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MARCH 1976

ETHEL'S Natterings

Fifteen years of publication is quite a long time; it is salutary to pause and reflect upon what I have gained from all this industry. The answer is easy - what I have gained is a great many friends. I consider myself very rich in friends. They are not just friends, they are good friends, generous friends, the kind of friends that go to trouble for me. They are what has made it all very much worth while.

I wrote to 35 people asking them if they would like to contribute to this anniversary issue. Of that total 21 came through nobly. I thank them all very sincerely.



I would also like to thank some other helpers: Ella Parker for her help financially, Billy Pettit for the loan of his typewriter. The colour of this fanzine is due to his desire to see more colour in the paper of British fanzines. I should also like to thank George Locke for help with transport.

This issue is dedicated to ATOM who has helped SCOTTISHE with his advice and artwork since its 4th issue.

The greatest pleasure I have received from this issue was watching ATOM's face as he read the contribution by Joe Patrizio!

I am sorry that I have to announce a rise in price for SCOT from this year; this is due to the soaring cost of paper and ink and postage. All existing subs will be honoured at the old rate.

-----Ethel Lindsay.
March.1970




Among the books we keep
in the loo, along with the
collected Mad and the Peter
Arno Pocketbook, are two by
Lee Gibb: The Joneses and How
to Keep Up With Them, and
The Higher Jones.

Scottishe has been around
for just about fifteen years.
So have those two books, give
or take a year. The other day
I was thinking about the changes
that have taken place in this
curious country of ours
since I came of age, and that
too was nearly fifteen years
back (alas), so I'm going to
use that loose association as
a peg on which to hang the
following monotribe. (If a dialogue is between several people and a monologue
is one person talking, I don't see why you shouldn't have a monotribe as
well as a diatribe. It may be very bad classical Greek, but I'm not
talking Greek...at least I don't think I am.)

Lee Gibb summed up with wicked insight the aspirations, ambitions and
weaknesses of the mid-fifties generation, with greater wit than - say -
Nancy Mitford in U and Non-U and more charity than - say - Osborne in
Look Back In Anger. (For instance, in the first of his books, he classified
various actions into "Jones" and "Robinson": fish and chips out of a news-
paper is Jones, fish and chips off a plate with a cup of tea is Robinson.
But in the second book he pointed out that while Jones always insists the
only way to eat fish and chips is out of a newspaper, no one has ever seen
him doing it.)

As L.P.Hartley said, in a line at the beginning of The Go-Between which
for me sums up everything science fiction is about, "The past is a foreign
country: they do things differently there." Watching old films on TV one
sees just how differently. Fifteen years ago has become genuinely foreign
- to me at least. I've been struggling to see how the incredible subsequent
changes have come about in order to extrapolate, in my future work, with
greater accuracy and greater insight, and I'm baffled. I am absolutely and
totally baffled. I
can feel the impact
of umpteen forces
shaping the world I

DECAYED
AND
A
HALF



JOHN BRUNNER

shall spend the rest of my life in, and I can't make a pattern out of them; it's a bit like living inside an explosive forming press whose operator is suffering from violent hiccups.

Let's take something which is at first sight superficial. They used to say, back in the thirties, "Good Americans go to Paris when they die." Or, if it wasn't Paris which attracted trans-Atlantic visitors, it was Rome. Now it's London which is the indispensable stop on a visit to "Yurrupe", as Punch used to spell it. I just saw, in Playboy, a picture of four pretty girls over an advertisement for a competition mounted by a trouser-manufacturer. First prize is an all-expenses-paid week in London with whichever of the girls you prefer. Even if BOAC was pressurised into abandoning its brilliant notion of combining travel with a dating service, which I must say I regretted because having myself travelled to places where I didn't know a soul and felt miserably lonely all by myself in dreary hotel-bars for days on end I felt the service to be provided was admirable, someone else is busy exploiting the same basic principle.

And have the heavens fallen? No, they haven't - indeed, right now they seem less likely to fall than they did fifteen years ago. Take something else superficial: fashions. The drawings in those books by Lee Gibb reflect the then-trendy styles: full skirts with two or three petticoats underneath, preferably frilly and multi-coloured, and slinky black slacks (for lounging around on the floor listening to records, says the text), and charcoal-grey suits and gaudy Palm Beach shirts for men. When I first met Marjorie she was wearing just such skirts, down to mid-calf, with lots of frills underneath. A couple of years ago, she made herself a charming summer dress in very light material you can see right through if she stands against the window. One day, after coming back from shopping in it, she said thoughtfully, "You know, there was a time when I wouldn't have dared go out in a dress like this without a slip underneath to make it opaque - but now it doesn't seem to matter."

Well, it's never mattered, let's face it... and possibly one of the ways in which the world I live in has been changed is due to that discovery being made by an unusually large number of people simultaneously. (This morning I had an excellent view of the panties worn by a girl in a chemist's shop who was leaning over to get something out of a window for me; they were very pretty panties, with lace edging and a floral pattern, and she was also a quite pretty girl...but to a generation convinced that anything more than a bikini on a beach is being over-dressed, it's only logical that what used to be hidden at all costs should now be kept clean, in good repair and generally smart in case it does show - which it will. And this, in passing, I regard as a Good Thing; a forensic expert in Paris in the last century, talking about corpses recovered from the Seine, said that the way to tell whether the deceased had been a Good Girl was to ask if she had dirty knees. Good Girls didn't bother to wash them, because no one else ever saw them!)

Maybe - and here I'm groping - the changes I can sense, the changes that represent the extension of the revitalising process which now makes London the essential stop on a visit to Europe, instead of Paris (where the people are distinctly square nowadays) or Rome (where, worse yet, they're mostly dogmatic Catholics), stem from a revision of priorities. I saw quoted the other day in Sanity (the CND journal of which I'm a contributing editor and in which most of my fannish-type - i.e. non-paid - writings can be found, advt.) a graffito which said "Up with love, down with hate".

One used to think of modesty as a priority. In other words a respectable young lady kept herself covered even when she was - not of course sweating, or even perspiring, but - glowing, as the Victorians put it. I've seen it remarked that it was during the First World War when the Fallen Women picked herself up and kept right on going, a little surprised to find herself still in one piece but glad of it. I wouldn't know - I wasn't around. But I do know that when Marjorie gets herself up for a party in a see-through lace cat-suit over the tiniest possible briefs and bra, she looks terrific and turns heads on a scale which I find distinctly complimentary to myself, at one remove. (I'm also pleased to be able to show up at a party in a neck-lace and not instantly be written off as a queer!)

On a related subject: one used to think of chastity as a priority, in spite of that celebrated dictum of (was it?) Balzac's: "Of all sexual perversions, chastity is by far the most extraordinary." Some of the most unstable people I know are promiscuous - but, on the other hand, so are some of the nicest, most civilised, best-adjusted and most sociable; they even attend orgies.

One used, similarly, to think of there being certain indispensable priorities in one's life-style: a child should be sent if possible to a private (read public) school and forcibly fitted for the Establishment world. Me, as a victim of one such public school, which left me a psychological legacy that nearly drove me into a nervous breakdown, I'm delighted to see this attitude drifting towards the class "irrelevant" in many people's minds. The bright young intellectual at a public school nowadays is likely to envy the kid attending a state school as a day-boy, who can get out in the evenings and probably has a steady girl-friend to neck with on the way home. (Our idols are more likely to be the Beatles and Stones than the Governor of the Bank of England or the chairman of ICI.)

Again, Jules Verne could portray Phileas Fogg insisting, in the middle of the tropics, on his regular Thursday lunch of roast beef and suet pudding. Lee Gibb argued that this was one of the weapons Jones used to kill "Snob" - food - and in this I think he was absolutely right. Marjorie and I came back last week (I write in October 1969) from a brief trip across France, into Italy and back via Switzerland, and as usual in France we stayed in the counterpart of transport cafes, the Routiers hotels used by the long-distance lorry-drivers, where for a matter of about fifteen bob one can get meals which would cost thirty bob in London...if you were lucky. (Sample hors d'oeuvres of beet-root in oil and garlic, shredded raw salsify, potato salad and half a hard-boiled egg with mayonnaise, plus a slice of ham; a steak with a jardinière of mixed vegetables - potato, peas, runner beans, baby carrots - and a green salad; a home-made compôte of plums, greengages and damsons; and a cheeseboard ...and that marvellous fresh French bread, and the local red wine, which was first-rate, thrown in for a total of about 17/6 apiece including tip. There was so much of that we couldn't finish it - and it was only lunch, not dinner!)

Now, thanks mainly in my view to the arrival of Chinese restaurants which mean you don't have to rush for the restaurant at five to eight and suffer surly rudeness from the waitresses, but can go out and eat at a civilised hour, like ten or eleven, and be welcome, and to the outburst of Indian restaurants where we've grown used to unfamiliar but delicious delicacies, I think you can eat better in London than in any major city. Little of what's good is native - but in our small modern world, isn't it best to learn to pick what's best, regardless of origin, and then try and bring your own local products,

habits, manners and attitudes up to the same standard?

Maybe this is what's going on around us. If so, then - somewhat surprisingly, I suppose - it's only a continuation of a process that's been happening for centuries. This is a great country to live in, not because Swinging London just hit the international tourist map or because skirts are shorter here than anywhere else closer than Bungo-Bungo, the undiscovered South Pacific paradise, but because...

Well: because within two or three hundred years the courts set up by the conquering Normans had to abandon French and settle for English which by then had absorbed most of what was useful in the new bosses' language;

And because Jewish bankers, driven from their homes on the Continent, came here and gave the country the benefit of their banking skills;

And because a quartet of kids from Liverpool heard the music of the descendants of black slaves and gave it an international accent;

And because Flemish weavers came here when they were kicked out owing to their Protestant convictions and turned this country into the textile capital of the world;

And because refugees from Nazism settled here, and because Hungarians came here, and Czechs, and Free Poles, and ex-prisoners of war;

And because Hans Knap, the Norwegian architect whom you may have met at the Globe, feels he ought to get married but would rather have an English girl than any other wife;

And because...

Well, here's where Lee Gibb hit the mark square, when he predicted one of the consequences of Jones taking over - the Jones who would rather spend his holiday with some Breton peasants than at Blackpool or even Bournemouth. He said, "There will be dancing in the streets, there will be such junketings as haven't been seen since Puritan times."

Life, putting it briefly, is more fun here than it was - and much more fun than in most of the fifteen other countries I've been to. Said one of A.P. Herbert's imaginary judges in a Misleading Case, "We are not here for fun. There is no reference to fun in any Act of Parliament!" (There shouldn't be, either - apocryphal Nazi decree: "The populace will have a good time on Thursday night, By Order.")

Among the things that make it fun, I'd class Chinese restaurants, Indian restaurants, being able to buy ackee and sweet potatoes in the local market, blues, blue-beat, high life and ska, stately African women in ankle-long robes on the way home from shopping, West Indians un-selfconsciously dancing on the pavement to transistor radios, hearing women discussing their families in Yiddish as they wait to be served in a shop, panties printed with the Union Jack and the fact that I can waste half an afternoon on answering Ethel's invitation to contribute to Scottish instead of chowing my nails to the quick because I am worried about who's going to buy my next story.

Of course, some people think that our Moral Fibre is being undermined; that our British Way of Life is being sabotaged; that unless we shove all those damned blacks on the next boat home this country will sink steaming beneath the waves and leave no more substantial memorial than a bubble full of gas. I have on my desk right now a packet of literature from the National Front which argues precisely that.

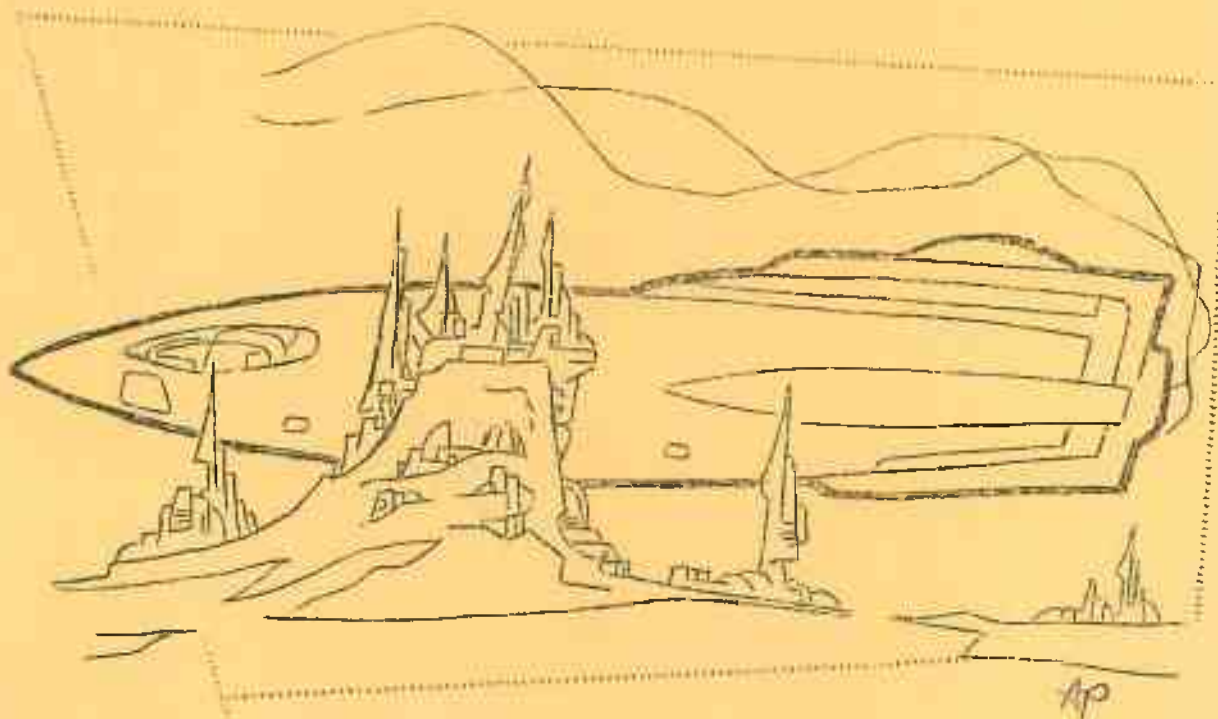
But the genius of this country, for a thousand years, has been to absorb change without discontinuity. Dr Johnson, on his tour of the Highlands (which he found rather unpleasant), recognised Scotch broth as superb, and said that although he had never had it before he did not care how soon he had it again; moreover there was a haggis-smuggling industry from Scotland to England at the time of Queen Elizabeth I (honest!) which the accession of the Stuarts put a stop to because it wasn't smuggling after that. The Scots in England remain proud of being Scots; I hope that in a hundred years the West Indians and Indians and Chinese here will be proud of being West Indians and Indians and Chinese..and will have added something to the British broth as the Scots have done.

Exactly what they'll add, I don't know. If I did, I'd give up writing SF and go in for the clairvoyance bit. Fifteen years ago I didn't know we were going to find a Chinese restaurant in Bury St Edmond's where you could eat well on a Sunday afternoon at three o'clock; I didn't know a girl behind a chemist's counter was going to give me a chance to inspect her panties without caring; I didn't know a week in London with a pretty girl was going to be top prize in an American contest; I didn't know the National Front was going to stuff my letter-box full of anti-black literature.

But if I had known..wouldn't I have found the last fifteen years dull?
And I didn't. Believe me. Nor, I hope, will the next fifteen be any duller.

John Brunner

Footnote: Since the writing of this article the author has discovered that Lee Gibb's The Joneses and How to Keep Up with Them was published in 1957 not 1959 as he had thought. Mr Brunner considers, however, that his argument still stands.



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Care

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feeding

of a

fanzine

Richard
&
Seis

Okay, you're a young, ambitious fan and you want to publish a fanzine and you want it to be a real good fanzine and have a big circulation and win a Hugo!

You've got a mimeo and a little spare money and you're faunching to get on with it.

But wait...wait...listen to a battle-scarred veteran. You've got to make some important decisions first. And you've got to realise some important things about fanzines.

They are monsters.

They eat you out of house and home, they gobble your time and sit on your back and ride you day and night.

You want proof of this? How much does it cost to publish a fifty page issue of SFR, for instance?

Here is where you'll get into some boggling logistics. Because a popular fanzine can demand steadily incresing runs on that mimeo. 500 copies...600...700...800.. 900...

That is if you are blindly intent on going up into the "Hugo" category of zine. Zines like SFR, TRUMPET, NIEKAS, AMRA, ODD,, SPECULATION, WARHOON, RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY, and LOCUS require a special kind of dedication and staying power, skill and talent.

So what to do: settle for a tradezine and a few subs or go for broke? And I do mean broke.

I don't know the circulation of SPECULATION. I'd guess under 500. Same for ODD, WARHOON, and RIVERSIDE. But Seithers has mentioned 900 for AMRA, and I suspect that TRUMPET is around 750.

By the time this article sees print I'll have run off 875 copies of SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #35.

That will require about 46 reams of paper, not counting the covers. Have you even enough room to store that much paper? About 12 one pound tubes of ink. Of course 875 envelopes, but it's cheaper to buy them by the thousands.

Don't even think of the postage. Yeah, do: about \$100.

SFR #35 will cost about \$275 to produce and mail

But, ah, the production! You think you can run off 47,000 to 50,000 sheets of mimeo paper on a manual? You would be a wreck! It would take you a non-stop week of arm-destroying work so you'll have an electric mimeo. There's possibly \$700-\$1100 gone.

And, too, there's the cost of printed covers and gestefaxed artwork and headings, to do a first class job of displaying your material. Be cheap and figure another \$50 per issue.

And now, the time factor! Ah... It will take two weeks to run off, collate, staple and mail your 800 copy issue. I envy you if you have help.

And, mustn't forget, the incoming mail--anywhere up to twenty letters a day--will take up to two hours a day to deal with.

And, remember, with 400 or so regular subbers and hundreds of single and back issue purchases you have to keep books. Records.

What you should do is set the zine up as a legal business for tax purposes. Some red tape there. But after all you are taking in and spending thousands of dollars per year.

WHY go to all this trouble?

Keep that question firmly locked into a tightly sealed box in your mental basement. Do not open till after your first heart attack.

Oh, do you think you can shorten all that labor by going photo-offset and letting the printer and bindery do all the production? You can if you have a paying circulation of around 2500. Short of that it costs more than you can get from a sub per copy, unless you overprice the zine...in which case you won't have many subbers---a vicious circle. In the under thousand copies per issue range it costs twice as much to go photo-offset per page as mimeo.

Listen, unless you're a glutton for punishment, unsane, divinely driven or a genius, stick to a small personalzine of 200 copies tops. You'll live longer.

If you are a student you have no business even thinking about a "bigtime" zine. If you have a full time job and a family, I suspect you should forget it too. I submit it takes a peculiar type of individual to make a good, Successful Hugo-category fanzine editor-publisher. They are rare. They are probably all slightly mad.

"I resent that, Geis!"

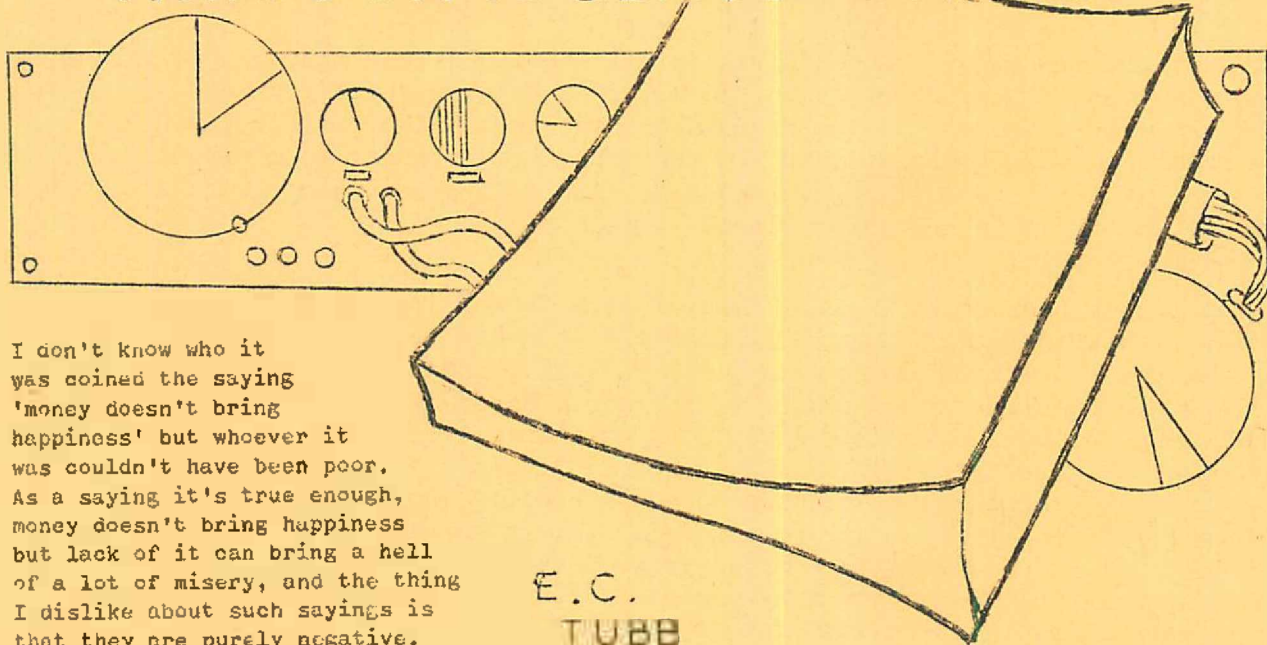
"Back into your hole, alter-ego. You have no business in this article."

"Hell I don't! You can't infer we're nuts and expect me to---"

So you see, you ambitious fans out there, you who are eager to win a "Best Fanzine" award...you see what can happen to you?

Richard Geis.

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY



I don't know who it was coined the saying 'money doesn't bring happiness' but whoever it was couldn't have been poor. As a saying it's true enough, money doesn't bring happiness but lack of it can bring a hell of a lot of misery, and the thing I dislike about such sayings is that they are purely negative. Money doesn't bring happiness, true, but good health doesn't bring happiness, five wives - or husbands - don't bring happiness, in fact nothing we know will bring happiness because if we knew what did it would be on sale in the large, economy sized bottle at each and every friendly supermarket. Or, then again, would it?

It seems to me that every government, and by government I mean anyone in a position of authority with power to back his decisions, has a vested interest in keeping the vast majority in an acute state of misery. There could be some subtle streak of sadism buried inside all those who seek power which flowers in mealy-mouthed fruitition as soon as they feel the handle of the whip. The public must not be allowed to be happy. They must be kept miserable for the good of their souls. No matter how hard they work or what they do to aid production they must always, with rising emphasis, be told that the state the Nation is parlous, that they are spending too much and enjoying the flesh pots too greatly and, if all else fails, they - we - are told how miserable others in far-off places are and how dare we feel even remotely happy when some child in some land is dying for want of medicine, or food, or clothing, or something.

Never mind that their brother politicians are the sole and prime cause of such misery. Politicians, to other politicians, can do no wrong, and starvation and misery anywhere is always the fault of the common working man who, so our bosses say, are cursed with the selfish and immoral desire to get more money for doing less work. Odd that, when we think of the pious statement that money does not bring happiness, but our rulers are determined to save us from that kind of misery at least. The misery attending the ownership of too much money, that is. Too much meaning anything remotely approaching an amount which would enable the common worker to lift two fingers to his boss and tell him to go and stuff himself. (Avant garde fans can substitute their own favourite four-letter word in the place of 'stuff')

Ah, well.

Another saying which has always puzzled me is to be found somewhere in the Bible and goes - 'To those that have shall be given and those that have not shall be taken even the little that they have.'

For years that quotation struck me as the height of naked cynicism because I laboured under the conviction that the stuff that those had and would be given more of was money. It fitted so well. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer and if you ask what they could have not and yet have the little they had taken away, the answer is still money. Debt is negative cash so a man in debt is having the little he has taken away before he gets it.

Later it was explained to me that the stuff mentioned wasn't money but faith. I found that hard to believe. Faith, to me, is something which you have or haven't, and if you've got it then you've got the lot. Like pregnancy, you are or you aren't (women, of course) and you can't be more pregnant than pregnant. Then I thought that maybe it meant patience, then tolerance, then power. Now I'm sure I was right in the first place.

Anyone for church?

Recently I've been doing a great deal of time travelling and for this I blame two people in particular; Phil Harbottle with his VISION OF TOMORROW and Wally Gillings who writes in it with his IMPATIENT DREAMERS series of articles. The effect has been to throw me back to the early days when I was first bitten by the SF bug and have never recovered. At odd times I find myself fingering an old magazine, a Clayton ASTOUNDING, circa 1932, and staring at a host of scarlet worm-like shapes clustered around a spaceship. There are other mags and I won't go into all that now because all of my generation have shared such experiences but the reason I take these trips backward into time is plain and simple nostalgia. I wonder how many others feel, not nostalgia, but a peculiar let-down at what has happened or, rather, at what has not happened in the fanish scene?

