malcolm Edwards had edited one more issue. Because of various

schemes Malcolm then decided he'd continue after the next issue (a point of academic interest only as not even the next issue got produced) so Chris never had the editorship handed over to him. But your point is a good one... ((10 Mar.'75.))

I've never been part of a demonstration but I've had the same feeling as Ian Williams... in the R.A.F. I'd never appreciated, before, that the R.A.F. slang for itself ("The Mob") has got a very subtle meaning. The discipline in the services does forge a body of men who will do things as a body that no individual would dream of doing.

One sentence ((in Chris Priest's review)) did puzzle me. "And is it only science fiction writers who call people from Earth 'Terrans'?" Could someone tell me what other kind of writer would need to distinguish Earthlings (?) from aliens? Just as pertinent a question would be "And is it only science fiction writers who write about faster-than-light travel?".

Terry Jeeves,
230 Bannerdale Rd.,
Sheffield S11 9FE.

Gelb's logic isn't too hot in saying that if there is no such thing as a bad boy, then by extension there's no such thing as a bad adult. Presumably such logic would also cover there being no such thing as a bad new laid egg... and by

extension... One could dig up further such analogues: one is enough to point up the flaw in that line of reasoning. To reverse the whole thing... in the old days of sf — and mainstream — there was no such thing as a bad — or even mildly bad — hero. How dull all those clean cut college boys were. Thank ghu that nowa-days, when the chips are down and the baddies are ganging up on the hero, he can cheerfully turn on the old karate and kick 'em in the slats. What sf has long needed, is a good (bad) 10% hero.

((I agree. I'm at present reading Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers, in which Harry Harrison takes the college hero to an absurd finality point. The book isn't as enjoyable as it sets out to be — most of the attempts at humour are forced and only partially successful — but one good result of my reading it will be a reduction in my tolerance of colourless twits as main characters. Have any others of you noticed, by the way, his little piece of German on p. 38 of the Berkley edition? One of the characters says: "Ich mochte ein Einzelzimmer mit Bad im ersten Stock!" which is helpfully translated in a footnote as: "I spotted a door behind the throne, so grab onto me and we can escape that way." I translated it, however, as "I'd like a single room with bath on the first floor!")

Mike Gilbert, (COA): As for the great Jesus Freak contest, here 19 Essex Ave. Apt. 3, in the Awful Arms (a "garden apt", i.e. many three-story barracks with small trees) Metuchen, N.J. 08840, U.S.A. two lived next door to us for about six months. They were the ugliest, most inconsiderate people. They (both girls) worked straight jobs 9-5, and kept to themselves except: THEY SANG! Terrible off-key Judy Collins sounds would come through the walls at any time: then at night maybe some friends would come over... Argh! One played the guitar and one killed the tambourine — wham jingle, wham jingle. The acoustics of this dump are such that the guitar and singing came through the wall but the tambourine went out of their door into the hall, amplified itself and came in our door, so it sounded like they were in the hall.



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I wonder if bheer is really fannish. It may just be a matter of tradition and that little 'h'. I could always say ghass. And heroin! Well, that one's already set up for you. I don't use any of the materials in question,

so I tend to have a different view on the matter, but as far as the rest of fandom is concerned the only disadvantage of pot is that it's illegal. Its leading to "the hard stuff" is most likely a cultural thing; "the hard stuff" is illegal too, and if prohibition was still on in this country, alcohol would be leading to the "hard stuff". After all, if you sell one you can sell the rest. You're already breaking the law.

((That seems to me to be a reasonably sensible last word on the matter. Medical evidence so far — flimsy, because

we haven't been looking at enough subjects for long enough — seems to indicate that pot/grass is less harmful than cigarettes; if & when it's legalised I may try it. I don't smoke, though, so the habit may be a difficult one to get into.))

Short comments, quotes and other WAHF's:

First, the Egoboo Pile, which was enlarged by Cy Chauvin: "Wow. What a great looking issue of Maya — you make me want to quit publishing, my own zines look so bad in comparison." Alan Hunter: "Christopher Priest's masterly review the most outstanding item in the issue. I have never read the book, and very likely never shall, but I am certain it cannot be more entertaining than this review." Graham Poole: "Ian Williams's Goblin Towers was as interesting as always and if it wasn't for Bob Shaw's superlative Once Upon A Tyne could easily be one of the best pieces of fan writing for some time." and Brian Aldiss: "Nice Shaw article with lifelike Bell illo!"

Now some more interesting quotes, which come under the general heading of the Twit-of-the-Month Club: Chris Hulse, who enjoyed Bob Shaw's article greatly, but added: "I had no idea Shaw was/is connected with fandom." Oh. Well, Chris, Bob was one of the original Wheels of IF (Irish Fandom) in the Fifties. Walt Willis and Hypphen, remember? Try and see how easy it is to get hold of a complete run of Hypphen — if, that is, you can afford it when you find one. Grant Canfield sent some illos with the message: "If Maya folds, as much of British fandom seems to do regularly, please pass these on to another active British faned." I wasn't very keen on that tone of pessimism! Frank Balazs wrote a loc on M6 which waffled like hell, but contained the following: "This sentence written in the hope that I elude the WAHF column in Maya 7." Well, Frank, your loc was so late you made it into Maya 8's instead. Finally, and most strikingly, Paul Anderson on why Aussies don't come to UK cons, mentions, not distance, but: "...we see so few fmz from the Motherland when compared to the huge numbers in the U.S. Also the English cons do not have the same tradition that the Worldcon has built up over the years." You may be right on the first part, Paul, but the second is absolute RUB-BISH! I'm enclosing a spare copy of Tynecon '74's Programme Booklet, with the articles about twenty-five years of Eastercon, so that you and any other Aussiefen you show it to can correct what is evidently a pretty large area of ignorance. The English cons have a friendlier tradition than Worldcons because their attendees are smaller in number, and are more regular, constant visitors to cons: thus they know each other far better than Worldcon attendees. The only real connection between one Worldcon and the next is the Hugos and other repeated programme events, now, which are cold fish compared to a tradition of friendship. Another useful aid to friendliness at British cons is the consumption of alcohol, which is far greater than at American cons because the stuff is cheaper.

A couple of explanations/apologies now: to John Hall, who wrote an absolutely SUPERB long loc on how he was assaulted in a Tube train by a gay type who believed he was the beloved, in the most literal sense, of God, with his resultant thoughts on religion as a deranger of minds. This was so good that it stood on its own as an article, and like an idiot I let Ian Williams publish it in his new genzine Goblin's Grotto. I've asked Ian to send copies to those interested in the religious debate in Maya. Goblin's Grotto is recommended, by the way. I wish I hadn't let him have the article now; it would have gone a long way towards curing the creeping blandness which I can feel coming over Maya.

Also, Gray Boak points out that he did at least pay for the Energumenoi he sneaked out of the auction pile at Novacon 2. Delete "thief", which was my loose terminology.

WAHF: Mark Adlard, Eddy Bertin, Sheryl Birkhead (with some Broomhilda cartoons — must see if a local paper will take these, as they're superb), Syd Bounds, Ian R. Butterworth, Alan Dodd, "B.W. Energumen", Rob Holdstock, Ron Holmes, Ben Indick, Gerald Lawrence, Mary Legg, Sam Long, Ian Maule (who's never objected to any of the little knocks I landed on him last issue), Len Moffatt, Chris Morgan, Andrew Stephenson, Angus Stephenson, Mae Strelkov, Dave Sutton, Harry Turner, Roger Waddington, and Roger Zelazny. My thanks to all those who wrote; there were a lot more interesting letters than I've had space to use.

