vector

vector 61

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Vector 61, September-October 1972

Vector is the official journal of the British Science Fiction Association Ltd. (Chairman: John Brunner)

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Vector costs 30p. In the U.K. it is only available on a regular basis to members of the B.S.F.A. (annual subscription £1.50)

Rates elsewhere are:

U.S.A. & Canada: single copy 60¢
10 issues $5.50

Australia: single copy 60¢
10 issues $A5.50

(Australian agent: Bruce Gillespie
PO Box 5195AA
Melbourne
Victoria 3001
Australia)

Necessary moral support during the production of this issue came mostly from Neil Young, the Family, and, of course, from Christine Edwards.

lead-in

In Peter Roberts' Convention report last issue, he referred in passing to the auction saying, "A mass of fanzines were to be sold, part of the BSFA collection which had been rotting away unseen for many years (despite the gallant efforts of Charlie Winstone)". This brought a swift and rather heated reply from BSFA Vice-Chairman Keith Freeman, who had interpreted what Peter said as a direct attack on the BSFA. I'll quote part of Keith's letter:

"When I took over the Vice Chairmanship there were many aspects of the BSFA that I knew little of...in a handout written just previous to my taking over you'll see no mention of the BSFA FF.

"On the 29th Nov I received a letter from Archie Mercer with part of a letter from Mike Meara:

> 'I was interested to hear Peter Weston say...at Novacon that the BSFA fanzine foundation was in a bad way, or words to that effect.'

"Archie's letter also said that the FF was last heard of c/o Charlie Winstone and needed something doing about it. The same day I wrote to Mike and offered him custodianship of the FF — giving him Charlie Winstone's last (known to me) address.

"I got a letter back from Mike on the 4th Dec and the next day I wrote to Charlie Winstone. Nothing more heard of that...

"Either before the Easteroon (though I can find nothing in a quick glance through the files) or certainly at the Con another name cropped up as the current holder of the FF. Mike Meara was found and told this and arranged to go over and collect the fanzines. This name escapes me at the moment so I'll call him 'John' as I think that's correct.

"I was dragged out of a meeting (or bar — I can't remember which) to be told that they were auctioning off the FF. I went to the auction where I found that the true state of affairs was that Peter Weston recognised the fanzines being got ready as being the FF. I inspected a sample of these fnz but could find no indication on them that they were from the FF (e.g. all books and magazines in the BSFA libraries and magazine chain have stickers and/or overprinting "BSFA" on them). Nevertheless "John" was found. He admitted that he'd got a lot of fanzines from Charlie Winstone (who'd apparently said he'd written to everybody in the BSFA Council but never had a reply) but stated that the fanzines being auctioned were not from the FF but were second, third and even fourth copies. In every case, he said, he'd kept the best copy -- or best two copies in the case of rare issues.

"Mike, it was agreed, would still go over and collect the FF from 'John'. With this agreed I could do no more —

it was Peter Weston's word against 'John''s.

"On the 7th June I had a letter from Mike. He is now convinced that the FF was auctioned off at Chester, BUT HASN'T TRIED TO SEE 'JOHN'. He also sent me the text of an editorial he's going to publish which is faintly libellous — that however is of no concern here.

"Can you see why Peter Roberts' words '(despite the gallant efforts of Charlie Winstone)' made my blood curdle?"

So far, so confused. It seems impossible to say with absolute certainty at this juncture just what has occurred, and if the BSFA does still have a fanzine collection. In an attempt to clarify the position somewhat I'd like to quote two of the other principals in the affair, Mike Meara and Pete Weston.

Firstly, an excerpt from the aforementioned Mike Meara editorial (this was to have been a News Department item; I've moved it here as it seems more relevant): "The Fanzine Foundation is dead. It died at Chester during the Easter week-end, and the various parts of its dismembered body have been carried off to various parts of the fannish world, even to America. There seems to be some confusion as to how this was allowed to happen, but it seems to me that a combination of reluctance to intervene by the BSFA officials in a position to do something about it, together with a connivance by certain people — I don't intend to name names; the guilty ones know who they are — to hide the true source of the material, was the main cause." Mike goes on to wash his hands of any future involvement with the FF.

Perhaps the most revealing comments come from Pete Weston's editorial in the 1972-73 issue of Speculation. Pete describes how Rog Peyton, Peter Roberts and himself discovered these very rare items among boxes of fanzines which were to be sold unsorted as job lots, and how he recognised them as the Fanzine Foundation, which he had helped transport from Liverpool to Birmingham some years ago. He continues: "In 1970/71 or thereabouts a Northern fan by name John Muir acquired the FF from Charlie (Winstone) seemingly without the authority or consent of the BSFA who indeed had until very recently completely 'lost' the collection.

"Here the story degenerates from fable into hearsay. When I protested to the BSFA Chairman (Pete means Vice-Chairman) at Chester that the fanzines about to be auctioned appeared to belong to the BSFA, at least in my opinion, he evidently confronted John Muir who 'explained' that these were only duplicates and/or part of his own collection which had been sold to him by Charlie Winstone.

"That's all right then — or is it? Doesn't it sound pretty thin to you? I mean, Charlie as a 1963-fan, like me, never built up much of a collection himself and so I can't see how he could pass on many 1940's fanzines to John Muir. Things like Acolyte, Sanceways, Le Zombie, early post-war Ken Slater Fantasts, and a complete run of Hyphen just don't grow on trees.

"But the salient point is that the BSFA believed John Muir, and so instructed me to proceed with the auction....Here is the joker, however. After the Con I heard by word-of-mouth (which may be incorrect, don't forget) that John Muir had not donated his (?) fanzines to CHESSMANCON after all. Oh no. He had offered them for auction on the understanding that the Concomm kept 15% of the proceeds, the rest going to him. Now this is a statement which I have been unable to check; but if true, it makes me wish that I had given the things away!"

Now all of this raises a good many questions, and answers very few of them. I make no apology for taking up rather a lot of space with these accounts of the affair: I'm sure many other BSFA members must be as concerned as I am that one of its most valuable possessions can be so easily lost — or, perhaps worse, that nobody knows enough about it to say for sure whether it has been lost or not. This may not be the fault of the current Council members — and in any case I'm not bothered about trying to lay the blame at anyone's door in particular — but I think it does display lamentable negligence somewhere along the line.

What can be done? Well, Archie Mercer commented that the BSFA hadn't yet written-off the FF, but it would be nice to know what action, if any, is being taken to recover it, or find it. Obviously there are basic facts to be established. Do either Charlie Winstone or John Muir have major items of the FF in their possession. John Muir is said to have claimed to have had in his possession one or two copies of all the valuable items sold at Chester. Does he? Where did the fanzines sold at Chester come from, if not from the FF, and where did the proceeds of the auction go?

Continued on p.14

James Blish

the arts in science fiction

I was asked to discuss the arts in science fiction. I was a bit puzzled at first as to whether or not I was here confronted with a non-subject — this, of course, partly because I was raised in the pulp era, when the only arts we were interested in were those of constructing one cliff-hanger after another, and if possible keeping the story moving by dialogue rather than anything else, because we had no faith in the reader's ability to follow more than three sentences of description. But this, of course, is not a question of art at all; it is simply a question of minor technique. Actually the subject has several sub-divisions: one of them being the role of the arts in sf proper; then the effects of the arts on sf; and finally — though this may really be a non-subject in truth! — the influence of sf on the arts.

The fact of the matter is that until very recently few of the arts were mentioned in sf, and certainly not in commercial sf. It's quite commonplace in mainstream fiction to find references to painting, to other people's writing, to music, and so on; in sf there is a tremendous dearth of this, with one exception (and probably not really to Kingsley Amis's surprise) — there has been quite a lot of writing about jazz in sf. And it's still going on: I've just received the most recent issue of F&SF, one devoted to sf in the universities, which contains a rather extended comparison between jazz and sf by Philip Klass (who you probably know as the author who writes under the name of William Tenn). Kingsley Amis made a similar comparison in New Maps of Hell; and in a number of different stories Theodore Sturgeon has described, or attempted to describe, the effects of jazz.

But when you try to survey the field as a whole since, say, 1926 (when magazine sf began) you really find very little reference to the arts at all, and when you do something very curious crops up — you find that the artistic tastes of the future are decidedly worse than our own. I realise this sounds like a vast hyperbole, but when you read some of these descriptions it's astonishing how stomach-turning they are. One of my favourite examples of this is, in fact, a Sturgeon novel called Venus Plus X (which I hope most of you have read): a thoroughly experimental novel, done in a series of slices, or alternate takes. The alternate slices are pictures of contemporary suburban family life in the United States, each of them designed to show the blurring of the traditional roles of the sexes in modern America. We have now seen that taking on a rather revolutionary colour, but at the time

this novel was written it was more or less subterranean, and Ted was very interested in it. In between these slices are pictures of what appears to be a utopia, far in the future. The secret of this utopia is that all of its inhabitants are hermaphrodites: the blurring of the sexes has gone all the way down to the physical level, with everybody both male and female at the same time, and playing both roles. I didn't think it came off, but that's neither here nor there for the purposes of my present discussion. What is interesting, it seems to me, is that in describing his utopia Sturgeon also took some pains to describe what its artistic life was like, and it consisted of gauzily-clad children doing folk dances, statues in the quasi-heroic, or late-Mussolini, style, buildings apparently designed on the same order (except that these were only public buildings; everybody else appeared to live in huts of some kind, out in the forest, cracking nuts and making pottery — I couldn't quite figure out if they had re-invented the potter's wheel or not). The whole thing had a rather dated quality to me, as the kinds of art Sturgeon was pushing in this ostensibly future utopia were the kinds of thing that the American group called the Southern Agrarians had been pushing back in about 1925 — surely quite unsuitable unless Sturgeon was trying to tell us that things had backslid a great deal by the time his utopia came up; and I'm sad to say I don't think that's what he meant. The gimmick of the novel is that the utopia is also in the present: it's just geographically isolated from the rest of the world, and these hermaphrodites have been created by surgery; so perhaps it isn't at all surprising that their artistic taste doesn't appear as advanced as that of Utopia ought to be. Now bear in mind that I'm not prepared to say what the artistic taste of a utopia ought to be like, but I do not think I would like it very much if it turned out to be either Southern Agrarian or Socialist Realism, and this peculiar combination is what Sturgeon gave us in this novel.

This is not an unusual sort of blind spot in sf. You find it in Heinlein. Stranger in a Strange Land will do very nicely as an example. Among the many other theories that are included — or advanced as fact — in Stranger in a Strange Land is a considerable swatch of the static theory. And Heinlein, in the course of telling you what he prefers through the omniscient Jubal Harshaw, makes it very plain that for Heinlein the absolute epitome of any art-form is the narrative, or storytelling, art. This means that he has no use for the abstract, not only in fiction and poetry, but also in music and painting. He likes paintings which tell a story; he likes statues which tell a story. As a matter of fact, Rodin's "Fallen Caryatid" is his typo-case of the perfect work of art. The poor girl, you will recall, has been trying to hold up the corner of a Greek building for two thousand years, and finally it has been too much for her, and she has fallen down. But she is bearing up bravely and trying to push that corner of the building up again. This, to Heinlein, is a perfect piece of storytelling, and just exactly what he likes to see in the graphic arts. Similarly when he treats of music you will find that all the music Heinlein discusses, in this and other books, is programme music. He doesn't know very much about that either. Nevertheless, a general bias is for narrative; no other kind of art appears to exist for him.

He goes on, in discussing the graphic artists, to repeat the old canard that abstract artists paint the way they do because they never learned to draw. A little knowledge — a very little bit of knowledge — of the early histories of some abstract painters, including some of the most famous — Picasso in particular — would have showed him that they began by being very good draughtsmen indeed, and only those who we speak of as Primitives, or whatever, became abstract artists without having a good deal of preliminary training or skill in this field. This has often made me wonder if Heinlein would carry this analogy over into music and say that composers of, let us say, string quartets or piano sonatas or things of that kind became such because they couldn't plot a piece of music? Or perhaps, even worse, couldn't carry a tune? In any case, the bias is there, and it is very strong.

Again, this is not limited to Heinlein. I have an example here — from a good many years back, but things haven't changed at all in the interim — a story called "The Face of The Enemy" by Thomas Wilson, which appeared in Astounding SF in August 1952. It takes place on an alien planet, and in the course of it the hero discovers an extended musical composition written by the aborigines. The account in the story makes it very

clear that this too is programme music; as a matter of fact it appears to be a historical composition describing how one tribe triumphed over another and how beautiful towers rose thereafter. All this comes very clearly to the hero's mind, despite the fact that even the most sophisticated Terrestrial music lover, encountering a piece of Terrestrial programme music for the first time, will be damned lucky if he can tell you whether it describes a battle or a love affair! I have seen this experiment performed with a Richard Strauss composition, and to a fresh audience which had never encountered it before and knew nothing about its reputation, a good half of the listeners didn't even detect that it was intended as comic, let alone what the incidents were that were supposed to be going on in it. So how our hero, listening to a piece of musical composition whose artistic conventions are utterly and completely alien to him, can worry a piece of elaborate tribal history out of this thing is a mystery to me. I'm sure it was a mystery to Wilson too. This is a kind of attention, or non-attention, to the arts that we have had to become accustomed to until very recently.