On an early edition of SLANT, Walter Willis's and associates fanzine was a cover which should have won a Hugo had the Hugo been around then. A dissipated fan, beanie'd, disreputable, sat lounging in a chair among a scene of fanact chaos. The caption was a pearl of wonderful phraseology;-

"We are the builders of brave tomorrows
We are the dreamers at last awake."

Well, the dreamers are at last awake and space flight is a living fact. Men have walked on the Moon and the prophesies of the old days have come home hard and fast. And yet - did we have a lunar landing party? Did we have a wassail to celebrate the first man to orbit the earth? Did we do anything to celebrate the occasion for which we all, I assume, had waited for with so much yearning anxiety? We did not.

The reason, I think, lies in the simple words, Anno Domini, or, if you prefer, Tempus Fugit. Age is with us and time flies. The fans of today are not the fans of yesterday. Not for them the time-travelling induced by reminiscences and certainly not for them science fiction. Probably not even science fiction. That stuff, to them, is ancient and of casual interest. Fair enough, but what now are the fans fanish about? It has been said that fandom could exist without the medium which gave it birth, that the thing itself was enough to promulgate growth and stimulate activity. Maybe so, but I'd still like to see it

because there seems, to me, to be an aching void where once echoed the sound of conviviality. Or perhaps the old fen have outgrown their youthful interests which, of course, leads inevitably to another pertinent phrase; - 'For then I was a child - now I put away childish things. Then I saw through a glass darkly - now I see face to face'.

See what, I wonder?

Certainly not the type of book I've been searching for for a long time now. Not a dictionary - a dictionary can tell what a word means if you know the word. But what if you know the meaning but want to find the appropriate word? For example, I'm lucky, I know that a phobia is a fear. So far so good. Therefore a fear of cats should be catphobia; of spiders, spiderphobia, of heights, heightphobia - but, naturally, it isn't as simple as that. Catphobia, a fear of cats, is what? I don't know and worse, I don't know where to look. Don't say Roget's Thesaurus. Each time I pick up a copy and handle it with the firm intention of buying it if it will answer my modest demands I fling it down with a muttered curse of baffled rage. I don't want to find alternative words for 'fear'. I merely want to find out what a person who is afraid of cats is suffering from in technical language. If anyone knows of the kind of book which would tell me all that accept my obedience in advance for your eagerly awaited information.

If the planets are inhabited, said someone, then earth must be their hell. And, I'd like to add, those twist-brained designers who dictate the shape of things must be the resident demons in charge. If you've ever tried to repair something, or simply to adjust something, you'll know what I mean. Want to adjust the points on a distributor? A simple, five-minute job, or it used to be on the pre-war cars. I remember a Ford Pilot I had where it was physically impossible to do that simple task. Even the Ford garage had to use a special tool which included mirrors to do it. The damn thing was fixed at the bottom of the radiator which meant, when you filled it, the water would fall onto the distributor. The radiator hole, naturally, was carefully designed to be small enough to make this a certainty. Have you ever tried to start a car with a wet distributor? Don't waste time trying - it can't be done.

The same with a hundred other trifling jobs which should be simple. They are simple. All you have to do is to get to them but, here, the designers show their fiendish cunning. To get to the part in question you have to take off this...and this..and this...and then this...and Ghod help you if you lose a nut or forget the exact order of reassembly or do something a little too enthusiastically or...

Well, what are garages for?

But usually these things don't happen close to a garage or, if they do, you find that the place is just for the dispensing of petrol and there is no mechanic, no tools, and above all, no one willing to help. So you join a motoring organisation for a fat sum per year and a resultant diminishing of the happiness that money will not bring you. Unfortunately the diminishing of the happiness which you aren't supposed to have with the possession of cash usually results in an increasing of the misery which you aren't supposed to have if you are broke, ie; if money doesn't bring happiness then it must bring misery. So maybe the designers are working for the good of our souls after all. Personally I'd like to take one of those wonder boys, plant him on a cold, wet road in the middle of a windy, winter's night, give him the junior toy-kit usually supplied with vehicles and then sabotage the car and force him to fix it.

Like being locked in a harem or in the vaults of Fort Knox with a sack and permission to take what I could carry such dreams must forever remain in the realm of wishful thinking.

But I would like to take a designer of modern electronic equipment, maroon him on a planet covered with a surging mass of corrosive slime, give him a radio - slightly busted - and let him face up to the task of fixing it in order to summon help to save his scaly hide. And give him a time limit, naturally. My guess is that, if my experience is anything to go by, he would have been eaten before he could figure out how to take the damn thing apart. As far as I can gather most components are rotated through the fourth-dimension, assembled, then rotated back again.

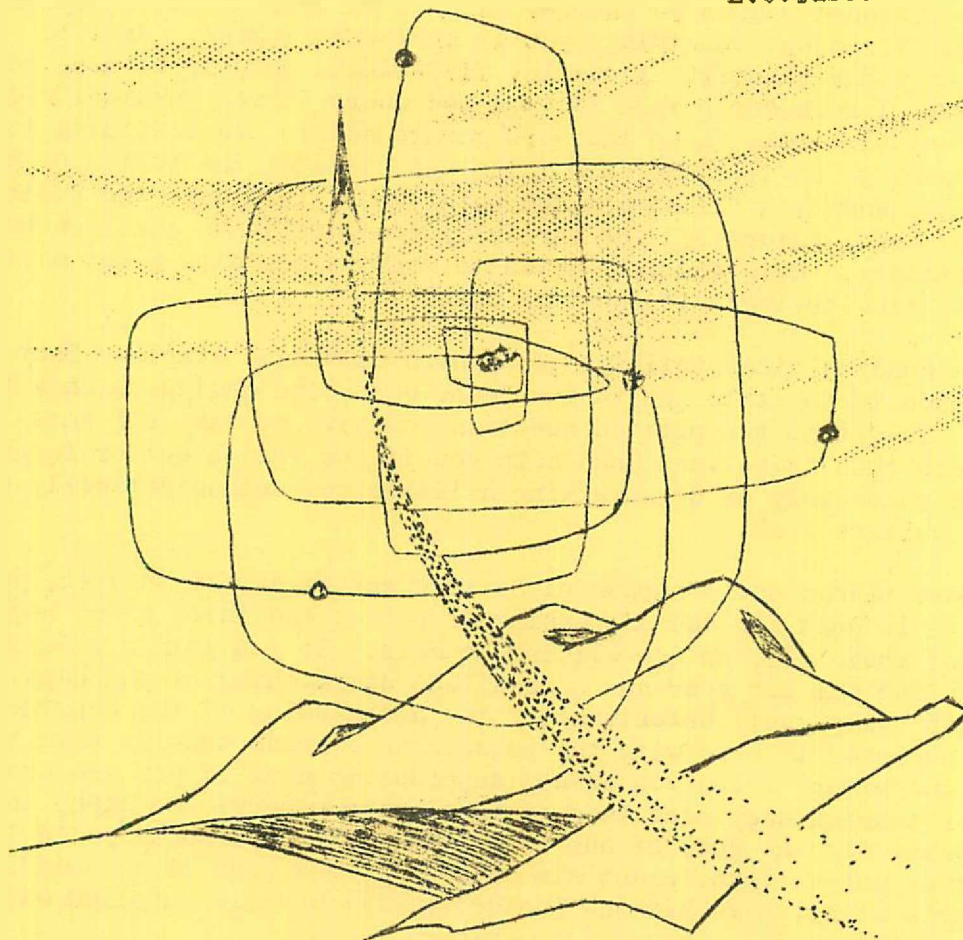
Or am I just plain stupid?

I must be because here I go again, walking to the bookshelves, reaching for an old mag and stepping right back in time to when control panels were wired with miles of sphaggetti-like connections, where heroes could rip out dead valves and replace them in a trice, where the aliens did not automatically speak English and sex was something we read in other mags if we wanted to read about sex.

Tempus fugit.

In those days we hadn't even reached the moon.

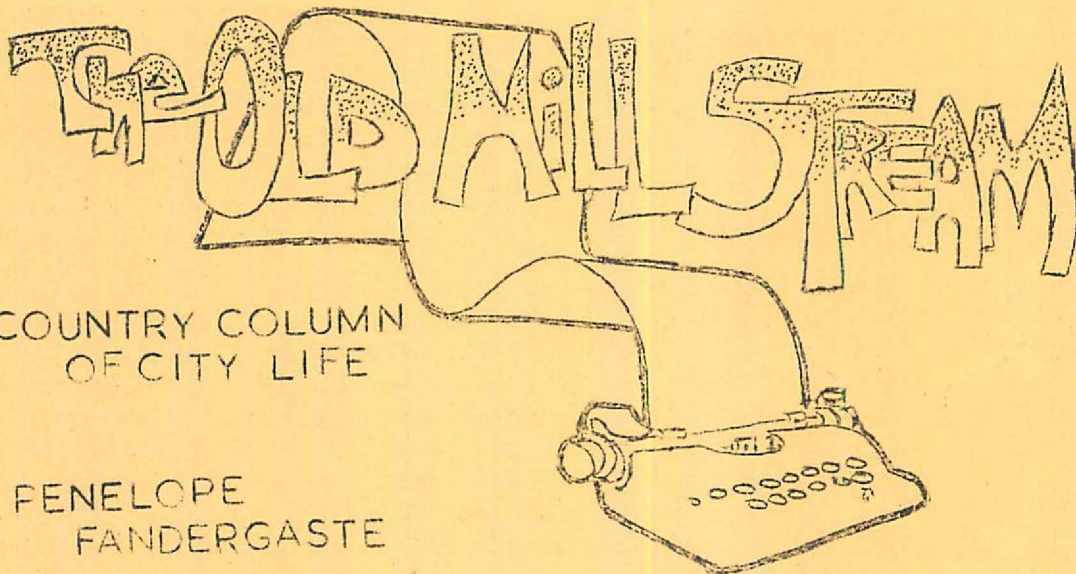
... E.C. Tubb.



We've had two Friday the thirteenth already this year, which might explain the weather. There's another to come, too, so if you're intending to take your holidays abroad this year, perhaps to travel to the Heidelberg Convention, ~~make~~ make sure that the ferry doesn't have a woman aboard. We all know of the older superstitions like these and not walking under ladders when there is an "r" in the month, but have you realised just how many modern day superstitions there are around?

The other day, for example, I counted over forty dangling car mascots and they can't all have been there for sheer beauty (have you seen some of them?). Nor can they but obstruct the driver's view. Perhaps with drivers like me on the road people feel they need some luck. And what about the people who, like two of my colleagues, must get out of the right side of the bed in a morning, so that nobody can say they haven't done so, no matter how foul their tempers? It's ridiculous, of course. I always get out of bed on the left, if only because the right hand side is pushed up against a wall.

That's not all. Van Johnson wears red socks. Ah, the things one learns from reading fanzines. Did you know that there are salesmen who always start their daily rounds with



the even numbered houses because they ~~went~~ went an edge over odd customers? And what about the students who take "lucky" ~~pens~~ pens into examinations or footballers who have to put on their right sock before their left, to say nothing of the millions who trust to pins, birthdays and "lucky" numbers systems in their attempts to win the football pools.

I know a writer who considers it lucky to send any new story to a religious magazine from which it is certain to be rejected, another who won't ride in a lift and yet another who dismantles his typewriter piece by piece and then assembles it again before he starts a story. At conventions some fans insist upon certain room or membership numbers (fourteen and fifteen, Norman?), whilst one regular convention card player always insists upon wearing his lucky ace of spades cuff-links. It's just as well he hasn't started insisting upon using a lucky pack of cards.

---oooOooo---

A couple of weeks ago I was caught in a Chelsea shower and took shelter in the new arcade off Sloane Square. The dazzling display of wood carving, pewter, silver and jade in the art shop, Fashion Arts, took my eye and with a quick balancing of cheque book stubs I made my way inside. I'd been looking around for some minutes before I saw the large notice which made me gasp. It read, "None of the items displayed for sale is genuine."

The shop assistant saw my amazement and took pity. "It's true," he said. "Everything here is a fake, though of course we pride ourselves upon making everything as close as possible to the authentic article. The jade was ordinary marble, the pewter coated aluminium and the magnificent African wood-carving had been made in East Ham.

I personally didn't see the point of it all, but who really needs a point to a fad? Even in the short time I looked round the shop an elderly gentleman came in to buy a pair of matching star sapphires. The price was about a fifth of the genuine article and they looked good enough to fool me. "But they won't on close inspection," the assistant told me, "or at least they shouldn't. In a real star sapphire the cut which causes the light to refract makes the star appear to move slightly. The star doesn't move in a synthetic sapphire, though of course the chemical composition is the same." Usually a synthetic stone is cheaply cut so that any piece is rarely smaller than twenty carats, a huge and virtually impossible size. Here, however, the synthetics for sale, the rubies, emeralds, diamonds and sapphires were small, delicate and tasteful.

"We cater in the main for two different types of buyers," the assistant said. It seems that there are people who like to surround themselves with arty-crafty items but who can't afford the price of the real thing, and there are the snobs who pass off the copies as the genuine item to visitors, presumably with a casual wave of their hands whilst they're pouring out a martini. "Marvellous Malawi wood carvings, darling," they probably say. "Set me back a packet, I can tell you."

I liked the sea shells which were on display. There is a booming collector's market in shells these days, from Queen Conches to West African Volutes. The tasteful array here were colourful and very attractive. They are made in two ways, I was told. "Pick that one up," said the assistant. "See how heavy it is. That's because the base is solid, rather than hollow like the real shell. We make them from Plaster of Paris and plastic fashioned round thin fuse wire. Good, aren't they?" I had to admit that they were. "What about this one?" I asked, picking up a shell labelled "Glory of the Seas." "It's light enough," I said, "and it certainly looks real." The salesman laughed. "It is real," he said. "It's a real shell, an Indian Textile cone, which isn't too rare, but we've changed the colouring with water-colour and photographic fixative." The Glory of the Sea is apparently exceedingly rare and the genuine article is the world's most costly, selling for around £400. The copy I was handling was priced at a modest fifteen guineas. I put it down.

"It's comforting to know," I said, "that you display that sign about nothing being genuine but who's to say that anything you sell won't be passed off as the real thing by your purchaser?" "I know," he told me with what sounded like sincerity, "and it's one of our biggest worries." He didn't tell me what he intended doing about it. I allowed myself to make a small purchase and as the sales assistant held open the door for me I noticed the full trading name of the firm stencilled onto the glass, Fashion Arts Crafts Enterprises, Ltd., which I thought a little clumsy till I took stock of the initials. "Very smart," I said, "but don't the dairy product people object?" "Heavens, no," he said. "You've heard of margarine, haven't you?" I thought that one over until I got home and arranged my plastic chess set along the formica teal top of the bookcase. It's a real netsuke, I tell you and it set me back a packet.

---Penelope Fandergast.

I am really pleased and honoured to accept Ethel's invitation to partake (if you'll excuse that ecclesiastical expression) in this very special anniversary issue of SCOTTISHE. This is one of my favourite fanzines, and I think one of the great ones. There are very few others which I would so much appreciate appearing in. (I have, of course, appeared here before. The article concerned was not enthused over by fandom, and if Ethel promises not to say anything about it, neither will I.)

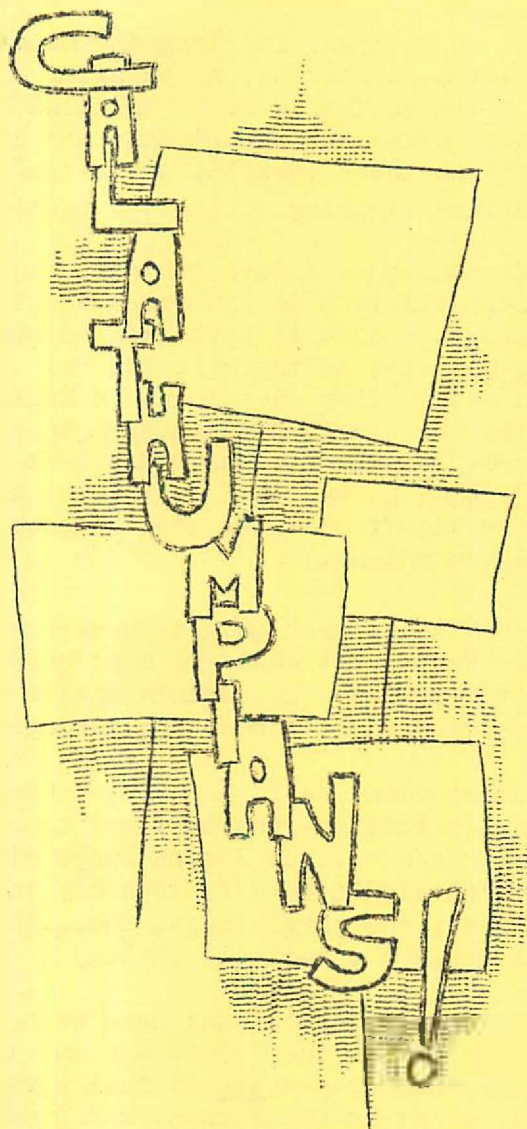
Another fanzine which I would like to get into is WARHOON. I tried, some time ago. I wrote to Dick Bergeron and said something like, "Look, I've got this great idea for an article for WARHOON. It's called THE PRECURSORS OF THE RELIGIOUS BODY KNOWN SIMPLY AS DISCIPLES OR CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN ENGLISH FICTION". And I outlined it to him thus:

The Churches of Christ, or Disciples, as I shall refer to them in this article, are, one might say, without theological or historical hair-splitting, a branch of the Protestant movement in the Christian church. Originally devoted to restoring the pristine unity of the Church, the Disciples themselves went through various schisms, surprisingly not at the time of the American Civil War, when so many denominations were split asunder, but towards the end of the nineteenth century and during the present century. The two major denominations surviving these schisms were the Churches of Christ and the and the Churches of Christ; the former sometimes referred to as "Associated" or "Disciples", the latter as "Unassociated" or (less kindly, but no less truly descriptive) "Anti-Organ". Both denominations claim about two million adherents in the USA, and since they use the same name it's all very confusing.

But I am not concerned with the present-day denominations, nor, with the movement started by Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander in association with Barton Stone and others during the early years of the nineteenth century. If I were, I might find any number of references to these people in English fiction, though I can't think of any offhand. No, I am concerned with their precursors: those tiny, independant, Bible-loving Christians who, when the Disciples became organized, decided to merge with them.

I could, were I concerned with the larger view, mention that two Presidents of the U.S. are said to have been Disciples - James Garfield and Lyndon Johnson; that the sometime Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Garfield Todd (yes, he was named after the President), had gone to that country as a

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Disciple missionary; that such well-known show business personalities as Pat Boone and Jane Russell are said to be members of these churches; but these undoubtedly interesting facts are strictly irrelevant to my purpose in this article, and I shall not mention them, except in passing.

The Glasites and the Sandemanians: these are the people I am concerned with. Oh yes, there were others. In many countries of the world, in Russia, Norway - even in Australia - there were simple Christians who rejected divisive creeds and clang- I beg your pardon-clang to the truths of sacred writ; who, when the Campbellite or Restoration Movement spread, recognised in its tenets their own beliefs and happily joined the cause.

But in England, for long the home of English fiction, there were the Glasites and Sandemanians, named after John Glas of Auchtermuchty(1695-1773), author of THE TESTIMONY OF THE KING OF MARTYRS, thorn in the flesh of the Scottish Kirk, and Robert Sandeman, his son-in-law(1718-71). To what extent do we find these lovable, primitive(their own term), fiercely independent Christians figuring in English fiction?

To commence, I turn to that unique novelist, Thomas Love Peacock, and in particular I turn to his great novel, er.....

Hmmm. I seem to have mislaid Peacock's solitary reference to Sandemanians, Dick, but it's in there somewhere. And, er, that's the only reference to these people I've ever found in English fiction after twenty years or more reading the stuff, but I'm sure there must be others. It's just a matter of, you know, digging around a bit. It could be a great article, Dick. Really set WARHOOD on the map. You'll let me know if you want it, won't you?

(Or was it Glasites that Peacock referred to? No, I'm pretty sure it was Sandemanians.)

I've never been able to understand why Dick Bergeron knocked that article back. Perhaps it would be most charitable("and the greatest of these is charity"-Paul to the Corinthians)to assume that he was short of space. All these Irishmen he's been publishing.

Since then, as it happens, I have found another reference to Sandemanians in English fiction-just as I had expected. Aldous Huxley, in AFTER MANY A SUMMER, says "...but Joseph Budge Stoyte, his father, had been a Sandemanian..."(I didn't need to identify the author, did I? The clarity of that statement, the playfulness, the...the...capital letters and so on-all hallmarks of AH's inimitable style.)

Mr Stoyte Senior must have been an elderly gentleman indeed, since this novel is set in the 1920's and the last surviving Sandemanian I know of was Michael Faraday-yes, the Michael Faraday-who died in 1867. But, then, the novel is set in California, and goodness knows how many sects though extinct might survive there even today.

Anyone who can help in this fascinating research is very welcome to do so. I think I've seen a reference to Sandemanians or Glasites in William Blake, too

Well, I find it fascinating; I don't know about you. I find that just as great authors(according to Oscar Wilde, Lee Harding, Farley Blotgrind and other leading authorities) are far less interesting than bad authors, so the little splinter groups that have come out of the main body of the Church over the

centuries are often more interesting than the reputable denominations.

My interest in these byways of religious history started when I was a theological student, in my torrid youth. I was always getting into trouble with lecturers for standing up for these little heresies, and I often really thought that they had something vital and real about them that the modern Church had lost. If nothing else, they were usually quite sincere and quite uninhibited about their faiths. To be a Methodist or a Quaker today is to be quite respectable, but it wasn't always so. In earlier years, to belong to a sect often meant risking your job, your freedom even your life.

Pelagians, Calixtines, Utraquists, Hussites, Arians, Marastians, Monophysites, Moravians, Montanists, Anabaptists, Pogoniles and Albigenians, Doukhobors and Reformed-Two-Seed-In-The-Spirit-Particular-Seventh-Day-Baptists -oh, and hundreds of others; their history is a vast storehouse of human folly and not a little nobility.

Apart from the last hundred years or so, perhaps the most fruitful period for the emergence of sects was the 17th Century. And this is not surprising when it is recalled that in 1611 the King James or Authorised (a Dominican man once asked me, "But who authorised it?") Version of the Bible appeared. For the first time the Bible was readily available in the common tongue. And by this time the revolt against authority which had started with Luther and others had just about reached its peak. The Bible, containing the absolute truth about practically everything, lay open to all. It was only necessary to interpret it; and to interpret it, all that was needed was the decision of the individual conscience.

Now the odd thing about individual conscience is that it is individual-and therefore, odd. Suddenly, about 1650, all the world and his dog* was interpreting the Bible finally and authoritatively. Eternal Truth might equally be expected to issue from the mouth of a learned divine or a Billingsgate fish-wife. It must have been terribly confusing. You could be a Behmonist, a Bidellian, a Coppinist, a Salmonist, a Dipper, a Traskite, a Tryonist, a Philadelphian, a Christadelphina, a Quaker - or something you invented yourself (always assuming you were sincere about it, of course). Some of this religious independance shaded over into political attitudes, so that from this distance in time it is difficult to decide whether such sects as the Levellers, Diggers, Fifth Monarchy Men, Millenarians and so on were primarily Christians or some kind of crypto-Socialists. Of all these gloriously independant interpreters of Holy Writ, I think my favourite is Lodwick Muggleton.

The future founder of the Higgletonians was born about 1608 and was brought up to be a tailor. He became engaged to a charming young lady, but about the same time he became religious, and under the influence of his puritan friends he broke off the engagement on the readily understandable ground that the girl's mother kept a pawnbroker's shop. (There's a lot to be said for the view that usury is sinful.) Among these friends was a cousin, John Reeves, a man of fierce conviction and unflinching holiness.

About 1650 two odd characters named John Tawny and John Robins started preaching in London. Tawny said that he was God's high priest, that it was his mission to lead the Jews back to Jerusalem, and(incidentally) that he was the

rightful King of France. Robins was less modest: he was Adam, he was Melchizedek, he was the Lord himself. He had raised Jeremiah, Benjamin and many others from the dead-and there they were beside him, admitting that it was all true! At his command serpents and dragons appeared; he could fly like an angel; and he was about to lead 144,000 men and women to the Mount of Olives through the Red Sea, just as soon as he could find that many followers; they would, of course, eat nothing but dry bread and vegetables.

It was all very exciting, and Muggleton and Reeve were very impressed. Suddenly, strange things started happening to them. They felt exalted, they heard voices, they felt holy...inspired...Could it be that...?Yes! One night Reeve burst into Muggleton's room and declared the great news: they were the Lord's chosen witnesses, whose appearance had been foretold in the Book of Revelations! Muggleton recognised the truth instantly, and enthusiastically with his cousin. But obviously Tawny and Robins were imposters! They must be denounced forthwith! A hazardous task-but had not the Lord said in His Word, "I will give power unto my two witnesses...And if any man hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies"(Rev.11:3-5)? So off they went.

