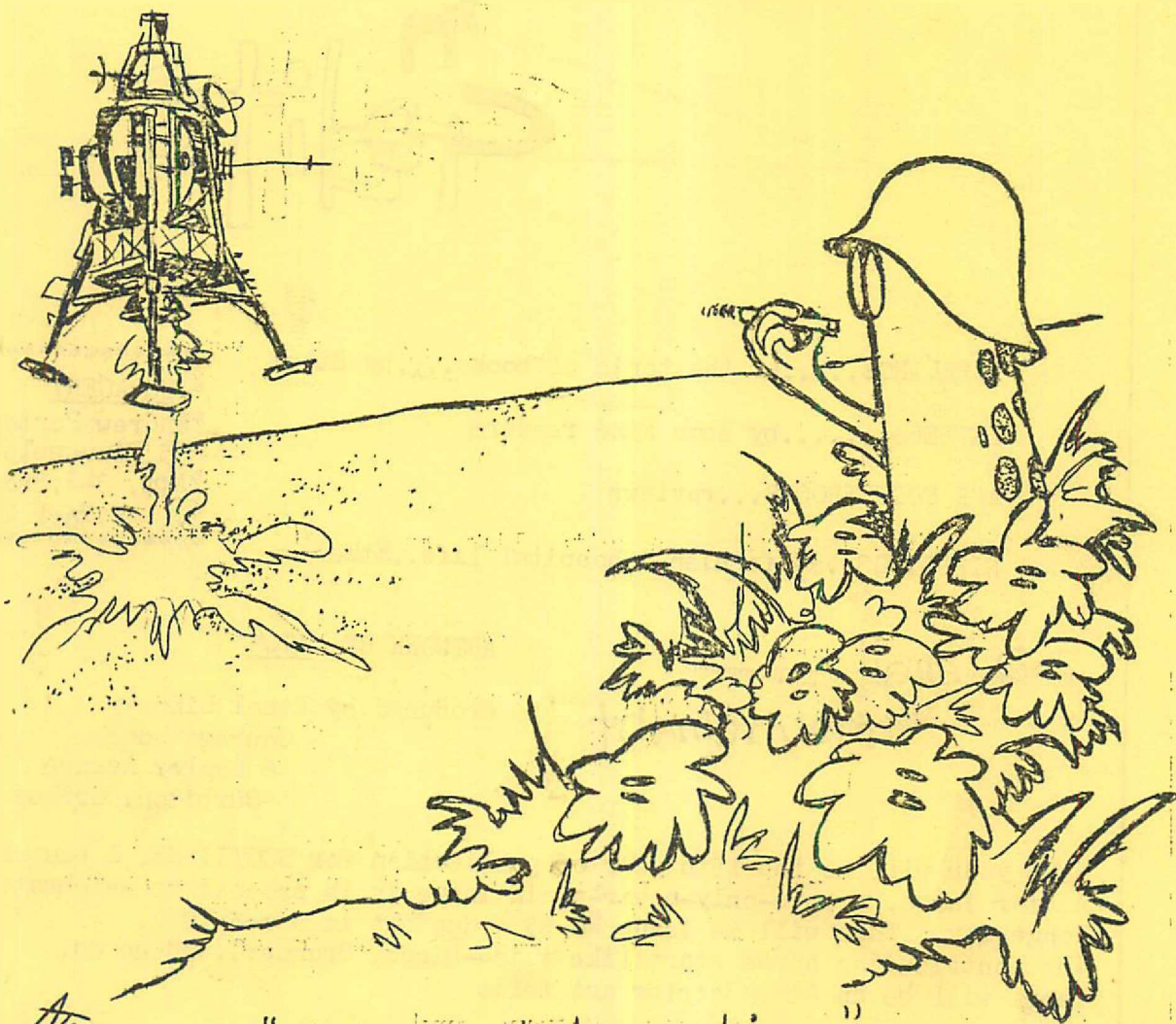


Scottishe



Atom

"Vairry Interesting".....

Scottishe

54

December 1969

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ACE POCKETBOOKS...reviews

NIBBLINGS..at fannish & hospital life..Ethel.

* US AGENT

* Andrew Porter

* 55 Pineapple St

* Apt. 3-J. Brooklyn

* N.Y. 11201

ARTWORK BY ATOM

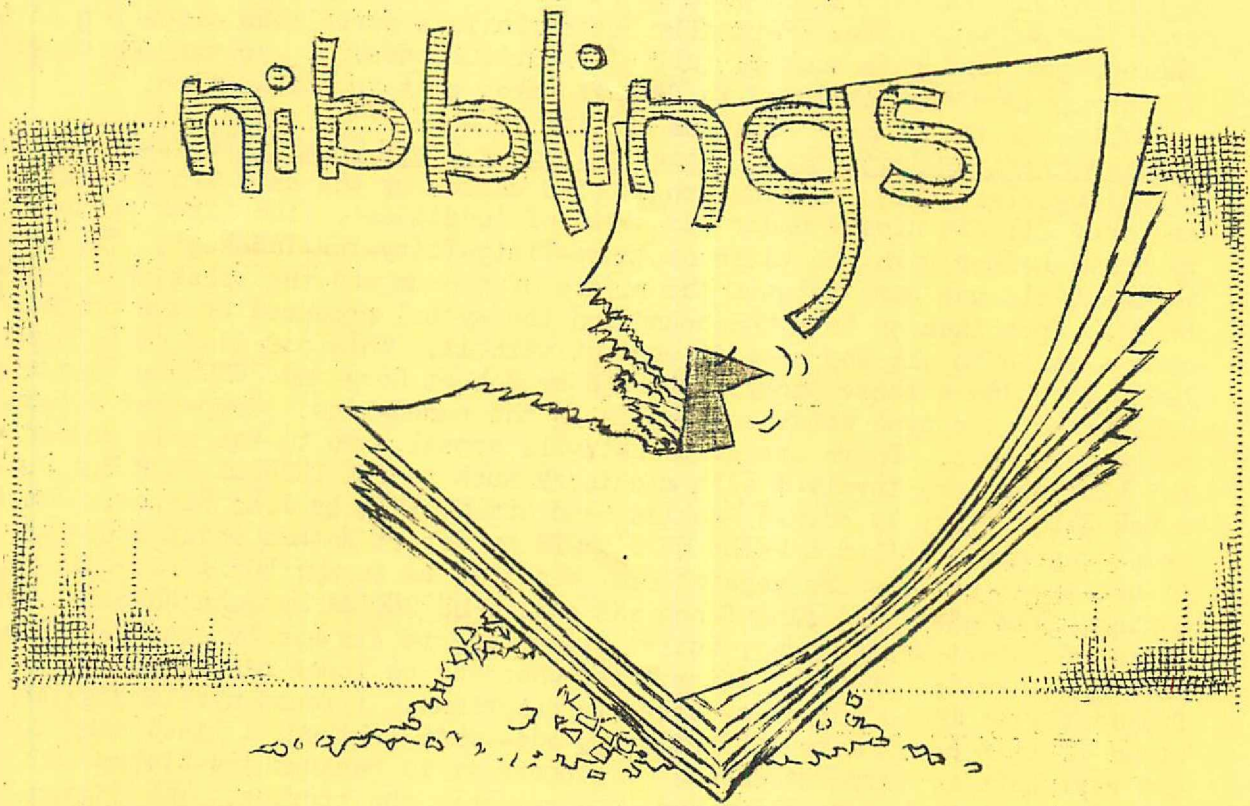
Produced by Ethel Lindsay
Courage House
6 Lagley Avenue
Surbiton. Surrey

~~a small~~
~~announcement~~

Next year will be the 15th year of publication for SCOTTISHE. A bumper issue, a star issue, a once-only-never-again issue is in process to celebrate such longevity. This will be issue No 55 - due out in March 1970. The contributing names start like this--Bloch, Brunner..and go on! There will be an Atom/Rotalor art folio

No change in price--but make sure of your copy!