There are some honourable exceptions here. Among others I would mention Jack Vance, who is apparently an instinctive anthropologist with an instinctive aesthetic sense. He never fails to describe an alien culture and make you feel that it is alien, and to invent two or three art-forms — not just try to transform Earthly ones — and do so with great colour, elan and flair. It is a pleasure to read even a bad Vance story -- of which there are not very many — simply because of the intricacy and flamboyance and consistency of the way in which he invents art-forms. I'll mention one example: a story called "The Moon Moth", in which the art was mask-making, and the masks were worn as a matter of social convention: what mask you wore presented you to your society as the kind of person you wanted to be taken as. If you wore the wrong kind of mask, or if you behaved in a way which was inconsistent with the mask you were wearing, you might very well find yourself involved in a duel, or dumped in the river, or asked to do something for which you had no training whatsoever. The masks themselves are elaborately described, and although I am no anthropologist myself — and no artist either, I should add — I have never seen any description of Earthly masks, in any culture, that bore the faintest resemblance to the masks that Jack Vance devised and described in this story; they were simply a marvellous invention. The one sf story that John Ciardi ever wrote to my knowledge had to do with an art vaguely related to jade feeling, which, as some of you may know, is a Chinese art totally devoted to the sense of touch. Jade pieces are carved, dipped in water to make them slick, and the aesthetic pleasure comes from feeling the delicacy of the contours. In the Ciardi story this had become a high art on another planet, and involved not only jade but all other kinds of objects: where we have pictures, music and so on they had these things. The one in the story turned out not to be a work of art at all, but a snare, a hypnotic device for trapping one's prey. But this came as a surprise in the story, and its beauty for me lay not in the snapper but in the fact that Ciardi here built up a whole artform, only slightly connected to Chinese jade feeling, and really made you feel that it had an immense history behind it and was the product of a whole culture.

The inventions of new art-forms for the future on our own planet have been equally few and far between. I suppose the most familiar example is George Orwell's invention of novel-writing machines. Plainly, Orwell didn't know how they would work; nor did he care. The heroine of the story, you may recall, first appeared with her arm in a sling, because she had been tending one of these machines and a lever, or something of that kind, had come loose and swung around and had broken her arm. I know there are a few computer technologists reading this who would know better than to expect a novel-writing machine to have a swinging axle, or anything of that kind! Really, Orwell didn't care. But there is a good possibility that novels could be written by machines. There has already been a certain amount of computer-generated poetry, some of which makes a certain minimal amount of sense. I was a little surprised that Orwell did not instead have music-writing machines, because at the time that he was composing 1984 music was being written by machines — and I'm not talking about computers, either. During World War II there suddenly appeared on the American market a slide-rule-like

device with four wheels on it. It was made of pasteboard and operated by hand, and enabled anybody who could read one stave of music — just a simple melody, in other words — to compose an indefinite number of popular songs. I understand (from the not-always-reliable "Time" magazine) that a great number of these things were sold, and one grateful customer wrote in to "Time" some weeks later and said, on the recommendation of your story I bought one of these machines and, by God, I've sold the first song I wrote on it! It is much more likely, in other words, that music could be composed by machine than a novel or a poem. But I suppose that will eventually be done. I've been reading novels lately which look as if they've been written on such machines.

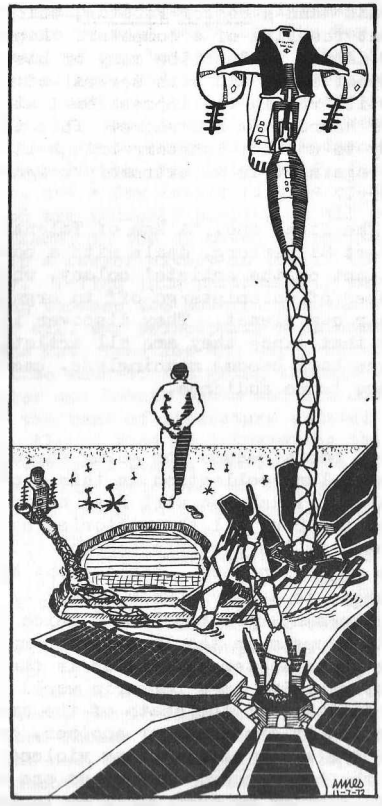
So, as I say, there are a few notable exceptions; but in general the arts of the future, as they are depicted in sf, very much resemble the terrestrial arts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They are what I might term very generally late-Romantic narrative — the Holman Hunt/Richard Strauss type of thing. Occasionally you may hear of, for instance, performed symphonies, but although something like that is sometimes mentioned casually, little attention is generally paid to it. I once became interested enough in this to try to make a collection of stories about the future of the arts, a book called New Dreams This Morning. It has never been published in England and, as a matter of fact, died an absolutely horrible death in the United States, due partly to the fact that the printer, instead of putting the blurbs in italics at the head of each story, tailed them on to the preceding story — which made the volume, to say the least, rather more puzzling than it would have been otherwise. It made a rather slim haul anyway; as a matter of fact I was forced to include two of my own stories — which I did not do with any great reluctance, I will add! — because it was so hard to find anything in science fiction that dealt with the arts in a responsible way and showed any real knowledge of them.

The arts involved are themselves interesting. There was an Asimov story about the art of dream-composition, which is, I think, quite a feasible sort of art. We have had stories about recorded dreams which go all the way back to Fletcher Pratt's "City of the Living Dead" in 1928 — in which everybody got trapped in the Hall of the Dreamers, and the lazy attendants even stopped changing the records, so that they were all dreaming the same dreams over and over again. The Asimov story, "Dreaming is a Private Thing", is not simply about the recording of dreams, but about the composition of them. This has become a creative art-form in itself. It's quite a good piece and I recommend it. It was first available in one or other of Mr Asimov's 150 books. It turns out to be not only about this particular technological innovation, but to contain quite a good credo for the arts as a whole, and for the essential loneliness and privacy of the creative act. Isaac just used his invention as a vehicle to make his point.

There was a story of my own about music, which you may have encountered, called "A Work of Art". I included the hit machine and a great many other gadgets that I actually borrowed from my own time, just like Jules Verne. The story did not contain any innovations or inventions of my own in the art of music: they were all things I knew about that were going on at the time the story was written. In fact, the only innovation the story actually contains in this department is a workable musical typewriter. People have been struggling to evolve one of these things for years now, and as far as I know one still doesn't exist; but you must admit that is a pretty minor innovation. One element of the story that seemed most radical was the composition of musical soundtracks by drawing on the soundtrack beside the film. No instrumentalists are involved; no musical notes are actually written down; but the man who does this has become a sufficiently superb sound technician that he can make sound waves on the film, and make the end result come out sounding just as he wants it to sound. I don't know that this has been perfected either; but at the time I was writing the story somebody was experimenting with this and producing a certain amount of (no doubt primitive) noise. Again, what I was discussing was not innovation in the art-form itself, but the whole nature of the creative process. The art-form which is, as it turns out, more central to the story, is one of which I am rather proud. I don't recall seeing it proposed anywhere else before. This is the creation, for aesthetic purposes, of artificial personalities. You take a perfectly ordinary man, who may or may not be a volunteer for the experiment, and a pack of psychologists and electroencephalographists and so on descend on him and resculpture him into a new human being. He has a complete set of memories — all of them false; but nevertheless he believes them to be true — and the climax of this art-form is the exhibition of this artificially-sculpted person to an audience, putting him through his paces. In the story it is a dead composer who is brought back to life, as it were.

There was also a story by Harry Harrison which I took great pleasure in including, partly out of iconoclasm. The art-form involved is the comic strip; it is simply the story of an elderly comic strip artist who is eventually eliminated by a machine. He is working in partnership with a machine to begin with, and a new machine appears which eliminates him entirely. The story, however, despite the apparent triviality of its subject, is not comic. The man feels his replacement very deeply; and the fact that the art involved is minor, and of no consequence, is one of things which, I think, makes the story as poignant as it is.

I think you will all remember "The Country of the Kind" by Damon Knight, which makes the very radical proposal that if you eliminate violence in the human heart — the very impulse to violence: not as in A Clockwork Orange, where you simply condition the man to be repelled by it — then the creative spirit will go with it: a highly debatable proposition, but one which I thought Damon put forward with great persuasiveness. The only artist left in the world in this story is an artist who has committed a murder and has been made intolerable to his fellows by having a bad smell. He is entitled to approach anybody, do any violence he likes; they will not fight back. But his agony is not that people will not associate with him; it is that he is the only remaining creative man in the world. He keeps putting little statues in niches for people to find and leaving messages saying: if you understand this, pick up a stone and strike, pick up a knife and stab. It's easy: try it. And nobody will listen to him, nobody will pay the slightest attention because, Damon proposes, violence and the artistic impulse are two sides of the same coin. It's a horrifying thought.



Then there was "With These Hands", a too-little-known story by the late C.M. Kornbluth. This is also a story of the replacement of the artist by the machine. In this case the artist is the sculptor, and the import of the story is almost the same as the Harrison piece, although the art-form is of more importance. It is also an extremely poignant story, with the man preferring death among works of art formed by real human hands to a very lucrative position he has been offered operating a sculpture machine. "The Music Master of Babylon" by Edgar Pangborn is one of the very few knowledgeable sf stories about music I have ever encountered. The hero is a composer and, by God, Pangborn makes you believe in the man's ability as a composer, and even in his compositions. These are described at some length, and sound like real pieces of music. I

have only seen that done once before, in Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus, which is about the life of a composer. Mann has the daring to describe many of his major compositions, and with several of them I still retain the impression that I have heard them somewhere. This is not easy to do, but Pangborn brings it off, and again it is an extremely poignant story.

The final one, "A Man of Talent" by Robert Silverberg, deals with a possible variant on the artists' colony, where a number of colonists go off to organise their own planet. They discover in the end that since they are all artists their lives have become meaningless, because there is no audience.

Now I had a reason for going through this rather long collection in this much detail. I think you will have noticed that the one thing all these stories have in common is the disappearance of art in one way or another. Replacement by the machine is a very common theme; replacement by barbarism — which is what happens in the Pangborn story: the Music Master of Babylon is the last musician in a barbaric world — is another; or the death of the artistic impulse by one means or another, such as Damon's story of educating violence out of the human race. And these are all good stories — even mine! — in that they are all knowledgeable about the arts they are discussing. They are uniformly pessimistic (probably another reason why the volume failed). I couldn't find anywhere in the vast mass of sf that I have read since 1931 — which is when I started — any story which was truly knowledgeable about an art-form and dealt with its future which was not pessimistic. And I began to wonder why this was. I think there are two reasons: they are very disparate and probably have no connection with each other whatsoever.

One of them is Marxist. It is — or was — a commonplace of idealistic Marxism that art was essentially an aberration of the socially maladjusted individual who was seeking in art the ideals and the satisfactions which he could not find in the society that was grinding him down; and that when Utopia did arrive, the impulses which art satisfies for us now would be satisfied in reality by perfect social conditions, and that art would therefore no longer serve even a psychological purpose. Of all the contributors to New Dreams This Morning (I do not know all of them personally, but do know most of them) I know of only one who had any real contact with idealistic Marxism, that being Kornbluth, who soon repudiated it. Nevertheless, this threat of the disappearance of art with the coming of Utopia — or at best the mechanization of art — is very, very common in sf even today — so common that it is hard to find any other kind of story about the future of the arts.

As I said, I think there is a second reason. Every period, with few exceptions, believes it is on the edge of artistic anarchy. The one major exception I can think of was during the heart of the eighteenth century — the old age of Haydn and the whole life of Mozart. Musical norms then were so settled that nobody really felt there was any sort of revolution going on. Everybody understood the music that was being produced; nobody was upset by it. I call your attention to the fact that these very conservative composers, who we now know as belonging to the Classical Age, were revolutionaries in their time. They really upset the Baroque composers who preceded them — such as Bach and Telemann, who were the last of their line in the Baroque school. The Romantics were certainly arch-revolutionaries to the Classic composers — Beethoven's music was regarded as a vast mass of cacophony by his contemporaries.

I am no expert on painting, but speaking from my position of vast ignorance it seems to me that painting and the graphic arts have reached a point where anybody who thinks he sees any meaning in them is a faker — and I deliberately take this philistine position to emphasise my point. This is a very common feeling in all the arts. Music — about which I do pretend to know something — has gotten so far away from the concert hall audience that the composers who consider themselves modern have to organise themselves into societies and play to each other. They are not drawing the audience any more: the last truly modern composers to do so were the twelve-tone composers — Berg, Schoenberg and so on. These people won their way only after a tremendously hard struggle. They still do not have a very wide audience, but they are gradually winning acceptance,

while the people who flock to hear John Cage or Stockhausen, or people who compose musique concrete can hardly be described as hordes. With modern poetry the common complaint has been that it has been out of touch with its audience for decades, compared to the period when poets like Tennyson and Browning could count on being best-sellers. Nowadays, for every Eliot who has what might be described as a mass audience, you have fifty people who appear to be writing only to themselves or to the next guy. Poetry has reached the stage now of isolated letters on the page: one here, one there, one down here, one over there: I think this is called concrete poetry; I am not quite sure. In any event I make no attempt to follow it.

It seems to me that this very conservative attitude — which has nothing to do with Marxism whatsoever; it is a completely different thing — also prevails among sf writers. They look around at the arts they see now, and to them it appears to be complete anarchy. Their appreciation only extends as far forward in time as the things they grew up with. In music, for example, this would mean Wagner, Richard Strauss, maybe Prokofiev and early Stravinsky if they were lucky. That far they are willing to go. And their predictions are either for complete disintegration or for a return to some previous norm. They never seem to consider that for most generations the normative, artistically, is always in the past, never in the present. Except for a very few perceptive people, what is going on now in the arts always looks like chaos — and this, I think, is a very general attitude in sf.