They found Robins in gaol. The redoubtable embodiment of Adam, Melchizedek et al. glared at them through bars. Reeve was undaunted. He delivered his message of denunciation forcefully-so much so that Robins collapsed, crying, "It is finished; the Lord's will be done". Then he wrote a letter to Cromwell, recanting his heresy, was released from prison and retired to his quiet little cottage in the country.

The intrepid pair did not actually confront Tawny, but left a piece of paper in his room, on which Reeve had written, "We pass sentence upon you of eternal damnation!" Tawny was moved by this communication: in terror he fled to Holland in a small boat-it is thought en route to Jerusalem-and was never heard of again. Denouncing holders of contrary opinions, however sincerely done, was certainly a magnificent bit of PR work, and the new religion rapidly became a great success.

Unfortunately, Reeve didn't live long to enjoy his success. He soon died, leaving Muggleton to carry on his great work. Which he did. He lived to the great age of eighty-eight, and for all of those years he never ceased preaching and writing and denouncing. Sermons, letters, pamphlets, books poured from his nimble pen. So what if his message was often so frenzied and incoherent as to benumb the brain? - disciples flocked to him.

The new religion did not go unopposed, of course. The great William Penn, for example, felt obliged to object to it (in the straightforward manner of the times) in a work entitled THE NEW WITNESSES PROVED OLD HERETICS. The government of Charles II subjected poor Muggleton to all the nasty little persecutions of authority: he was badgered by JPs, hunted from place to place, his books burnt in public, he was worried by small fines and short imprisonments. Eventually, at the age of sixty-eight, he was arrested and tried for blasphemy. The judge was lenient: he condemned Muggleton to the pillory. So the old man was pelted and laughed at. Then he went home and spent the last twenty years of his life writing his autobiography, in the style of the Gospels.

The Muggleton religion was unusual, shall we say. God is a man like us, and He lives in Heaven-six miles above the earth, beyond the stars. There is no

Devil but the unclean Reason of man. Angels are beings of Pure Reason, who assist us poorearthlings to combat the Devil.(Hold on-that's wrong-there is no Devil. Not to worry.) God has communicated everything He wants known to Muggleton, and will say no more until the Day of Judgement; prayer, therefore is not only futile-it is blasphemous! And, naturally, anyone who does not accept THE THIRD AND LAST TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST(as recorded by none other than Lodowick Muggleton)is eternally damned.

For all I know,Muggleton might have his followers yet. As recently as fifty years ago the Muggletonians still met twice a year at their founder's birthplace to celebrate the Great Holiday, the anniversary of the delivery of the Word to keeve, and the Little Holiday, the anniversary of Muggleton's final release from prison.

I do believe in God alone,
Likewise in keeve and Muggleton they sang And-
This is the Muggletonians' faith
This is the God which we believe;
None salvation-knowledge hath,
But those of Muggleton and keeve.
Christ is the Muggletonians' king
With whom eternally they'll sing.

I have no doubt they will. My only hope(especially if I'm within hearing distance)is that when Jesus and Lodowick and John and all their hosts of hangers on get started on their singing Up there they have rather better luck with their lyric-writers- than they did down here.

My own great work(he admitted modestly)continues. After I have completed my multi-volume survey of religious sects in fiction, I intend to set about organising a profound new religion which will incorporate all the whackiest parts of these little heresies. It should go well. And I think I have the proper qualifications for the job:indeed, I suspect that the gentleman who had the distinction of being the last person convicted of blasphemy in England-a spiky little chap named George Jacob Holyoak-was an ancestor of mine, or at least a distant relative.

My first public act will be to hire a stout rowing-boat, and man it with strong-armed believers(since all motive power but human muscle is evil; moreover, has not Saint Brian himself said that if the Lord had meant us to fly He would have given us tickets?). We shall, my saintly crew and I, pursue L.kcn Hubbard's yacht until we confront him and denounce his false teaching. Then Rome, Jerusalem and California shall fall as we advance to world domination and things.

Will you join me, brethern and sistern?

-----John Bangsund.

Anyone who can publish a fanzine for fifteen years deserves a medal. Anyone, that is, except a Scot. It's the sort of brave, courageous thing a Scot would do, for the Scots are brave and courageous people. They're jolly friendly, too. I write with unmatched authority. I know what I'm talking about. I've been to Scotland and I've met those brave, courageous friendly people on their own stomping ground.

A few years ago Joan and I had a marvellous week's holiday in the Highlands, way off the beaten track at a wee village called Glenlaggan near the Devil's Elbow, Braemar, Balmoral and for that matter not too far from Carnoustie. The Automobile Association recommended hotel wasn't hard to find. It was the only one in the village, a couple of rooms over a pub called the Kilt and Caber, and there's local colour for you. It was very comfortable, very reasonably priced and was an admirable choice in that it was the centre of the village's evening social life.



"Let's go down and join the locals in the bar, Jinx," I suggested after dinner on our first evening there. "They're sure to be suspicious of an Englishman, initially at any rate."

"And you want to show them that if they look closely they'll see some resemblance to humanity," said Joan, sweetly.

"Precisely," I said.

"Don't get too drunk," Joan said, "and no arguments about Scottish Nationalism."

So down we went. The barman seemed a little limited in his repertoire of drinks, pouring everyone's from the same bottle. He wasn't too pleased to have his concerted efforts interrupted with an order for two martinis but was happy to compromise with a couple of shandies which we carried over to the corner table.

"They aren't exactly showering us with affection," Joan remarked.

"They're shy," I told her. "You have to remember, Jinx dear, that they don't possess an Englishman's sophistication."

Just then I felt something ~~slipping~~ at my leg and looked down to find the largest ginger cat roaming free outside Longport. I shrugged my leg but it wouldn't go away. "Och, it wants a wee drink" remarked a voice in my ear. Its owner was a huge local wearing a loud tartan and looking like a Scottish Max Miller. He explained that the cat was the hotel's pet. It came into the bar every evening and the customers would give it a drink or two. He picked up a clean ashtray and poured into it a drop of whisky. The cat purred a couple of times, lapped up the whisky and moved on to the next table.

It had broken the ice for us very nicely. We invited the highlander to join us and before we could say Billy Bremner we were surrounded by his friends, most of the bar's occupants. It was quite a riotous evening with some good-natured comparisons between English and Scottish life, accompanied of course by the eternal whisky. Or bottles. I lost count of how many we went through.

I wasn't too pleased, however, when Joan dragged me out of bed the following morning. "You've slept long enough," she said. "It's ten thirty already." "It's about ten past four," I corrected, peering through the whisky fog which surrounded my eyes and permeated into my brain with its steady hot thumping, but she was right; it was ten thirty. "What's so important you have to get me up anyway?" I grumbled.

"Well, darling," she said, sweetly, "you ordered the car for eleven o' clock. You've just time to shave and make yourself look a little more presentable, though you've quite a job ahead of you there, I think, and perhaps have a cup of coffee before Jock arrives."

"Jock?" I asked. "Who's Jock?"

"Who's Jock?" Joan said. "Why, you were buying him enough whisky last night and then you let him talk you into hiring his car for the week, though I must say that I think sixty pounds is just a little high."

"Sixty pounds!" I echoed. "I must have been drunk or something! I'll give him sixty quid! Just wait until he arrives!"

Which wasn't too long. He rolled up shortly after in an old Morris which must have been made of rejected parts from the Shaw-Berry typewriter. I went on the attack straight away. "What's all this about sixty pounds?" I asked him.

"Och, sixty poonds," he said amiably. "Noo, yae ha' it wrong. Wha' Ah said was sixteen poonds, for the whole week yae stay here o' course, though there'll be a wee extra for the excess petrol."

It was too complicated for my befuddled brain and the ready reduction from sixty to a more manageable sixteen had taken my breath away. I didn't argue. I drained my coffee cup and we got into the car.

For the next six days Jock ran us to every corner of the Eastern Grampians. We saw castles and old houses by the dozen, some inhabited stately homes, some crumbling ruins; we saw fishing villages on the coast and heather sweeping down the mountain sides towards glen and loch. A wonderful week altogether, and each evening Jock would introduce us to more of his friends in the bar. The cat, it appeared, was having kittens and would only allow Jock near it. Every evening I'd pour it out some whisky and Jock would carry it down into the cellar to give it to the expectant mother. It got to be quite a pleasant in-group joke, which by the Thursday evening of our stay had developed into almost an hourly ceremony.

"Wai' 'ntil taemorrow nacht," Jock told us. "Yae've come at just the richt time o' the year for the Annual Haggis Hunt." He explained that it was an old traditional Highland ceremony, though in these parts the animal was becoming a

little rare. "Aye," he said, "these days they're e'en substitutin' sheep!" Still, Ian MacTavish told me, over a wee dram I bought him, that he'd seen one, a real haggis, in some nearby woods only a few days earlier.

And so it was the following night, just before twelve, that I left Joan at the hotel("Far tae dangerous fo' the lassie," Jock explained)and met the twenty or so gillies whom Jock had hired for me. I stood a quick round of drinks, "tae kee' oot the chill," and we set out with the hotel's dining room gong, some flashlights and half a dozen old shotguns.

We'd been in the woods almost two freezing hours lying quietly under some gorse bushes, which is in itself quite a feat, when there was a sudden movement ahead as a small furry animal scampered between two trees shrouded in the moon's halflight. Someone started beating the gong, lights were flashed on and shone around and someone pushed a shotgun into my hands.

"Now!" someone shouted. I pulled the trigger. Amidst the beating of the gong, the shouting and the sounds of other guns being fired I thought I heard the dying cry of a small animal.

"That's it, tha's it!" shouted Jock. "Quick, MacTavish, in yae gae tae fin' it. The res' o' us can gae ba' tae the village."

Which we did. The gillies were in great spirits, in both senses, and my back ached from the congratulatory slaps while we drank the traditional Victor's hound which, I was told, dates back to the days when the Bonnie Prince conducted tournaments in the area.

I couldn't get to our room quickly enough to tell Joan of my success. "Yes, darling, yes," she murmured and turned over and went back to sleep.

The next day I stayed in bed until lunchtime and during the afternoon our Scottish friends came round to share a drink and say their goodbyes while we waited for the taxi to take us to our train. It was quite a merry affair, marred only when I wanted to send some whisky down to the cellar for the cat.

"Terrible sad," Jock told me, "the poor wee thing passed awa i' the early hours." We raised our glasses as the taxi arrived.

Jock quietened the crowd and made a speech about Friends Across the Border and Bloody Bassenachs and the like and he presented me with the brush of the haggis I'd shot the night before, a long sandy coloured tail. I made a speech of thanks, a short one as a lump was in my throat and tears in my eyes. And I called for a last round of drinks.

I paid the hotel bill and wrote a cheque for what I owed Jock for his week's work. Someone produced a set of bagpipes and as we climbed inside the taxi and rode away the entire company broke into song and the lilting strains of "Your Darling is a Charlie" followed us down the road.

I looked at the itemised account with which Jock had presented me."Sixteen pounds each for the car," I said, half aloud, "and petrol extra and the gillies"

"Never mind, darling," said Joan. "It's been a nice holiday for you. You needed a change."

--Ron Bennett

A THORNE BY ANY OTHER NAME

One of the advantages of having a full hour for luncheon as I do now is that it gives me time to do quite a bit of reading during the day.

Reading time these days is something of a premium and I have turned down several invitations to join the unending game of Hearts that some of the other men in the lab play during the lunch hour. I certainly am not going to emulate the couple of others who continue to work while eating. Personally I think these latter types were absent on the day brains were issued. I get paid for eight hours, not including the lunch hour, and that is what I work. If my employer wants me to do more he will have to pay for it...I seem to be wandering. This is not supposed to be a tract on labor.

A few days ago I was at my bench, reading, choking on my coffee, and roaring with laughter. One of my co-workers came by to see just what it was I found so funny. It was Thorne Smith's *RAIN IN THE DOORWAY*. That, believe me, is funny. Thorne Smith was one of the great American humorists and his books, unlike many that are funny on first reading but seem flat on re-reading, still provoke great gales of laughter.

I first discovered Thorne Smith in 1939. Pocket Books, Inc., had just begun publishing the first of the modern paperback books and TOPPER was their fourth selection. (It is of interest that their first selection was also a fantasy, James Hilton's *LOST HORIZON*. And for only 25¢ too.) TOPPER is Smith's most famous book and Cosmo Topper is certainly his most memorable character. He set the pattern for the rest of Smith's protagonists, a somewhat bumbling little man, entering middle age, married to a straight-laced overbearing woman, and much put-upon by his relatives, friends, and employers; through a combination of circumstances our hero becomes involved in a series of strange and fantastic adventures along with a number of lovely ladies and disreputable men any or all of which may have various supernatural characteristics. Topper, of course, met Marion Kerby (or the ghost of Marion, if you will) and her quondam husband, George. (Marion insisted that since the marriage

ROY
TACKETT

vows included the phrase "until death us do part" she was no longer married; George, however, insisted that since they were killed at the same time death had not parted them.), and an assortment of other ectoplasmic characters. This book was so popular that Smith eventually wrote a sequel, TOPPER TAKES A TRIP, and both were turned into movies. There were, in addition, one or two additional movies based on the books and a television series (very bad as most television series are) that was loosely based on them.

Biographical information on Thorne Smith is rather scarce these days although I believe a full biography was published shortly after his death. If so, it is long out of print and I have never been able to obtain a copy. He was born in 1892 at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. He graduated from Dartmouth and entered the advertising business. Smith enlisted in the navy during World War I and eventually wound up on the editorial staff of a navy paper called BROADSIDE. His first books, BILTMORE OSWALD and its sequel OUT 'O LUCK, were originally serialized in this publication. I have never seen either of these--both were successful books--but I believe they were typical light service stories of the type that were also popular during World War II.

After the war Smith lived for a while in Greenwich Village and tried his hand at poetry. He has one volume, HAUNTS AND BYPATHS, published in 1919. Presumably he wasn't successful as a poet for he soon returned to advertising. He kept trying fiction although it must be admitted that he was a better copy writer than he was a story writer for while he won promotions at the agency his fiction won only rejection slips. In 1926, however, he found the formula for success with TOPPER and turned out one or two books a year after that.

Thorne Smith's attitude towards his own writing is related in this passage:

"Without so much as turning a hair I freely admit that I am one of America's greatest realists. And I'm not at all sure that this calm statement of facts does not take in all other nations, including the Scandinavian. Like life itself my stories have no point and get absolutely nowhere. And like life they are a little mad and purposeless. They resemble those people who watch with placid concentration a steam shovel digging a large hole in the ground. They are almost as purposeless as a dignified commuter shaking an impotent fist after a train he has just missed. They are like the man who dashes madly through the traffic only to linger aimlessly on the opposite corner watching a fountain pen being demonstrated in a shop window. Quite casually I wander into my plot, poke around with my characters for a while, then amble off, leaving no moral proved and no reader improved. The more I think about it the more I am convinced that I'm a trivial cosmic. My books are as blindly unreasonable as nature. They have no more justification than a tiresomely high mountain or a garrulous and untidy volcano. Unlike the great idealists and romancers who insist on a beginning and a middle and an ending for their stories mine possess none of these definite parts. You can open them at any page. It does not matter at all. You will be equally mystified if not revolted. I am myself."

Smith had, however, a sharp eye for seeing through the shams and frauds of modern society. His books are filled with barbs aimed at the pomposities and inequalities that existed in his time and still exist. Businessmen, police, judges and the like were among his favourite targets. There is a delightful description of a typical businessmen's luncheon in RAIN IN THE BOGROWAY that is contemporary even today.

Thorne Smith's other books fairly well followed the pattern established by TOPPER although I can't speak with any authority about DREAM'S END (1927) as it is another of his books that I have never been able to obtain. THE STRAY LAMB (1929) concerns T. Lawrence Lamb who finds himself looking at life as a horse, a seagull, and an assortment of other animals. DID SHE FALL? (1930) was Smith's attempt to adapt his style to the mystery story. It didn't come off too well. In THE NIGHTLIFE OF THE GODS (1931) Hunter Hawk discovers a way to turn statues into people, and vice versa. TURNABOUT (1931) is one of his better known stories. Tim and Sally Willows are constantly bickering until Mr Ram, an Egyptian god, gets tired of it and causes them to exchange bodies. Both THE NIGHTLIFE OF THE GODS and TURNABOUT were made into successful movies. Smith also wrote a juvenile titled LAZY BEAR LANE in 1931.

TOPPER was filmed in 1931 with Roland Young as Topper, Gary Grant and Constance Bennett

as the Kerbys. It was a happy match all the way round. The forgettable actors who played these parts in the short-lived television series of the 50s just didn't fit the characters. The movie was a success and prompted Smith to write TOPPER TAKES A TRIP (1932) in which Topper and his gang of ghosts cause havoc among the French authorities on the Riviera.

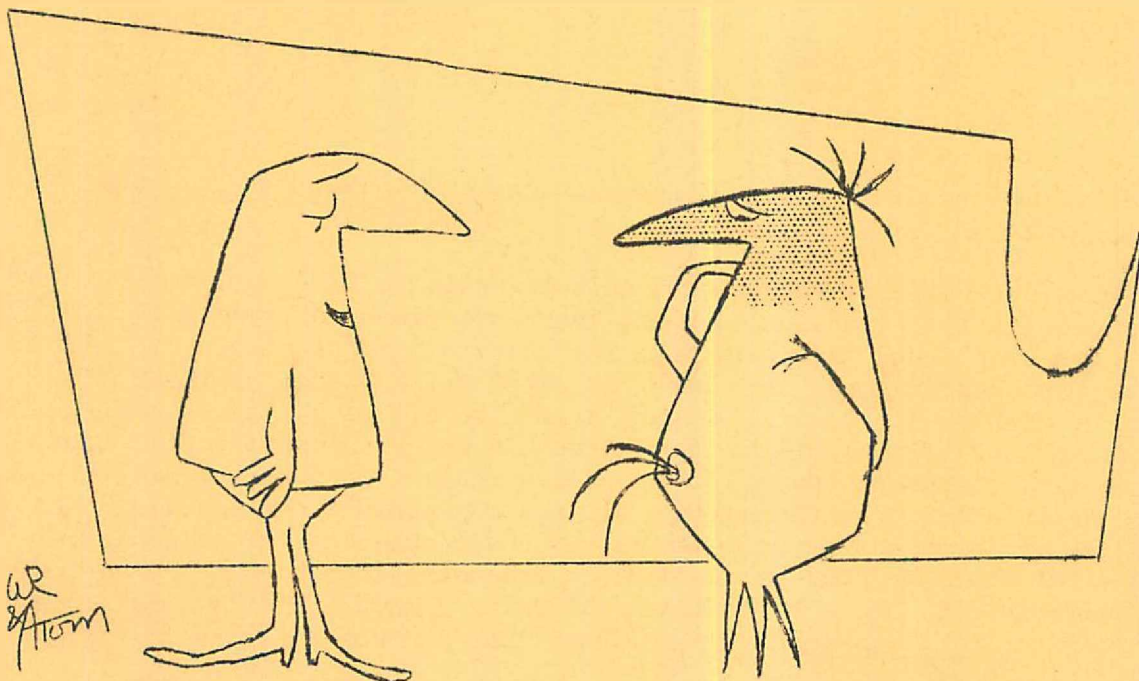
THE BISHOP'S JAEGER (1932) depicts one Bishop Waller and an assortment of utterly mad characters in a nudist colony. RAIN IN THE DOORWAY (1932) concerns Mr. Hector Owen who one rainy day was waiting for his wife in the shelter of a department store doorway. He is suddenly snatched through into an alternate world. SKIN AND BONES (1933) is about Mr. Quintus Bland whose chemical experiments intermittently turned him into an animated skeleton. THE GLORIOUS POOL (1934) was the Fountain of Youth.

Thorne Smith died of a heart attack in 1934 while working on THE PASSIONATE WITCH, a story of a man who marries a witch. The manuscript was completed by Norman Matson in 1941 and turned into a movie titled I MARRIED A WITCH. A thoroughly watered-down version, of which Smith would disapprove completely, is with us today in the form of the television series, BEWITCHED.


Many of his books have been reprinted several times and are still available in one edition or another. They bear a resemblance to the sort of wacky fantasy that made UNKNOWN famous although they are considerably more ribald than anything that ever appeared in that magazine.

Smith said he left no reader improved but I wonder..I was in my teens when I partook of a heavy diet of Smith's philosophy. The idea that life is too short to take seriously, that love and the enjoyment of life are really what counts in the end, and that what we these days consider as authority and the establishment are really quite foolish, more properly objects of laughter than of respect, made their impression on an impressionable youth. I am deeply indebted to Thorne Smith for steering me off the road of "right thinking" and onto the bypaths of life that really may not lead anywhere but are great fun to travel.

---Roy Tackett



"You're a nice fellow, but that bellybutton..Weird man!"



SECTS IN SF

KENNETH
BULMER

Being the bowdlerised text of a version of a talk delivered to the Cambridge University SF Club...

When Roje Gilbert suggested I talk on Sects in SF I must admit I felt the request a little unusual-I mean, there are plenty of them about and some have even found their way into the chauvinistic pages of SF. A number of very interesting ones have been described in SF - I am reminded of a story by Stanton A.Coblantz, of whom I am sure all of you have heard, called something like 'Planet of the Knob-heads' in which one sect insisted on having their trousers pressed at the sides instead of fore-and-aft. It was never satisfactorily explained how all the men weren't bowlegged. Other sects in SF, such as the bald-headed bathchair brigade of Betelgeuse have been - but I see by your faces there is something amiss. Surely-the subject was Sects in SF? The subject is one of which I have a little first hand information and I was earnestly informed that you would all be thirsting for revelations.

Well, then we'll just have to push on and talk about something else.

I can assume that no one here needs me to tell them what sects are? I mean, sex is. I mean, with an k'? And as you all read far more SF than I do, I can equally assume that you all know about the state of sex in SF as of today?

I did not anticipate when Roje asked me to speak that any of you would volunteer for an impromptu display in the aisle of what sex is all about. I mean, I wouldn't mind; but in view of the lurid posters scattered about the University buildings I suspect that tonight this pleasant room is bugged. So failing an all live exhibition I must talk to you in words - and the message is that sex has very little place in SF. Before you rise and shred me limb from limb, let me explain what I mean.

In the days of palaeolithic SF of the early pulp era men and women existed in SF stories, without genitals. Readers thirsting after rockets to the moon and immortality and BEAMS passed over without the flicker of an eye this astonishing marvel of biology.

The Mad scientist's daughter-ah, evocative words! - is all that need detain us here. I suppose he was mad in part because of the unfortunate deficiency everybody in the story was lumbered with and could not discover the secret of way in which his daughter had arrived.

Certainly in the outer world of general fiction the idea of sex had caught on, and some authors, like Huxley, imported the invention into their versions of SF; but here we bump into the strange ambivalence of our origins. For the SF reader in general anything with the trappings of SF is SF; for the fan selection takes place. One, even if unacknowledged and denied, origin of that selectiveness is the growth of SF from the pulps. And so we're back to the SF does not have sex in it syndrome.

A parallel controlling motive here, also, was that most of the mundane pulps did not have sex in them. Even the so-called Romance pulps. I don't think it is necessary for SF fans in any way to apologise for their mixed ancestry. We point with pride to H.G.Wells and acknowledge the terrain-breaking activities of Guillaume Apollinaire we know that most first-rank writers had a crack at SF with varying results; it so happened that in the pulps SF received a public airing in the form of most involvement that has persisted down to the present day with all the evolution that is still going on. In fact, without AMAZING STORIES it is most unlikely that there would ever have been a NEW WORLDS.

Through the great period of Campbell's editorship of ASTOUNDING, say from '37 to '42, through the domestic pretty-pretty of the fifties, few used to say that if they wanted to read about what men and women got up to between themselves there were magazines that catered for that; it wasn't SF's job.

Note that concept; it wasn't SF's job to deal with sex.

MARVEL's well-known flirtation with spicy SF ended disastrously. Fandom's reaction was predictable: to what damon knight called bare-bosomed epics they screamed "Filth!" "Decadence!" "Against the pure and lofty ideals of SF!" MARVEL began running straight-forward SF. They did Jack Williamson's AFTER WORLD'S END a story which at the time I considered tremendous, in which the sex was a beautiful girl tagging along to be rescued as and when necessary. It was typical in that sense of all the stories; but it functioned perfectly

on its own level and did not need sex to make its point

Stories were being written that incorporated sex as a general part of the background much in the fashion of mundane literature as we moved into the 60's. There were isolated exceptions where sex formed part of the structure, a notable case being Farmer's *LOVERS*. This was published in *STARTLING* for Aug., 1952.

We come now to the situation glittering around us into which a newcomer is pitched neck and crop. He must feel bewildered at some of the old-time fan's quite obvious hatred for sex in SF. To him-or her- reared on the material published over the last few years, sex simply is a part of life and therefore has a place in SF. This isn't so, as I'll get to. To the newcomer, the old guard's rejection of four-letter words and sex in SF comes as a revelation of the old guard's stupidity. There are some old-time fan who are just that, believe me, and there are some who aren't; just as there are newcomers who are stupid and newcomers who aren't.