QUARTERLY: 4 for \$1 or 8 shillings



Before I start to write about the SF books I have read lately; I would like to point out that I do have other reading matter! Lately I have been concentrating upon the works of the mystery writer Phoebe A. Taylor. It is odd to come back to these books which I first encountered in the public library 20 years ago. I have to keep reminding myself that the war which she often refers to is not that of WWII! I still admire her ability to pile incident upon incident and introduce a whole host of characters without having the whole edifice topple into absurdity. Because of her books, Cape Cod has always been a place I would like to visit; but I guess I would find it vastly changed from what she describes.

I've also been reading TITUS GROAN, GORMENGHAST, and find this a stupendous piece of work. I've come to a grinding halt, however, over TITUS ALONE. Once Gormenghast is left it seems to be just another symbolic fantasy. Which leads me to conclude that my fascination lies in Gormenghast itself as much as any of the characters that perambulate its endless corridors. These books are the pb edition put out by Ballantine Books at 95¢. Very handsome they are too with richly coloured covers and a generous amount of Peake drawings. I read in the latest NEW WORLDS that Langdon Jones has obtained the Peake manuscripts for TITUS ALONE and has finished work upon it. This is to be published over here; so I may try again with his new version.

Thanks to the generosity of Diane and John Bangsund I have a magnificent book - ANIMALS AND BIRDS IN AUSTRALIA. It is produced by Graham Pizzey who is

Nibblings 2

a leading naturalist and photographer. He is also very interested in the conservation of wild life. Naturally Australia is a marvellous place for animal photography; and this book is full of beautiful ones. I was very taken with a honey possum and intrigued to find it takes part in pollination.

Well, now to the SF. First on my list is - Science Fiction Oddities: 2nd series, Edited by Groff Copklin, Published by Rapp & Whiting, 21s. This contains ten stories chosen by the late Groff Copklin and they all fit nicely under his title of 'oddities'. The first and best is by Fritz Leiber with the title of 'Rump-Titty-Titty-Tun-TAH-Tee'. The noise in the title was born between the rattle of a drum and the splat of a paintbrush. From then on both the sound and the symbol produced by the brush become a mania to all who come in contact with it. This odd idea of Leiber's leads to quite a tense story. RUNDOWN by Robert Lory and PUNCH by Frederick Pohl are of the type whose essence is in the punch-line. Competent without being memorable. There are some that will appeal more to the male reader - the kind that are involved with machinery such as THE TROUBLE WITH H.A.R.R.I., a Hek Belov story by Edward Macklin; and SEE NO EVIL by John Pierce. There is a long piece called A PRIDE OF CARROTS by Robert Nathan which concerns a planet whose natives are vegetables. Meant to be funny; but I found it rather boring. The one I did find funny was called ON CAMERA by John Novotny. This tells of Robert Masters who, whilst attempting to fix his tv set, gets himself onto nation-wide screens. After that, whenever he loses his temper (which is frequently) he blots out every other tv programme. I found myself giggling aloud at this one. This collection is odd - what I liked, I liked very much, the rest left me very untouched. I suppose it is because the Lieber and Novotny characters were alive and so I remember the stories. The others were puzzles only. Of course there was the carrot saga, but carrots being used to show up humanity struck me as rather a poverty-stricken device.

THORNS by Robert Silverberg, Rapp & Whiting, 25s. This is really a love story in an SF setting. The man is Minner who had been captured by aliens, dissected and then replaced but not just quite as he had been. This causes him to look monstrous to himself and other humans. Silverberg shrewdly never describes how he appears completely - so leaving this bit to the reader's imagination. The woman is Lona who, at seventeen, became the mother of 100 children none of which she was allowed to keep. She is recovering from her second suicide attempt when she meets Minner. They are brought together by Duncan Chalk who "eats" other people's emotions and helps a TV audience to "feed" also. Chalk is drawn as completely evil; and I found it hard to believe in him. The two main characters, are presented with care - Minner is drawn to Lona because she is a freak like himself, but he finds her lack of much intellect an increasing source of irritation and frustration. An engrossing story that I would highly recommend.

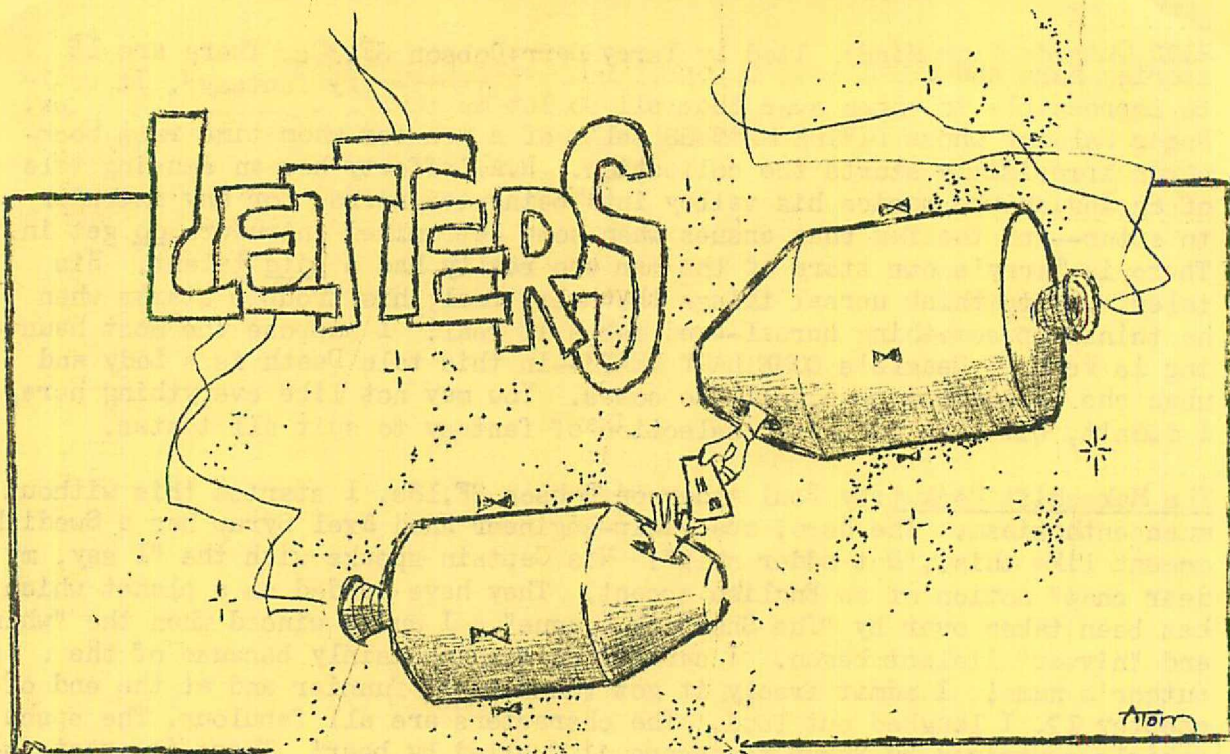
Intermind by Arthur Sellings, Dobson SF, 18s. This is the world of the secret agent with an SF flourish. The agent, Ryder, is asked to use a new technique - that of taking into his own mind the memories of another agent who has just died. When this technique proves that he can dredge up some of the dead man's memories, he sets off to discover from them why the agent died, and how he came to die. So you see, this one ought to attract both the SF and thriller reader. I did not find the characterisation in this as good as in THE POWER OF X, perhaps because it lacked the light touch of the other. It is, however, a clever blending of the two styles of plotting.