I think this leads logically (at least I hope it does) to the question of what the effects have been of the arts upon sf. It will not surprise you when I say very little, until quite recently, and the only arts that appear to have had much effect even upon recent sf are the literary arts. Some attempts have been made to use pictorial effects — typographical tricks and so on — to create pictures on the page in the manner of George Herbert, or some of the seventeenth century metaphysical poets. But the effect of advances in painting and music on what goes on in sf has been very little.

What has been happening in the literary sense has been quite interesting. I suppose we must call this the New Wave, for want of any better term. What is happening now, and has been happening for the past ten to fifteen years, is that sf has caught up with the movement that used to be known as the Modernists: John Dos Passos, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and a few lesser figures of that period are suddenly popping up all over the place, in the sf novel in particular, and to a lesser extent in the sf short story. I find this particularly interesting because the Modernist movement, after all, was principally a phenomenon of the late Twenties and early Thirties, the time when sf was going through its blaster and beanie phase and did not know the rest of literature existed at all. Also I find it interesting that this movement began, and is still primarily being sustained, in England, and has been going on at a time when the mainstream novel in England has entered upon a decidedly anti-Modernist phase, best illustrated I imagine by John Wain and Kingsley Amis and people of that stripe who are going back to very direct narrative forms and completely eschewing all the experimentalism which used to be such red-hot stuff. Now, just at this juncture, people like John Brunner, Philip Jose Farmer and others — epitomised by the new, new New Worlds — have suddenly discovered that it is possible to arrange words on the page in something other than the traditional order, and are adopting with great enthusiasm these techniques of the Thirties — to what effect we do not yet know.

In some cases it has been highly effective and very well used, although not entirely within the sf fraternity as we know it. Joyce, for instance, has had a tremendous effect on one British sf novellist who has been one of the very few men not only to use Joyce — which I would have thought impossible out of hand — but actually to assimilate him, and make him his own. I refer to Anthony Burgess, who is from time to time an sf novellist, and a very good one. The influence upon him of Joyce, particularly late Joyce, which is the hardest to assimilate, is very evident indeed, particularly in A Clockwork Orange but also in some of his non-sf novels.

Then we have Brian Aldiss's Barefoot in the Head — a very effective novel in

itself, and in its technique a sort of child's guide to Finnegan's Wake. Once you have read Barefoot in the Head you will be able to tackle Finnegan with absolute impunity, and very probably even get through it, which would be very good for you. Finnegan's Wake is, I think, a masterpiece, although not such a masterpiece as Ulysses. Brian assimilated this technique and used it in Barefoot to his own purposes, and it worked out very well.

Moorcock is one man who has adopted some of Dos Passos's techniques, particularly in the Jerry Cornelius stories; and several other people have written those as well, including Brian Aldiss, James Sallis, and several of the New Worlds crowd. I have mentioned Burgess and Aldiss in connection with Joyce; there is also Farmer, who has shown a strong affinity for Ulysses. Aldiss, you will recall, wrote an anti-novel which started out to be a perfectly straight anti-novel, but turned out to be another sandwich novel: alternate episodes of anti-novel and straightforward sf story. This was Report on Probability A. I think it was an interesting experiment, although in some respects a failed one. The most interesting part about it is that it shows the most recent literary influence I have yet detected in sf. There are all those other people employing Dos Passos, Joyce, Faulkner and so on; but the French anti-novel is, after all, quite a recent development and here it is showing up. Just to show that he is not immune to the same prejudices as the rest of us, however, Aldiss is also very much hooked on narrative art, and in that novel the late Victorian painters, particularly Holman Hunt, have had quite an obvious influence. A Holman Hunt painting, "The Hireling Shepherd", plays a part in the book. For those of you who haven't seen it (it appears on the cover of the Faber edition) it is a highly symbolic affair in which a young gallant is diverting a shepherdess from her sheep by capturing for her a butterfly. The pattern on the butterfly's wing makes a death's head. It is a very typical Holman Hunt painting, the kind of thing which presents a suspended moment of a story that makes you want to say "Yes, and what happened next?" One can see how an interest in the anti-novel would lead one to be interested in that kind of painting as well, because the anti-novel just sits there. Nothing moves. Everything is done by implication. There is not plot; it just sits. It may be that what little plot the story has was introduced because of publisher's interference. But it is an interesting combination: late Victorian painting and the French anti-novel.

With poetry the connection is not quite as bad as all that. There used to be very little poetry in sf, and equally little notice taken of it. We used to have people who wrote reams and reams and reams of flowery, unselective prose — particularly the fantasy writers, of whom my favourite horrible example is Abraham Merritt — but quite often you would encounter a writer who made the mistake of introducing a poet character into his stories, and then made the further mistake of quoting some of his poetry. I am told upon reliable authority that Robert Heinlein is firmly convinced that the works of the blind poet Rhysling are real good stuff! Robert E.Howard wrote quite a lot of poetry. Lovecraft, as you probably know, wrote many, many yards of it — cubic miles of it — much of it under the title "Fungi from Yuggoth", which was a sonnet-cycle. I do not suggest that what underlies the title is any more promising than the title itself.

We do now, however, have some genuine talents and some genuine practising poets in this field. Me, for instance! I can document this: I have had a considerable volume of poetry published in little magazines, both here and in the United States — and even in Hungary, I understand, although I have yet to get any zloty, or whatever it is they pay over there. But taking me out of the picture, we still have people like Aldiss, John Brunner, Tom Disch, who are not only very sensitive writers of prose but also produce a considerable volume of poetry on the side, much of it very respectable stuff. I think this is a very hopeful sign; and it may also be a sign that modern poetry may after all recapture some sort of an audience. Sf seems to be becoming a mass medium (although possible the smallest mass medium in history) and if a certain amount of poetry can be infused into it, and a rather modern sort of poetry — unlike "Fungi from Yuggoth" — we may have an audience to be re-educated, very much as the tv show Star Trek converted a lot of people to sf who wouldn't touch

it with a ten foot pole before, because to them sf meant monster movies, and Star Trek taught them that this wasn't entirely true. The two phenomena are not, I must admit, closely comparable; but I do think there is some connection.

There has been a lot of rock lately in sf. Norman Spinrad's "The Big Flash" is the example which springs immediately to mind. Just as Sturgeon quite frequently attempted to describe the effects of jazz, so many of the younger people of the Ellison-Spinrad group are talking quite a lot about the effects, emotional or otherwise, of rock. I must confess these are inaudible to me; but plainly they are audible to younger people, so I obviously have a tin ear in that department.

On the whole it would seem to me that one of the rather big changes we see taking place in sf now is an increased consciousness of the existence of other arts besides pulp narrative, and of the fact that what is going on in contemporary art is not necessarily chaos and is not necessarily to be looked upon with pessimism. If it is taking the boys a little while to catch up with the Thirties so far as technique is concerned, well, please bear in mind what they were doing in the Thirties: they were writing "Monsters of Mars", "The Revolt of the Machines", "Hell's Dimension", "The Exiles of Time" — I could go on forever if I were to abandon my mind to it. They were paying no attention to Joyce and Dos Passos and those people at the time that they were writing. They were doing a kind of thing for which they were being paid what Horace Gold once described as "microscopic fractions of a cent, payable on lawsuit", and they had absolutely no time, or inclination, to keep up with what the literary giants of the period were doing; and furthermore, had they done so they would probably have said just what almost everybody else was saying at the time: this is utter chaos; literature can break down no further than this; we have reached the end. I remember at that time reading a book by an American called A Doctor Looks At Literature, which had a chapter in it on Ulysses beginning: "I am probably the only man in the world to have read Ulysses through twice." The rest of the chapter was devoted to demonstrating just why it was that Ulysses represented the absolute breakdown of all form and control on the novel, and that from now on we could expect absolutely nothing of the novel. Forget it — the form was dead. Now, of course, we know that Ulysses was one of the most over-controlled novels ever written, so there is hope.

At the time, I am quite sure that had the boys turned to Ulysses, much less to Finnegan's Wake, they would have seen chaos, just as we see chaos in Stockhausen and John Cage; and they would certainly have seen no possibility of adapting any part of it to selling stuff to "Astounding Stories of Super Science" or "Weird Tales". So I think they can be excused for being forty years behind the times: forty years ago they were not behind any times, they were nowhere, not aware of what was going on at all.

Now comes the most interesting part, it seems to me, and that is the influence of sf on the arts — and there is some. I have already mentioned Burgess, who has clearly been influenced by having read quite a lot of sf. The Argentinian writer Borges has obviously read a lot of the stuff and been influenced by it. His work shows it very strongly (and now that's beginning to feed back, by the way, to go in the other direction). John Barth, an American novelist, has written one sf novel, Giles Goat Boy, and it would not surprise me at all to see him turn out another. Another American novelist named Thomas Pynchon, who I recommend highly to you if you have not encountered him, has written a massive encyclopaedic novel, in size if not in structure rather reminiscent of Ulysses, which is quite science fictional in parts; and another, a shorter one, The Crying of Lot 49, which is a Van Vogtian conspiracy story from the ground up, very funny and very ingenious.

There has been a lot of sf influence on music, most of it, as you probably know, in rock. Rock groups have given themselves science fictional titles; they have written songs with sf lyrics. It has also had a considerable influence on what I suppose we must still consider as serious music. There now exists an sf opera called Aniara*. It takes place

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* Two, actually. There is now an opera based on Stanislaw Lem's Cyberiad (see Franz Rottensteiner's article in V59) -- ME

entirely aboard a spaceship which has been derailed, so to speak, and is on a long journey to nowhere. Musically, it is a thoroughly eclectic opera: mostly twelve-tone; but also containing some neo-Romantic music, some musique concrete, some taped music of electronic sounds — all of which, however, are beautifully integrated. The poem is by Harry Martinson, who is one of Sweden's greatest poets; it was adapted from a long epic poem. The opera has been highly successful, not only in Sweden but almost everywhere else it has been played. If you have not encountered it there used to exist, and I think still does, a complete recording of it, which I encourage you to look up. The copy that I got maddeningly had no libretto with it, and I am still trying to run one down. All I have is a general outline of the plot, but even so I found it very interesting.

When it comes to painting I should defer to my wife, who is the expert in the family. But I have seen myself — little attention though I pay to this art, quite a bit of influence of modern painting which comes either from sf or from the space programme — I cannot exactly tell which. A fair amount of modern painting that I have seen reproduced in magazines is suddenly full of astronomical symbols, usually of pretty good accuracy. It is as though Chesley Bonestell, at his advanced age, has suddenly crept into the forefront of at least some part of modern painting. This is an interesting phenomenon, and one which, I suspect, will continue to develop as we go farther into space and find odder things than we ever dreamed of on the covers of pulp magazines — such as what we have recently discovered on Mars. Artists may seize upon this material for imagery, and may also draw more and more from the stories themselves, now that the audience for the medium is spreading.

So on the whole, though I thought that what I had here was a non-subject, as I said at the beginning, there does actually seem to be quite a bit to be said about it — and, what is probably a great deal more important, quite a bit to be watched for. We are standing effectively at the beginning of the invasion of sf by the arts, and the invasion of the arts by sf — there are two complementary processes. Where it will all go only God knows, but I think it is an extremely interesting process, and it is something that I am watching with great fascination.

—— James Blish, 1972

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There are other, more obscure questions. Both Pete Weston and Keith Freeman say that John Muir claimed it was O.K. to auction off these fanzines because they were duplicates — but even if they were duplicates, surely that doesn't make it all right if they were from the BSFA's collection? Another, contrary, point: it doesn't make much sense to me, if it's true that Mr Muir kept most of the auction proceeds, for him to send them for sale in jumbled-up packages, so that the valuable material might have gone unnoticed had it not been for the vigilance of Messrs Peyton and Roberts. Anyway, whatever emerges it would be nice to know that someone, somewhere, in the BSFA is doing something about the FF — because despite what some people say if it has been sold it isn't too late to recover it, or most of it, although it becomes more difficult as more time passes. If it is recovered, or found, I'd like to suggest that it be loaned to the SF Foundation in the same way that the Library is: it is, or will become, valuable archive and source material which deserves a better home than a pile of cardboard boxes in someone's attic.