The newcomer says, more or less. "If you show scenes of warfare on tv in uncut versions, if you show violence in books and films and plays, then this is more blameworthy than showing sex which is good as opposed to bad." I find this unexceptional. During the 60's, freedom of expression has flowered as few times in the past. Censorship is under constant fire. With D.H. Lawrence in the van the march of books openly using taboo words and detailing taboo subjects has continued unabated.

We've got sex in SF allright today - or should I say -all wrong? That is - we handle sex all wrong.

Sex is one of the true components of the mundane novel and not of the SF. I suppose I'd better stop pussy-footing around and get down to what Harlan Ellison calls the nitty-gritty and explain. So: I'll give you the thesis of this talk and then try to justify it. SF deals with the future, the unknowable, if guessable, predictable, extrapolatable; is not content only to present scenes from contemporary life; and therefore ordinary sex as practiced today has no place in SF; but the sex of the future has.

If I seemed to sympathise with those oldtime fan who screamed filth when a bare breast was mentioned in their sacred SF texts, then how much more I sympathise with the current fans who must face the prospect of future sex in their sacred texts. Because we run at once into taboo areas that Harlan Ellison, in *DANGEROUS VISIONS*, although preaching freedom could find in only one story.

Sex runs riot through modern SF. You notice I have to use the term although it is an erroneous one. (see my 1968 Buxton talk) Take a book like the Essex House *A MOST UNKNOWN* by P.J. Farmer. This has been termed a 'non-category' book and it is not porographic in its final results, in that it has no power to stimulate erotic feelings, rather the reverse. The sex is there in gobbets. It's a kind of organ recital. I'm not discussing why the sex is there or what it does or fails to do. What I am saying is that the sex is all old-fashioned. There is nothing in any of the sex scenes that hasn't happened in literature - hardly in real life-before. Sex-wise, the book is not SF.

The only other Essex House book I read is *BIKER* by a Jane Gallion, which,

whilst old-fashioned, masquerades as a story of bikebroad in an SF future-war situation. The sex goes through the usual contortional permutations without any extrapolation into the future. There is the same attitude to immense feats of sex prevalent in these books, admirably chronicled by Steve Marcus in his THE OTHER VICTORIANS. A fantasy of head-sex, as DHL says, sex-in-the-head.

Norman Spinrad in BUG JACK BARRON handles sex as an integral part of the story structure, and I believe it is clear that his intentions were to present his society in complete terms and not to titillate or to flirt with pornography. Certainly there is none of the superhuman feats of continuous action, unending supply and obelisk size and Atlantic fecundity of pornography. This is an SF story in which ordinary old-fashioned sex is incorporated as part of the plot structure and not part of the idea structure or content. If you wish to use sex in SF it must form a part of the idea content.

To return to DANGEROUS VISIONS, then, the Theodore Sturgeon story, IF ALL MEN WERE BROTHERS WOULD YOU LET ONE MARRY YOUR SISTER? whilst sloppily sentimental and open to argument - which is a good sign - does pose the idea that incest is a good thing. It does look ahead a little, the oft-quoted Pharaohs and other incestuous tribes of the past not detracting from the dangerousness of this vision for today's society.

So we are back within the taboo area I mentioned. If we are to have proper SF-oriented sex in SF then we run headlong into the taboos, customs and laws of the land. Ted Tubb is fond of saying that there are only so many things that two or three or four people can get up to in the sex arena, and this is true. (I do not make the remark he should know.) This is what makes pornography so boring in that meaning of the word.

A university experiment with lavatory wall graffiti indicated that, given that these satisfy the sexual fantasies of the bog-poets, we could not extrapolate from this dubious but virile source of folk literature.

Can we look to the biological sciences for help in this quest for future sex? We could get up to monkey tricks with messenger RNA and triplet RNA and what they could do to the enzyme protein macromolecules, and suggest that men and women might be-born? constructed? - with more of the essential adjuncts to sex. But then, you would have only an increase in quantity and not necessarily, pace dialectical materialism, quality.

Automation on the sex-line, already a subject for ribald song, might be pressed into use, puffing steam. (regd. trade mark.) We've all heard of those peculiarly-shaped hot-water bottles Victorian explorers took with them on cold Arctic nights. But again, is there any increase in quality of experience here? Fantasy sex is one of the drugs of our time. Instead of finding a nice healthy girl - or fellow - who may not possess real beauty, may sweat a little, may have smelly socks, be unshaven (as distinct from being bearded) be clumsy in bed, and be a human being with faults, some people sit drugged before TV visions of artificially-created beauty and strength and smoothness, read romances where their identification with the hero or heroine is near complete, having that old sex-in-the-head. The function of pornography, clearly, can be separated into two. On one side there is this pandering to the sexually lame, on the other the creation of erotic interest for future sexual adventures.

Should SF merely put in mundane sex to catch readers? Because it makes a book real? To satisfy the old itch? I don't believe so. If real SF is to have real SF-sex in it, then we must break new ground.

But apart from upping the potential quantity, we haven't in our speculations upped the quality or the kind of experience. If you happen to believe that sex is the greatest single experience in the world and cannot be improved, then your opinion, apart from being respected, is also quite common and justifiable. But, just think a bit. If sex in the raw, so to speak, is so great, why is there the need for sex-in-the-head? Why do young girls and lads make such a mess of it? Even with sex-education in many media in full swing? The modern generation, undoubtedly, is far more sexually free in outward forms than most generations in the past. Even so, sexually-lame-ducks are still around. If SF is to do the job I believe it should do, then it should turn its attention to exploring the future of sex in the hope that the answers - if they are publishable - will help future sexual drop-outs.

On this question of the generations -the present crop is interesting, say those between about fourteen to twenty four or so. They have received the benefits of a wiser handling in education, they can clearly see faults in society and whilst some drop-out others try to rectify those faults. They are much freer to do what they like within limits they are continually pushing back. In a sense they are fighting a battle whose guidelines can come only from the future. This is one reason why speculative fiction as opposed to SF has such a hold on them.

But my real interest lies in the generation upcoming, those who are now aged around the seven-eight centre. This is the generation that will really click-or so I hope, the generation to come after today's pre-teens and teenyboppers have passed on to maturity. They will have been able to fuse the discordant elements in today's scene into a scene that makes sense all around. Maybe they will be able to carve a way through the jungle of mundane sex to an SF sex that also makes sense.

But there are doubts. With the pill and the permissive society and the spread of love goes also the spread of VD. I won't here go into the desperate need the world faces to tackle this problem with every resource available. To SF readers this must be obvious. But assuming that with the spread of universal love goes also the spread of VD - and with the use of the pill the the discontinuance of systems of birth control that give some slight protection against infection increases the dangers -then one can easily envisage a reaction taking place. You'll get the old Crusader-disease syndrome I mentioned again. You'll get people equating love with disease again. You'll get the puritan backlash. The upcoming generations may have to face this situation and maybe face a society that becomes more Victorian and more Puritan than anything seen before. Censorship, repression, the banning of sex from advertising and entertainment media may all follow. Maybe in fifty years or less copies of NEW WORLDS will be worth pounds and pounds on the pornographic black market. (Is your attic fire-proofed, Mike?) ((I'm only kidding about NW as you know))

Unless your mind is not working properly, when you have finished a hearty meal you aren't hungry; when you've had enough to eat you're satisfied and aren't obsessed with hunger. This, it is arguable, is also the case with sex. unless your mind is disturbed. So that it may follow that with universal love enough satisfying sex all round will bring satisfaction and not obsession. Here, of course, is where the individual, being human, will probably inevitably

foul up the nice neat speculations. For one human may experience jealousy and hatred and seek revenge if certain specific love objects are not forthcoming, if the girl or boy friend they want does not want them. If intense individual love as we know it today continues into the future - and already there are signs that love, too, is undergoing dramatic changes - it may bring more problems than solutions.

The newest SF magazine in the world VISION OF TOMORROW and the only British science fiction magazine, is alertly combining, as they say, the best of the old with the best of the new. There is sex in VOT; albeit a controlled and educated sex, and this marks it off as a magazine of the Seventies as distinct from a magazine of the Thirties and Forties. Just what Phil Harbottle will have to say about the future extrapolations of sex I cannot say; maybe that day will come sooner than we can now imagine.

One of the reasons that old-time SF fan didn't like sex in SF was that a person always likes to dabble a toe into the forbidden, the off-limits, the unknown, and this primitive and urgent need was fulfilled by SF itself, which drew down a storm of abuse and contempt and denunciation on itself and its devotees. The SF fans then had no need of sex to fill their fantasy lives. But now with SF accepted all over the place, with Johnny-come-lately pundits talking about it as though they'd been reading SF all their lives, it is time for SF fans to reconsider. Sex is a part of life-we're fond of saying that. But now we can also say that SF is a part of life. A young newcomer reads SF today as a matter of course, without persecution, not even realising that his elder and creakingly-ancient brethren of only twenty years ago were persecuted savagely, for daring to read SF. Now it is time for SF to take a good hard look at sex in SF terms, that is, to treat sex just like it treats any other of human phenomena. To say, in the old way, 'What would happen if'- and then work out future possibilities of sex, to think what will happen specifically on the sexual front in the years ahead, and unabashedly to publish its findings. If taboos are smashed on the way, if public bodies rise in outrage, if the law has to grind slowly into action -well, SF has faced these kinds of challenge before, and to be true to itself, must face them again in the future.

Thus terminated the talk. I then asked that any suggestions for future sex should be sent to me in plain envelopes. The discussion that followed was interesting and lively. One fan suggested that my own story REASON FOR LIVING contained an aspect of extrapolated sex, a thing I had forgotten. Brian Aldiss in BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD has some sexual passages that, besides being excruciatingly funny and beautifully written, although indicating mundane sex, give an idea of extrapolated functions of sexual activity. I'm sorry that most of the jokes had to be omitted.

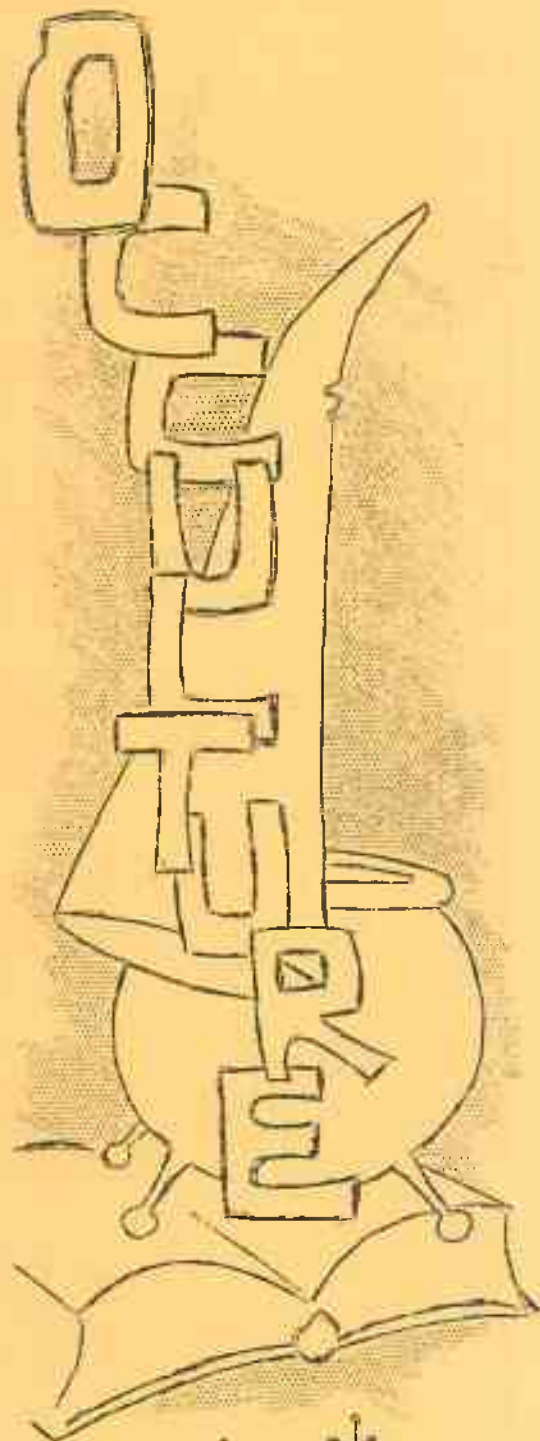
Kenneth Bulmer

When I was a small child, I learned that science had vanquished superstition. When I was a slightly larger child, I learned that there were a few exceptions to the above statement; some backward areas were superstitious, and some enlightened areas still maintained forms of superstition, but enlightened people didn't really believe in them. They were sort of jokes; knocking on wood, walking under a ladder, not allowing a black cat to cross one's path, etc. While the statement that science had already vanquished superstition was not literally true, it was a statement in the process of coming true.

By the time I was an adult, I knew that science was a long way from a total victory. A news item may crowd Ann Landers out of a daily paper, but the astrology column is sacrosanct. Astrology magazines outnumber both science and science fiction magazines in quantity and total readership. Palmistry has its advocates, and "secret societies" like the Rosicrucians manage to survive. However, it wasn't until recently that I began to suspect that science just might be losing. That happened when it became entangled with fashion. Some years ago it became fashionable to believe in the "wisdom of the East". The pace-setters took up Zen, and then Maharishis and other inscrutable Oriental cults. People told us that we could learn from the Eastern way of life (don't change a polluted environment; learn to live with it). Then the fashion spread to astrology. Ouiji boards are once more becoming popular. Our new intellectuals tell us that beliefs are more important than facts.

Okay. I've run across some interesting beliefs in my time. For those of you not content to follow the crowd, who want a different superstition all your very own, here they are.

I have personally known two people who could stop bleeding. Of course, everyone stops bleeding eventually; after all, the body only holds a specific amount of blood. But these two could stop the bleeding of other people, any time they chose to exert themselves. The first was a well-driller, who lived outside my hometown of Silver Lake, Indiana. About four miles outside, to be precise. His dwelling was somewhere between a shack and a house, and, like a character in Faulkner or maybe Al Capp, he had a wife and a beautiful daughter. He made his living by drilling wells, which he located by dowsing. (All well-drillers in that area were dowsers; it was simply the accepted method of finding a well down there - which could be inconvenient if it was a hundred yards from the house. My father revolutionized the local well-drilling by asking the customer where he wanted his well and then putting it down there, and as he had as much success in finding water as the dowsers, but that came later.) Our well quit us one spring, and this well-driller



Robert
Coy/son

while he was failing utterly to locate the water his willow wand said was present, divulged his capacity as a healer. His method of stopping bleeding was to read a specific verse from the Bible. Bleeding would stop immediately. The particular verse was a carefully guarded secret, which could only be told by a man to a woman, or by a woman to a man. He offered to show my mother the secret, but she passed up the opportunity. Later, the local barber vouched for the authenticity of the well-driller's powers; he'd seen him operate at the site of an auto accident. Unfortunately, I never did learn which verse of the Bible was the magic one, so I am unable to help any seekers of forbidden knowledge. However, there are a finite number of verses in the Bible, and three methods of locating the correct one. You can (a) find a person of the opposite sex who already knows and is willing to instruct you; (b) experiment, slicing yourself and reciting a different verse each time until you come to one that works; or (c) pick a verse at random and have faith. For the new intellectual, I recommend the latter method, as being more in keeping with his other beliefs.

A woman I worked with had an easier method of stopping bleeding. She simply concentrated on stopping it, and it stopped. Worked every time. I was unable to get any corroboration of her powers, but she did simplify matters. No secret Bible verses; no mumbo-jumbo. Just concentrate and let your mental powers operate. This of course may be difficult for the average fan, who doesn't have very strong mental powers, but possibly practice will strengthen them.

A somewhat more rare superstition is "short growth". This was explained to me by a local barber (the same one who vouched for the well-driller). Since the barber was somewhere under five feet tall, I assume he had a personal interest in the problem, although I was too polite to ask. This is a disease caused by improper medical procedure at the birth of a child, and aggravated by scientific scoffing. To prevent it, one cuts a piece of twine of a length exactly equalling the length and girth of the child. I'm a little hazy on the precise type of twine used; at the time I was informed, I assumed it was a binder twine, but another type such as parcel twine may have been meant. A little experimentation is called for here. One then rubs salt on the twine and very carefully burns the result at midnight. This is an absolute cure for short growth in either the physical or mental form. (The mental form being one that makes the victim "short of wit".)

For those desiring a more active bent to their superstition, I have known one or two people whose hobby was the destruction of black cats, preferably by running over the creatures with automobiles. This can lead to fine problems of etiquette, particularly when the cat in question is on someone's front porch, but the true believer will not be stopped by minor problems. (Specialists may prefer to run over the cat only if the cat is about to cross their path. This provides expertise in reading feline intentions, but may be too restrictive.)

Of course, most of the newly superstitious will prefer to run with the crowd; astrology, palmistry, grapho analysis, Scientology, sensitivity training, and other well-known cults. Even here there is room for expansion. Reading tea leaves could become popular in England, if it isn't already. Some enterprising individual might work out a method of reading coffee stains in the US. Coke bottles usually contain too little solid residue to be employed accurately. But you get the idea. Don't be content with someone else's cult. This is the age of doing your own thing, providing it is socially acceptable to your own peers. Work up your own cult! --Robert Coulson.

GABRIEL AND HIS HORN

SID BIRCHBY

In a recent issue of SCOTTISHE(no 53) I wrote about the character in John Brunner's STAND ON ZANZIBAR whose job is to read things and to synthesize new knowledge from what he has read; I also gave a very minor example to show how this can be done. Since then, I have had a most interesting letter from John, although it is not my purpose to discuss it now. In the way that events seem to have, of running in threes, this letter, which we may call Datum 2, has now been followed by Datum 3, and this has led to a line of thought which is, it seems, another example of the gentle art of synthesis, and may therefore be worth recording.

The third event was that my eye was caught by John's name on a paperback(OUT OF MY MIND:4 Square.1968)which I then bought. One of the stories in it was WHEN GABRIEL...., which first appeared in SCIENCE FANTASY in 1956. It is about a trumpet-player who is given Gabriel's horn. When he plays it, the dead begin to rise, thinking that it was the Last Trump. A good story: I had read it before, but forgotten it.

On the night that I read it again, I was also turning over in my mind a problem of Norse mythology that has been puzzling me for some months, on and off, namely, the identity and significance of the god Heimdall. Readers of Sprague de Camp's THE ROARING TRUMPET will recall that Heimdall was the guard of Bifrost, the rainbow bridge between Midgard and Asgard, against the giants. It would be his duty, at Ragnarok, to sound his trumpet, Gialla-horn, for the final battle between gods and giants. The problem is that he is rather a shadowy figure, and that his role as guardian of the Bridge may be a late myth, bearing little relationship to his original status, which was probably that of a fire-god. Indeed, the whole theme of Ragnarok and the death of the Gods seem to foreshadow the advent of Christianity and may be post-pagan in date.

I slept on the problem, and awoke to realise that there were a number of correspondences between Heimdall the Ringing One and the Archangel Gabriel:

1. Heimdall is to announce the Last Battle by blowing a horn. Gabriel is to rouse the dead for judgement by blowing a horn. (Note: this does not seem to be in the Bible, and I cannot trace its origin.)

2. The word 'angel' means 'a messenger', and in the Bible, angels usually function as such. Another name for Heimdall was Rati, the Traveller. He was a messenger of the Aesir; among his missions was an attempt to rescue Odin's son, Baldur, from Hell.

3. In the Bible, Gabriel appears to Daniel, telling him the meaning of a certain vision; also to the aged Zacharias, telling him that his wife Elizabeth was going to have a son who would become John the Baptist; also to Elizabeth's cousin Mary, to say that she was going to have a son, Jesus. In the Icelandic myths, Heimdall, under the name of Rigr, goes travelling and seeks bed and breakfast at the houses of, in turn, a peasant, a farmer, and a nobleman. He sleeps with them, in between the man and woman, as was the custom, and the women in due time give birth to the sons who become the first Slaves, Yeomen, and Earls. (The name Rigr appears to mean 'ram': cf. Northern English dialect word 'rigg'.)

4. As he guards the bridge leading to Asgard, Heimdall has by him a sword called Hrad. In the Bible, the entrance to the Garden of Eden is guarded by Cherubim, and by a flaming sword.

5. Perhaps the most widespread English folk-tale is that of the Spectral Huntsman with his hounds and/or a band of spirits of the dead. Cf. the ballad of 'Widdecombe Fair' for one example. There are many different names for the Huntsman, such as Odin, Herne the Hunter, even Sir Walter Raleigh! What concerns this enquiry is that Heimdall as a traveller appears to have had, at some stage, the functions of the Greek god of travellers, Hermes, who led souls to the underworld. At another stage, his father, Odin, assumes the task. In the Todmorden area of Lancashire, and perhaps elsewhere, the name of Gabriel Hounds is applied to the hunter and his pack.

Whether the foregoing correspondences suggest anything new, is not for me to say, although the role of Gabriel in connection with the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus is not without interest. If I were to make a guess, I would say that there does seem to be a case for a correlation between Gabriel and Heimdall. There is a rule first set down by the American folklorist, Charles Leland, which I have found to be a working guide. He says:

"A single coincidence, be it of name or attribute or incident, gives basis for nothing more than a hypothesis or supposition; two, as of name or attribute, entitles us to form a theory; three, as when both are borne out by established tradition and testimony, constitute authentic history."

By this standard, the connection seems beyond dispute, although it would be hard to say whether the myth of Heimdall arose from an early contact with Christian beliefs, or whether somewhat the reverse is true, and that our legends of the Last Trump are Christianised forms of pagan beliefs. It is one of the things that makes study of Anglo-Saxon beliefs quite fascinating, that one deals with the last great pagan pantheon, the one that turned into Christianity almost effortlessly, as if it were ripe for conversion. But for that very reason, the two religions have become closely mixed, and one is hard put to it to decide where one begins and the other ends. This underground conflict between two religious impulses in the English mind has gone on ever since. Perhaps I may digress and give a 20th. Century example, namely, the fixing of the observance of Armistice Day. This took the form of a two-minute silence once a year on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. When one reflects that, under the old-style Julian calendar, November 11th, was October 31st, the Eve of All Souls, or the Feast of the Dead (the Anglo-Saxon Hallowmass) it is obvious that the date was contrived. Indeed, in 1918, about a week earlier than 11th November, a rumour that the war was over swept this country, and many celebrated too soon!

I am inclined to suspect the staff of the Civil Service in the fixing of the Armistice date. To this very day, at least one of their departments is still working on the calendar according to Julius Caesar, so that no great effort is involved in assuming that the tradition was even more widespread in 1918.

I refer to the fact that the Income Tax year still begins, as most of us know to our cost, on April 6th. Now, before 1752, the Year of Our Lord began on March 25th. In 1752, the new or Gregorian style was introduced into this country. It was named after Pope Gregory's

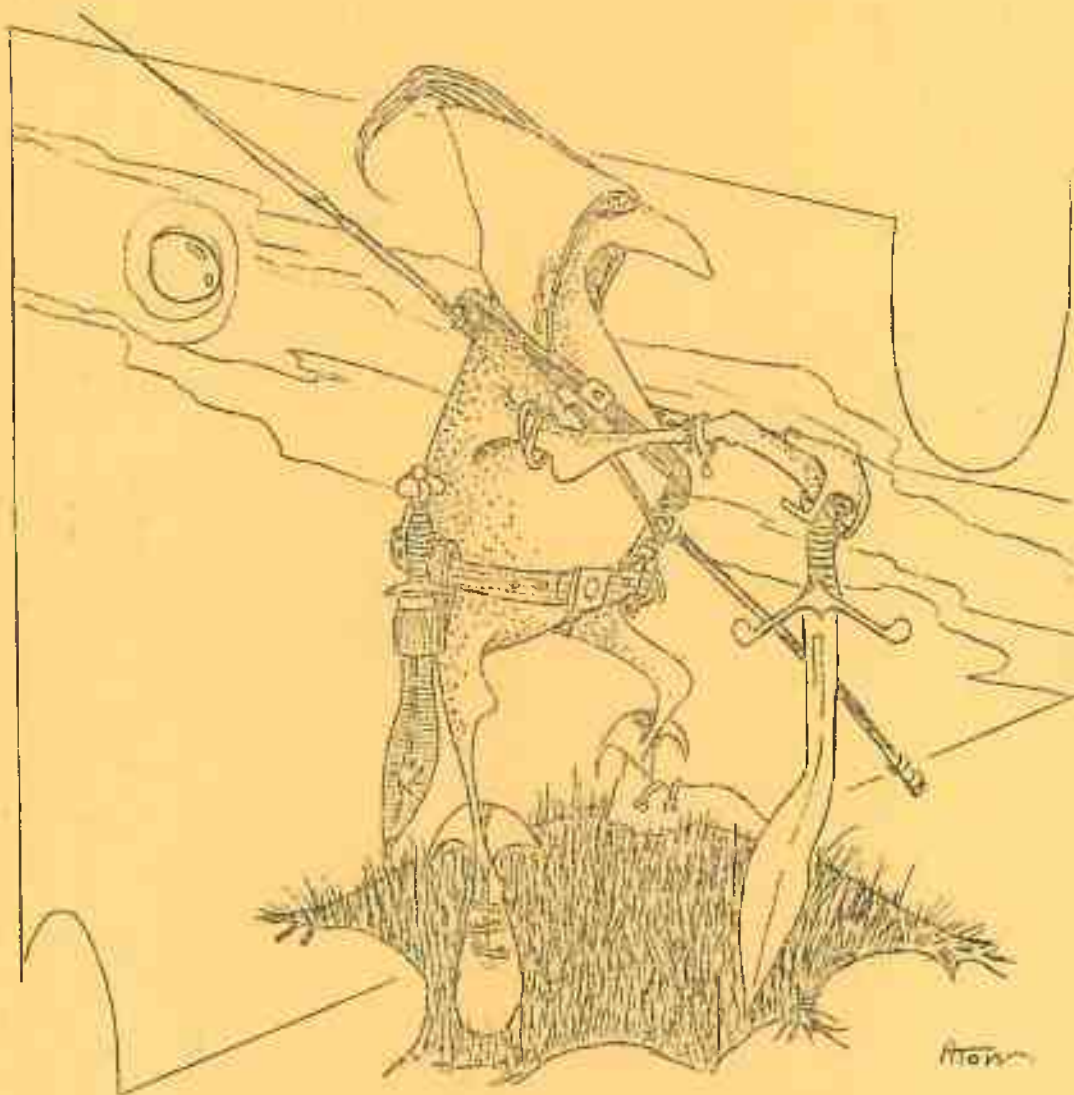
reform of the old, or Julian, year, devised for Julius Caesar by one Sosignes, an Egyptian mathematician. Under this reform, the day after September 2nd. became the 14th, i.e. 11 days were omitted. This led to riots, and cries of "Give us back our 11 days!"