Step Outside Your Mind: edited by Terry Carr: Dobson SF.30s. There are 15 stories here and Terry Carr's introduction is a "temporary fantasy". It would be impossible to check over them all so let me mention a few. Roger Zelazny whose DIVINE MADNESS tells of a man for whom time runs backwards irresistibly starts the collection. R.A.Lafferty has an amusing tale of an Indian who magics his valley into being too narrow for any intruder to enter--and the fun that ensues when some determined intruders do get in. There is Terry's own story of the man who really had a wild talent. His talent was to think unreal things that were real; his trouble starts when he thinks up something unreal--and makes it real! I suppose the most haunting is Peter S.Beagle's COME LADY DEATH--in this tale Death is a Lady and when she is invited to a ball--she comes. You may not like everything here, I didn't, but then this is a selection of fantasy to suit all tastes.

The Makeshift Rocket: by Poul Anderson. Dobson SF.18s. I started this without much enthusiasm. The hero, spaceship-engineer Knud Axel Syrup has a Swedish accent like this.. "Dot odder ship". His Captain speaks with the "I say, my dear chap" notion of an English accent. They have landed on a planet which has been taken over by "The Shamrock League". I quite winced when the "whin" and "nivver" dialect began. I carried on reading mainly because of the author's name! I admit freely it got funnier and funnier and at the end of chapter 12, I laughed out loud. The characters are all fabulous. The space vehicle contrived by Syrup to escape is fuelled by beer! There is great ingenuity in this story. I cannot remember a book where I started with so poor an opinion and finished with one so high! Join Syrup and his companions - Harr Sermishkida the Martian inn-keeper, Emily, the Isadora Duncan devotee, and Major Rory McConnell of the Shamrock League - and I guarantee you a hilarious trip.

It's a mad, mad, mad Galaxy: by Keith Laumer. Dobson SF.25s. This contains 5 longish stories. They are of the lightly entertaining and amusing variety where the main characters find themselves caught up in astonishing adventures. All the heroes are highly inventive at getting out of their various hassles. I liked the first story best THE BODY BUILDERS which tells of an age when man can have a complete body built for him; and of course pick the style he or she would like such as the Wayne model or the Dietrich. When the hero finds himself without his specially-built body and due to fight a "Modified Norge Atlas"; it gets to be quite exciting. Laumer's stories, fantastic as they may be, are considerably helped by his command of dialogue.

The Weisman Experiment: by John Rankine. Dobson SF.25s. Here the author foresees a very regimented future. His protagonist is Prosper Kanes a Professional Grade 4 citizen. He becomes involved with Meta, a Freewoman who has become interested in The Weisman Experiment and wants to find out more. When Kanes discovers that such enquiry puts him in danger; he becomes interested too. The remainder of the story is fairly predictable; but it is entertainingly told; and there are lively characters met by Kanes on the way.



Ardie Mercer,
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" Sid Birchby and his super-computer...Supposing that, as he suggests, all possible known data was(were?) fed into such a machine. This would include a vast amount of assorted data that directly contradicted an equally vast amount of assorted counter-data. Take any two history books, for instance, covering the same events with conspicuously different slants. Thus our computer would have to do one of two things:(a)decide between mutually exclusive facts on the basis of theoretical probability (in the light of all other relevant data)or (b)come up each time with unpteen different possibility-answers between which its masters or interrogators would then have to choose. They'd require another computer to do that for them too! Furthermore there would be plenty of cases where, although there was no counter-data present to contradict it, an item of data would simply be wrong. It seemed right at the time, everybody excepted it, nobody has ever bothered to check it, or owing to lapse of time a check was now impossible; so there it is, a wrong fact that is accepted as right. Conceivably, the computer might be capable of challenging its validity, particularly if it was something scientific. Some matter of ancient history might be unassailable by man or by computer alike, and a whole department of data be undetectably false as a result. Sid could no doubt give specific examples, or reasonable facsimiles thereof. Natterings P3 gave me a brief chuckle-"increasing shortness of staff". Five foot nothing in stockinged feet, in fact?***I don't know if Sid visualised wrong data going into his super-computer. Perhaps he meant that it would be checked for validity first? Umm.. your quote of my blooper shows how badly I need a proof-reader around here. Frances Varley used to perform this chore..but she has practically emigrated."

Letters 2

Jean Muggoch,
Clydfan
Bridge St
Llanfyllin.

Montgomeryshire

"Re Andrew Porter's letter, I suppose as I will be Educational Assnt. to a Learned Society for a few days more I should attempt to answer this one. As usual, a bit of unadorned data can be highly misleading! Andrew doesn't say whether he is including Undergraduates, Postgrads, full-time, part-time, sandwich, extra-mural, but I should think he isn't too far out. But has he tried comparing the figures for those students who complete the course successfully? I have it on good authority that this ~~makes~~ quite a difference to the picture. Then remember that there are in the UK many routes to professional status other than through University, such as the National Certificates and Diplomas gained at Colleges of Further Education and by examinations run by professional institutes. For instance, of the 74 candidates who this year passed the Institute of Physics Graduateship exam, 65 had done all their studying at technical colleges (This exam is equivalent to a good Honours degree in Physics). Many of the technical colleges and polytechnics have degree courses on various subjects. I don't want to dwell too much on the difference in standards but my senior officer got rather irate when I discussed this lot with him. I don't know what they are like in N.Y. locality, but it seems that in the U.S. as a whole there are more than a few degrees that would equate quite nicely with our 'A' levels. So you weren't wrong to take the late school leavers into account. One final point is that the extremely high entrance qualifications necessary for entering a British University has no real parallel in U.S. The University Entrance Boards are still pretty ruthless with their pruning. So relax, Ethel! We may be sliding back to the primeval slime in many things, but not noticeably in education. What did you think this brain drain thing was all about then? An afterthought on the statistics which I loathe, fear and don't understand but which started this off:-A quick look at these, to me, incomprehensible figures seem to indicate that some of them appear to have more than doubled since 1955. So someone must be doing something! ***** I wonder if any Briton or American will be able to look at this objectively? It seems to me that one could cite all sorts of facts to bolster one's opinion. Should any Briton argue on the side of Andy, or any American argue on the side of Jean, I will be quite surprised; but I think the latter is the more likely of the two. Well, that's human nature, the Americans can afford to be generous here; and the British are sure to be very defensive. *****"

Joe Patrizio
7 Oakwood Rd
Bricket Wood
Herts.

"Is there such a homogeneity of news and opinions in the US as is suggested in the letter column? Perhaps we in this country are luckier than we know, to be able to read a range of views from the Daily Express to the Morning Star nee Daily Worker. And have you ever watched the BBC news on TV and an hour later that on ITN. The difference in emphasis can be an education. I think that Andy may be unnecessarily aghast at the depth of ignorance in this country. Does "University Student" mean exactly the same thing in both GB and USA? I think not. I've an idea that British students leave university with what most American colleges would call a post-graduate degree. Perhaps this is the area in which comparisons should take place. A point Andy might like to ponder is that in 1967 28% of engineers taking jobs for the first time in the US were from outside the country. So Brian Varley now lives in Cumberland--well, all I can say is that anybody who goes to live in a place like that deserves all he gets. Isn't Cumberland that place they grab each other round the waist, hug each other like mad and then fall on the floor in a bundle. Grown men too! ***** Talk there was of a homogeneity of news..but never opinion! Brian may decide to sort you out; on the other hand he is probably too busy digging *****"

Lecture 2

Chris Priest
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6 Lower Rd
Harrow.Mddsx.