One surprise offshoot of this job came in the form of an invitation to an illustrated lecture to publicize The Challenge of the Stars, a new book by Patrick Moore and David Hardy, published by Mitchell Beazley in association with Sidgwick & Jackson. The gimmick of the lecture was that it was a look back from the year 2000 over the past 30 years' developments in space travel, with David Hardy's paintings being shown as if they were photos. Patrick Moore was rather different in

Continued on p.27

peter roberts

the fannish inquisition

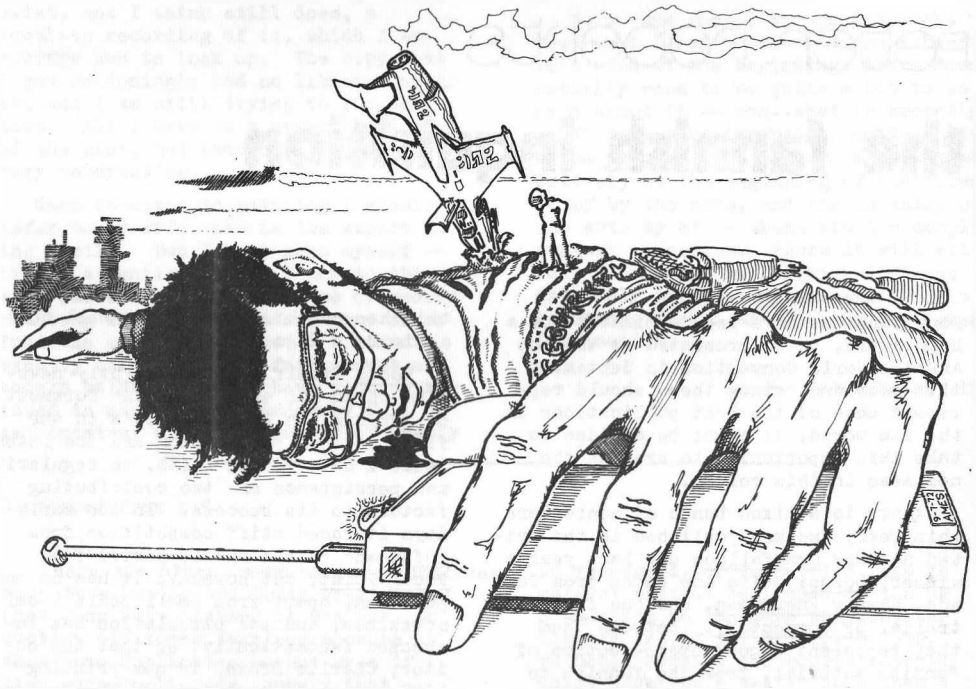
Four fanzines have been nominated for a Hugo Award, to be presented at the Los Angeles World Convention in September this year and, since these should represent some of the best publications in the fan world, it might be an idea to take this opportunity to examine the nominees in this column.

There is a mixed bunch of contenders this year; two are published in the United States: Granfalloon and last year's winner, Locus; while one comes from Canada, namely Energumen, and one from Australia, SF Commentary. Between them they represent a good cross-section of fanzine material, from the fannish to the sercon, and a variety of formats, from the small newszine to the plush quarterly. The only point they have in common is a large circulation, an unfortunate necessity for any fanzine publisher who has hopes of gaining Hugo votes. ((Perhaps I should note that in fanzine terms a large circulation probably means around 400 copies, which is, I believe, about what SF Commentary prints. There are exceptions, of course, such as the late SF Review and, as Peter mentions below, Locus. MJE)) Previous years have seen a further and much worse tendency whereby the final result of voting parallels the circulation figures of each fanzine; should this happen this year, Locus will once again be a Hugo winner.

Locus itself is a fortnightly newszine which has emerged as the foremost of its kind in America. It's in the fifth year of publication and the latest issue I have is the 114th, so regularity and persistence are two contributing factors to its success. In the early days it faced stiff competition from Osfan and in the middle period from Focal Point; but nowadays it has no competition, apart from small scale local newszines, and its circulation has increased fantastically, so that the editor, Charlie Brown, is now printing 1300 copies of each issue. The contents are largely items of science fictional news, a point of criticism to the more fannish fans who remember the earlier Hugo winner, Terry Carr's Fanac, with nostalgic delight. A fair amount of fan news does, however, appear and a typical issue, such as the 114th, contains a con report (Disclave 72), lists of new books, contents of forthcoming magazines, reviews of the latest magazines and books, and some general notes. The average size is ten pages and Locus often contains fliers and columns by such as Bob Tucker, Harry Warner, Jr, and Jack Gaughan. Cartoons are liberally sprinkled throughout and are consid-

erably more fannish than might be expected. Generally, therefore, I have no complaints about Locus. I might prefer a more fannish newszine; but Charlie is publishing what both he and the majority of his readers want, which is of course entirely fair enough. A more specific complaint might be directed at the mercenary way in which Locus is run; but there again, no one is under any compulsion to subscribe.

SF Commentary, published by Bruce



Gillespie, is undoubtedly the foremost magazine of sf criticism currently being produced. The only other contender might be Speculation, but Pete Weston's schedule has been extremely erratic of late whilst Bruce has been publishing with some regularity. The 25th issue is fairly typical of SFC, since it contains equal amounts of reviews, articles, and letters, all firmly based on the sercon aspects of science fiction, rather than the fannish. Curiously enough, however, Bruce softens up in his editorial and includes several pages of fannish chatter dealing with the activities of fans in Melbourne and in Australia generally; this too seems to be typical of SFC and also, incidentally, of Speculation — a sort of last ditch attempt to convince you that the editors really are human. The greater part of SFC 25 is nevertheless summarized by the words 'sf criticism'; it's slightly biased towards certain authors and certain modes (the inevitable 'New Wave', or shall we say 'literate', science fiction in particular), yet still manages to cover a variety of topics from Tau Zero to Quark. One complaint I'd make as a result of this is that too much space is wasted telling us that books we know are worthless really are worthless — Paul Anderson, for example, takes two pages to say this much about Tarnsman of Gor and Priest-Kings of Gor. My own prejudice also condemns a six-page critique of Tau Zero for the same reason. There remains nonetheless an interesting open letter from Philip Jose Farmer to Stanislaw Lem, plus a detailed analysis

of stories collected in anthologies which just about proves that the 'Golden Age' for the sf short story falls between 1951 and 1953, and Richard Delap's continuing review of the original fiction anthologies. The letter section is long and well-edited and the general appearance of the fanzine is competent and clear, though Bruce does without any interior artwork. SF Commentary has a personality of its own, a rare thing in a sercon fanzine, as well as the ability to maintain the interest of non-addicts such as myself. I for one would be quite happy if Bruce receives a Hugo in Los Angeles.

Both Granfalloon, edited by Ron and Linda Bushyager, and Energumen, edited by Mike and Susan Glicksohn, are finely produced fanzines whose contents are varied from issue to issue. They are part of the new breed of fanzine which places great emphasis on layout and visual appearance. Granfalloon 14, for example, has a portfolio of artwork by Ron Miller in the centre pages and Energumen 12 a portfolio by Jim McLeod. Both stand out as such, since their white pages contrast with the green and buff (respectively) of the remainder; the result, coupled with offset covers (by Grant for Granfalloon, Shull and Fletcher for Energumen) and the mass of interior artwork by such as Tim Kirk, Steve Fabian, Rotsler, Kinney, and so on, makes an immediate impression on the reader: these are fanzines to handle with white gloves on. This, however, does both an injustice, since Linda and Mike are also concerned with the contents of their fanzines and manage to achieve a fine balance between visual and written material as a result.

Granfalloon is the less frequent of the two and is more prone to vary its standards from one issue to the next. Occasionally it contains both poor artwork and poor articles and Granfalloon 14, for example, does have some inferior drawings. Energumen, however, is consistent and also sports regular columns by two of this year's Fan Writer Hugo nominees, Susan Glicksohn and Rosemary Ullyot (both of whom owe their places in this category to their work in Energumen). A distinct advantage for the latter is that Mike Glicksohn himself is a fine writer, whereas Linda (Ron does no writing) is not. Energumen, in other words, is better written and has more personality than Granfalloon.

Granfalloon 14, however, seems in many ways superior to the average issue. Don D'Ammassa has an amusing series of anecdotes about life in an Oklahoma army town with Tim Kirk providing illustrative cartoons. Arnie Katz then talks of his love for old fanzines and recounts some of his trufannish dreams, many of which (to my envy) seem to have been fulfilled. Jeff Glencannon contributes some excellent and lengthy fanzine reviews and there is a fairly good letter column. In addition, the second chapter of Ted White's novel Trouble On Project Ceres appears; this is a curious item, apparently explained by Ted White's publisher cutting out his first two chapters, Ted's resulting anger, and Linda's timely sympathy. Needless to say, you really need a copy of the novel for this to be of much use. Energumen 12 seems to be a slightly odd issue in that Mike spends his editorial and Susan her column, "My 2¢ Worth", talking about fannish conduct in relation to Energumen -- Mike complaining about angry would-be traders and Susan about forgetful artists. Perhaps this is necessary, yet it still seems slightly unpleasant. However, Susan also contributes the second part of an article about women in comics, specifically Marvel comics; Harry Warner, Jr. has a piece about Bob Tucker and the Noreascon; Bill Watson, old-time ex-fan, has a splendid personal piece; Don Hutchinson looks at Clockwork Orange (Kubrick's); Jerry Lapidus talks on fanzines, quite entertainingly; and Rosemary Ullyou has her column, "Kumquat May", which I, as usual, found terrible, but which everyone else raves over for reasons which remain unclear to me. A good letter column completes this issue.

Perhaps Granfalloon 14 is a better single issue than Energumen 12; but generally the Canadian fanzine wins any such comparison and I unhesitatingly put forward Energumen as my choice for Fanzine Hugo in 1972.

I promised to include at least one British fanzine in each of these columns; but it seems I am to be foiled this time, since none of the Hugo nominees are British. However, Pete Weston's Speculation has been nominated five times in the past and probably only failed this year because of its unfortunate irregularity.

An issue has at last turned up, the thirtieth, and it is an excellent production in almost every respect.

Speculation is one of the world's foremost sercon fanzines, the kind, that is, that specializes in discussing and criticizing science fiction itself, rather than science fiction fandom. Pete Weston has outlasted most of his rivals in the field: Dick Bergeron's American Warhoon seems moribund at the moment; Dick Geis's double Hugo-winning SFR has folded again (he'll probably revive it again in another ten years); John Bangsund's fine Australian SF Review has changed names and forsaken straight sf; and the many minor rivals have disappeared or mutated. Only SF Commentary, reviewed earlier, presents a serious challenge; Riverside Quarterly has long since disappeared down apeman-infested jungle tracks.

Somehow, however, I think SFC will win. Pete has long had severe attacks of fannishness, unbecoming to the strict sercon publisher (as Bruce Gillespie will tell you), and it's beginning to show in Speculation. Most of us will rejoice; but I rather think the sercon-or-die fans will leave a sinking ship and flee to SFC or some new, as yet unknown, publication. Perhaps Pete will convert them, though? Certainly he's a good fannish writer and in Speculation 30 he allows a long editorial in which he rambles well and intelligently through a few topics, even managing to squeeze in a con report and a fanzine review (and before some of you cry 'sacrilege!', remember that Pete used to do fanzine reviews for this magazine under the peculiar pseudonym of - uh- Malcolm Edwards...). Also included are four good photo pages of the Easter SF Convention at Chester, assembled by Pete Weston though also visible in some other fanzines which shared costs with him.

The science fictional side is not neglected, however, and there are two particularly fine items within, namely Philip Strick on Heinlein (from his Speculation-II talk) and John Brunner talking about the writing of sf once again (from the Worcestercon). Both are transcribed well and are concluded with comments and questions from the audience. The other main items are Bob Rickard analysing Blish and Mark Adlard considering sf and the business world. Reviews are by Creath Thorne, Pam Bulmer, Tom Shippey and Tony Sudbery and are some of the better examples of their kind; they are fairly intelligent, open for argument, and, what I consider particularly important, deal with books that are worth investigating, rather than space operas and the latest sword and sorcery epics. The letter column, finally, is well edited and interesting and the general presentation of the magazine is clear, though hardly glamourous. Speculation has improved considerably over the last few issues so that even I, never well-known as a serious sf fan, have greeted its arrival with glad cries — so much so that this issue even contains a letter from me. This alone makes Speculation 30 a collector's item and one that's well worth getting.

Energumen is 75¢ from Mike and Susan Glicksohn, 32 Maynard Ave, 205, Toronto 156, Ontario, Canada
Granfalloon is 60¢ from Linda & Ron Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania 19076, U.S.A.
Locus is 12/$3 (£1.50) airmail from Charlie & Dena Brown, 3400 Ulloa St., San Francisco, California 94116, U.S.A.
SF Commentary is 9/$3 from Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia (Malcolm Edwards is UK Agent — 9/£1.50)
and Speculation is 20p from Pete Weston, 31 Pinewall Ave, Kings Norton, Birmingham 30.

All except Locus are also available for contributions and LoCs, plus arranged trades.

— Peter Roberts, 1972

books

Fugue for a Darkening Island

by Christopher Priest
Faber & Faber; £1.75; 147pp

Reviewed by Vic Hallett

When I read Indoctrinaire I felt that Christopher Priest should have continued the book in the style of his opening section, but that he seemed to have got stuck and weakened the book. Here there are no such problems: he had an idea for a story; he had an idea for a narrative form; and he has written a cold, pessimistic and powerful novel.

Britain has an extreme right-wing government and has also become the target for African refugees fleeing from a nuclear war. Conflict is inevitable, and the result is a three-way civil war with United Nations intervention. This is tolerable if you are committed, but if you are like Alan Whitman, intelligent but trying not to get involved, then you have problems — no one wants you on their side for any length of time. Whitman finds himself homeless, trying to protect a wife and daughter as well as simply trying to survive in the war-ridden countryside. When the two females are captured by Africans, he finds that he has to take sides and decisions.

A breakdown of society novel, otherwise known as a disaster novel — yes, the book is that; but it is not about the disaster, it is about commitment. Whitman (I am not sure if the name is allegorical or not) is on the fringes of events but never begins to be able to affect them. He is neither a hero nor an anti-hero; he is simply the central character, the man who can argue but never does very much, the man with the right attitudes who finds that they don't help him. The whole book leads to the final paragraph, with its decisive action.

The idea of the conflict obviously arose from some of Enoch Powell's utterances; and it does not matter if the situation is still valid or no — the main point will always be valid. The style is unusual but it is the most effective one for this book. It is non-linear: events are taken from various chronological points of Whitman's life so one gets a series of snapshots. This causes Christopher Priest to be precise in his writing; it causes the reader to concentrate on each episode; and the whole picture builds up piece by piece over a wide canvas. The writing is so clear, with not a wasted word in the book, that there is never any confusion in the reader's mind, and many episodes take on a power they might otherwise lack.