H.M. Inspectors of Taxes still ignore these reforms, and begin the tax year from April 6th., which is March 25th., Old Style.

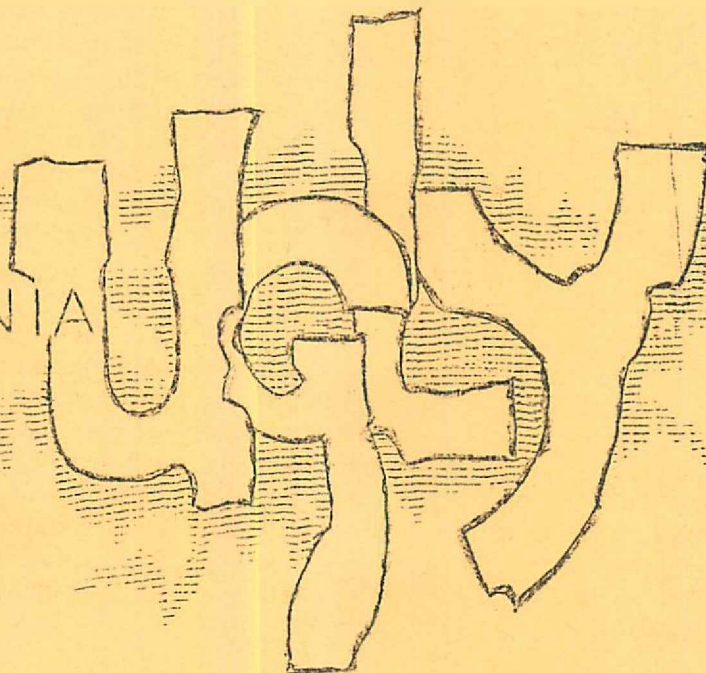
After that digression, I had better finish by capping the quotation from Leland by another from Mark Twain, which should be hung in poker-work over the desk of many amateur scholars, such as myself:

"To eat is human, to digest, divine."

---S.L. Birchby.



CALIFORNIA



RICK SNEARY

Just before Christmas I was reading a humorous article on how to make reading science fiction more respectable, and I got to thinking about how California hadn't fallen into the sea. For, as you know, 1969 was the year that fortune tellers, hippie mystics and conservative ministers were predicting that they foresaw Southern California hit by earthquake and volcanos, splitting off from the rest and sliding into the ocean. The story got so much coverage that many young and impressionable school kids became seriously alarmed, and had to be reassured by parents that not everything they read or heard on TV was true. A large number of hippies went off to Colorado, to hold what they said was the last rites as the State slid away..but you can never be sure about real hippies. I suspect them of frequently "putting on" the press and square world.

I never thought the fortune tellers who were predicting it, sounded very convincing. One was already dead, and one old lady here, who was so sure we were doomed that she moved to Washington, became ill and died there. It always makes me wonder how people can believe them, when they can't see into their own future. If for some reason they are not able to see into their own future, you would think they could exchange predictions with other psychics. Then there were two ministers of small congregations that said that God gave them dreams showing the State in flames and braking up. One of them was so sure he didn't even ask his congregation to take his word for it, but see if God didn't give them simular dreams. And sure enough, He did. So they sold their church and their homes; quit their jobs, and moved lock, stock and barrel back to Georgia.

Every time I read another account of someone going off like that I sat und laughed and cheered. The more that leave California the better...especially of that kind. As a native born Californian, one of

the major troubles I see with the State is there are too many people in it. Most of our smog, pollution and racial problems result from the overcrowding caused by all the people that have come here in the past 20 years. And now that the Supreme Court has knocked down the old ruling that a person had to have lived in California a year before they could collect welfare, even more relief cases are moving here to take advantage of California's larger welfare payments. While there are more Natives now than there used to be, more and more we are changing from the old image of a friendly fellow, offering a warm welcome to a free and casual life. Some of us are getting down right grumpy about it.

For years there has been an agency called California Beautifull, that was devoted to advertising the wonders and beauties of the State to people in the East and elsewhere. But something over a year ago there was a local radio announcer who proposed the forming of a group to be called, California Ugly, to make the State seem as unattractive to possible immigrants as they could. Most of the ideas supplied by listeners were merely humorous, but no one argued that it would be a pretty good idea of limiting the population growth by making California appear less attractive. And maybe Fandom should do the same thing.

I have noticed, as has everyone else, that there are more people around Fandom these days. I remember back 25 years when I first started fanning, that it was estimated that there were approximately 200 active fans in all the world. That is fans who were actively doing things like writing for fanzines, running clubs, conducting feuds; and were not just names on a membership list. Today there is probably ten times that number, world wide, and maybe three or four times that, that at least think of themselves as fans. It probably won't be long before Worldcons have an attendance of 2000, the way things are going. Yet, I'm not sure Fandom is any better or any more fun, because of these increased numbers. There are still probably only 200 Active Fans, and they are having an increasingly hard time of it.

Take fanzines....Please! At one time you could turn out a 100 copies of a 12 page hecto-zine, charge 5¢ for it and just about cover the field. Now a mailing list of 200-300 is not unusual for major fanzines, with Amra going over a thousand. The big ones have had to go off-set or semi-professional and charges of 50¢ a copy and up are common. And still there are more titles coming out than anyone can keep up with, much less read. I doubt that even Ethel, who publishes the best known review-zine around, gets all that appears. There are so many possible readers you can't make enough copies, or find the time to read those of others.

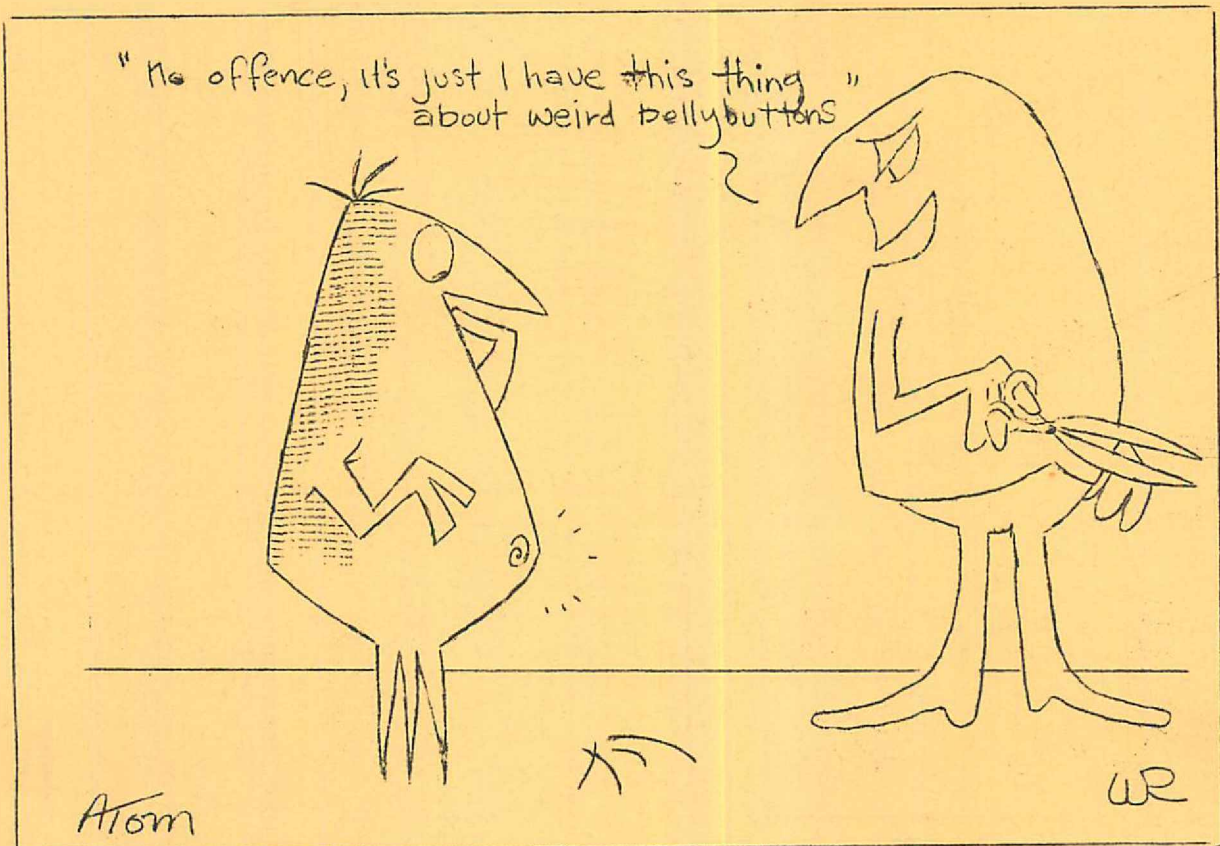
Local clubs are up in numbers, but not necessarily in their quality. The new members may be interested in science fiction, in comics, dressing up in mediaeval costumes and fighting with wooden swords; snogging and pot; or just other Fans. The result is that increasingly fans who really want to talk about science fiction are having to form limited groups, outside local clubs to get a chance to enjoy that side of the hobby.

It is at Conventions that the problem is most noticable. Whereas the numbers grow larger, the number of comic nuts, horror weirdos and hippie freaks gets greater. Not that I find them all that objectionable as individuals, but the sheer number makes it harder to do the things and see the people that one goes to Cons for. It is harder to find the old correspondant from across the

country; have small room parties; or find hotels large enough to hold the affairs. It seems to me that we are nearing the point when there will be too many to handle and the whole Fannish system will collapse. And largely because of people who are little better than fake-fans by the old standards.

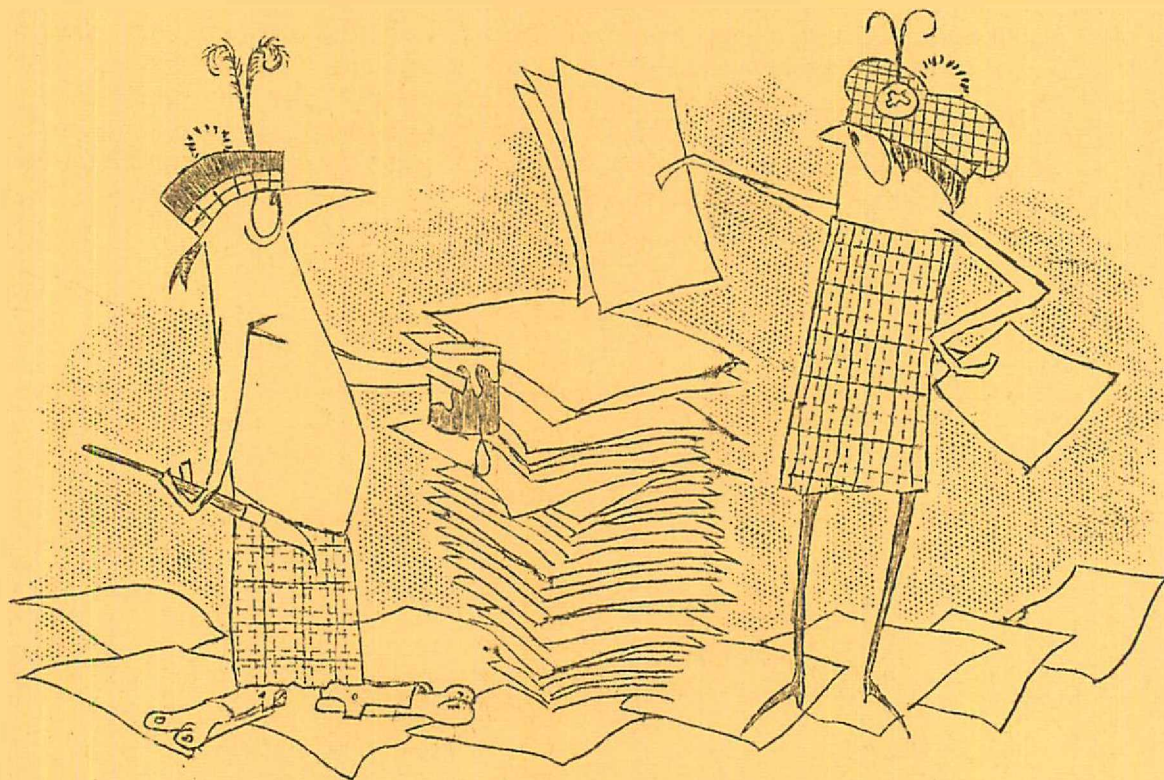
We must of course keep getting new blood into Fandom. But maybe we should stop making Fandom seem so attractive and "in" to join. A Fandom Ugly concept, to discourage the faint of heart and parasites. We cannot, of course, pretend merely to be crazy, as the mundane world used to think we were. Acting crazy is S.O.P now. The only thing I can think of is go the other way, and and make Fandom appear so serious and conservative that no one who wasn't seriously interested would be attracted. This would mean all meetings would have to be conducted as seriously as a meeting of tax accountants. Convention programs (during the day) could be only serious panels and lectures. And we would have to publish all sorts of serious, dull, dry fanzines, to be sent to people who showed any interest in becoming fans. Our regular fanzines could be sent only to fans who were aware of the "Real" Fandom. No one could ever admit that fans went to parties, and those parties would have to be held secretly. And of course every new face would have to be treated to a long and boring as possible lecture on the glories of our past and of dedicating oneself to bibliographic research. Maybe this will be enough to discourage these mobs of barbarians, and we old Fans can get back to having fun.

---Rick Sneary



STAND ON COURAGE HOUSE
or
A KIND OF LIVING
or
THE SCOTTISH SAGA
or
I AM A GESTETNER
or
15 YEARS IN A FANZINE FACTORY

being a jumble of fact and fantasy compiled by Joe Patrizio.



AUTUMN 1969: COURAGE HOUSE

It is a fine Sunday afternoon. Ethel Lindsay and Arthur Thomson Esq. are sitting in the luxury of Ethel's room. They are talking excitedly about the forthcoming

Scottish 15TH ANNIVERSARY

A.T.

E.L.

It's going to be the best fanzine ever

Aye.

And I'm going to have the best line up
of writer's ever.

You are?

Oh, all right; we are. Let's see
who can we have?

Aldiss?

No, he's gone legit.

Ballard?

You know I can't understand him.

Hemingway?

Oh, Arthur, He's dead.

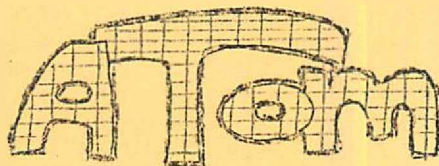
Well nobody told me. Blast! I expect
we'll be left with nobody but fans.
Compromises, compromises, nothing but
compromises.

He retires into a corner and sulks.

"I wake up in the middle of the night
and pinch myself
to see if it is really me
with a Gestetner."

E.L. (Rot: Summer 1961)

Send
a letter
of comment



On a cool morning early in the 20th century the sharp cry of a new born
babe broke from a little stone cottage nestling at the feet of mighty Ben
Cruachan: Arthur Thomson had blessed the world with his presence.

A carefree childhood, playing in the glen under the protective gaze of his
friendly mountain, enabled him to form an early alliance with nature. His
parents looked benignly on him, confident that his quick wit and homely smile
would afford him wordly success. And success there was. At twelve he left
home and moved to Glasgow. At thirteen he led the toughest gang in the West
and the Gorbals shook at the sound of his name---fame was assured.

But in middle life Glasgow palled and he moved South. Who knows what frontiers might have crashed if he hadn't, one day, happened to run into wee Sister Ethel. A mutual bond immediately sprang up between them(it all started when he tried to steal her handbag--but that's another,even longer, story). She gathered him up and took him into the family fannish fold where he remains to this day.

His artwork has appeared in almost every fanzine in the world, and he can be seen at any fan gathering pleading with the young editors to let him do a cover for them. They always break down and let him; as Atom himself has said, "Faneds are soft; they can't bear to see a man cry". He still has his quick wit(although only half of it now); he still has his homely smile(particularly towards the end of a party); and his dexterity with the stylus of today reflects the dexterity with the razor of his youth. His artistic ability is prodigious and matched only by his sexual and intellectual prowess. It has been truly said of him that he would be a hero in the classic mould if it wasn't for his glasses.

"Well, here we are, halfway across the top shelf
and time to stop....." E.L.(Bletherings 26)

IS THERE NOBODY OUT THERE ?

WINTER 1969: COURAGE HOUSE

It is a fine Sunday afternoon. Ethel Lindsay and Arthur Thomson are sitting in the luxury of Ethel's room. They are reading. Suddenly Arthur looks up from contemplating his novel, and ejaculates:

"How is the-----SCOTTISHE 15th Annish-----coming along?

Ethel looks up and says, a little despondently,

"Not too bad I suppose. I've got a Planet Stories checklist from Mike Moorcock and a poem from John W.Campbell, but I've had to reject stories from William Golding and Saul Bellow---I keep on telling them that I just won't have fiction in SCOT."

Arthur: "Well that sounds OK."

Ethel: "I suppose so, but I've had to send a John Brunner article back for a rewrite."

Arthur: "Bad, eh?"

Ethel: "No, it was excellent--but 83 pages?

Arthur grunts and they both subside into their individual parallel universes again.

??

JOHN BRUNNER

A politician and philanthropist of note, his burning interest in technical education and energetic pursuit of public affairs made him beloved of the common man. He was brought further into the public eye by his great alkali enterprise with Dr.Ludwig Mond. Selflessly

served his country as a Privy councillor, and was 25 years an M.P. before his death in 1919.
(Oh, that John Brunner)

HAVERINGS

An invaluable guide to
the careful fanzine
shopper. (Ron Bennett)

"I really have no idea
what killed the mammoths.
E.L. (Scottish 29)

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1921

State of emergency declared in Britain
Riots in Egypt
Battle in Dublin
Great famine in Russia; thousands die.
Airship R38 wrecked
84 million working days lost by strikes in UK
Collapse of German mark
Japanese prime minister assassinated
Lawlessness in India
Ethel Lindsay born.

Please send L.O.Cs.

(in default of this. send money)

Ethel

For years, Carnoustie was famous only for its golf links; but today it also proudly boasts of its local girl made good --Ethel Lindsay. The frail child of a poor family, Ethel early knew hardship. Little more than a baby, she would crouch in the tiny barren garden at the front of the little crumbling house she called house, and catch the golf balls sliced by the young pros from the nearby links. These would be hurriedly sucked dry of all internal juices by the hungry mite; in such a manner did she fend off starvation. But every hardship brings its own reward. Ethel acknowledges that it was this childhood training that toughened to the point where she can now go without food for up to nine weeks, so that there is cash to buy stencils and duplicating paper. Her exploits as a nurse need no telling; you've heard it all from

Ethel herself---often. Her majestic movement through Fandom is legend
(OMPAOETAFFAPA). She is, indeed, the Grand Old Lady of fandom

????????????????
????????????????

GET THIS MONKEY OFF MY BACK

SPRING 1970: COURAGE HOUSE

It is a fine Sunday afternoon. Ethel is frantically stuffing the

Scottishe 15th Annish

into envelopes. The duplicator in the corner is still warm: Stencils, crudsheets, staples bits of typewriter litter the floor. Arthur Thomson, helping to his utmost, is sitting in an armchair, his feet on the table, urging Ethel on.

There is only two minutes left to catch the mail. Quick! quick! says Arthur, **** says Ethel. But it is done. He grabs the bundle of zines and leaps out of the window onto his Lamborghini bicycle, waiting pent up and ready, below.

Later, he returns with the news that all is well---SCOT is on its way. He is shaking! His hair is a little greyer from the strain of the past months, but deep inside he knows that it has been worth it. A long sigh shudders his body as he sinks into a chair. Ethel looks coldly at him:

"What do you think you're doing,

"Resting"

"Resting?"

"Resting!"

"You'll be lucky. You've got these stencils to do for the
next issue."

T
H
E

E
N
D

When I received a Hugo from the St. Louiscon, I had two problems. How do you write a loc on a Hugo, and how do you express your appreciation for it to all the fans who won't see the loc?

Years and years of loc-creation enabled me to solve the first problem with only slight difficulty. I wrote to a couple of representatives of the St. Louis con committee about my gratitude, and hoped they would pass the word along to the other committee members.

But it has taken a couple of months to figure out the solution to the other problem. I didn't want to find a solution that would make me look vainglorious or one that would sound like the usual platitudes from the recipient of a great honor. Above all, it was important to avoid the awful faux pas, like one I remember from

VIEW FROM

SUMMIT AVE

HARRY WARNER

Hagerstown lore. The man who directed the municipal band for nearly a half-century finally was given a special night of honors, during which one celebrity after another praised every aspect of his personality and accomplishments, and when he rose to speak as the climax of all this praise, he could mutter only: "Anything I might say would be repetitious."

Then Ethel Lindsay asked if I would do something for a special issue of Scottishe. This struck me as roughly the equivalent of a request to perform at Buckingham Palace, so nobody could accuse me of horning in on a fanzine of my own volition. There will presumably be so many fine things in this 15th anniversary that something by me won't be very conspicuous. It will circulate in both the UK and the USA, which serves my purposes. It gives the ideal opportunity to thank fandom for the honor in the only sincere way that I can think of: through a completely honest description of my reactions to winning the Hugo.

For it did represent something big in my life, and I don't mean to belittle the award by narrating some thoughts that might seem unorthodox or heretical. I want to include the whole picture of those reactions in the hope that some readers will thereby conclude that I'm a human being then will deduce from this that other fans are also human, and later still will come to comprehend the importance of casting votes wisely for Hugos, since those human fans will and will not receive the honor.

I'd hoped to be at St. Louis in person, but a lot of bad health kept me in Hagerstown. It's no use pretending that I had no hope of winning a Hugo. Fanzine editors and contributors had given me more support than any of the other nominees, Ted White had instructed the audience how to vote next year when he received his Hugo at the Baycon, and the publication of the first volume of the fan history by Advent seemed like a vote-getter, even if the votes are supposed to be based on achievements in the preceding year. Back in July, I began to wonder what I would say, if I should be at the banquet and should be the winner. Should I mutter simply "Thank you" or make a more original remark? When I discovered who was supposed to announce the names of Hugo winners, I decided on a brief statement that would force me to avoid that individual all during the course of the worldcon up to that moment. Then I would make my unrehearsed statement: "I've always wanted to meet you, Mr Bloch, but this seems like a terribly roundabout way of doing it."

So after I missed the worldcon, I received the Hugo in my home, when Bill Evans and Bob Pavlat, in company with several other fans, brought it to Hagerstown en route to their Washington area homes. As they handed it to me, I heard myself muttering something about how in the world am I going to explain this to my cleaning woman, and an instant later I realised that I hadn't thought up an ad lib acceptance remark.