" You wanted to know from "young readers" about masculinity. Will I do? A reluctant 26 and still rising. My reaction to a tenor voice is the same as to any voice.... passive disinterest. But that's just me, so don't start extrapolating a Gallup poll from it. Regarding masculinity, loss thereof. It seems to me to be the exact converse of what you say..I chance to meet far more feminists than I do masculinists, but this could be a subjective thing. It might be I don't recognise a masculinist when I see one, alternatively, it could be that both you and I are observing normal phenomena in members of the opposite sex. The gulf between the sexes, and all that. I fear, incidentally, that the days of the permissive society are numbered. If so, we will find a reversion to the blatant male/female dichotomy. Billy Pettit's letter was very entertaining though a little unfair on the British press. What visiting Americans will not readily accept is that the British are insular rather than chauvinistic. The lack of foreign news is a passive thing rather than an active thing--the British are generally disinterested in news anyway--they are more disinterested in foreign news. Anyhow, I doubt very much whether American newspapers would print the results of the GLC elections(say)or even the constituency results in a General Election. The trouble with censorship is that you can't often put your finger on it precisely. The general thing is that with decentralisation of broadcasting, and a wide-spread news-gathering service, practical censorship is difficult. On the other hand, there is the censorship of economics, which is incredibly more subtle and difficult to pin-point--like, for instance, every sane, living,American must have heard of Vietnam. How many though, know about the billion-dollar profits being made by certain corporations out of it. Obviously a lot of people must be aware of the profits, but do they know where they are, and to what purposes they are being put? I gather that large areas of America would have severe unemployment problems if the war were to finish. The really frightening thing would be to find out that that few people cared. One of the awful things about Czechoslovakia, for instance, must be that the population, having been given a taste of freedom of expression must know right now that all their media are censored, that history is being re-written, that a few hundred miles to the west people can stand up in the street and declare the government to be wrong, that in the long run there can be little hope for progress to that Freedom..and the feeling is that the Czech people care. Meanwhile, Britain fumbles on, with the Press largely affiliated to one political interest or another, with the radio monopolised, and with two tv channels, both of which are headed by Government puppets. Has anyone noticed how trivial 99% of tv is at the moment? Or should that be 100%? It's coming to something when 34% of all BBC tv after 6pm in one week was repeats. Catch that percentage? Over one-third. I know, because I worked it out."

David C.Piper,
24 Dawlish Drive
Ruislip Manor
Middsx.HA 4 9SD

"I don't understand your last comment. You, I assume, send SCOT to faneds who swop their zines and to people who send letters..but how come the "few non-faned, non-letterhack readers" get copies if they haven't already sent you a sub? 'Cause you imply that they do."***Some people get copies in the hope they will cough up a letter one day. Some get copies because they are friends. Some get copies because they always have and I don't like to stop. In my present financial state; I wouldn't refuse money from any of them!***

Terry Jeeves,
30 Thompson Rd
Sheffield, S11 8RB

"..your request for cheap paper. I get mine from Messrs Maclean Bros (Paper)Ltd, Blothcley, Bucks. 8/- a ream, plus approx 1/- carriage. Actually it is 10/- per eight reams so for 8 reams it cost me £3.14.0d. They have all colours and grades and are even cheaper than Chapmans. I like Sid's idea for correlation in unpteen data-sources, we'd certainly learn a lot. Martin Gardner's AMBIDEXTROUS UNIVERSE while not on this topic, ranges into as many fields while covering the thesis, that many unexpected correlations come up. I can't argue with Andy's figures, but I don't accept his premise that we are not an educated country because we have a relatively low number of college students/university students. Your idea of an avergae leaving age is better; but this overlooks the fact that I think our kids also start earlier. Probably one good yardstick for judging an educated nation would be to take the % of illiterates in each nstion; you can't judge any group by merely assessing its cream. Can we claim to be further advanced aeronautically than the USA since we have the VTOL Harrier and Concorde - neither of which have American counterparts? Obviously that is a false assessment of the simple fact that we have a lead in those two particular items at the time of writing. But in general - the US industry is far more advanced than our own.***I hope I have got the title of that book correct; your handwriting is every bit as bad as you say it is.***

Ken Cheslin
17a Highfield Rd
DONCASTER.
Yorks.

"re Sid Birchby, his computer stuffed with every scrap of information, graded by likelihood of accuracy, has been a dream of mine for years too. I was thinking of this quite recently when doing a history essay. I had to sort through stacks of manuscripts, newspaper cuttings, diaries, and books to find what I wanted. It is true that I found out some rather interesting things on the side, but the amount of time I wasted just hunting was terrific. If all this data had been filed, I could have had the whole thing done in a week. If I had my way there would be computers in all universities, and a constant feeding of information to them. Ideally all libraries and many schools would be linked too..andhmm..and museums, the various services,hospitals. The reason the US has more students..basically it is the US philosophy which says that as many people as possible should get to college; that they should go as high as they can, and if they drop out they are not unusual. On the other hand the UK wishes to 'waste' as little money and time as possible. The US way gets the better results in my opinion. The UK way is too narrow, it creates an elite too separated from the rest of the system; and it creates the idea that to fail university is shameful. On the other hand our Junior schools are probably the best in the world. Sigh, British teachers are among the worst paid. To Mary Reed:Sorry, but England persecuted the Jews alright. Maybe not so ruthlessly as the Continent, but certainly a lot were killed. Two opposing examples: Winchester had a thriving Jewish community for most of the time and the Jews got along fine in the town. In Cl3, in York there was an attack on the Jews who took refuge in Clifford Tower, some escaped but most went up with a merry crackling sound when the mob fired the tower. There is plenty of material around if you look.***Hospitals do have computers, Ken, used for research, wages, medical records..and in some places for bed allocation.**

Jhim Linwood
18 Kew Bridge Court
London.W4.

"Al Rispin is right about the Luna crater "controversy" being contrived by the press(and a few publicity seeking astronomers). It has been generally accepted for some time that the smaller craters were formed by impact and the larger ones by

volcanic activity, in fact eruptions have actually been observed in the crater Alphonsus. The presence of several craters on Earth of definatly impact origin, the Arizona crater and Hudson Bay, indicate a lack of uniqueness of the Moon's craters, and the discovery of similar craters on Mars has made the whole subject rather commonplace. Al shouldn't worry about the Mariner photos ruling out Barsoom, if the Martians had sent a similar probe to Earth they would be convinced that it is inhabitable because the whole surface would appear to be covered with water!...Why should Mary Reed be surprised that Enoch Powell got enormous support for his racist speeches? He only made articulate the bigotry and ignorance that has been growing in Britain for over a decade. He gave a respectable vocabulary to the unsaid thoughts of many Britons, instead of writing "Send the Wogs home" in public lavatories it is now quite civilised to talk of "repatriation" and actually believe that Negroes are intellectually inferior. Powell's concern is just a mask for his real motive of harnessing racial feeling in Britain to place him at the head of the Conservative Party and eventually Prime Minister. I wonder how many of his supporters are familiar with his other political beliefs? The London dockers, who gave him tremendous support, would find themselves in jail(under Enoch's law) the first time they strike for more money or in support of another demagogue. The possibility that Enoch could become PM if the Conservatives win the next election and then oust Heath is one good reason for voting Labour. Its interesting to note that the same racist arguments were used at the beginning of the century against the large number of Jewish immigrants and this resulted in the passing of the Aliens Act, which excluded Jews from entering Britain even at the time of the Nazi persecution. It is generally conceded that the immigration of Jews into Britain was a good thing, and that the fears of the Victorians were unfounded, so the same may be true of coloured immigration..only time and tolerance will tell."