Towards the end Whitman finds himself in a South Coast town which is trying to carry on as though nothing had happened

-- non-commitment on a large scale. The scene is remarkable vivid, and it is so easy to see how tempting such a course would be; also so easy to see at that point how wrong it would be. That scene is likely to affect decisions I may have to make in the future, whether they are large or small ones.

This is a very good book and, I think, an important one. It is also an exciting, violent novel which works as straightforward intelligent entertainment.

The Patterns of Chaos

by Colin Kapp
Gollancz; £1.90; 222pp

Reviewed by Tony Sudbery

A bomb, despatched from the Andromeda nebula seven hundred million years ago, strikes and demolishes a whole planet. It strikes at the exact point where a certain man had been twenty-four hours ago. A little later the same thing happens again; this time the bomb is only sixteen hours late. Isn't that a gift for a blurb writer? Think of all the possibilities for tension that this idea offers; don't you want to read the book? Well, don't bother; you'd do better to write it yourself. Not a single one of these possibilities is taken up by Colin Kapp. This is only one example from many; the whole of The Patterns of Chaos is a heartrending succession of missed opportunities. Any moderately competent storyteller could have made a very enjoyable read out of Mr Kapp's basic materials, which include a strong plot and a number of very nice sf ideas, but somehow Mr Kapp himself manages to make them boring. If you persevere to the end you'll be rewarded with a good conclusion; personally I had lost all interest by that time.

Perhaps The Patterns of Chaos could be useful to aspiring writers. Exercise: tell this story. More advanced students could try bringing the characters to life, or at least writing something a bit more like dialogue to replace the stuff Mr Kapp has put between inverted commas.

Stonehenge

by Leon Stover and Harry Harrison
Peter Davies; £2.10; 251pp

Reviewed by Vic Hallett

The authors have a theory about Stonehenge, and they have chosen to present it to a wide audience in the form of an historical novel which uses many of the narrative techniques of science fiction.

Ason is a Mycenaen warrior prince, and Inteb an Egyptian architect; together they are shipwrecked on the shores of Britain and their subsequent actios change the lives of the Yerni, the peoples already there. Ason's weapons and tactics are so new that he is soon regarded as a great chief, and Inteb is supervising the building of the symbol of that greatness, the largest stone henge that the tribes have ever seen.

There is little difference in essence from a story in which two astronauts crash on another planet and change the culture by their superior technology. There is no accident in the resemblance either: the authors thought it the best format for the book, and they were right. It gives the reader a chance to become acquainted with Ason, Inteb, and the warring civilisations of the Mediterranean, and then to discover the alienness of the northern island as they discover it. And it is alien: the customs, the boasting, the killing, the attitude to women — all are different from us and from the two outsiders. They are also different from us: Ason is a cold killing machine, and Inteb a civilised craftsman whose feelings for Ason lie so deep that he is forced to express them through the enormous enigmatic structure which slowly grows on the plain.

This is an historical novel which gives one a feeling for the vast distances of the ancient world. Once shipwrecked there is no thought of escape — that would mean too great a leap into the unknown. It is also a book into which a great deal of research has gone, but in which it is not permanently held up for our admiration; nothing is allowed to interfere with the excitements of the story, and they are considerable, whether they are battle or the building of the henge. These last sequences are splendid, with Inteb getting the reluctant Yerni to co-operate with each other, and the descriptions of the awesome shaping and raising of the stones.

I was a little worried when I saw mention of Atlantis, but it proves to be the true Atlantis — Thera and Crete -- which has been uncovered in the last few years. I gather that the book has suffered to some extent at the hands of publishers and that it is shorter than was intended; certainly there is a feeling of rushing at some points where a more leisurely pace would have suited better. There is no impairment to the reader's enjoyment, however; we still have a very exciting and colourful novel and a very plausible explanation for Stonehenge. I gather that King Arthur will be the next subject to get the Stover/Harrison treatment. That should be interesting.

The Committed Men

by M.John Harrison
New Authors Ltd; £1.75; 184pp

Reviewed by Malcolm Edwards

This review is rather late in appearing: the book was published more than a year ago. Better late than never, though, especially since it appeared under a non-sf imprint and many of you may have missed it; and it would be a pity if this were to happen to one of the best first sf novels for years.

M.John Harrison has been closely associated with Michael Moorcock and "New Worlds" — he is the magazine's Literary Editor, he has contributed a number of stories (including some Jerry Cornelius stories), and so on. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that The Committed Men, both in its style and its approach, clearly shows this influence in general, and that of J.G.Ballard in particular. It is far from being merely derivative, however; Mr Harrison has much to offer that is original and individual.

Like practically every other British sf novel (it seems), The Committed Men is a disaster novel: radiation levels rise; society collapses; the pathetic remnants, riddled with skin cancers, eke out a precarious scavenging existence in the ruins of the Great Society. (That last bit is a quote from the jacket copy, which is for once germane, being — one suspects -- written by the author himself.) M.John Harrison treads a careful path somewhere midway between the opposed approaches of Ballard and Wyndham. In Wyndham's novels (to generalize slightly) the ruins of civilization provide a backcloth against which middle-class Englishmen assert their capability; with Ballard, on the other hand, landscape is of primary importance, and the best the characters can do is to submerge themselves into it. While performing an open genuflection in Ballard's direction (p.31), Harrison allows his characters more independence; while they are affected by the landscape, their shifting moods mirroring changes in it, they are still able to think and to act.

Indeed, this is to a large extent what the book is about. Homo sapiens is out-dated, no longer fitted to survive in the new, radioactive world. The few hang on, making efforts towards survival. These efforts may even seem partially successful -- until a glimpse of a genuine adaptation to the changes exposes them for the meaningless gestures they are. This central metaphor is hammered home time and again from various angles. There are the handful of surviving bureaucrats in the city who, unable to make any kind of adjustment, mimic their former life in pathetic rituals; there is the enigmatic figure of Nick Bruton, whose odd chromosomes make him immune from the effects of the disaster, his appearances at crucial moments mocking the characters' efforts to adjust with his easy familiarity with the new order; there are the mutants, semi-reptilian humans, in whom the future really resides; there are the landscapes, the remnants of billboards whose fragmented messages, hovering on the edge of comprehensibility, speak only to the past. Only through commitment to a single, relevant course of action — in this case delivering a mutant baby to the main mutant colony — can a group of survivors give their existence a temporary meaning.

It would be wrong to give the impression that this is a static book -- it is full of excitement and incident, fast-moving and very readable on the surface. With a very few exceptions, it avoids

lapsing into the cliches of action writing, and Mr Harrison's style is lucid and clear. As a first novel it is a considerable achievement in itself, and a great promise of things to come. One only hopes that Mr Harrison will resist the temptation to squander his talent on sword-and-sorcery novels and Jerry Cornelius stories — he does them better than most, but is capable of so much more.

The Tombs of Atuan

by Ursula Le Guin
Gollancz; £1.25; 160pp

Reviewed by John Bowles

Some critics who had better remain nameless, such as George May and Ted White, have suggested that this sequel to A Wizard of Earthsea is a minor work in comparison to its predecessor. I would disagree with this assessment — The Tombs of Atuan lacks the broad narrative sweep of A Wizard of Earthsea, being much narrower in focus, but it is no less finely realised.

Ged, the hero of A Wizard of Earthsea, plays a subsidiary part — though an important one — in this new book; in fact he is not identified until the book is more than halfway through. This is the story of Tenar, who at the age of six is taken from her parents to the Place of the Tombs of Atuan, where she is renamed Arha, the Eaten One, the Priestess of the Nameless Ones — powerful ancient spirits whose influence pervades the Labyrinth beneath the Tombs. Like a succession of priestesses before her, she is supposed to be the reincarnation of the original priestess (when one dies, a girl born at the same time is sought out as her successor — like the succession of Dalai Lamas). She leads out this rather dismal existence, until the day when she finds a stranger in the Labyrinth (which is forbidden territory). She traps him, but instead of having him killed her curiosity impels her to keep him alive. The stranger, of course, is Ged, searching for the missing half of the Ring of Erreth-Akbe (one half of which is already in his possession. The story then is that of Tenar's gradual awakening under Ged's gentle guidance and their escape together from the Labyrinth and the evil power of the Nameless Ones.

What sets this novel apart from the usual run of fantasy is the quality of Mrs Le Guin's writing, and the understanding which she shows of her main character. The prose is unspectacular but always excellent — calm, measured, evocative. The story is full of drama without ever resorting to physical action for its own sake. The book is, of course, primarily for children, but like most good children's books it can be read and enjoyed by adults; it is in no way 'written down'. The Tombs of Atuan can only add to Mrs Le Guin's already considerable reputation.

The Universe Makers

by Donald A.Wollheim
Gollancz; £1.50; 122pp

Reviewed by Malcolm Edwards

For many years Donald Wollheim has been identified with the Ace sf list. For years before that he was active in the field first as a fan, then as a writer and magazine editor. This book is a memoir of a life spent in science fiction, an affirmation of the old slogan 'Fandom is a Way of Life' — and a highly idiosyncratic survey of the sf field.

I always find it difficult to assess a book about sf because I enjoy reading them all regardless. I suspect this is partly because the existence of such a book goes part way towards affirming that sf is important in some way — it's not just one of my peculiarities. If you share this feeling, whatever its cause, then the only purpose this review can serve is to let you know there's another one out, if you didn't know already. However, I can't help noticing a few things wrong with this book.

Firstly, Wollheim writes horribly. It's a sort of ponderous American non-style, where instead of pausing to find the right word the writer puts down the wrong one regardless and then finds some way of cobbling the sentence into a fair approximation of what he meant to say. A perfect example is when he says of Van Vogt: "It is not an accident that his first fame-making novel was The World of Null-A...". This is a typical example, but not one chosen at random. It illustrates, as it happens, the one factual error I could find. Wollheim states that World of Null-A preceded Slan, which is wrong: Slan appeared in either 1940 or 41, while Null-A didn't come out until 1945. Even I know that, and I wasn't even born!

Then there is the general slant of the book. Wollheim has a rather sour dig at New Maps of Hell and complains that Amis's sf reading was biased through having been given "a guided and selected tour through one particular publisher's sf mill" (presumably he means Ballantine). This may be a fair point — but then Wollheim's own survey of sf devotes a lot of space to books which many people would not consider landmarks, books such as Andre Norton's Daybreak 2250 AD and Philip Jose Farmer's 'world of tiers' novels, books which, as it happens, were all published by Ace books.

There are other odd judgments, such as Wollheim's opinion that Kornbluth was so warped and embittered that the universe could no longer accommodate him, and that's why he had a heart attack and died at 35. Overall I would say that as a work of criticism this is pretty worthless, while as a personal survey of sf it does contain a fair amount of interesting material. I would think that most B.S.F.A. members at least would find it interesting reading, and since I think Gollancz deserve some return for taking on a project which on the face of it is commercial suicide, I'd suggest that you at least ensure that your library has a copy if your enthusiasm doesn't stretch to buying it.

Books received (may be reviewed in future issues)

From Gollancz: The Gods Themselves — Isaac Asimov (£1.80); Of Time and Stars — Arthur C.Clarke (£1.30); The Wind from the Sun — Arthur C.Clarke (£1.75); A Pocketful of Stars — Damon Knight, ed. (£1.90); Android at Arms — Andre Norton (£1.40); Other Days, Other Eyes — Bob Shaw (£1.80)

From Faber & Faber: Best SF Stories of Brian W.Aldiss (paper covered ed. 80p); Best SF — Edmund Crispin, ed. (paper covered ed. 60p)

From Sidgwick & Jackson: Possible Tomorrows, Groff Conklin, ed. (£1.60); The Battle of Forever — A.E.Van Vogt (£1.60)

From Sphere: Macroscope — Piers Anthony (50p — this appears to be a substantially revised version of the book, and is very much shorter than the Avon edition); Lords of the Starship — Mark S.Geston (30p. This is undoubtedly one of the worst sf novels of recent years, although for some reason it seems to have attracted many admirers.); Year's Best SF No.5 — Harry Harrison & Brian Aldiss, eds. (35p); The Ice Schooner — Michael Moorcock (30p); Neutron Star — Larry Niven (35p); The Pawns of Null-A — A.E.Van Vogt (30p)

From Pan/Ballantine: The Pollinators of Eden — John Boyd (30p); The Island of The Mighty & The Children of LLyr — Evangeline Walton (40p each); 4 Days, 40 Hours — Riva Poor (75p)

From Arrow: A Case of Conscience — James Blish (30p); The Year of the Quiet Sun — Wilson Tucker (30p)

mark adlard

peter tate: an interview

MA: I'm always painfully intrigued about how people discovered sf. Case histories such as Brunner's (his grandfather's Heinemann edition of War of the Worlds dropped in the nursery, his father's landgirl's GI boyfriends "Amazing" left around on the farm) fill me with an agonising jealousy of people who were so fortunate so young. So let's begin by asking how and when you discovered sf.

PT: Like Brian Aldiss, I discovered sf in Woolworth's. I'd passed through the american comic stage and was now looking at American words, augmenting "Detective Tales" with "Texas Rangers", "G-8 and his Battle Aces", "Weird Tales" and "Thrilling Wonder", mostly courtesy of Street & Smith. My parents were a little perturbed by the sudden influx of bikini-clad blondes in goldfish bowl helmets, but when they discovered by careful questioning that I was more interested in the hardware than the software, they allowed me to keep reading. Introduction to my first name sf author -- Ray Bradbury -- was by word-of-mouth recommendation in the first form at the grammar school. From Bradbury I went to Eric Frank Russell, Fredric Brown, Heinlein, read in anthology rather than by any particular design. When I started noting the names, many of the works were already familiar. My sf interest was spasmodic, just a part of the general growing literary awareness which took in Dennis Wheatley, Hemingway, Leslie Charteris, John Steinbeck, William Saroyan, James T.Farrell, with regular returns to Bradbury.