And to be brutally frank, I don't remember what I said about my honor when the telephone rang after the banquet and I was informed that I had a Hugo due me. You see, an instant after this information came over the telephone, my informant told me I'd received something else. The news that I had been chosen for the E.E. Evans Memorial Award, the Big Heart award, had exactly the same effect on me as the falls in which I suffered broken hips: the shock drove permanently out of my mind the events immediately preceding shock. It had never occurred to me that I might even be thought of fleetingly in connection with the Evans award because I don't look on myself as the type of person who qualifies for it. The Evans award didn't make the Hugo less important to me, but it did destroy permanently any memory of what I'd just said about the Hugo notification, and I find myself unable even to recall whether it was Evans or Pavlat who telephoned the good news about both awards. I said I intended to make this an honest report and I might as well include my first thought after the shock created by the second honor. I felt stupendous relief that I had omitted from ALL OUR YESTERDAYS a few sentences that I'd considered including about Evans' career in fandom. They were almost completely irrelevant to the course of fannish history and if I'd published them, all my pride in the Evans award would have been irretrievably corrupted.

Should I have won the fan writing Hugo? That was the question I kept asking myself after the first wave of exultation subsided. As far as I can determine from a long and searching of my conscience, the answer to the question is yes and no.

Yes, because I needed a massive injection of egoboo in the worst possible way. The ailments that kept me away from St. Louis had me badly depressed, both for the possibility that they were symptoms of more serious illness and for the certainty that they were signals that I'm growing much older than I feel mentally. Everything has been going wrong at my full-time job, which I feel I must give up in the very near future if I am to avoid a complete disintegration of personality or a nervous breakdown. I'd acquired the notion that it was almost impossible to win the Hugo in any of the fan categories unless the individual had done enough for the professional forms of fantasy and SF to be known to the outer circle of fans who have little to do with fanzine fandom. Moreover, I've been growing embarrassed at the way I have only amateur relations with SF. This embarrassment was started by a biting letter from a celebrated pro who took offense at something I wrote in a loc and intimated that I shouldn't criticize the pros, if I was still an amateur after three decades in the field. I don't feel that my embarrassment is really justified: for a quarter-century, I've earned a good living by another kind of professional writing, journalism; I sold about a dozen stories to the prozines during the only period when I really tried to write SF for sale; I like to think that it was my translating that was partially responsible for the way the German stories got particular praise in International Science Fiction. And yet I can't evade the sensation that I'm an eternal neofan because I haven't written some paperbacks. The Hugo was something I very much should have won, for all these reasons.

But for the sake of honesty, not ingratitude or false humility, I also feel that I shouldn't have won this Hugo. I wouldn't have voted for myself, I'd been considering whether to vote for another person who turns up in most loc columns but writes formal contributions to fanzines on a very occasional basis. The loc-dominated form of fanac is something very close to being the easy way out. Nobody expects the loc to be fully thought-out and comprehensive on each subject it touches or even revised from first draft and sent out in second draft form. Something as significant as the Hugo should be awarded to someone who takes the trouble to write at more significant length. Nor do I think that my locs are particularly good examples of the art form. They're numerous, and that attribute has apparently been mistakenly identified as a major virtue. The big fault inherent in them is waste. I throw away an enormous quantity of potential fanzine articles by summarizing their unborn selves in a sentence or two, at a time when fanzines everywhere desperately need lengthy material. An obvious side effect of this is the difficulty I find in writing an article for a fanzine without repeating myself. If I write five locs a week for a year, and most of those locs are published in whole or in part, I'll be in part, I'll be in print on a very great number of topics, treated briefly, and it's difficult to write an article on some subject never nibbled at in a recent loc. Andy Offutt recently scolded me for using up three potential SF stories in one paragraph of a loc, so I may be squandering fiction ideas too. If ALL OUR YESTERDAYS was the factor that really won me the Hugo, I feel somewhat better about the victory, because that book did represent an enormous amount of work and about one-third of its contents strike me as well done.

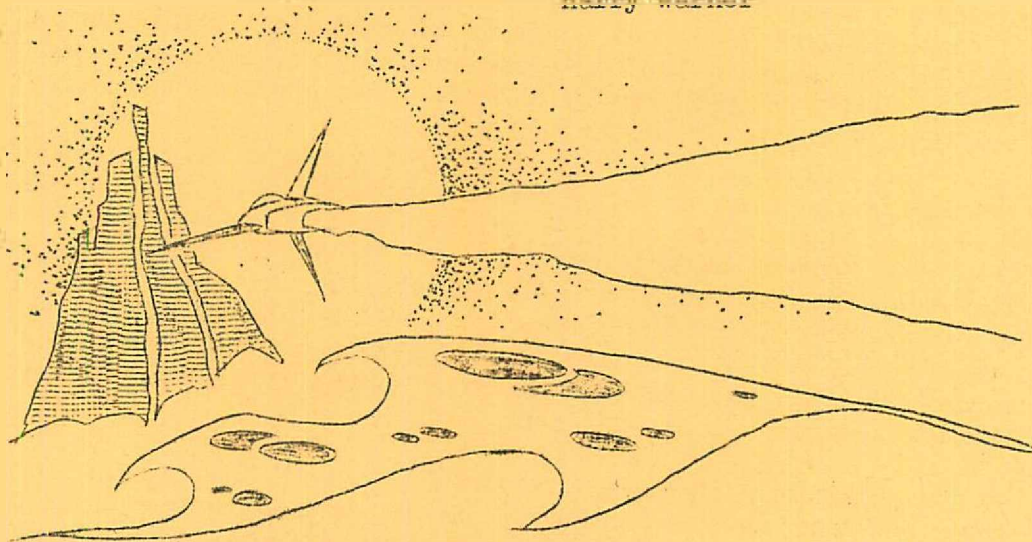
All these years as a newspaper writer have hardened me against the concept of trophies as an abstract entity. Hardly an evening passes in this community of 40,000 inhabitants that at least three trophies aren't awarded to three people for rescuing a squirrel that couldn't get down from the tree into which it had climbed or for possessing the lowest cholesterol count in a cub

scout pack. So, up to the last week in August, I assumed that I really wouldn't get aroused if I won a trophy in the form of a Hugo. It would be simply one of a thousand or two trophies presented to Hagerstown people for one reason or another. I was dead wrong. After the fans who brought it to Summit Avenue left, I sat there looking at it, a remarkable activity, because there's never enough spare time these hectic days to waste any of it in staring at any inanimate object. I realized suddenly that this was not just another trophy. It was the first thing I'd acquired in more than a quarter-century of fanatic that I could pick up and handle as a three-dimensional object with the knowledge that it represented solidified appreciation from fandom for what I'd been doing, appreciation that has height, width, thickness, and weight. People have said nice things about me on paper but those are two-dimensional symbols that are meaningless unless subjected to the complicated journey from the printed page to the eyes to the brain to wherever the psyche resides. Compliments that have been spoken vanished as soon as the air stopped vibrating. If I hadn't won this Hugo, I would have no solid, concrete evidence that the time and effort I've put into my hobby had been enjoyed by other people than myself.

I am withdrawing from competition for the fan writing Hugo that will be awarded at Heidelberg this year. Ted White set a good precedent in this respect, because there should be no possibility of an honor that means so much going year after year to the same individual. There is also the danger that my remaining in the race this year would cause a lot of fans to feel themselves duty bound to vote for me solely because this would technically be the year to extend some kind of recognition for ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. But unlike Ted, I don't care to suggest the proper recipient for the 1970 fan writing Hugo. There are plenty of possibilities.

The cleaning woman, incidentally, hasn't said what she thinks about the Hugo. But she hasn't dented it, broken it, or put it in some spot where I can't find it, a fate which she bestows on almost all my other possessions eventually. So maybe she senses how much it means to me. I'm very grateful for it.

Harry Warner



Now that "Star Trek" has been given a run of BBC I am nearing the conclusion that science fiction and television simply don't mix.

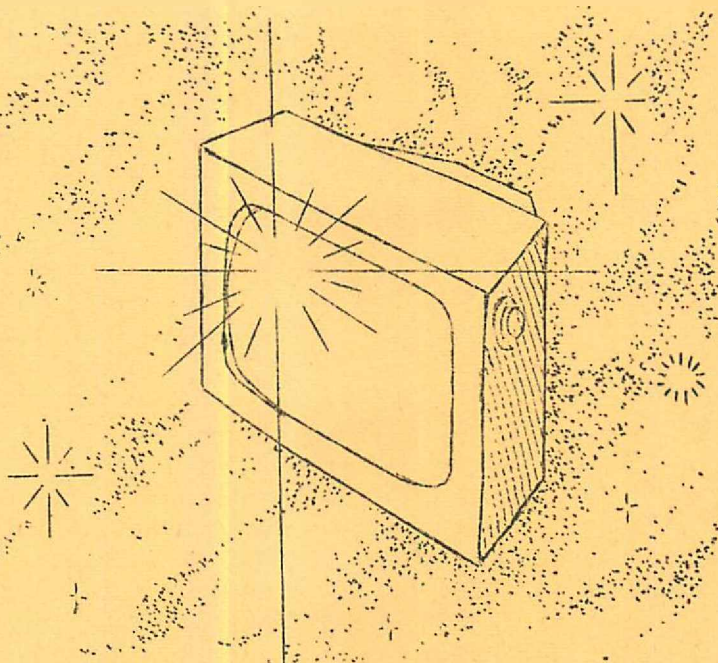
This incompatibility is partly due to factors inherent in SF itself. The phrase "used the vidi-phones" in a printed story occupies very little space and in a fairly unobtrusive way

suggests a background of advanced technology; but translated into TV those three words suddenly involve the actors, the set designers and the viewers in an elaborate charade which always brings the story to a halt. For some reason, a television vidi-phone is a massive contraption which the user can turn on only by whirling himself through at

least 90 degrees in a swivel chair, stretching right across a huge console to the most inaccessible switch of the lot, and then swinging back to face the screen. The screen itself is prone to show all kinds of interference patterns at the beginning and end of each conversation -- a quirk which would have me screaming for a maintenance engineer if it manifested itself in my humble Neolithic rented television. It is possible to think of other examples --- operating an airlock, using a teleporter, etc --- of the SF writer's shorthand being translated to laborious longhand, of the visual representation getting in the way of the concept.

For this reason alone I doubt if we will ever see any completely satisfactory SF on television, but to make matters worse there is the fact that screenwriters appear incapable of assimilating elementary science. How many of them, I wonder, realised that the light year is a measurement of distance and not of time? The most recent example of mistaken ideas in this respect was the BBC's "Counterstrike" SF series which in the puff in the Radio Times and in the spoken introduction told of a culture existing "Many light years in the future". Constant repetition of this solecism enraged me so much that I wrote a letter to the BBC referring to the programme they broadcast "at three miles every Tuesday", but the fine irony must have been lost on them because the complaint was ignored.

The same series displayed another item in the screenwriter's credo---that astronomical terms such as planet, solar system, galaxy and universe are interchangeable. Its opening sequence showed a spiral nebula which, we were assured, was "the constellation Centaurus". I'm no Lovell, but this piece of ineptitude disposed me so unfavourably to the entire series that I never succeeded in watching an episode right through. (Not being a Beatle fan, I derived a certain morose satisfaction recently when Ringo Starr-----



the
Jaundiced
Goggle
Bob Shaw

apparently elevated to the status of a cosmologist because of his expressed interest in SF ---was asked on TV about the long-term future of intelligent life. "There are fifty million planets in our solar system," Ringo began knowledgeably, and went on to tell us that a Californian was building a practicable time machine. The interviewer - -the android-like Tony Bilbow who ought to have his batteries permanently switched off ---took it all with visible pinches of salt, some of which must have rubbed off into the wounds of any real SF fans who were watching.)

"Star Trek" is not so offensive in this respect, and this leads to an interesting point. Science Fiction Review 55 had a letter from J.J.Pierce hinting that one "Star Trek" episode had leaned rather heavily on Fred Saberhagen's Berserker stories, and editor Dick Geis bawled him out for making the suggestion. But I saw the episode in question and actually wondered at the time if Saberhagen had written it --- and so Pierce can't be blamed all that much. In fact, the whole strength of the series is the fact that it seems, in my view as a result of deliberate policy, to retell the best stories from the Golden Age of Astounding. The concept is that of van Vogt's Space Beagle and most episodes can be traced to Asf stories. For example, the episode in which Kirk is snatched from his ship by paternal super-beings and put on a barren planet to decide the outcome of a war through single-handed combat with an alien was practically a screen version of Frederick Brown's "Arena".

"Star Trek" avoids most of the obvious scientific errors --- and perhaps only a purist would complain about the way when the Enterprise is making close manoeuvres in planetary systems stars continue to flow past as though it were moving at interstellar speeds; or the way in which the ship in one episode was hurled "a light year out of the galaxy", equivalent perhaps to being thrown two inches out of Greater London. It has, however, its own little flaws which niggle at me every time.

I don't refer to the captain and senior officers personally handling all the dangerous assignments, which is the criticism often made in U.S. fanzines. A far more galling thing is the crew's utter astonishment every time their ship is gripped and held motionless by an incredibly vast force which neutralises the engines. Memory might be playing tricks, but it seems to me that this happens in every episode, and one would think that with it being a weekly occurrence the crew would acquire a certain amount of resignation.

"Captain," that Scottish engineer would say, "it's happened again."

"You don't mean....."

"Yes. The ship is gripped and held motionless by an incredibly vast force which is neutralising the engines."

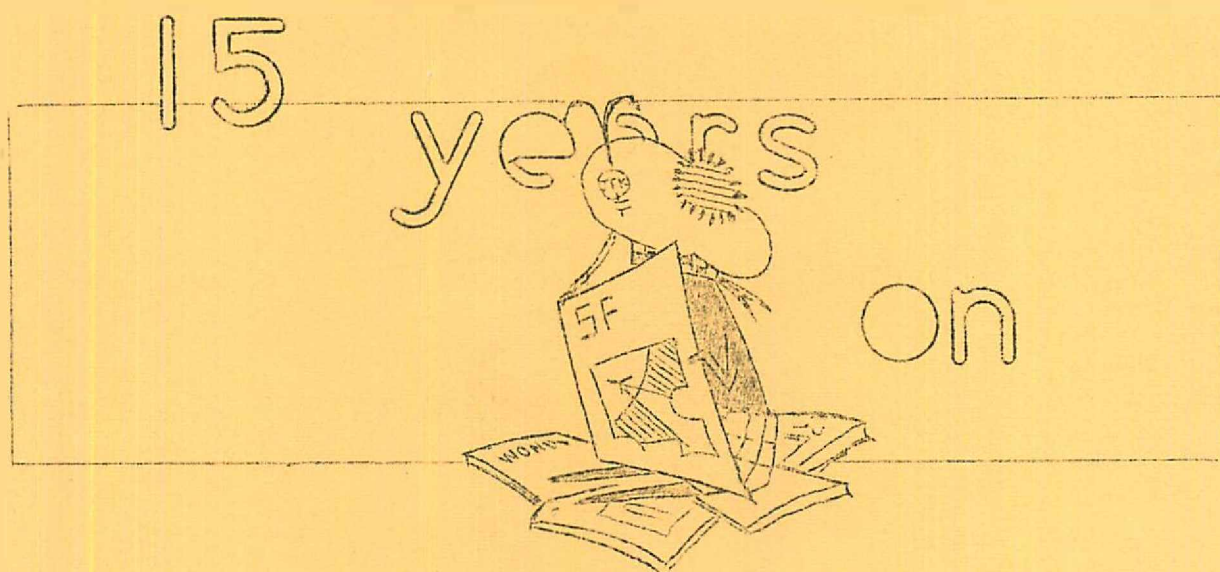
"Oh, well. The extra gripped-and-held-motionless-by-an-incredibly-vast-force-which-neutralises-the-engines- pay will come in handy just before Christmas."

All those problems would never arise, of course, if only the TV and film producers has the sense to hire an SF consultant, somebody who could keep them on the right path. Somebody like me, for instance. The only trouble with this suggestion is that if such a job were ever created it would almost certainly go to the man who monopolised coverage of the moon shots and is now oozing over the rest of British television --- James Burke. I have yet to meet meet anyone whose nerves don't get severely abraded by Burke's complacent grin, and I suspect he was appointed BBC space expert merely on the strength of having TV experience and a few years at university and a couple of science degrees behind him. It isn't fair that this job to which I am perfectly suited, even entitled, because I was wading through Astoundings back in the Forties

and Fifties, should have gone to a Johnny-come-lately like Burke. I'll bet he wasn't wading through Astounding back in the Forties and Fifties. Thank Chu that someday emissaries from the Kingdom of Orion are going to land on Earth and raise us Star-begotten to our true stations in society, that's all I can say. But they'd better hurry up --- I'm not so young as I used to be.

---Bob Shaw.





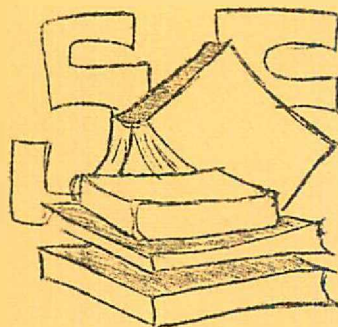
MACHIAVARLEY

Much has changed in a changing world since our editress entered fandom as a shy wee fan and I felt that many of her readers might be interested, if not intrigued, to have my impressions of Ethel in her early years.

In a way I suppose my wife, Frances, would be better equipped to write this saga as she was in communication with Ethel long before I saw her. Indeed she still has some of these early letters written on night-duty in a Glasgow hospital. These letters, obviously written at 2am under the influence of surgical spirit and H.P. Lovecraft, give an intimate picture of the impressionable young girl who first cast an awed look at the splendours of fandom.

"Was it true," she asked Frances, "that Walter Willis sprang full grown from the head of Hugo Gernsback and that Bob Shaw and James White were spored instantly from beads of sweat cast from the mighty brow whilst he was churning his historic Gestetner?" For those who enquire "Walter Who?" and "What Shaw", ponder on the ephemerality of fame.

Still, away from philosophy and back to the dogmatic practicality of my subject. I first met Ethel Lindsay at the SuperMancon, long before Scottishe was even a twinkle in its parent's eyes. Her entry caused something of a sensation as the first fleeting impression was of a kilt, topped only by a bobbed tammy entering the premises entirely under its own steam. A less sophisticated

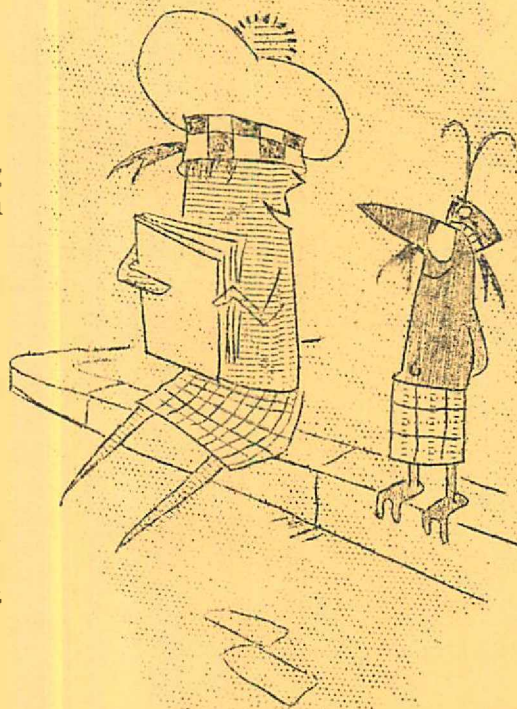


gathering would have departed rapidly in a state of near hysteria, but fandom, to its everlasting credit, held its ground. This phenomena was made even more curious by the continuous and seemingly unstoppable sounds emanating from a small gap between the kilt and tammy. This was tentatively identified as a form of speech by the more discerning of those present. I myself was certain that the words "porridge" and "bluidy Sassenachs" could be separated from the other sounds, and as they were repeated several times I was able to confirm the impression.

The kilt, still accompanied by the tammy, proceeded directly to the bar where it absorbed the contents of a whisky bottle. I say absorbed advisably, for there was no other way to describe the speed with which the event took place. The alien-ness of the kilt was further enhanced by the fact that the sounds or "speech"(as we later came to know it) CONTINUED WHILST THE WHISKY WAS BEING ABSORBED!

It is a true measure of the adaptability of mankind that, within a short space of time, the Lindsay chatter became an accepted part of the background noise like the susurrations of one's own bodily fluids through arteries and veins. It became unnoticed, excluded, the Museak of SF fandom.

We must move on now to examine other aspects of the early Lindsay. There was a period at this time in Ethel's life when she took to what she described as being "puddled". This took the form of sitting on some convenient kerb and holding vigorous conversations with "a sma' man wi' a wee moustache". This fellow accompanied us on many expeditions, appearing suddenly and without invitation and usually after the consumption of a few drams. He eventually vanished from our ken one evening at the cinema during a performance by Dean Martin (or was it Jerry Lewis?). For some time after this, Ethel's pure and chaste hospital bed was shared with a large teddy bear addressed as "Dean". Where she kept her, at that time, inseparable partner I never had the audacity to ask. Dean lasted until the JFK meteor rose in the West and he now lies dusty and forgotten, eyeless and minus much of his bodily hair, in the further reaches of an under-stairs cupboard.



When I first met Ethel, her position as a night sister had given her that complaint common to all hospital sisters, matrons, school teachers and sergeant majors of expecting complete and mindless obedience. Contact with

fandom was certainly responsible for preserving the last vestigial, evidence of humanity. That she still has friends today outside the narrow bounds of her profession is evidence enough of this. Unfortunately sisterdom still played a dominant role in her character. When I first began to write regularly for "Scottishe" every meeting was prefaced by a forty-five minute catechism on why the MachiaVarley piece for the next SCOT wasn't ready. My life at this time was compounded of fear and misery, I dreaded answering the phone, only nightmares featuring voracious Gestetners and suffocating haggis, broke my sleepless nights. Once in the depths of despair I threatened suicide, only to be told, "Not until you've written my piece --and I want it funny this time." Eventually sheer desperation drove me from London to the wilds of Leeds from where, with the delicate balance of sanity restored, I came to Cumberland to convalesce (Funny isn't it, one 3-day visit to London in October and here I am, writing for "Scottishe" again!)

Another side to Ethel was her life as a sportswoman. Apart from traditional Scots sports such as haggis hunting and curling (either up in bed with the teddy or fan-writers round little fingers); she was a tennis player in the Christine Truman mould, though it's a pity they didn't have enough to more than half fill the mould. With a hospital racquet as taut as a string bag, she played a murderous game. Unfortunately it was usually her partner she be-headed so, alas, she ran out of partners before she made the sports pages of the national press. She also excelled at "Cheat" and "Liar Dice", having a natural talent for these games.

Photography is another of Ethel's talents. An avid bulb flasher at Conventions, such was her art that she took the only picture of Brian Aldiss that made him look like a film-star. The fact that the film-star in question was King Kong is only a quibble perpetrated by jealous enemies. In the wider world of photography Ethel is famous for straightening the leaning Tower of Pisa and putting the Forth Bridge over the Thames at Kew.

This, then, is how I first saw Ethel Lindsay, those many years ago. Much has changed in a changing world since she entered fandom, but Ethel has altered not a whit!

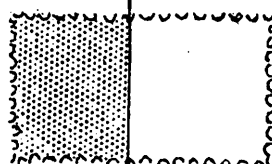
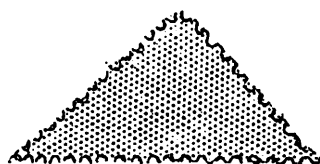
Brian Varley.

SCOTTISHE was born in 1955, some years before Sputnik went up. The next year the tiny principality of Monaco published a set of stamps that the then fifty members of OMPA remember fondly. Norman Shorrock published a zine on Jules Verne which he illustrated with the Monegasque stamps. One of those which were too expensive to include, was the airmail value showing the rocket described in "From Earth to the Moon."

Rockets had been depicted on stamps even earlier than this, though many were of the rocket mail variety rather than the type intended to reach other planets. In 1948, the United States

outer
space

AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



JOY & SANDY SANDERSON

published a stamp for the Fort Bliss Centennial which showed the launching of a rocket bearing a grim resemblance to a V2. Other countries had issued a number of stamps with astronomical designs and illustrations of observatories, and constellations.

However, it is really since the launching of Sputnik that the collecting of stamps about space, spacemen, astronomy, and scientists has increased at logarithmic pace, with a further giant leap when Neil Armstrong took his one small step for man.

Naturally, with Russia the first to launch a satellite, the communist countries were first to issue such stamps, although they are quite happy to help commemorate American achievements, too. Russia had already, in October 1957, issued a stamp commemorating Tsiolkovsky, their Robert Goddard, showing the man and his rockets. In November, they overprinted it to commemorate the sputnik launch. Several other communist countries issued stamps to show sputnik during 1957-8, but none of the Arab states, which were later to make such a nuisance of themselves, had yet grasped the idea that space was going to be such an interesting (and lucrative) venture.

The International Geophysical Year gave rise to many a stamp in which the 18 months from 1958 to 1959 suggested everything from polar bears (Poland - isn't this a little off course? I thought they were only at the North Pole regions.) and ocean-bed exploration (Haiti) to rockets (almost everyone) and the creative hand of God (United States). The

British Commonwealth added a few stamps along these lines until the satellite detection stations were built. At this point in time, adhering to the highest ideals of stamp-issuing countries, they desisted from flooding the market with issues, but printed stamps only when they had taken part in some launch. This, alas is not the case with some countries.