Robert Coulson
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Hartford City.
Ind.47348.USA

"To Andy Porter:the number of people in universities really is no guarantee of the education of the population. WASHINGTON MONTHLY has been running a series of articles on this lately. The US lays emphasis on the college degree as a basis for getting a job. This reliance on the degree as a requirement for a good job and advancement puts more people into universities, but they emerge with no more education than they had before. They went to get a degree and they got it and that's all they were interested in. Honeywell had one college graduate who couldn't write an intelligible letter. It wasn't that he misspelled words; he used completely different words from what he intended. He misspelled too, of course. I found out about it because the secretary used to bring his letters over to me sometimes to see if together we could figure out what he was talking about. Every fifth or sixth word - I am not exaggertaing - would be wrong. Like using "constriction" (usually misspelled)for "combustion", or "general" for "generator". The secretary would bring the letters to me because the engineer would get mad if she brought them back to him. He left for a better job and is probably somewhere in middle management now. Completely uneducated - but he had a degree. Did he know his job well? Well, he knew where to look things up in the handbooks. Another engineer, not quite as bad, got a job writing instruction manuals for another company. He couldn't turn out an instruction that anyone could make sense out of, but he had a degree. The thing about US iniversities is, that while it is possible to get perhaps the best education in the world by going to them, it is not neccessary to do so in order to graduate, and therefore damn few students bother. However as for your young people who don't plan to leave school before 17 years - do you mean 17 years of

age, or 17 years of schooling? It's illegal to leave school in the US before 16 yrs, which amounts to ten years of schooling. Some in the ghettos and rural areas do, anyway, though. I suppose the norm in the US is somewhere over 12 years of schooling. And of course more and more companies insist that their office staff and even some of their factory hands go to night school before they can be promoted....For Mary Reed: Australian "coloured" restrictions definitely do not apply only to Negroes. It isn't the Negroes they are worried about; it's the orientals, and the law is aimed at them. A lot of the letter column has concerned the problems of Jews in the US; they still aren't welcome in the "better" clubs and so on. But then, how many Jews are welcome in "society" in Britain? Or anywhere else? Russia and Poland have been persecuting them recently. The fact is that Jews are a readily identifiable minority and thus ideal for use as scapegoats. Negroes are even more readily identifiable, and therefore even more useful in countries like the US and Britain, but Jews still come in handy. And some of the militant Negroes in the US are anti-Jew; the "normal" human being has to have somebody to persecute, apparently. In Israel, the Jews get to persecute the Arabs which is undoubtedly a great psychological relief to them. ~~****In answer to your question--I meant 17 years of age. You know I would like to see a degree in common sense; it is a must to have!****~~

Ian Williams
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Sunderland
Co. Durham.

"FANTASTIC and AMAZING are the two most difficult mags to get hold of (with IF and GALAXY coming close behind) and in recent years they haven't really been worth bothering about. In the past six months there has been a surprising renaissance because they have been taken over by Ted White who has put a great deal of effort into making a comeback. The December issue of FANTASTIC shows an even more marked change from previous issues. There is a long and personal editorial from White (something most prozine editor's don't do - I ignore the Gospel according to Campbell); an article on the Arabian Nights by Piers Anthony which was reprinted from a fanzine (from now on it is going to be a regular feature apparently); a good letter column with good editorial comment - but he does have an annoying habit of putting them in the letter as well as at the end; and the usual book reviews. As for fiction out of an issue of about 80,000 words there is only one 17pp reprint, the rest is new. Fully half the mag is devoted to the first part of the new Piers Anthony novel HASAN. This is a tale couched in the background of the Arabian Night's style. It's amusing and worth reading.****One way to be sure of getting the SF mags you want - is to order them through a dealer such as Ken Slater, 75 Norfolk St. Wisbech, Cambs. I see you are a teacher..any comments on this topic in the letter column?****

Many thanks to all the letter-writers--please keep them coming.

Ethel.

HAVE YOU REMEMBERED TO JOIN THE HEROES?

ACE paper backs

The Frankenscience Monster: By Forrest J. Akerman. 25130.95¢. This is a tribute to the Grand Master of Horror-Boris Karloff. This is a real work of love. It contains not only the biographical details and many fine stills from the films in which Karloff appeared; but it has a great deal more than that. There are things like Robert Bloch telling of his friend Boris; R. Michael Rosen on "Yes, but could he act?"; and some fascinating anecdotes about the charming man behind the Monster. Highly recommended.

The Demon of Cawnpore: by Jules Verne: 14253.60¢. This continuation of the "Fitzroy" edition is part 1 of THE STEAM HOUSE. This is set in India, at the time after the Indian Mutiny; and features an ingenious idea; the building of a steam engine in the shape of a gigantic elephant.

Masque World: by Alexei Panshin. 02320.60¢. The further adventures of Anthony Villiers, accompanied (more or less) with his companion Trog. By now you should know whether you like this series or not; if you do it is still lightly amusing. If you don't, and I'm not at all sure but what I don't, then you will be irritated by the author's self-indulgent style. Still, this one has less slabs of 'lectures' and more glimpses of an alien way of life. There is more hint of a plot too, enough anyway to make me want to know what happens next.

The Warlock In Spite of Himself: by Christopher Stasheff. 87300.75¢. The hero of this tale, Rod, is an agent sent to a planet where superstition has a real basis. There are witches, dwarves, elves and, of course, warlocks. He has as a helper a computer-brained robot-horse which has occasional epileptic turns. Amusing in parts, for the fantasy fan as well as the sword and sorcery lovers.

The Power Cube Affair: Man from U.N.C.L.E. No 19: by John Phillifent. 51702.50¢. This one is set in Britain and involves a secondary set of characters who get more attention than the authors usually devote to anyone other than Napoleon and Illya. Of all the authors who have written about this pair I do think that Phillifent is the one who breathes the most life into them. The plot hinges upon the disposal of stones which, when put together, will amplify the mental capacities of the wearer.

The Lost Continent: by Edgar Rice Burroughs: 49291.60¢. The original title of this was BEYOND THIRTY. This was one of his earliest works appearing first in 1916. Considering this it sure is interesting to see his idea of what would happen in the 22nd century. The hero is a lieut. in the Pan-American navy who sets off on a mission to re-discover England cut off from civilised America for 200 years. Some of his ideas of the future might not be beyond happening yet!

The Palace of Eternity: by Bob Shaw. 65050.75¢. Ace Special. This future has Man at war with aliens, and not winning. The hero, Mack, has retired to the "Poet's World" whose peace is suddenly shattered when the military headquarters are moved there. From here on in the story becomes very involved. For me I guess it got too involved for I began to lose interest. On the whole, disappointing.

Ace Paperbacks 2

Kalin: by E.C. Tubb, and The Bane of Kanthos: by Alex Dain. £2800.75. Ace Double. The first half - KALIN - is another tale of the adventures of Dumarest. It is the better half as well. Kalin is a girl who can visualise the future; particularly if it is going to be dangerous. As she accompanies Dumarest this is very useful! THE BANE OF KANTHOS has the same type of fantastic adventures but the style of telling and dialogue sounded too unrealistic to me and I kept skipping chunks of it.