MA: Can you say anything about your first attempts at writing fiction? I don't necessarily mean your first published stories.

PT: My first attempts at writing sf were heavily influenced by Bradbury — in fact, quite late in life (I had left my teens well behind). For that, I blame my occupation of journalism, which took all my creativity for a very transient kind of return. It was only when I stopped writing and started supervising as a newspaper sub-editor that I found things beginning to work for me.

MA: Your first published stories appeared in "New Worlds" in 1967.

PT: Yes. But my first writing success was nothing to do with sf at the outset. I entered a story for the British Argosy Magazine's competition to mark the quatrocentenary of Shakespeare's birth, and gained a "Highly Recommended". It meant that at last I was beginning to produce stuff worth taking seriously. The Muse was stirring restlessly. I still didn't consider myself big-time enough for the US magazines (having had my Bradbury pastiches of some years before rejected by them all). So I cast around for a UK publication. That was "New Worlds" -- and Michael Moorcock was extremely patient and exceedingly kind. My Shakespeare story, with a parallel universe theory, became "Fifth Person Singular", published third in NW (and reprinted in NWQ2) after "The Post-Mortem People" (written third) and "The Gloom Pattern", a Bradbury-ish thing which, said Moorcock, was better than Bradbury because Ray always had such happy endings. I applied my new maturity to one of the old rejected tales and it became "Mars Pastorale, or I'm Fertile, Said Felix" (NW 1968), took another one and de-Bradbury-ised it and it became "The Day the Wind Died" (F&SF, April 1969). In the meantime, Joe Ross of "Fantastic" had expressed an interest in "The Thinking Seat" (the short story which sparked the novel).

MA: And what about work since then?

PT: "Fantastic" published another, "Same Autumn In A Different Park". Judy Merril took "Post-Mortem People" for her SF12 and "Same Autumn" for her England Swinges SF. Kyril Bonfiglioli had taken "The First of the New Martyrs" (which is sf in the same way that Aldiss's "A Monument to his Profession" is sf) for "SF Impulse".

The Thinking Seat came out in novel form from Doubleday in October 1969 and Faber in April 1970. Gardens One to Five was published by Doubleday in March 1971 and Faber in April 1971. Doubleday will publish the latest novel, Country Love and Poison Rain, shortly. UK publishing arrangements have not been finalised, but Fabers will not be involved. Current work in progress is a piece intriguing even to me by the directions it seems to take of its own volition, and the working title is Okinawa Baskets or Something Wicker This Way Comes.

I haven't written a short story since "Mainchance", for Anne McCaffrey's Alchemy and Academe collection, and the reasons are domestic — my wife's father has had a prolonged bout of illness and her mother, very dear to both of us, we nursed through terminal cancer. Little time for writing then, and that taken up with the novels.

MA: Will you write more shorts?

PT: Well, I hope so. One I have to write for an sf writers' workshop at Milford-on-Sea, Hampshire, in October. Perhaps that will get me back into the habit.

MA: The moral tone of your fiction doesn't consort very harmoniously with the permissive nature of much New Wave writing, and it seems slightly odd that Moorcock should have godfathered your first published stories. Perhaps although Moorcock was in the saddle, "New Worlds" was at that time still trotting on the route plotted by Carnell?

PT: You talk of a moral tone in my work. I suppose there is, inasmuch as I do not concede the need for science fiction (or any fiction) to use sex to sell it. I don't write permissive fiction because I don't want to me associated with it. People, I hope, will appreciate my work for a strong story line or a memorable character, and not for the coupling on page 57. Does a writer have to change with the times? That depends on him. Ideally, I want to be a writer (and this isn't such a rare piece of vanity among us) who transcends trends and manias. Why Mike found my work interesting? I'd like to think it was because he saw something that was good despite the lack of oedipal obscenities. I can't agree he was following the course plotted by Carnell. In fact, the opposite was true. Mike was anxious to produce a magazine in his own image and Compact Books, who published NW at that time, were also publishing Hank Janson, so that sex in print was no novelty to them.

MA: I should say that the heart of The Thinking Seat, and the source of its inspiration, are the philosophisings of Simeon. What would you say the essence of his message is?

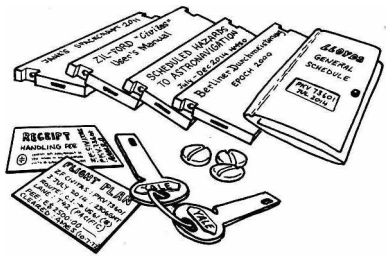
PT: The message of The Thinking Seat? Basically it was ecological but a lot of Simeon's uncertainties, I suppose, were my own (just as Latimer's asthma spray is my own) and his search for expression a chronicle of my futility.

MA: In your second novel, Gardens One to Five, I was particularly struck

by the stylistic device of a naturalistic story line (the Scarlatti episodes) intersecting scenes of a symbolic nature (the de Bergerac dew-gatherers and so on). Here again the novel seems to be inspired by a species of controlled anger that this planet makes such a mess of ordering its affairs.

PT: A while ago I spoke of journalism as a setback. At that stage it was. Today, an involvement with facts is an essential for my style of work. I think you want to ask me later about my being a Jehovah's Witness — well, this touches on that, too, because it gives me a millenial outlook: that is, not a blind acceptance of dogma, but a recognition of present events and conditions as having a religious significance. It is not unusual in any Christian faith to believe that man cannot make his own salvation — what makes my particular persuasion so vital today is the abundance of secular facts to verify that belief.

Re Gardens: when the League of Nations (later the United Nations) was formed in 1923, a group of American clergymen described it as "the expression of God's will on earth". This must rank as one of the greatest arrogances, particularly in the light of subsequent violations of humanity by the said sacred assembly. By writing Gardens, I wasn't evangelising. The trial scene uses only the legal guidance of the U.N. Constitution — and nobody can say that citing Ulster, the Middle East, the Congo, is partisan. And whatever else I write will be first of all commentary on the world situation as I see it, secondly pure fiction, and only coincidentally cognisant of my religious beliefs. I'm careful not to thrust my views down people's throats under the guise of legit sf, but I am not disposed to make a secret of those views, either.



MA: I'm sure that's right. I wouldn't have guessed at your particular beliefs from your fiction. I would simply have said that you were an (increasingly rare) example of a writer with a moral viewpoint. It was Judy Blish who first told me that you were a Jehovah's Witness. I solemnly assured her that you weren't, without myself really knowing what it meant. And Malcolm Edwards is most insistent that I should discover how your Jehovah's Witness beliefs harmonise with your sf activities. Is there any conflict?

PT: My viewpoint makes me favour the more realistic approach to sf — scientifically feasible rather than unbridled imagination — and that makes stories of alien beings and alien planets less likely from me, though not impossible as symbols, since even the scriptures use such beings as symbols. If anything, the standpoint makes producing sf more of a challenge, since I have to seek a denouement which stands up to the cold light of day. I strive to entertain and marginally suggest to people that they look at things in a certain way. That is not being doctrinaire — it is pulling no dirtier trick than the most honest sf writer pulls: that of inviting the audience to participate in the vision.

MA: Your third novel will be published shortly in the States. Can you tell us any more about it, and give us any news of your future plans.

PT: Country Love and Poison Rain is to do with chemical warfare, and rather more practical intrigue than straightforward sf — though, as I say, the device is fiction and the situation scientific. It is also a study of patriotism — its different meanings to the different characters involved. Okinawa Baskets is about germ warfare and at such an experimental stage presently that any more specific description might well turn out to be contradictory if not downright inaccurate. After that comes a hardcore sf novel for my son, Mark, tentatively titled The Man Who Talked With Earthquakes, and another experimental piece set in the African city of Zimbabwe and focussing on guerilla warfare 1980's-style.

MA: And finally, can I put forward the hardy perennial: what do you think is going to happen to sf — hard v. soft, outer v. inner, genre v. mainstream, Aristotelian v. Platonic, or whatever you want?

PT: Sf will not go the way I want it to go or the way you want it to go or the way any of us want it to go — only the way we all make it go. If that sounds trite, I'm sorry. The words may be tired but the truth of them is inevitable.

MA: Sure. But at the recent Speculation Conference, for example, Geoff Doherty made the point that technological innovation is now so abundant in actual fact that the old hard core style of sf is boring. I think of such things as Tom Godwin's "Mother of Invention", a typical "Astounding" tale of the early 50s, which consists almost entirely of imaginary technical chat about imaginary technical problems. Doherty's point was that although Larry Niven appears to have given a new lease of life to hard core sf, the stuff is really redundant.

PT: The writings of people such as E.E.Smith and Heinlein were valid because they were on top of the technologies existing at their time. To have somebody do that today is wasted exercise. There are new sciences which have to be encompassed, researched and understood thoroughly, before the same impact can be made by any of today's aspirants. By this token Larry Niven, although I enjoy his work greatly, has only sentimental value.

MA: Thanks a lot, Peter. Now let's have some more vino.

-- Mark Adlard, 1972

Continued from p.14

the flesh from what I had expected: very short and very broad, so that one felt he would occupy the same area of space lying on his side as he did standing up. As a lecturer, he'd make a good tobacco-auctioneer — his delivery speed was about 500 words a minute, at what seemed like 120 decibels. I was sitting near the back; I pity those further forward! The slides themselves were magnificent, and it would have been nice if the publishers had completed their publicity work by sending us a review copy of the book. However, while taking advantage of the free drink afterwards, I was looking through a copy of the book with Philip Strick, and neither of us was much impressed with the paintings as reproduced therein. They seemed very flat in comparison with the slides; nevertheless, the book is worth a look, and is very reasonably priced (I'm being vague here because I can't remember exactly how much it was; I think it was £1.75 though).

A few words about this issue of Vector. Firstly, you may or may not have noticed that it is nearly a month later than was hoped. This can't be helped: with part-time work to do as well as my full-time job, Vector has to be slotted in to the limited time remaining. Having to first transcribe the James Blish talk before I could start work on it also delayed matters considerably. Anyway, I can see now why very few people produce bi-monthly fanzines. The equipment being used — an Olivetti portable — is not ideal for the purpose; it doesn't type a sharp enough, black enough page to get the best results from photo-offset reproduction, so if some of this issue comes out faint, as some of the last did, it's probably not all the printers' fault. If there is anyone out there with a decent typewriter (ideally an electric) and a fair amount of spare time (or an underemployed secretary) I would be delighted to hear from him.

I was a little stung by a review of Vector 60 in Locus, which praised the contents but criticized the layout, since although I recognize that parts of it were sloppy, there were other parts (such as the heading for the John Brunner article) with which I was rather pleased. This time, I've standardized it completely, to see how it looks. I would appreciate any comments and suggestions about the physical appearance of Vector as I certainly do not claim to be a brilliant graphic designer.

The cover for this issue and all the interior illustrations are the work of

Continued on p.39

the mail response

Kenneth Harker
Guisborough

Dear Mr Edwards — It was considerate of Dan Morgan to hope that I was not a member of the BSFA, so that I could be spared from reading Pamela Bulmer's review of my novel, The Flowers of February, in Vector 59 — but just for the record, I am a member (though a somewhat silent one) and I did read the review.

Dan happens to be the first published sf writer I ever met (in 1954, I think), so let me reassure him — though I'm sure he must realise — that by now I am sufficiently aware of, if not hardened to, the eccentricities of the writing world not to be put off by one solitary review. Still, I take his point that such criticism could certainly deflate someone who is fortunate enough to get a book published soon after embarking into this literary business without appreciating the ups and downs involved.

When I read Vector 59, I refrained from comment. It isn't my intention to take up swords or sorceries with Pamela Bulmer, for one or two reasons. First, I don't believe it is a good policy for a writer to start commenting on reviews of his own work — out of considerations of ethics, diplomacy, or what have you. He should be the last to attempt any final assessment, in case he is accused of delusions that he has written a masterpiece. Second, if he is more than just a dabbler at writing, he should regard arguing with reviewers as a waste of time anyway when he can be getting on with more creative writing. Writers should be more interested in construction than destruction.

So, on reading Vector 60, and finding that Dan Morgan had quite voluntarily spoken part of my mind for me, I felt I should at least acknowledge his remarks -- if only to save him the effort of steering the conversation in other directions next time we happen to meet and he shakes me by my not-beautiful but human hand.

I think perhaps this is the time to address a few remarks to the aspiring sf writer -- and I am sure there must be many in the BSFA — on what his attitude should be to reviews.

Reviewers, like people, come in all categories; and a review is only one person's opinion. The chances are that whatever attitude it takes — whether it pans or praises him — someone somewhere will think differently. It is the privilege of a reviewer to adopt an aggressive viewpoint if he feels like it; but it is still a writer's duty to himself to at least have faith in what he writes. To consider any sensible advice he can find, but still to stamp his work with his own style.

One of the hazardous consequences of being published is that a writer is offering himself and his work not just as something which might or might not be idolized, but as a potential target for sneering attack. All budding sf writers should bear this in mind.