The communist countries cannot really be faulted for their issues - most are fully justified by their achievements. However, many Arab sultanates have become anathema in the stamp world because they have not only issued so many stamps with no justification, but they have issued them so frequently (often two and three sets a month), and in such large sets. Perforated and imperforate stamps, with souvenir sheets, deluxe sheets, and miniature sheets, create a "set" that can cost anywhere up to about ten pounds. With their frequency of issue, the general stamp collecting public ignores them, justifiably call them labels instead of stamps, since they seldom see postal use and are published simply as money-getters. Unfortunately, as far as s.f. fans are concerned, these labels are some of the most attractive and colourful, with such typical science-fictional scenes that it is hard to resist them. However, if any of you are going to start collecting, you should know the dangers, and a trip to Stanley Gibbons (or some other reliable dealer) would be well worth while. Men who are already collecting will be able to tip you off to the finer points.

With Gagarin's success, the stamp issuing countries went wild. His youthful face soon became instantly recognisable, as did those of the other early Russian and American astronauts. Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, is also easily recognised, but from then, until the moonlanding, most of the other astronauts become a jumble of faces bearing a close resemblance to each other.

On John Kennedy's death, most stamp issuing countries linked him with rockets on their stamps because of his dedication to the idea of the moonlanding. It became difficult to know whether you had all the stamps with rockets on, or not. The Quiet Sun Year, the launching of Telstar (hiya, Arthur), and the Gemini Series were particularly productive of stamps. And it was during this period particularly that the noxious flowering of decorated borders fully bloomed. For instance, a standard pattern prevailed with the series issued to commemorate the International Telecommunication Union - a globe with lightning flash and UIT imposed upon it, and electronic symbols on either side. No collector of space stamps would necessarily include it, but some countries decided the problem for him. They issued them in sheets of two, or more, and in the borders printed satellites or other designs implying space. Thus you paid extra for duplicate stamps, and extra again because they slammed you with additional charges because the stamps were in miniature sheets. (I do not refer here to dealers, but to the issuing countries. Most dealers play fair and refrain from recommending the purchase of such moneycoining-for the issuer - irrelevancies.)

It was in 1965 that Russia took the fatal step that led to the gaudiest idea yet. In that year, they published two stamps on aluminium foil, with rockets embossed in colour. They realised later that such issues were not too successful because of the ease with which cancellations can be removed, and have not repeated the idea since. This, however, did not weigh with the African states from the former French territories. If aluminium foil, why not gold foil?

Apollo 8 came, and several countries in Africa issued stamps in gold foil, carefully packed individually in sealed cellophane wrappers, and they have continued this policy through Apollo 11. So long as it pays, they will probably continue through Apollos 12, 13, and up (if Nixon ever allows us to get any more up). Gold foil stamps are, needless to say, expensive.

There is a fascinating variety of stamps dealing with space, which would make an ideal collection on the side for those few who also collect books, magazines and artwork. It will cost you more than it did us, because you will be starting later, but few of the space stamps are really rare. If anyone intends to delve further, I suggest the acquisition of the only catalogue dealing solely with space stamps -- Conquete de L'Espace, Catalogue Lollini. This is published in French only but for those not familiar with the language a small Woolworth's French/English dictionary should be sufficient. If it is not available at your local dealer or Stanley Gibbons, their address is - Maison Lollini, 3 Rue Pertinax, Nice, France. A subscription covers three quarterly updating supplements, too.

To start you off, here are three stamps, a complete set, from Russia (Gibbons Nos. 3400-2 and Scott 3316-8).

May spaceflight and Scottishe go on together exploring new territories and keeping many fans happy.

Fifteen years is a long time. Ethel Lindsay spent it editing SCOTTISHE. I spent it trying to do the mathematics necessary to get the title for this piece.

Something which, by the way, Arthur C. Clarke could probably figure out in a minute. Wrong, too.

But we all know what has happened during the past fifteen years. An entire new fandom has sprung into being; kids who were then on potties are now on pot. What is more difficult to comprehend or recall is where we older fen were, almost eight million minutes ago.

I know where I was -- in Weyauwega, Wisconsin, sitting in front of a typewriter. For about a year I'd been experimenting on a method of sitting in back of a typewriter, but finally realised my arms weren't long enough for me to type that way. And the carriage was apt to give me a nasty blow in the ribs as it moved; I'd had one nasty blow in the groin to begin with, which cured me of trying to type standing up. At any rate (2¢ a word was pretty good in those days) I started to sit in front of a typewriter in 1955 and I've never regretted the change.

1955. Where was everybody? Well, 300 of us were at the Worldcon in Cleveland. Isaac Asimov was the Guest of Honor. I suppose few people remember that name today -- after all, Asimov was one of those no-talent Old Wave writers whose work has sunk into deserved oblivion -- but at that time he enjoyed a certain vogue. In fact he might best be described as a fat Harlan Ellison.

Judy Merrill was at that Convention, too. I might best describe her as a female Harlan Ellison, but then I'd have two lawsuits on my hands. And that would interfere with my typing; as it is, I can't even type with rings on.

And what about the rest of fandom and prodrom? Walt Willis was in Belfast, almost completely recovered from his 1952 visit to the States. White, Shaw and Berry were luminaries in the local L.R.A. ... Ella Parker was carrying on an affair with William Dunbar. ... John Brunner was a beardless youth. ... Mike Moorcock was just a beard. ... Dean Grennell was smuggling furaaces through rural Wisconsin. ... Alan Dodd was living quietly in Herts. ... Bob Tucker was living noisily in Bloomington. ... John W. Campbell, Jr., had written 180 less editorials than to date, and how we got along without them I'll never know.

Arthur C. Clarke was skin-diving in Ceylon. He must have chosen the wrong location, because he didn't bring up any skin. ... Ted Sturgeon was just a minnow. ... and Ethel Lindsay and Atom were planning this 15th Anniversary Issue.

"The more things change, the more they remain the same," someone once said. But he said it in French, so I never understood it.

WHERE

WERE

YOU

7,889,760

MINUTES

AGO

?

BY

ROBERT

BLOCH

All I know is that fifteen years is a span that brings changes -- and I'm told that by something I can understand; namely, my mirror. I can see plenty of changes in it, upon due reflection.

But SCOTTISHE, like Ethel and Atom, never changes. Improves, yes -- changes, never! I can hardly wait for the 30th Anniversary Issue. Oh, yes, I fully intend to be around to read it. But before I do, I'm going to break that damned mirror!

---Robert Bloch.

The late, late review:

The Reefs of Earth: by R.A. Lafferty. Dobson SF. This is the story of a band of alien children called the Pucas who live in a rather 'hill-billy' community in rural America. The inhabitants of this place are not exactly of a prepossessing disposition; these humans easily forfeit sympathy by their attitude to the aliens. On the other hand, the children are truly alien and this human reader felt even less drawn towards them. Throughout the book the author adopts a jocular tone; were he to speak to me in such a tone I could tell from his facial expression; his body movements; and the timbre of his voice whether this tone marked a deeper seriousness. First of all, then, I am not sure of the author's intention. There is a good deal of violence in this book--I recoil from violence--but am I meant to do so? It is extremely well written; and there are many imaginative passages. As a picture of a completely alien way of thinking, it is highly successful - and I guess in the end that is the way I accept it. In the end I reserved my sympathy for any humans the children encountered in the future--thinking that all humans are not so narrow and mean as those they met in the small town of Lost Haven.

The Freak Show. Tales of Fantasy and Horror. edited by Peter Haining. Rapp & Whiting. 32s

The editor admits to a fascination with the freak shows one sees at fairgrounds and has taken this as his central theme for this collection. He has gathered together 20 short stories. He starts with THE MAGICIAN by Daniel Defoe; I agree with his statement that it is authentic in atmosphere and storyline. HOP FROG by Edgar Allen Poe is another from the past when freaks were kept by kings as 'fools' and tells of the rather nasty revenge perpetrated by one of them. SPURS by Tod Robbins takes us to the fairground proper and has a real horror ending. We are told that this story was made into a film which was refused a certificate in Britain for almost thirty years! There are some familiar names here--Bradbury's THE DWARF and Bloch's THE GIRL FROM MARS plus Sprague de Camp's THE GNARLY MAN; but there are plenty of unusual and out of the way items. On the whole there is more horror than fantasy in this lot; some of them made me feel my hair might be standing on end! At the last, though, there is an evocative story from Dylan Thomas that seems to capture the sound of the roundabouts. I should add, for the SF reader, that there is one story of a fairground of the future by Harlan Ellison that is masterly.

---Ethel Lindsay

THE LAST DAYS OF THE LATE, GREAT STATE OF CALIFORNIA by Curt Gentry.
(Ballantine Books, 101 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003. 391pp. 95¢)

This book might be classified as science-fiction in the same sense that fiction now being written about voyages to the moon or to Mars might be classified as SF.

Contrary to some newspaper reviews, Mr. Gentry has not set himself up as yet another prophet predicting the ultimate doom of California. What he has done is what many a writer of s-f has done--that is, take the predictions of others and use them to build a story. The "what if" factor. What if there were a series of tremendous earthquakes that would result in the destruction of the west coast's most productive and most provocative state? What effect would such a catastrophe have on the rest of the country, and on the rest of the world?

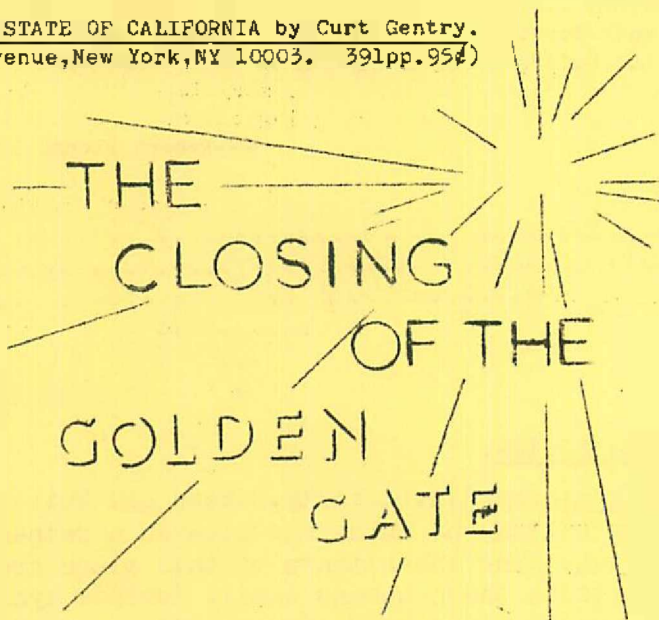
In order to answer these questions, he had first to present a myriad of facts and figures about the Golden State to illustrate the vast influence of California on the USA and on the world in general. The result is that the first 300 pages of this fascinating book cannot be classified as fiction of any kind.

True, the facts and figures are liberally laced with his own opinions and prejudices, but there is no difficulty in separating fact from opinion. It is obviously a book of social commentary, and there should be no doubt in any reader's mind as to where Mr. Gentry stands on any given subject. This is especially true in the field of politics.

I'm reasonably sure that a far-rightwing conservative would disagree not only with Mr. Gentry's opinions but also with Mr. Gentry's facts. And, of course, as a middle-of-the-road liberal I am also reasonably sure that his facts are correct. I place myself in this category, despite the fact that I dislike placing anyone in a confined area, in the hope that most readers will understand where I stand politically, rather than write several paragraphs on my personal political philosophy.

I should add that a far-leftwing liberal might possibly find some bones to pick with Mr. Gentry's assortment of facts and opinions, but it is more likely that the leftwinger's opposite number would find the book more distasteful.

LEN MOFFATT



The author pulls no punches in discussing Governor Reagan and Mayor Yerty, for instance. One is at once amused and alarmed. On the other hand, he reports just as honestly on the gaifes of ex-Governor Brown. However, the end result is that Reagan is pictured as a clown who has been tutored and computerized into the governorship, whereas Brown is depicted as a well-meaning chap more to be pitied than censured.

In its own unique way THE LAST DAYS is a history book. After reading it, I had the overall feeling that I had just read a compleat history of California from the time of its discovery to the time of its(as yet)fictional destruction. This despite the fact that the author does not begin with the discovery of California, and even in 300 pages could not possibly cover all of the major and minor historical events that occurred in California in the past century. But he has managed to convey the impression I described to the degree that, after catching your breath, you just might have the urge to read other histories of the state, or other accounts of some particularly fascinating event in the state's history.

Unfortunately, he does not include a bibliography, but there are references to newspapers, magazines and books in the Index. The fact that he did include an Index makes the book a valuable reference volume. To give you some idea of what is covered in these first 300 pages:AMA, John Birch Society, Pat Brown, Berkeley, Edgar Cayce, Cesar Chavez, Watts, Reagan, Marilyn Monroe, topless bars, John Steinbeck, Frank Lloyd Wright, Earl Warren, Nelson Rockefeller, Nixon, Shirley Temple Black, Forest Lawn, freeways, etc.etc. And that's only a meager sampling.

The final 90 pages take us into the realm of fiction--save for the quite logical effects on the rest of the world that would result from the nearly total destruction of California. At least, we hope it remains fiction. Soothsayers and other weird prophets aside, the fact remains that such a series of earthquakes is possible. However, I am not about to pack my family and worldly goods and depart henceforth to Arizona or New Mexico, and I'm not a fatalist, either. That is, I'm not a fatalist in the sense that each person has a certain time to die. I follow all the rules of safety to the best of my ability so as to avoid accidents at home, at work, everywhere. But I also know that it is possible to get killed crossing the street outside the crosswalk and with the green light because there are idiot drivers who will run red lights and clobber pedestrians or other cars.

The point is, that no matter where you go in the world, there is likely to be something there that will cause your demise. I am reminded of a man who retired from our company a few years back. He moved to San Francisco. A tremor shook up his apartment, and he decided to get the heck out of there. So he moved to Florida. Shortly after his arrival a hurricane came along and scared him back to California. He was from the midwest originally, but I guess he didn't want to go back to these cold winters--and the possibility of tornadoes..So, he wound up in one of our Southern California beach towns. Really no safer from a quake there than in San Francisco, but perhaps he didn't know that--or didn't associate that area with quakes. But he lived there only a short time. Cancer got him.

The fictional portion of this book reads just as "real" as the preceding pages of real history. Mr.Gentry did a good job of researching catastrophe, and it shows. Perhaps the final pages could be classified as a horror story, because of the matter-of-fact, reportorial method of writing. Vivid scenes range from the black humor of Minute Men taking over Disneyland and shooting

"Communists posing as Disneyland guards" ("We are now in control of all entrances and exits, have captured Frontierland, Adventureland and Fantasyland, and anticipate seizing Tomorrowland by nightfall...") to the final, grim, unreal-but-believable reports of the destruction and disappearance of great cities and small towns...

It is hard to digest or comprehend such an ultimate catastrophe even when it is spelled out for you. You know it could happen--there is nothing reported that could not happen. Not that I am an expert on earthquakes, but once you accept the "what if" factor you have to accept that such unbelievable destruction is believable. It has happened before in history..and could happen again. Perhaps on the west coast of these United States. Perhaps elsewhere in the world.

This book is not a one-message book. It has many messages. The casual reader will say that the author is merely telling us "Don't sell California short". The reader who is really interested in the world and its peoples will know that this book says more than that. There are no heroes and villains. While reading this book, you will find no "character" with whom to "identify". Whether you read it as a history, or as a social commentary tract, or (as I did) as a simply fascinating and informative work, you will find only one person as a protagonist (or, if you dislike Mr. Gentry's viewpoint, as an antagonist), only one person with whom you can truly identify.

Yourself.

---Len J. Moffatt

Vision of Tomorrow: No 6: This copy arrived after I had finished my column. You will find the details about the magazine in NIBBLINGS. This issue has some very lovely illustrations by Eddie Jones; and once again the appearance has improved. E.C. Tubb starts off with a tale of drug addiction in the future; if I take his meaning correctly he is saying that people have a right to turn themselves into zombies if that's what they want. Well, read it and have an argument. John Brunner's FIFTH COMMANDMENT has another future where a man in the city for the retired begins to wonder why he alone is discontented. This one has a lovely ending! THE PHOENIX PEOPLE by Richard Gordon is more predictable. More interesting is THE STAR-MUTANTS by Damien Broderick which describes a star-ship in which humans and mutants battle for survival. I especially appreciated a very good review of the book by Aldiss BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD.

-----Ethel Lindsay

I was looking at the fishpond over in the next block when I first stopped to think how long the Orient has had a fantasy fandom. What reminded me of this was watching a couple of the neighbors' kids duelling on the footbridge over the feeder canal --the pond is about 30x30x4 feet and needs plenty of water--whacking away at each other with bamboo canes and waving towels.

Actually, I knew, it was only my over-30 vision that they seemed to be using canes and towels. What they were really doing was dealing swashing blows with their two-edged broadswords and swirling their capes. (A bath towel is just the right size to make a knee-length cloak for a Vietnamese ten-year-old.) That which appeared to be a footbridge was at least a knife-edged mountain ridge; or, if any kind of bridge, then a suspension bridge whence one misstep or careless sword-stroke would hurl both duellists into a gorge of awesome depth. They were acting out a yu-hsia tale, or, as we would say, a "sword and sorcery story", a type of Oriental fiction rather more popular than Westerns or detective novels with us, and which---considering the length of its history and the size of its market--is very likely the most substantial body of fantasy writing in the world.

The great source of these productions is the Free Chinese community in Hong Kong and Taiwan; the Vietnamese, for their own market, run off pirated translations and a small number of original works in Cholon, the West End of Saigon. Possibly -- Ron Bennett might know --Overseas Chinese in other countries do translations into the local languages too; this would be a case in which Taiwan's notorious copyright laws cut both ways.

Like our spaceship-spacesuit-and-BEM conventions for science-fiction covers, yu-hsia stories are recognizable from a glance at the front: typically a clean-cut youth or maiden clad in baggy civilian clothes brandishing a sword at a ferocious barbaric type in armor, while a vaporous or hobgoblinny Supernatural Being hovers in readiness to Intervene.

Now, the lineage of our own fantasy fiction hardly reaches much back before +XVII, and of course science-fiction is more recent still--late +XIX --while our Persecuted Minority Group of fandom is hardly half a century old. There are plenty of earlier examples of writing which would now be classed as fantasy, to be sure, but these were sports or dead ends, not true ancestral forms: Orlando Furioso and New Atlantis are no more direct ancestors of The Lord of the Rings and Ralph 134C41+ than ichthyosaurs are direct ancestors of porpoises. Yu-hsia fantasy, on the other hand, can be traced back to the first novel ever written in China, and one which was the most popular fiction in the language until Mao Tse-tung pulled a Harlan Ellison with his Little Red Book.

The first novel is Lo Kuan-chung's Tale of the Three Kingdoms (San Kuo Chih Yen 1), a lengthy episodic story covering the period of the (historical) Three Kingdoms: that is, 168-265, from the collapse of the Later Han dynasty to the short reunification of China by the Tsin. It appeared in +XIV, early in the Ming dynasty. Of the four most acclaimed Chinese novels two others were written within a few decades of this, and both contributed

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to the Secondary Universe which is the understood background to yu-hsia tales. These were Wu Ch'eng-en's Journey to the West (Hsi-yu Chi), and Water Margin (Shui-hu Chuan), by either Shih Mai-an or the same Lo Kuan-chung who wrote Three Kingdoms. Among them these three effectively established the novel as a literary form in Chinese; they were direct progenitors of one of the two main lineages of Chinese novels, that which embroiders and romanticizes facts of recorded history, while the other lineage--more or less imaginary works which deal with domestic life and love -- was established by Chin P'ing Mei(1), which is an expansion by another hand of three chapters of Water Margin.(2)

Of these three great novels, The Journey to the West is almost pure fantasy. It is a novelization of the journey of the Buddhist monk Hsuan Tsang, during the early T'ang dynasty to obtain Buddhist scriptures in India. This really happened, about the year 630; Hsuan Tsang even left a trip report which still exists. Wu Ch'eng-en, however, improved on the basic story by supplying his pious and proper monk with an escort of rowdy and improper companions, including a dragon who wanted to work off some bad Karma, a cannibal who was trying to reform by practicing vegetarianism, a former general of Marines who'd been reincarnated as a pig, and a stone monkey who had learned magic from a Taoist sorcerer. A good thing, too, because it takes Hsuan Tsang about ten volumes to get to India and he has to stave off seventy-nine calamities on the way, plus two on the trip back to make up the magical number of eighty-one.

Water Margin improves on the adventures of "Sung Chiang and his thirty-six comrades", who, after becoming outlawed under the Northern Sung dynasty (at the beginning of +XII), were granted amnesty and fought against the rebel Fang La. It is well known that every outlaw leader and his Merry Men(3) are driven to outlawry by circumstances; this is just as true at Liang Shan(4) as in Sherwood Forest. Justifying all thirty-seven of these bravoes takes about seventy chapters, followed by fifty more in which they receive amnesty and redeem their names by heroic fighting for the Emperor against several different sets of foes: Fang La, two imaginary rebels, and the wild Tartars. (The usual English translation, by the way, very wrongly ends when the band has first gathered at Liang Shan and one has a dream foretelling their execution as rebels). Fantastic events are not the main subject of these episodes; the author's point is the basic altruism and chivalry ("hsia") of the brigands. Nevertheless, a majority of the heroes have some kind of a run-in with the supernatural: a ghost to be exorcised or avenged, a magician to be puzzled by, a malignant nature spirit to overcome, perhaps; a weapon or talisman of mysterious virtue which is a reward for some courtesy to a Taoist hermit or Buddhist monk; at the least, a spiritual tie with another which traces back to something that happened in one's last incarnation.

Similarly with the Tale of the Three Kingdoms. The author's own statement of his theme is that when united the Empire tends to disunion; when broken, to rejoin--mystical, but hardly fantastic. The destruction of the Han dynasty begins with the revolt of the Yellow Turbans--itself a bit of sword-and-sorcery fiction come to life, as I'll explain later. In the novel they fight against the Emperor's forces with magical beasts, until one Liu Pei, drinking in a tavern one day, remarks that three men united could stop them. Kuan Chang (who is now a god) and Chang Fei take him up on this; they swear the Peach Orchard Oath of brotherhood. Pooling their information, they find they can stop the Yellow Turbans, at that; between them they have enough odd bits of magical knowledge to exorcise the sorcerer-rebel's beasts. But the strain of the war has already inflicted fatal damage on the Han dynasty, which presently collapses. The three friends hold together as much of the Empire as they can, founding the Kingdom of Shu Han (modern Szechuan) and attracting such scholars and heroes as the brilliant strategist Chu-k'o Lian. Meanwhile the Emperor has fallen into the hands of Ts'ao Ts'ao, a dissembling traitor who would have made Cesare Borgia bite his lips with envy, and who presently deposes the Son of Heaven and sets his own heir on the throne. The kingdoms formed in the breakup of the Empire--Shu Han, Ts'ao Ts'ao's realm of Wei, and the Kingdom of Wu on the East coast around Nankin--establish their inability to conquer one another after a series of battles which amount to a drawn game but involve many ploys which Three Kingdoms fans delight in. Once peace sets in among them they turn to fighting the barbarians, Chu-k'o Lian particularly distinguishing himself against the wild Sothorners whose battle techniques include enchanted impenetrable armor and trained fighting animals; these he counters with magic fire and robots. At last -- more to make

an end, I suspect, than because it represents the triumphant restoration it should -Ts'ao Ts'ao's heirs are deposed in their turn by Marshal. Ssu-Ma Yen and, with the old age and death of their founders, the other states gravitate into the Marshal's hands and the Empire is re-established under the Tsin dynasty.

Here, too, the author's attitude is that fantasy elements are neither prodigies nor the exclusive province of specialists. One's impression, on first reading, is that everybody who is anybody knows some magic; there are a few ghosts, a scold and a half of combats carried out or influenced by sorcery, and a number of prophecies. (5) Black Moon the Taoist magician who "acts like" a magician, by playing tricks that awe the crowd, doesn't really accomplish anything except annoying a bureaucrat; the most effective use of magic is made by Chu-k'o Liang, who isn't famed as a magician at all, but as a scholar and military strategist.

These three novels --and especially the two latter --pretty well define the universe of popular Chinese fantasy fiction as it presently exists. Mix in more supernaturalism than appears in Journey to the West and you're in the domain of weird stories, a well-developed form but by no means comparable to fantasy tales in popular fiction. Much less supernaturalism than the other two and you'd have popularized history rather than a novel. Leave out the history and the result would be a domestic novel, which is a major form in its own right.