The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects: by Edward J. Ruppelt. £1400.75. The writer was chief of the US Air Force's Project Blue Book, an operation of the Air Technical Intelligence Centre. This is not a book by a "believer" in UFOs nor is the writer an "unbeliever". He has tried to write an objective report and leave the reader to draw his own conclusion. He also points out that the "proof" either way is not yet possible. All the data here is based entirely on Air Force records.

Operation Time Search: by Andre Norton. £3410.60. Caught in a scientific operation, Ray Osborne finds himself sent back to an era where there is a war between Atlantis and Mu. He joins the Murians and the tale of his adventures makes the usual exciting adventure that one expects from Miss Norton.

Isle of the Dead: by Roger Zelazny. £37465.60. An Ace Special. This is the first book by Zelazny that has not left me filled with admiration. Mainly, I think, because I felt he was not breaking any new ground. The hero is a man, and a god, and we are once again into the realm of god-like powers. Sandow became a god through alien help and the god is an alien one. Through this power he is able to make worlds and so amass a huge fortune. He doesn't really believe that his personality has merged with the ancient consciousness of the god until he is challenged by another god. Although this is told in the first person I did not feel involved and so remained sceptical throughout. The author's desire to keep the how and the why enshrouded as long as possible does not help either. The battle between the gods is vividly told; perhaps it would appeal more to male readers.

The Hollow Crown Affair: The Man from U.N.C.L.E. No 17: by David McDaniel. £1700.50. Something about this continues to puzzle me. Obviously ACE would not continue to buy these books if they did not sell well. So, obviously there must still be an interest in this series. Yet it has been yanked from TV for quite some time now. Why no enterprising producer has not tried to resurrect the series beats me! McDaniel shares with Phillipant the honours for producing the best of these books. I think in this one he still manages to present Napoleon and Illya as believable characters but the story of their alliance with a member of THRU... in this tale is just a bit too much for me to swallow without a choke.

The Star Venturers: by Kenneth Bulmer and The Fall of the Dream Machine: by Dean R. Koontz. Ace Double. £22600.60.

The Fall of the Dream Machine: Koontz takes McLuhan's idea that the future will be electronic and from it produces "Show" which has swamped all other forms of entertainment. You sit and experience what the Performer experiences. The story is told from the viewpoint of a Performer who escapes from 'Show'. Quite an exciting story. I boggled though at the idea of 'Show' being ruled by one man; and, of course, a villainous one. He is rather like Chalk in THORNS - painted so black as to be almost a caricature.

The Star Venturers: At least this one wastes no time in plunging into adventure. Bill Jarrett by the second page has been hijacked aboard a spaceship and is soon facing a ruthless woman who intends to use him to maintain her power. Fast pace of story-telling. A gruesome idea in the shape of a 'life-lock'.

Servants of Wankh: by Jack Vance: 66900.50¢. This is the second in a series about the planet of Tschai; the first being CITY OF THE CHLSCCH. Adam Reith continues to be the central character who, in his hope of returning to Earth agrees to lead an expedition. On this planet four alien races vie with each other which adds to the excitement.

Dark Piper: by Andre Norton. 13795.60¢. The Piper of the title is a name for the man who helps nine children escape from death by having them in underground caves whilst their planet is rocked by explosions. In doing so, he himself is killed. This tale is aimed at the juvenile market but adults can also become engrossed in the struggle of the children to find their way to the surface and then cope with the fact that they are the only human survivors. As the planet had been used for experimentation in mutations, they have to consider that they are now the minority species. Very good reading.

Times Without Number: by John Brunner. 81270.60¢. Don Miguel, the hero of this one, lives in a world where time-travel has its Order of which he is a Licentiate. The year is 1988 and it has been one of celebration of the conquest of England by the Spanish Armada four hundred years ago. There were many rules that governed the Society of Time; and Don Miguel's discovery that one had been broken leads to his finding out much more of the paradoxes of time-travel. The way to a logical ending is excellently thought out. Will delight the hearts of those who like to puzzle out the paradoxes.

Armageddon 2419 A.D.: by Philip Francis Nowlan. 02935.60¢. In the foreword Robt. Lowndes says: "This novel was originally written over 30 yrs ago, and has long and rightfully been regarded by lovers of SF as a classic." This was the start of the "Buck Rogers" strip. It appeared first as a novella in AMAZING STORIES in 1928; and had a sequel a year later. Both works have been integrated for this book. When this was written "Buck" was Anthony Rogers, who was in suspended animation for 500 years-this lasted from 1927 to 2419. He awoke to find Americans a hunted race in their own land; and the world dominated by the Mongolians. Naturally he becomes embroiled in the war to overturn the 'Hans'. Interesting for the view of science in the future as guessed at in 1928.

Final War & Other Fantasies: by K.M.O'Donnell//Treasure of Tau Ceti by John Rackham. Ace Double. 23775.75¢.

Final War: The writing is very good and I have to admire the imagination shown here; but I just didn't like any of the stories of which there are 11. The main one is typical. It tells of three men involved in a war-a futile war that makes little pretence at being anything else. One is naturally reminded of CATCH-22; but this is it minus the mordant humour. It seems to me that Heller said all there was to be said about war; and anything else is just an anti-climax. As THE FINAL WAR was nominated for NEBULA, obviously others do not share my opinion! These are uncomfortable stories; and no doubt they do not march with my basic optimism, so don't let me put you off-they are very well written.

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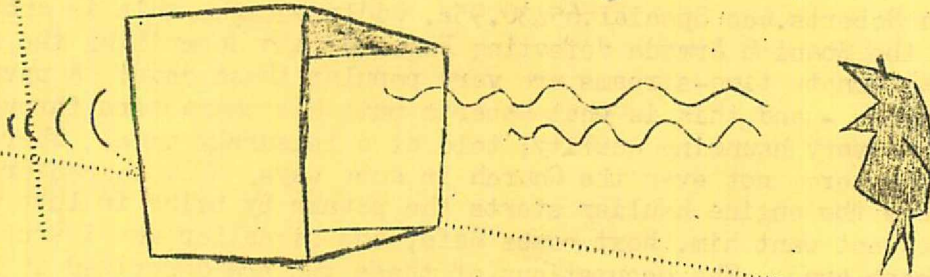
Treasure of Tau Ceti: This could be another SF adventure story of a search for treasure on a strange planet; but it is enlivened by Racham's ability to make his characters very real. Two men and a woman set out on their expedition and realtions between them are as interesting as the adventures they encounter. The villain, however, is as usual wholly evil!

The Prisoner: No 2: Number Two: by David McDaniel. 67901. 60¢. It seems to me that this series has the built-in handicap that one knows the Prisoner will never finally escape-else the series could not go on. With this suspense removed a lot of the tension is lost. Apart from that, this is efficiently done.

Pavane: by Keith Roberts. Ace Special. 65430. 95¢. Oddly enough, this is another book which has the Spanish Armada defeating England; and describing the resulting culture. Alternate time-streams are very popular these days! A pavane is a stately dance - and this is what Roberts puts his characters through. It is a story with a very haunting quality; told at a leisurely pace. There are no black villains here; not even the Church in some ways. The characters hold attention - Jesse the engine haulier starts the pavane by being in love with a woman who does not want him. Next comes Rafe, the signaller who learns to work the semaphore arms. The occupations of these two are described in loving detail. Brother John, sickened by the Inquisition, also moves this stagnant culture. Margaret, neice of Jesse moves next, and I can see her place in the dance. Becky, who comes next, puzzled me-her story is fascinating but I could not relate it to the whole. Lastly, the Lady Eleanor brings the dance to an end and a whole culture starts to move again. There is a nice little sting in the tail of this story. I'd highly recommend it.