Nevertheless, when a writer reads a review of his own work, he does owe it a sort of duty too — to see if he can gain anything worthwhile from it, regardless of its attitude. I don't say this will be easy, for he wouldn't be human (or humanoid, for that matter) if he wasn't perturbed by a review which wades through him like a demolition party. But he also wouldn't be a writer worthy of his intentions if he hadn't the gumption to put things into some sort of perspective. This means he must recover his cool, not allow himself to be unduly swayed by the reviewer, and try to look upon the situation from a logical viewpoint rather than an emotional one. He must tell himself that no one can impose absolute standards of what is good or bad in any literary work (sf or otherwise) — if only because literary yardsticks change as sure as the Universe is expanding.

The chances are he will be able to do this if he has been hardened by the adversities of his previous writing experiences.

First, he may have tolerated many rejection slips before having any of his work accepted in a paying magazine. He might also have faced the disheartening situation of having work accepted, then later returned before publication because the magazine is either going kaput or changing its policy. And he might have had to wait even longer before someone takes sufficient note of any published novel to decide to review it. So whatever the tone of the review, he has already been initiated.

Furthermore, if he is a sincere writer he should be as capable of assessing the merits of a review as the reviewer claims to be of judging the writer's work — if only because during perhaps years of apprenticeship he has received many helpful comments from editors and publishers. And even if he assesses the useful content of the review to be as low as two percent, he should still have more brains than to start arguing with the reviewer — if only because some reviewers might be as dogmatic on what is good and bad in the printed word as a flat-earthist might be on the shape of the Galaxy.

Likewise, he will regard any suggestion that he should stop writing because the reviewer did not like his book, as laughable. Publication is still a matter of contract between the publisher and the writer. And reviewers who delude themselves into thinking they have a duty to protect the public would all do better as publisher's readers (or table-thumping on a censorship board or something), where they might be in a better position to obliterate manuscripts before they ever get published.

Briefly then, a writer's attitude should be this. If the review praises him, he should regard it (naturally enough) as encouragement to get on with further writing. If it knocks him, he should get on with his writing anyway, in order to forget the review.

I read somewhere recently — I think it was Ken Seager quoting James Blish — that a destructive review is a cliche used by writers whose toes have been trodden on. This struck me as a neat and fair assessment; but one might also add that a destructive review is the reviewer's exhibitionistic way of saying he didn't enjoy the book. Anyway, it is up to the writer to cultivate protective toecaps; and if he is persistent, he will do this, even if he only sells a small part of what he writes. I like to think my toecap armour is pretty sturdy after some twenty years linked with the writing game — especially after wading through something like four typed drafts of inverted icicles to produce The Flowers of February.

Dan Morgan
Spalding

Dear Malcolm — Yes, you did detect a note of sarcasm; which may have been a mistake on my part in dealing with a matter of such serious concern. Your other comments are, however, way off target. I

certainly didn't say that I found criticism of my work of no help to me. There have been several occasions when I have been very grateful for criticisms and suggestions made upon my novels, and in each case I have acted on such advice to the benefit of the work concerned. I am talking of course of the only kind of criticism which has any real value to the writer — criticism by a professional editor who is prepared to put his — or her — money where his mouth is.

Criticism of a book after it has been published is pointless. The author's part in any such work was over anything from a year upwards before, and if he is a professional he will have written at least one other book since. It might be argued that even though the horse has long since bolted adverse criticism may close the stable door against the emergence of another of similar breed, but this isn't true either. If I have learned anything in 20 years of fiction writing it is that each book is a one-off project, with its own particular problems and — thank God — delights.

Come to think of it I may have learned one other thing. The Spaniards put it this way: 'Tonto es el que mira atras. Mientras hay camino adelante el caso es andar y andar.' Which being (very) freely translated means: 'Don't sit around brooding about your last book — get on with the next one!' (++ Very freely! You can't take liberties with a man who got a grade 3 'O' level a mere 6 years ago. It seems to have more to do with roads ahead to walk along, with the Lone Ranger guarding your rear. Excuse me. ++)

Incidentally, what is this accurate criticism you speak of? Until we have computers writing books and computers criticising them, such a thing is manifestly impossible. There are no right answers in the writing of fiction, just a series of subjective, intuitive choices. And nobody can tell you how to do it. I devour books on technique, but in the long run a writer — any artist in fact — is alone, doing his own thing for better or for worse.

++ Well, Dan, I'm sorry if I misinterpreted you, but you did say: "I question very seriously Pam's.... suggestion that criticism is of some help to the writer." Obviously you were referring to reviewing-type criticism rather than editorial-type; but then, so was I. You say now: "Criticism of a book after it has been published is pointless." This seems rather a dogmatic assertion, although it may be true in some cases. There was a TV programme on Alistair Maclean recently in which he said that ever since he read the first review of HMS Ulysses, which panned it, he has never looked at another review of any of his books. He should worry. However, one suspects that there are other writers, of whom you are not one, who are interested in the reviews they get, and may even take notice of them. Furthermore, of course, reviews have other functions. People read them; as a result of reading them they may or may not buy a book (or, more probably, they may or may not order it from their library; but this ultimately has the same effect as the volume of such requests will determine whether the library buys one copy of the book, or a dozen.) So a review can be useful both to the public, as a shopping guide, and to the publisher, as a reasonably cheap advert. This is all self-evident. It seems to me (and perhaps you'd care to refute this) that a writer who dogmatically disavows any interest in criticism after a book is published shows himself to be interested in one thing and one thing only: selling enough wordage to make a living. Nothing at all reprehensible in that, of course; but I suspect it does not describe the majority of writers.

As for 'accurate criticism': it's the kind of meaningless guff you get when you're typing stuff into the letter column on Wednesday, knowing the thing has to be at the printer's on Friday. Not quite meaningless, though; nor can I think of a better term on the spur of the moment. I wasn't talking about objective criticism; I don't believe in it any more than you do. What I was getting at was criticism, perhaps in itself covering a wide range of opinion, which is nevertheless based firmly on the book in hand; which may differ in interpretation and assessment but does not misconstrue and misunderstand. See what I mean? ++

Graham Charnock
Willesden Regis

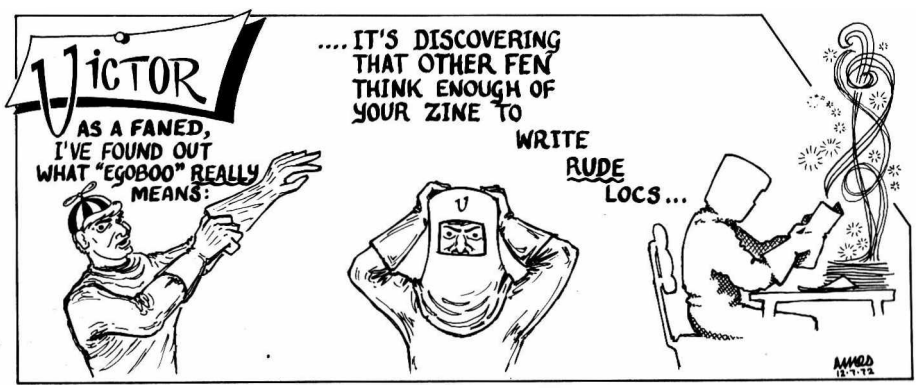
Dear Malcolm Of course I haven't read Vector, but I have read, with a kind of masochistic delight, Mrs Bulmer's contribution to the same. It's splendidly simplistic. Why does it smack so much of a child's primer in criticism? The schoolma'am trying to impress upon slightly truculent children the basic rules of critical appreciation? Pam at least knows the level of her audience, knows the standard of literature they consume, knows the quality of criticism the field can expect. And, as is evidenced by her article, is prepared to give it.

So, it's a shallow article; to poke at it perhaps gives it more stature than it deserves. But I shall be generous and poke away. "The prime object of reading fiction is enjoyment" is a statement that seems to beg a good many questions, not only in the direction of the term 'enjoyment', which Pam halfway answers, but in that of 'prime'. Can't fiction be written and read as education, as the folly of the foolish, as a trial, as a bleating cry of meaningless communication, as sweetly 'enjoyable' as a shot of junk? Okay, accept enjoyment as one of many motives equally valid and primal for reading the stuff. "Good analytic criticism can help to enhance this enjoyment for the reader by sharpening his awareness." No, love, only good writing can do that, else awareness is not awareness but a kind of parrotry. Does father holding child's hand and leading him to the top of the hill make the sunset beautiful or the child aware of its beauty?

Ah, and you speak of style, Pam, and how, "The sf writer has, after all, an extra dimension to convey to his readers, and cannot therefore afford to waste a single word." Would that you had wasted a few yourself to explain this mysterious extra dimension that appears to make more demands on the sf writer than the mainstream writer.

It is perhaps mean to point out that "she moved like a gazelle", the first of Pam's examples of metaphor, is in fact no such thing. And I'm not sure her second, "The bed was made for chastity and early rising", is metaphor in her own terms either. Where the selective comparison? It certainly seems no better or worse an image than Harker's poor "The hardwinters were going insane."

As for critics, I think a lot of critics deserve respect, the most deserving being those who have retained some sense of humility and of the cosmically absurd. Readers and critics are basically the same breed; they live in submarines. Critics are those canny enough to have found the periscopes and hence some small sense of location. But still, they breathe the same air as their less-sighted fellows, suffer the same stench and meanness of entrapment. Perhaps their vision may even make them a little more crabby. How else account for Pam's delight in dissecting a very bad book, the easiest task in the world for the poorest critic. No, it won't do, it won't do. All hands to the hatches. I look forward to reading Pam's first novel.



N.B. On consideration of the above it seems a shame to have spent so many words on someone who bored me so stiff, and to have said nothing about something that gave me great enjoyment, namely, the Howett piece. The trouble is, I am frequently uncritical of that which gives me enjoyment. I suspect many people are. I suspect critics enjoy very little.

Franz Rottensteiner
Austria

Dear Malcolm I would be grateful if you would correct a few errors in my piece ((in Vector 59)) that Lem called to my attention: 1. He wasn't decorated for his activities during WWII — the decorations were given to him entirely for his literary work; 2. Although he published essays on test psychology in Zycie Nauki, these had no connection with his own work; 3. And of course, Tvardovsky should be Tarkovsky — Tvardovsky was the late editor of Novy Mir.

I fear Bruce Gillespie is very unrealistic in his letter to you, although he has a point in asking why I am writing about Lem in the fanzines; but this is closely connected to the question of why I'm writing for the fanzines at all, or indeed about sf. The answer is simply that I enjoy doing it ... And frankly, I am not convinced that writings in The Listener or Times Literary Supplement would have had any more effect than writings in SF Commentary (which have close to none) besides being that much more difficult to achieve. Has Bruce considered how much fiction is being reviewed in, say, TLS; and how much fiction in a foreign language? Even if I had succeeded in placing one piece in each of these papers, does Bruce think they would have accepted a 2nd? And what is the real effect of one short review? (Yes, and how often and in what length is sf being reviewed in TLS?)

I fear Bruce's sentence "if the literary world of New York ignores Lem, then I would have to blame Franz for not plugging Lem in the right places" is wholly illusionary. The promotion of Lem is the business of McGraw-Hill, and theirs alone; if they or Lem had to depend upon my efforts in New York, they already would be lost. I have no monopoly on Lem, and nobody has a monopoly on recognising the qualities of any writer; and if I were the only one to think Lem great, then he would not deserve to be translated at all. No, what I write is of little importance, and probably serves just to teach fandom how to spell Lem's name. There is only one thing that matters, and in this I was extremely lucky. This is to make the texts themselves available. That I succeeded in talking Faber & Faber into doing Solaris is much more important than all my English language fanzine writings combined. (Here Bruce's guess is correct: I wasn't in contact with Lem then, and only later did it occur to me that I might do more for him if I became his agent.) I simply was lucky: first in Germany, where I was offered an sf editorship (and this as the result of editing my fanzine Quarber Merkur); and later there was the opening in the USA.

I don't think you have to look forward with "very slightly mixed feelings" to the Lem explosion. For consider this: if I were the great agent who knows everybody in publishing, and is able to sell any book, the fact that McGraw-Hill have contracted for 11 Lem books (and are soon to contract for two more — without having published even one so far!) might just be an indication of my superior salesmanship. But this I am not and so there is only one explanation for a major US publisher taking such a plunge into sf: Lem's superior qualities. (And I happen to know the extent of Lem's success elsewhere, and not only how much has been written on him but also by whom and how.) And there are already hopeful signs in the English speaking world, too: Prof. Ketterer and Prof.Suvin in Canada; Prof. Kandel in the USA; Peter Nicholl in the UK; pros like James Blish or Brian W. Aldiss; fans like Bruce, you, or James Mark Purcell in the USA. Not bad for a beginning.

I should like to know who it is who thinks The Invincible dreadful? I don't think so, nor do most of the people who have read Mrs Ackerman's translation. But the book is in quite another vein that Solaris, a piece of hard sf, with lots of technology, much simpler. I know people (highly literate writers) in Germany who reacted similarly: one was enthusiastic about the elegance of The Cybriad but didn't like The Invincible at all; and yet it is a fine example of another kind of sf... In any case, this was in the pre-McGraw-Hill days, and all other Lem books will be translated from Polish. And it is an indication of the importance the publishers attribute to Lem that his first books are now being translated anew, for the translations were a mess (and this is why most of the books mentioned in Vector 59 have been postponed until 1973). The work is now being done by Prof. Michael Kandel, a professor of Slavic languages and literature, a capable man and Lem enthusiast, who arrived as a Heaven-sent gift.