From nothing comes nothing, even in fantasy, and Chinese sword-and-sorcery novels can readily be traced back to pre-novel forms. Under the T'ang dynasty (VII to X) tales of magic and adventures --Ch'uan chi, "tales conveying the extraordinary" --were an accepted form of elegant literature; Buddhist marvel-tales were common. Both of these, however, were short, sometimes no more than a page length, and the former, at least, were highly polished productions in the literary form of the language. At the same time, in the colloquial language, oral story-telling was strongly developed; the reciters of these tales used promptbooks (hua pen, "story roots") which gave bare-bones outlines of vast numbers of five-minute acts, strung together more or less according to the taste of the storytellers. Under the Mings ("XIV to XVII"), on the other hand, there appeared true novels, in the living language rather than literary p'ien wen "parallel prose", and running 80-100 chapters; these have remained popular ever since.

The gap created by the turbulent period between the fall of T'ang and the Mings --which saw a period of contending states, and Imperial restoration, a barbarian invasion, and a devastating invasion and conquest by the Mongols capped by a violent revolution which ejected them --might make it hard to figure out just how short stories and promptbooks metamorphosed into lengthy novels, but fortunately all the oldest and many later Chinese novels retain peculiarities of layout which make plain that what happened was that the short summaries in the promptbooks were expanded into fully stated accounts and given some thematic organization. They even retain the couplet or quatrain of verse, of which the first half is the subject (t'i-mu) and the second the title (ch'eng-ming), originally used as singing commercials by the storytellers and still retained for a similar use by Chinese plays and operas; for that matter the word for "chapter of a novel" is the same as that for a storyteller's act --hui, "session".

With this evolutionary background it's understandable that Yu-hsin tales don't usually display the coherent plotting and character development which we expect of Western novels. Rather, they are typically organized as an endless series of episodes tenuously held together by a general theme. There are a host of characters, most of whom play roles -- often important roles -- in one or two episodes and never appear again. But these traits allow for virtues as well as faults. Little attention may be paid to logical connection between successive episodes, but there is plenty of the internal plausibility that creates willing suspension of disbelief. A cast of thousands of briefly-seen individuals doesn't encourage careful personality development, but it positively demands vivid characterization.

The unifying themes are such as give occasion for good sword-and-sorcery yarns. There's this war, see? It's either in progress or imminent, and the Bad Guys are really rotten, as they demonstrate almost immediately. (In Tale of the Three Kingdoms, for instance, Ts'ao Ts'ao overhears somebody in another room say something about binding and

killing. He promptly whips out his sword, rushes in, cuts down everybody in sight...and then notices a pig tied up to be slaughtered for dinner. So he goes out and murders his host, too, lest the latter make a scene about this faux pas.) Perhaps the Good Guys are struggling against long odds, or they need some unique magical treasure for success; there is also the we-must-warn-the-Emperor theme to exploit. Anyway, they fight with swords, spears, arrows, and magic spells, and the Good Guys eventually win; any story that fits within those parameters passes the test.

I specify that the Good Guys win because they always do, but I'd better add the caveat that they "win" when the traditional or Confucian Proprieties are satisfied. In Journey to the West the "win" is such that we'd also call it that: Hsuan Tsang becomes a Buddha and his companions all achieve some kind of sainthood. (6) But in Water Margin the heroes "win" when they get killed, mostly in battle for the Emperor, expiating their earlier rebellion. (7); and in Three Kingdoms the Good finally triumphs when a usurping man-on-horseback (8) who happens to have fulfilled the constitutional requirements for Imperial legitimacy conquers the other two Kingdoms and reestablishes the Mandate of Heaven, long after the heroes and villains who started the contest have died--some of them of sheer old age.

The historical, or quasi-historical, setting is usually the period of the Three Kingdoms or an undated but equally disorderly period, the Chinese equivalent of Graustark or Ruritania. In the domestically-written Vietnamese stories the period of the Viet-Mongol wars (+XIII) is also very popular. Whatever the stated date, though, the society and technology is almost always early +XV China--the beginning of the Ming dynasty. Initially this may have been naive; this was the time at which the three novels I've sketched were actually written, and a period of conscious archaism. Later it may have been nostalgia; this was the last upflaring of China's greatness, just before the disastrous battle of Huai Lai opened the way for the Manchu conquest which paralyzed the Empire for five centuries.

The hero, of course, is young, hardly beyond childhood. (This allows him to make with little blame the sort of blunders which in an older protagonist would forfeit our sympathy.) Quite often "he" is a heroine, or even plural. There are plenty of Amazon maidens in these stories, since the Chinese get the same sort of Freudian kick from this role-inversion that we do; and since martial prowess is a matter of virtue rather than strength there's no physiological objection to such characters. (They make excellent wives and mothers, considering how little training in homemaking they receive.) The tendency to invincibly numerous characters includes both multiplication of Good Guys and individualization of them to the point where it's hard to select just one as "the" hero. (9)

The resources of these heroes include a variety of magical devices, usually exotic weapons: flying swords, sometimes travelling along beams of light; self-directing or target-seeking arrows and spears; and special weapons like diamond knives or flying discs. (10) Many can ride or fly on their spears or discs, or on the light-beam which guides their flying swords. There's no fixed convention about origin; most heroes are retiring types if not actual hermits and have magical powers in their own right (some are Taoist initiates or Buddhist adepts), but their weapons may be their own handiwork, gifts from someone of superior sanctity or occult power, filched from wicked sorcerers, inherited, or fallen from heaven.

Villains are consistently Chinese VIPs, seconded by evil sorcerers, barbarians, or better yet evil barbarian sorcerers, though except for the subclass of stories about the Viet-Mongol wars (11) barbarian hordes are mostly background threats rather than stage-center Principal Menaces. These evildoers also have magic weapons, commonly discovered by luck in an ancient site, and they often possess tricks for creating gold, cash, or rice with which to attract Undesirable Elements and spectacular powers of deception and illusion to impress and persuade such folk once they're attracted. (It is these people who provide the villain with his large stock of expendable minor baddies.) If the skullduggery has been going on for some time the villain may have already, by the time he appears, gotten his dupes organized into a Sect, or Secret Society as we often call these half-mystical bandit groups. (Historically it is quite accurate to show subversive types organizing Secret Societies in China; and, since we were talking about derivations from Tale of the Three Kingdoms, many trace their origin to the Yellow Turbans, whose rebellion began that

story.)(12) Secret Societies possess all kinds of good stuff like Mountain Strongholds, Underworld Connections, passwords, subtle poisons, spies, disguises, secret fighting arts, and magic spells. Their value to the yu-hsia writer is that they allow the hero to struggle against a large and powerful group which is ethnically Chinese (and therefore a credible Menace), yet isn't the government. (13) The arch-villain himself may be an ambitious private citizen, though he's more likely to be degraded official or an unclassed graduate--that is, one who qualified at the examinations, but never got an appointment. When the Viets are telling the story he may be an official acting with the full knowledge of the Emperor of China, but otherwise if he is an official the Emperor knows nothing and Exposure will be fatal. Bad Guys tend to come in bunches for the same reason heroes do, but it's more likely that one individual will be "the" villain even if only by virtue of his rank. He may or may not be a magician in his own right, but he will have a real adept as either a lieutenant or a puppet-master. Unfrocked Taoists and Buddhists or renegade Confucians are good, but the best Evil Magicians are fox-spirits in human guise and particularly vixen-foxes.

All very well, says the fan historian, but how does this work up to an Oriental fandom? Surely an immensely popular art form isn't consistent with the small body of persecuted connoisseurs we understand as "fandom". Very true, yet yu-hsia tales are connected with a fan group, and a small secretive one at that. The difference is that these weren't the readers of yu-hsia; they were the creators of it. While it's easy to exaggerate the rigidity of classical Confucianism even when one isn't consciously trying to put it down, it is historically true that the drama and the novel were consistently ignored by Chinese critics and historians, and that the reason for this was that they were in the spoken rather than the classical language. (14). Scholars wrote literature and critics and historians discussed literature: literature consisted of compositions in the classical language, period. What was written in the colloquial language was not literature--this was a basic tenet of criticism until the "renaissance movement" began under the Republic in the last half-century. And the scholarly class of Imperial China were neither artsy pseuds nor petulant snobs who could be ignored. Like Mycroft Holmes, they were the government, and understood clearly that since an education according to classical literary standards was their patent of nobility, whatever attacked classic standards attacked them. The official world of learning, accordingly, treated these new literary forms with the greatest contempt. To admit reading novels was shameful; to mention their existence in the course of a serious composition the nadir of bad taste; to quote from one, no doubt, was to invite a thunderbolt from outraged heaven. C.P. Fitzgerald claims that many Chinese scholars now living still remember being well spanked for reading That Trashy Stuff. (Sound familiar?) More, fiction was defined as not only frivolous and licentious, but subversive. In a despotism tempered by inefficiency, that was no charge to play with.

For that matter, who did play with it? Well, as nearly as historians can tell--they've only been working some fifty years, after all--it seems to have been mostly classically educated Confucian scholars. But because of the official, and by no means ineffective, disapproval of novel-writing almost nothing is known of the authors of the most famous Chinese novels, for they wrote under pseudonyms or published their work anonymously. Probably a modest literary detective effort could have produced biographical essays on them once they were safely united with their ancestors; but under the Empire no scholarly criticism and research was devoted to such subjects. (Sure, anonymous publication works fine with the original work or isolated critical studies; but can you imagine a well developed school of anonymous historical-literary criticism?) Five hundred years after the fact it hasn't been possible to establish even the identity of the author of Water Margin definitely, and about all that is known about Shih Nai-an, slightly the more probable of the two principle suspects, is that he may also have written drama under the name Shih Hui. If the alternate possibility is correct and Lo Kuan-chung, the author of the Tale of the Three Kingdoms, is also the author of Water Margin --which would make him the most influential novelist who ever lived--we know a little more: (1) his "real" name was Lo Pan and (2) he was alive in the year 1364, although his age at that time is unknown.

It is also impossible to establish whether the subversive character of some of the best novels was occasioned by the Establishment's hostile attitude or vice-versa. But covert

criticism was certainly built into many novels, including obscene attacks against the Emperor. (15) No doubt it infuriated the classicists even more to realise that this was the pet classical method for making sneaky attacks on the government. Three Kingdoms even uses the classical expression: Yen I, "expansion" or "paraphrase" is the general title for the narrative commentaries on official chronological tables--the form under which classical literature also got in some of its nastiest digs at wrongdoing in high places.

The charm of exploiting a new and officially indecent area of literature with great potentialities and getting under the skin of the Higher Authorities to boot might explain why yu-hsia stories were written, but hardly why they were vastly popular. The fact is, nobody is quite sure. The standard rationale involves such notions as that they fill a psychological need to escape into fantasy--translation, some people like this kind of thing because this is the kind of thing some people like--or, perhaps closer to the truth, that they can be traced to wishful thinking on the part of both writers and readers for the sort of knights-errant who redress wrongs in these stories: dauntless superfathers of inexhaustible resource.

That sort of wish could be excused in any part of China at any time in the past five centuries, so the explanation is plausible even if not sufficient. Yet a wider explanation might be advanced, too; one I think might cover the cases of all stories vaguely similar. Yu-hsia, though a peculiar form, isn't an unparalleled phenomenon, as I tacitly admitted at the very beginning by comparing it to our Westerns. If I had a better familiarity with European popular literature I'd feel more confident about the suggestion (16), but it strikes me that Oriental yu-hsia, American Westerns, and possibly European tales of chivalry (a catchall category, I'm afraid, covering everything between the breakup of Charlemagne's empire and the Wars of Religion) have a common theme, even though a vague one. All of them involve periods of lawlessness, but diffuse lawlessness, as it were; private-enterprise predators and not faceless terror machines like the Nazi Reich or Communist Empire. Further, these predators are recognised as lawless, which is to say that there is an agreed-on standard for judgement to which even criminals subscribe; the greedy, dissolute, or vengeful commit outrages because they want to rob, rape, or murder and think they have the power to get away with it, not because they have a different life-style which justifies expropriation, love, and liquidation. And--a corollary of the last, but a most critical point--there is a resistance to the lawless which is quiescent but ready to be awakened: a warning to the Emperor, a theft of the secret talisman, a knockout over some activist bullyboy in a crowded market, can start the collapse of the enemy's power--reveal his plots, expose his weakness, rally his resentful foes.

Thus it doesn't rest on the hero, even when he's a plural one, to set all wrongs right single handed. Let that be the significance of the story and it's less fantastic to think of it possessing appeal because of identification with the hero, for on such terms one exceptional individual (and we all qualify there) has a chance against the most formidable antagonist. Quentin Durward in his travelling clothes can knock over a knight in full armor and the Lone Ranger can always get Dirty Bill in the hand rather than through the head. And a Vietnamese youth with a bamboo--er, a good broadsword can hold Bach-Dang pier against all the uncouth hordes of Ghengis Khan. As long as they come one at a time, that is.

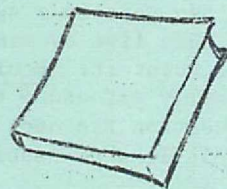
NOTES

- (1) This one is untranslatable; the title is composed of the names of the three heroines
- (2) It was this lineage which, much later--middle + XVIII--contributed the fourth of the great Chinese novels, The Dream of the Red Chamber (Hung Lou Meng). (3) The corresponding Chinese euphemisms are "heroes of the green woods" or "mountain lords of benevolence"; Sung Chiang's band describes robbing the rich and aiding the poor as "practising the Way on behalf of Heaven". (4) "Water-margin Mountain" --it's surrounded by marshes. (5) Lo Kuan-chung strikes a blow for Righteousness, Confucian style, by making Shamans give wildly wrong predictions, while those who--as they ought--consult the classical Book of Changes (I Ching) get correct forecasts. (6) This is Mahayanist--in fact, Amidist--Buddhism, naturally. The other major division of Buddhism, the Theravada, is revolted by this shtick of treating Illumination like a post-medicinal lollipop. (7) This is why I called the English translation very wrong in chopping off the story before the hero's deaths; it denies them their redemption. (8) Apparently there isn't any Chinese expression for a military dictator this being an unconsti-

tutional post. Historical ones like Wang Mang (9) are regarded as unpersons. (9) In fact, a part of the immense popularity of Tale of the Three Kingdoms and Water Margin is just because there are so many well-realized minor characters that later writers couldn't resist picking them up and making them central figures in other stories. I've mentioned how an entire class of Chinese novels, the domestic ones, was generated by applying this process to part of Water Margin and J.J.Y. Liu has hunted down over fifty known plays and dramatic romances based on this novel. (10) Of course they weren't our flying discs-UFOs, that is-but a sort of flattened ball lightning. (11) Which are popular in Viet Nam only, needless to say. (12) The first of the Secret Societies-a genuine phenomena in Chinese culture, whatever Sax Rohmer may have made you think-was the Red Eyebrow Sect, which arose after Wang Mang's usurpation in 25. The Yellow Turbans (184) were much more successful, but the tradition can be traced right down to the Boxers (1900) and the Heavenly Gates (1930). To say nothing of the Si Fan. All had the common themes of miraculous cures by which the founder recruited adherents. (13) If it were the government, either the Emperor would be an evildoer or the hero a rebel, and neither of these situations is acceptable. According to the Code government troops can only be treated as the Enemy if the chief Bad Guy is an evil official who has either misled Higher Authority into trusting him or just hasn't been caught yet. (14) This amounts to more than the distinction between written and spoken rhythm with which we're familiar in English. Unlike alphabetic script ideographs give no hint as to the sound of the words they stand for, and are learned by meaning-and the classical texts' meaning has been preserved for better than two thousand years. A scholar can read them, but if somebody pronounces the sounds the result is gibberish. (15) The reason this grotched them was not that many Emperors didn't deserve it, but because of the Confucian attitude-that the sacred office should be respected. (16) My impression is that octogony corresponding to Westerns is, in Europe, translated or imitated Westerns. If only the magic-cum-chivalry tales of the Gothic/Romantic period had struck deeper root they would provide excellent parallel to yu-hsia stories; change a few names and The Castle of Otranto, say, could be translated as it is, right down to the perfectly Confucian manifestation of Divine Vengeance, the extinction of the clan. However...now I think of it, I wonder what word rates they offer in Cholon...?

---Richard H. Eney

NIBBLINGS



Vision of Tomorrow: No 4: Obtainable from Ronald E. Graham (Publishers) Pty. Ltd. 25 Nicholas Buildings, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, England, 5/-. Editor: Philip Harbottle. The novelette this issue is TROJAN HORSE by E.C. Tubb in which the author explores the world in which man is free from the censor that governs his impulse to action has been lost. A neat idea whether you quibble with the philosophy behind it or not. There is a good selection of short stories: a highly amusing one from Jack Wodhams takes pride of place, his protagonist is an SF author in an unusual predicament--he begins to "smell". In the course of this Wodhams' manages to insult every SF author in sight! Sydney Bounds has a new slant on transplants; Chris Priest has a real horror story on space-mites; Eric Harris gives a fascinating tale of the Queensland outback and a time-slip; Philip High has a disturbing picture of what could go wrong in the treatment of a maniac depressive; Harold G. Nye has the tv set take over us; and Peter Cave gives a new twist to the robot theme. Among the articles high praise must be given to the continuation of Walter Gillings story of the early days of SF in this country; and particular commendation to the high quality of John Foyster's book reviews.

Vision of Tomorrow: No 5: I like the Quinn cover on this; but the artwork has been improving each issue. William F. Temple has the lead novelette with LIFE OF THE PARTY which introduces a "jet set" who find themselves in an artificial world where their ideas of happiness are made concrete--with chilling results. Again a generous amount of short stories, seven in fact. Douglas Mason has DINNER OF HERBS--another robot story, less believable than last issues. Philip High again with TECHNICAL WIZARD--the human of the future through alien eyes. Dan Morgan has fun with FLANAGAN'S LAW on a litigant-minded planet. Sydney Bounds in ONE OF THE FAMILY tells the rather sad story of a biologically adapted human. Jack Wodham again has the most entertaining tale (but maybe I think so because I like to be amused, and get a little tired of horror stories); this time he considers the state of affairs as seen by a child, of the effect of longevity on the family. INCUBATION by Damien Broderick is the kind of disaster story to which Wodham is such a good antidote. I suppose it is a reaction to the "Good Guys always win in the end" theme that so many of today's SF stories have a downbeat ending..but this can get monotonous too. In the last story AFTER RAGNAROK Robert Bowden takes an ancient story and works it into the fabric of the future.

ACE RELEASES:

06530/75¢. THE BLACK CORRIDOR by Michael Moorcock. Ace Special. This is the story of a spaceship carrying thirteen people, twelve of whom are in suspended animation whilst the thirteenth, Ryan, looks after them. They are fleeing from Earth where witch-hunts for 'aliens' has grown into ever-narrowing circles. As Ryan thinks and dreams the reader realises that paranoid fear can be the most stubborn of things for humans to lose. A fine example of extrapolating from a trend of today.

51401/60¢. THE MAD KING by Edgar Rice Burroughs. SF Classic series. A must for the Burroughs' collector; and also for those who like "swordplay and intrigue, a beautiful princess, a courageous American hero, a throne in danger..derring-do and narrow escapes."

71065/60¢. THE REBEL OF RHADA by Robert Cham Gilman. This one postulates a future in which there is a strange blend of feudal culture with the use of spaceships, an interesting mixture.

72781/75¢. RITE OF PASSAGE by Alexei Panshin. This one won the Nebula award and is, I think, the best thing this author has done. It is told by Mia and describes her life in the Ship and how she endured the period of Trial when she is left on a planet for a month among a hostile colony. Her Ship is a small, closed community and it is described with skill. The rules and laws she must live by make engrossing reading. One of the virtues of the book is that one can argue about it. Would the people of the Ship vote to destroy a whole world? Has the author really got under the skin of an adolescent girl? I will confess that my answer to the second question had been --no; but that on re-reading I am not so sure! Yes, it is a book that that I felt like re-reading.

42900/75¢. TOWER OF MEDUSA by Lin Carter and KAR KABALLA by George O. Smith. Ace Double. Two adventure-type SF stories. I doubt that I am the best judge of them, these stories are more oriented towards a male reader. Carter's story has Kirin of Tellus as a hero, a jewel thief who faces many dangers in a well-paced story. Kar Kaballa is the Ghengis Khan of this story who faces the hero Dylan to whom help comes from a Major Churchward handily bringing a Gatling gun with him. Both are full of action.

Powell SCI-FI.

PPI81/95¢. TWO DOZEN DRAGON EGGS by Donald A. Wollheim. This has a particularly attractive cover. It contains 24 short stories and is introduced by F.J. Akerman. The author tells us that these stories were not written so much for publication as to rid his mind of an idea and give him peace. Consequently it is impossible to categorise these stories--they range very wide in subject matter. They are bound to interest SF readers for each has a nub. Are the things we see really what they seem starts the ball rolling. An anti-gravity story; a battle of atmospheres; and Santa in a flying saucer are a few of the ideas that come dancing out of these eggs. There is one really horrific egg called GIVE HER HELL; I'd as soon as forget reading; but all the others I found ingenious and enjoyable.

Dobson Science Fiction Books

THE TIME MERCENARIES by Philip E. High. 18s. Picture a world where man, afraid of greater and

greater wars, has deleted the aggressive tendency from his heredity..Now race him with a ruthless, alien enemy..against whom he cannot fight back! Solution here is to bring back the battle-trained crew of the submarine EUPHRATES. Main interest is in the impact of the crew upon a society which views them with repugnance.

THE WORLD OF NULL-A by A.E.Van Vogt.30s.Although this is an SF classic which came out in 1945, this is the first time it has been published in this country. A new generation of readers should enjoy this very much; I cannot detect anything particularly old-fashioned about it. The idea that the use of Null-A training can produce a superman is no more far-fetched than the idea that psi can do so. There is as much adventure and fast action as one could wish for; this was always a hallmark of Van Vogt's stories. No SF collection complete without it!

LET THE SPACEMEN BEWARE! by Poul Anderson.18s.An odd book, which succeeded in surprising me. There are three main characters..Tolteca and Raven from the spaceship sent to set up a re-fueling station on the planet Gwydian..and Elfavy whom both men grow to love. There is interest in the relationship between these three; the reader soon becomes involved in their situation. Even greater interest is aroused in the mystery that hangs over this planet and its people; a mystery that spells danger to the spacemen. Three of four times I was sure I had guessed the answer--but I had not reckoned on the author's ruthless determination to follow his theme to a logical conclusion. There are plenty of clues really; but I had not believed them. I cannot say more without spoiling the ending but this one will leave you shaken.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF.16:Edited by John Carnell.21s. 6 stories.GETAWAY FROM GETAWAY by Colin Kapp is one for the men..an engineering puzzle story with which I quickly became bored. ALL DONE BY MIRRORS by Douglas Mason has more appeal containing, as it does, more characterisation even so, they are all rather too black and white for me. The central notion though, of a 3-D image which can be duplicated, is intriguing. THROWBACK by Sydney Bounds was the one I enjoyed most--having a future of telepathy with no need for written or oral communication..and the one man who was a freak in this society. THE PERIHELION MAN by Christopher Priest explores the idea of a man's unusual ability to stand heat.R26/5/PSY AND I by Michael G. Coney also explores an idea..growing agoraphobia in big city complexes and an unusual cure for it. This one seemed the most relevant for today! MEATBALL by James White has another problem for Dr Conway of Sector General which requires all his ingenuity. A good batch this..something for everyone.

Rapp & Whiting Science Fiction Books

ORBIT.4.28s.Edited by Damon Knight. Billed as the best new SF of the year. This collection holds 9 stories.WINDSONG by Kate Wilhelm involves you with Dan who is working on a new war device. The reader understands more than Dan, what a dreadful part he plays in it all. A grisly story, compellingly told. PROBABLE CAUSE by Charles Harness takes the unusual scene of the inside of the US Supreme Court. Quite fascinating to watch the Judges debate the use of psi as evidence: very realistic dialogue and believable characters. This was my favourite story. SHATTERED LIKE A GLASS GOBLIN by Harlan Ellison describing a drug scene that makes riveting if horrible reading. THIS CORRUPTIBLE by Jacob Transue has the invention of a duplicate body at the heart of it--and the question can a villain be turned into an honest man in the process as the suspense of it. ANIMAL by Carol Emshwiller has Knight introducing it by saying that her stories have an "enigmatic simplicity". My reaction, I fear, being that I can't be bothered to guess what she means. PASSENGERS by Robert Silverberg makes his meaning very clear..a nice idea of hell in anyone's nightmare! GRIMM'S STORY by Vernor Vinge is a bit of a relief after that; a fantasy tale. James Sallis finishes the volume with A FEW LAST WORDS. A slice out of a quiet kind of nightmare would best describe it, I think.

LIGHT A LAST CANDLE.by Vincent King.28s. A most unusual story that keeps twisting right to the very end. The protagonist tells the story and is never addressed as other than "Ice Lover" He is a Free man, a Normal man, and he lives in a world of Modified men and Aliens. From the beginning he is fighting for his freedom. What distinguishes this book is the feeling for all kinds of people--whether Modified or not. One's sympathies swing as the author shows you yet another point of view. Rich in imagination, good in characterisation--this is the very best type of SF---thought-provoking!