Vision of Tomorrow: No 2. December. 5 shillings Published monthly. Edited by Philip Harbottle, 2 St. Nicholas Buildings, Newcastle upon Tyne, England. The lead story is by E.C. Tubb - QUARRY. In this adventure story a Terran agent has to out-wit many bounty-hunters to rescue a telepath. Douglas Falthrop's story of the annexation of our Moon-had a grisly thought; and John Rankine's story of a killer-car had another kind of chill. Michael Coney is again represented with a thoughtful story of human/alien encounter. Dan Morgan thinks up a new way to use the Freezing theme. This month's MEET THE AUTHOR is on Dan, some British fans will remember him being on a panel at Oxford. William Temple is here too with an interesting story of an alien who wanted to play Hamlet. Jack Wodham's UNDERCOVER WEAPON sets out to amuse with his tale of a gadget that will dissolve clothing. I admired most the story by Lee Harding called DANCING GERONTIUS which describes a future solution to the growing number of old people on our crowded planet. Book reviews are done by Ken Slater; it is nice to see him back again. There is also a continuation of Walter Gillings biography THE IMPATIENT DREAMERS; a good answer to British fans who want to know British SF fandom history. The production is again very well done; I would say this magazine only wants a letter column to make it completely satisfying to the many fans who stopped reading New Worlds.

Natterings



Recently I have read two articles on the subject of fandom. One was SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM. INSTITUTIONALISED ESCAPISM by Joe Ann Wood and this appeared in CØSIGN No 17. The other was written by Norman Spinrad, was titled FOR TRUEFFEN. SCIENCE FICTION IS NOT A GENUINE CONCIUSNESS-EXPANDING EXPERIENCE. This appeared in KNIGHT magazine.

One of the things these articles have in common is the attitude of the writers which is that of being outside fandom and studying it objectively. Of the two the woman sounds the much more objective. Another thing the articles have in common is a potted history of fandom. Again, Jo Ann Wood is much the better of the two. She did have, however, more space at her disposal. Still, judging by her bibliographical list at the end, she studied the subject well. The main point they have in common is to accuse fandom of escapism. Neither says that this is a terrible thing in itself, but the implication is there.

To take Jo Ann Wood's article first, apart from her admirable history of fandom, she gives the history of SF itself. She discusses clearly the division between fantasy and SF and shows how both can be labelled escape fiction. She also states some clear data about fandom: man to woman ratio is 5-1; unattached women are a rarity; there is a transient population of young boys entering and leaving (usually on acquiring a girl-friend); the stable population is over 25yrs. So far so good. I would begin to argue when she moves on to statements of opinion that sound like fact. Such as - "Fans are usually lonely people. Some of them are recluses who contact other fans almost entirely through correspondance. They may have diarrhoea of the typewriter, but they cannot say a word when they are in personal contact with others." There is enough truth in this statement to make it impossible to refute completely. There are people in fandom like this. Only, I would add that they are a very considerable minority. Her next paragraph is on firmer ground where she says "There are many kinds of fans."

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When she moves to analysing fandom further, she begins to make assertions that one can agree with or not. "fandom as a group, differs from that of any other group". "Fandom is in a constant state of flux". "...the only thing fans can agree on is the right to disagree (and disagree they do)". She mentions that there is no social stratification; no future goals; a sort of anarchy; that "even the most prestigious fan cannot compel co-operation from other fans." She mentions the prevalence of cliques. Her hypothesis is that fandom is held together by a desire to escape society. She states "For the escapist or anomic individual, fandom provides a body of literature and an activity..in which they can take part without having to compete or be successful in the larger society". One very definite statement is made which ties up with this conclusion. She writes: "Many fans although generally very able and above average intelligence, have little or no success. They cannot hold a job for any length of time. Instead they prefer to work as taxi drivers, waiters etc.". I would quarrel severely with this last statement. I would say instead that the majority of fans have steady jobs, and often very good ones. As for success..well a lot depends upon what you consider success.

However, let me now turn to Spinrad. His opening paragraphs are facetious using fan slang as if this were something used by no other group. He compares fans to sports buffs. He will not allow this to be a complete comparison; as he maintains that SF fandom can be a "common" experience in the way that sports cannot be. Oh yes, all those Met fans in ecstasy this year were not sharing a common experience? Surely too he must have heard sports fans talking together - why they can go on for hour after boring hour!

Spinrad spends less time on the history of SF fandom and, I would venture, knows less about it than Jo Ann Wood. He does have a good point where he says - "Suspension of disbelief is a state of mind that you must take to the reading of fantasy; you know damn well that there are no such things as vampires when you read DRACULA, but for the duration of the story you "suspend your disbelief" in order to enjoy the impossible fantasy world of the tale. SF however, does not demand suspension of disbelief; if well done, it produces suspension of disbelief". Spinrad says that "in a sense" SF acts like a psychedelic drug. When he takes a look at the evolution of a fan he likens its effect to that of heroin; and that like a junkie a fan takes larger and larger doses of SF until he reads the stuff almost exclusively. Again one could not completely refute this; I know that there are such fans but, as with Joe Ann Wood's statement, I would argue that they are in the minority. Also, they are often the transient young boys she mentions.

Spinrad blames fandom wholly for the fact that "literary critics" and "academicians" consider SF "inferior". Here one can see how much less objective he is than the lady. He is, after all, an SF author and one who has been under attack by a small segment of fandom. It is natural to find him writing things like - "Consider the early hack writers of SF, men banging out SF for a buck. Sooner or later, they discovered SF fandom. They discovered that there was a tight-knit national community of several thousand people who took their work seriously. They discovered that there was a whole microcosm, a complete alternate reality, in which they were not lowly hacks, but the Lords Of Creation."

Again I would argue. Surely one of the things that fandom does is let you meet more authors than does the average reader. One not only meets them, one gets to know them socially. Once that happens it is easy to see that they are

quite ordinary human beings with all the ordinary human foibles. Thanks to fandom is there is one group of human beings of which I am not in awe - it's authors! Lords Of Creation! My Goodness!

Spinrad is more interested in arguing about 'New Wave' writing versus 'First Fandom' than he is in analysing fandom. He does not really put fandom down. He might feel, after all, that if things turn out well fandom may be looking to him as a Lord Of Creation--instead of the hacks of yesteryear! It cannot be disagreeable to be given admiration for one's work.

As you can see although both articles have taken fandom as their subject, the approach is rather different. Yet both conclusions label us as escapists. Spinrad adds hopefully that we may improve as we turn to the 'new' style of SF writing. I guess it is supposed to lead us more to the 'real' world.

When fandom is the subject, one of the things that is frequently mentioned is that it is different from any other group. To prove this it is often cited that no other branch of literature attracts such a thing. This is quite untrue. One can mention the Sherlock Holmes devotees, the Oz fans, the Tolkien phenomena, the Burns' societies. There are coteries around many individual authors--start with A and start with Austen. Or think of the Brontes! One thing often levelled against us is that there is no mystery/detective fandom. Again this is untrue. There are thousands of people who collect these books, who write scholarly articles about them, who exchange correspondence about them. Lately we have seen mystery fanzines, and now there is a mystery-lover's convention. There are also comic fanzines and horror fanzines and I reckon the next will be devoted to westerns. I hope I may never live to see a love-story fanzine or -ultimate horror - a nurse novel fanzine!

Fandom is accused of escaping from reality, as done by no other group. Now have you ever heard a couple of people discussing TV as if the people in it were real who live in its soap opera world? Have you ever heard of people sending gifts when a character in a serial gets married or has a baby? I have. Quite normal people chat to me about what Barlow did last week; they rarely mention the name of the actor who plays the part. Most people do not remember the actor's name. Have you ever heard of the transport buffs? The ones who go to a great deal of trouble to travel on a particular train or line? They are not always young boys. Tell me that any of these people I have mentioned are less "escapist" than I, and I will not agree. A woman will come home from work and sit and watch TV all night, or queue for hours for seats at the opera or ballet; a man will come home and go out to dig his garden or be the type who is never happier than when risking his neck climbing some mountain. Tell me that because I come home and bang away at stencils that I am more "escapist" and I will say---"nuts!". You escape from the "real" world into fandom! Boy! are you different!

I have just been reading about a book called THE HUMAN ZOO written by Desmond Morris. He says it started with the thought that many of the problems and strange behaviour patterns of city dwellers resemble those of animals kept in zoos. He describes how he joined a group recently who were to try and describe an Utopia. He said it was very difficult because "the moment you get rid of tension or turmoil you face the problem of boredom. So the moment you

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start trying to design an ideal society in which nothing nasty happens and you are rid of all problems, then you end up with this awful boring resemblance to Heaven". He blames growing boredom for the rise of senseless violence. His solution for Utopia was a "Stimulation Palace". Which brings us back to SF which has explored that idea many times. As to the boredom-well that is one thing about fans, they are never bored. Most of my friends never seem to have enough time to do half the things which they would like to do.

When I come off-duty from working in the "real" world and escape into fandom; I am doing what comes naturally to the human animal - avoiding boredom. I must have something to occupy my time or I'd go crazy. The people who I cannot understand are those who have no interests at all. There are at least a dozen other hobbies which I could have chosen instead of fandom; but I would have had to have chosen something. I am not the type to make work my hobby, I like a change from that. I often regret that I do not have more spare time in which to pursue other hobbies. However, in life, there is only so much time and more by chance than anything else - I chose fandom. Some of the things that attract me to it are the things cited by Jo Ann Wood...the only thing we can agree on is the right to disagree-no social stratification, no future goals(hurrah for no goals!)and so weiter. Yes, I chose fandom and I am getting a little tired of having the "escapist" label tied round my neck as a consequence. One way or another the human animal is always trying to escape.

I promised to tell you something of the Course on which I was sent by my hospital. It was called ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT. There were about 25 of us; and we were a mixed batch. Some were ward sisters; and some were (like me) administrative sisters. Some were young; and some old (again like me) been in hospital life so long we preferred not to count the years. Some of us had been asked if we would like to go on the Course; and some had been ordered to go. None of us knew what to expect.

The first revolutionary aspect was that there was no formal lecture structure; we were constantly involved in discussion, the atmosphere was informal and we - greatly daring - discovered we could smoke. The younger sisters adapted quickly to this. It may seem very innocuous to you, but to we older sisters it was a very revolutionary thing indeed. Here we were among people who were our seniors and being treated like equals; here we were being told it was time we stood up and answered back. We were told it was time we stopped saying automatically -"Yes, Matron"; and it was the Matron of a famous teaching hospital who was telling this to us. That first day I went home convinced that I was on a Course to teach us how to rebel!

The Course lasted two weeks and throughout it we had it constantly drilled into us that we must speak frankly; that we must lose our fear of authority; and that we must remember that we were managers. The great emphasis on being managers to show us that management in business and elsewhere was exactly the same as our own - and so could be used as a model. On this side of the Course we received talks on management, films showing bad management, and the value of free communication.

There was, of course, another side to it and I can best best explain this by telling you of the day we marched in for something written on the time

table as HUMAN RELATIONS. This was to be conducted by Miss Martin, the Matron of a psychiatric hospital; and we expected the usual discussion to be started by her. We found the chairs had been set into a circle and Miss Martin was sitting in the middle of this. Our Course lady introduced us to us and then sat down at the back of the room. We all took seats and then looked to Miss Martin, she looked at her feet and said nothing. After a deathly silence lasting almost five minutes, one of the male sisters asked her what we were supposed to do. She did not reply and there was again a lengthy silence whilst we all looked at one another quite baffled. Then one of the men decided that Miss Martin was indicating to us that she had been offended; and that she was waiting for us to be friendly. So he stood up and introduced himself to her; and invited us all to do the same. As this produced no reaction from Miss Martin, no-one else did so. One by one various members of the group tried various schemes to set us doing something, but they all trailed away into silence again in the face of Miss Martin's silence. Usually because whenever anyone tried to take the lead, no one would follow! Miss Martin spoke only twice, once to say "You are in a test situation and the test is the situation you are in, and it is not a new situation for you"; the other time she spoke up when we had managed to get a conversation going and said, "You are very ingenious in thinking up ways to get out of the situation you are in". Which halted the conversation pretty quickly! We all reacted in different ways. Some of us talked a lot; five never opened their mouths all afternoon. Yes, all afternoon, that is how long this lasted and, just when it had become unbearable, Miss Martin stood up, said "Good Afternoon" and left with the tutor.

Never had I seen so many relieved faces before! Everyone hurried off home; there was little of the usual social chat. I found the relief short-lived; as I soon began to puzzle over the afternoon, ruminate on my own and other's reactions, and hope for some explanation on the morrow. Fortunately that came. We were told that our afternoon's ordeal merely showed us what pre-conceived ideas will do. We had not been told Miss Martin would give a talk, we had all assumed this. This was the main reason for our discomfort. It also demonstrated to us that in every situation there are expectations which must be taken into account. Usually also there is always two demands - to be helped or to help. It was explained that when we are faced with a constant parent-like role it leads to a child-like response. This was worse than aggression in a way; and accounted for the apathy of the nursing profession. The situation also demonstrated how we all feel in an alien situation. This ought to give insight to the feelings of a patient going into a ward for the first time; or a new nurse entering her first day of duty on a new ward.

We had a discussion on how we had all felt, and how we had shown how we felt. We noted that even those who did not speak at all, still showed by their expressions how they felt. One of these, a woman, confessed that she had been too angry to speak. This, we all felt, had been obvious from her facial expression. Some people had been very surprised at their own reactions. I can't say that it was any surprise to me to learn that my own reaction to a stress situation is to start talking; or that I would make at least one attempt to lead the group. Not that I was any more successful than any other of the would-be leaders. The tutors remarked upon how savagely we had cut short any such attempts.

As many staff as possible are being sent off on these Courses. The plan for the future is that as soon as a nurse has finished her training she will

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be whisked off to a Course (and they are improving all the time) before being allowed to take a ward sisters post. I am filled with envy for these young nurses; how I wish it had been like that when I started. The "dragon" type of Matron or Sister could never have survived this type of training. And the difference it would have made to the patients of those days! Many sisters then looked upon their patients much as a sergeant-major surveys his new and raw recruits. When I was a junior probationer, I hated many of these sisters and vowed never to become like them. Looking back to those days, I now find it easier to understand why they became the types they did; and how they became that way. As usual, from the distance of time, it is easier to feel pity than hate.

To be honest, it wasn't I who figured out that next year would be the 15th year of publication for SCOTTISHE--it was Arthur Thomson. The first few issues without his artwork were pitiful things. Since the day he joined SCOT I could always be proud of one thing--the artwork was always excellent.

Through SCOT, I have made many friends and I've invited many of them to help SCOT celebrate its 15th birthday. Already some of the contributions are coming in and it looks as if this really will be the star issue that ATOM and I had hoped to see.

I am running off 150 issues--contributors, subscribers and letter-writers will head the list of those who will receive the next issue.

Ethel Lindsay.