++ I'm very pleased to hear it. My chief doubt was over the translations, and if they are being done straight from the Polish then so much the better. ++

Tony Sudbery
York

Dear Malcolm I hope I'm not too late to react to your two articles on Stanislaw Lem, and to register a dissenting opinion. I've always admired Franz Rottensteiner's criticism; his knocking voice is a refreshing element in the critical scene. So I'm disappointed to find that now that he's found something to be enthusiastic about he's lost his head as completely as one of the fans he's always knocking. All I've got to go in judging Lem is Solaris; but Rottensteiner does put this forward as one of the four books on which he bases his case for Lem, and to my mind Solaris utterly fails to support the claims he makes.

Let's take these claims one by one. "Lem is a highly original writer." Not in Solaris, he isn't. A great deal of Solaris seems to me to be derived directly from Olaf Stapledon; you might almost say it is an attempt to write a Star Maker with human characters. In particular, the long descriptive essays that you find so striking in your review are an example of a technique that Stapledon was using quite uncompromisingly over thirty years ago. In my opinion Stapledon is by far the better writer; Lem is certainly his inferior intellectually.

Which brings me to another of Rottensteiner's claims. "He is a systematic thinker. There is nothing of the fuzzy thinking... that mars the work of the people who are today acclaimed as 'sf thinkers'". Solaris is full of fuzzy thinking. A small example is Lem's statement of the "commonsense view" that the planet "stabilised its eccentric orbit by virtue of a self-generated mechanical process, as a pendulum keeps itself on a fixed path once it is set in motion". Since a pendulum keeps itself on a fixed path by obeying the laws of mechanics, this is a far from commonsensical view of a planet that doesn't obey the laws of mechanics. A more serious example is the absurd section where Kelvin convinces himself that he is not merely suffering from a consistent delusion; in fact his elaborate experiment only proves that if he is suffering from a consistent delusion, then a consistent delusion is what he is suffering from. Thinking doesn't come much fuzzier than this. There are a number of other illogicalities and inconsistencies in the book; you touch on some of them in your review (and I've described others in my review in Speculation).

Finally, Rottensteiner enthuses about "the knowledge, the depth, the width of interest, this unique set of talents". Lem's interest may be wide, but its depth is illusory; much of his knowledge is spurious. I think Rottensteiner must have let himself be hoodwinked by Lem's trick of producing utter nonsense with an air of great authority (for examples see my Speculation review again). He should stick to destructive criticism: he's much better at it, and it's more valuable, than the constructive criticism in this article.

Obviously I disagree with a lot of your review of Solaris. There are some points where we agree, particularly those inconsistencies in the plot. But you seem to think they don't matter, whereas to me they add up to a picture of thoroughly shoddy construction. I don't see how you can call Solaris "a fairly conventional mystery-puzzle sf novel". Very few of its mysteries are explained; sometimes this is deliberate and justifiable (one of Lem's points being to do with the impossibility of explanation), sometimes Lem just seems to forget that he's

raised the mystery. For example, take the "Little Apocrypha", the book which Gibarian refers to in his posthumous note to Kelvin and which gives descriptions of Solarian phenomena which are not accepted by most Solariste. This is introduced as a significant clue; yet later these phenomena are described as well-known, and the Little Apocrypha is forgotten. Like so many of the other inconsistencies, this makes me suspect that Lem is being purely cynical; he wants to stir up an atmosphere of mystery, and can't be bothered to do it fairly.

Still, I can't deny that Solaris is a remarkable novel. But I would be sorry to see it hailed as a masterpiece while such genuine masterpieces as Star Maker and Capek's War With The Newts (which also has elements in common with Solaris) remain so little known.

++ I'll concede the point about Kelvin's delusion. In fact I noticed this myself while reading the novel, but had forgotten about it until I got your letter — not through any desire to overlook Solaris's shortcomings, but simply through a lapse of memory. (I should make notes while I'm reading a book, but I can't: when I start to do it, I stop getting through the book.) But the other point I don't see: it is a matter for debate what determines the planet's eccentric orbit, and the scientists who favour the commonsense explanation in accordance with the laws of mechanics are those regard the planet as purely inanimate and therefore seek an explanation for its motion which will not conflict with those laws. Q.E.D. I maintain that the book is a fairly conventional mystery-puzzle, although as I pointed out, Lem is not above introducing the odd red-herring. (He is perhaps not quite the paragon of literary virtue some claim him to be.) All of the important mysteries of the novel are explained, or at least laid open. The inconsistencies lie in a few incidents near the beginning of the book — you mention The Little Apocrypha; I still prefer Snow's hysterical reaction to Kelvin's arrival. Where we don't agree is in your assertion that these amount to a "thoroughly shoddy construction". They don't seem anything more than trivial. Mind you, I can see that you found it much more mysterious than I did — Gibarian's posthumous note, indeed! ++

Time for a few We-Also-Heard-Froms -- with the emphasis on 'few'. The response to Vector 60 has just as poor as that to no.59. Still, I have hopes that it will pick up (and if all the people who swore faithfully that they were going to write next weekend, honest, had done so, it wouldn't have been so bad). Anyway, we also heard from: Ted Tubb, who liked the contents well enough but found the small type hell on his eyes. Sorry, Ted -- I know it is rather microscopic but the reason, as you probably realise, is economic: we have to get as much material as possible into the available space, by reducing the type-size, or it would be completely uneconomic to have Vector printed. Chris Bursey, who complained about having to pay postage due on Vector 60 in a letter which he sent without any stamp at all... Terry Jeeves, who enjoyed John Brunner's piece: "He always writes well -- in fact I doubt whether he can write badly. Some of his examples seemed a bit apocryphal, but well illustrate his points -- however forecasting or mirroring society is only one facet of sf." Terry didn't go very much for Philip Strick's column, though. Richard Cotton, however, thought it was the best thing in the issue — which shows that you can't please all of the people all of the time etc etc blah blah. I wonder how many people have actually got as far as reading this line. L.R. James wondered if "John Brunner may one day rethink his 'destructive obsolete principles' since lotus eaters and high population density would hardly seem compatible except in rare Earthly paradises, and every one of the principles he mentions seems to me a relative statement in as much as "hard work,..lot of money... greed...material comfort" are far from the same things to individuals in the same culture let alone in differing worlds." Mr James also made me glow with references to the "sheer professional technical excellence of Vector...that makes it a pleasure to read". And last but not least (to drag in another of my vast repertoire of cliches) Andrew Prior thought that reprinting G-o-H speeches was a bit of a bore, just used to fill space. Both he and Chris Bursey mentioned the small size of the news department, as if it was my doing. Not so. The only reason, as Archie said, was that it followed fairly close on the last duplicated Bulletin and there just wasn't much news. Much more this time as you can see. And that will have to be all. Please write.

news department

edited by archie mercer

THE IT'S NOT MY FAULT DEPT. Several members had to pay 2p "postage due" to receive their Vector 60. Please don't shoot the distribution team; the blame lies with some anonymous servant of the Post Office at Highbury Park N.5 for telling us that the postage was 2½p instead of 3½p. Nevertheless, we are very sorry that this should have happened.

TURKISH? SWEDISH? If any member can read either Turkish or Swedish and would like to see a fanzine in that language, I have one of each which you would be welcome to peruse and to pass on to anyone else interested. SAE to Audrey Walton (address on contents page).

DAN MORGAN WRITES RE THE S.F.W.B. "The response to the last issue was a deadly hush apart from a letter from John Brunner — this despite my appeal therein for material. How can one run a forum for writers if the writers don't have anything to say? John's letter is very interesting as always — but apart from that I would have to write the entire issue myself, which seems a pretty pointless operation, more or less like talking to oneself. This being so, unless something drastic happens, I can't see there being another SF Writer's Bulletin. Pity, but there it is."

GLOBE MISPLACED: SENSATION! It is generally known that fans and professionals of sf and fantasy have since time immemorial (well, moderately immemorial) been wont to foregather on the evening of the first Thursday in every month at a certain London tavern hight "Globe". A certain amount of doubt, however, appears recently to have crept into the precise identity of the "Globe" in question. I recently heard tell of one unfortunate who sought it in vain in-and-around Fleet Street, whilst I have just seen a plug for it (on a Novacon 2 progress report) locating it in Gray's Inn — wrongly spelt "Grey's" at that! So one and all please take note -- the "Globe" tavern, Hatton Garden, is the onlie true Globe; all others lack the necessary authenticity — and, what is worse, lack the sf-oriented company that one seeks! (Underground to Chancery Lane or bus to where Gamages used to be; then ask for Hatton Garden.) (To locate it precisely, it is on the corner of Hatton Garden and Greville Street, and despite what everyone tells you Farringdon is the nearest Tube station, though there's not a lot in it. -- MJE)

LIBRARY NEWS The recent referendum produced an overwhelming majority in favour of the Association's book-library being loaned on a long-term basis to the S.F.Foundation at the North East London Polytechnic and

the arrangement is now being proceeded with. The books will, naturally, still be available for members to borrow — as, in the meantime, they still are at Elaine Wash's address. (The magazine library, containing more issues of more sf magazines than I care to think about, remains in the care of Joe Bowman, of Balinoe, Ardgay, Rossshire, Scotland, who is only too delighted to loan them out on the Association's behalf. To a certain extent, he can of course also give guidance as to what can be found where.)

INFORMATION BUREAU The Association is happy to announce that Mr. Alan Myers, who teaches at a grammar school and is an expert on Soviet sf, has joined the Bureau. He will be very pleased to deal with any query in this field. (As usual, all queries for the Information Bureau should be sent in the first instance to Audrey Walton — address on contents page. A stamped addressed envelope for the reply would be appreciated.)

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED John Gordon Cole (26): 4 Villa Rd., St. Leonard's on Sea, Sussex. "Other" interests: Wargaming, chess, astronomy. Prefers correspondents from: USA, Canada, Australia.

Barry D.McCann (23): 32 Haven Lane, Ealing, London W.5. Playing in a jazz band, Marx Bros., social work, travel. Anywhere.

Robert L.Bartram (21): 116 Turners Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. Ancient history, mythology, most fields akin to sf. USA, Japan, England.

Brian Robinson (20): 26 Marlow St., Westcott St., Hull, HU8 8NE. Reading, science, life. USA, Australia, Canada. (Not to be confused with the other Brian Robinson, of Manchester!)

Valerie M.Humphrey (Miss) (28): Hollywood, Billesley Lane, Portway, Alvechurch, near Birmingham. Astronomy, TV, reading, writing. UK, USA, Australia, Canada.

Brian P.Dewell (32): 20 Thirlmere Ave, Horwich, Lancs. Drawing, painting, natural history, fencing. USA.

Robert P.Muncey (20): 50 Burlington Rd., Enfield, Middx. Old sewing machines and typewriters, records, geology and mineralogy; very interested in bibliography & is thinking of doing some checklists. USA, Canada, Brazil.

Gordon Larkin (20): 32 Victoria St., Whitstable, Kent. Writes songs and poetry, plays guitar and dreams. USA.

John Melville (38): 6 Eskview Gro., Dalkeith, Midlothian, Scotland. Bibliography, D.I.Y. UK, USA. (Members may be interested to learn that he heard about us from the BFS.)

Robert B.Taylor (55): 23 Great Hay, Sefton, Bootle, Lancs, L30 0QT. Rosicrucianism, mysticism, stamp collecting, Red Cross.

ROUND THE CONVENTIONS

NOVACON 2 (Birmingham, 4th/5th November 1972) has issues its second Progress Report. The event is shaping up nicely from all appearances. Room rates at the official hotel (the Imperial Centre) run from £2.90 per night (+ 11% service charge) for a single, proportionately cheaper for a double. And Doreen Parker (of whom all readers of Vector must, surely, have heard!) is not simply the fan-guest-of-honour as was thought, but the Guest of Honour. This Con looks as though it's going to be fun!

Registration (which brings full details) 50p to the Registration Secretary: Jeffery D.Hacker, 92, Wisley Way, Birmingham, B32 2JU. Cheques, postal orders etc. should be payable to NOVACON.

OMPACON 73 is the title of the 1973 British S.F. Convention, to be held as usual over the Easter weekend. The 1972 Convention announced a hotel — found that the announcement was somewhat premature — announced a substitute elsewhere — and settled finally on a third somewhere else again. OMPAcon is playing it cagey at the moment, and its first progress report, "Ompagress 1" will only commit itself to saying that the two favourite locations this time are both in Bristol. However, under the chairmanship of Ken Cheslin of Stourbridge, it is in good hands. Registration fee is 50p. Secretary-Treasurer is Fred Hemmings, 20 Beech Rd., Slough, Bucks, SL3 7DQ.

EUROCON 1 (Trieste, Italy) is now over. Total registration was about 780, with 372 attendees from 24 countries. Particularly encouraging was the representation from East Europe, with attendees from Hungary (16 people), Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland, while a representative from East Germany had to drop out at the last moment because of illness. The Europa Awards went as

follows: Artist — Karel Thole (Italy); Professional Magazine — Nueva Dimension (Spain); Non-Specialised Magazine — Viata Romaneasca (Rumania); Amateur Magazine — Speculation (England — and congratulations to Pete Weston!); Comics — Lone Sloane (France). The awards were made through a mixed system of popular vote and a jury constituted by the European representatives present at the convention. The main award at the SF Film Festival which proceded the convention went to the American film Silent Running, which should get its UK premiere shortly. Eurocon 2 will be held in Brussells in 1974. (The above is extracted from a report by Eurocon chairman Gian Paolo Cossato which appeared in the indispensable Locus.)

TOLKIEN SOCIETY NEWS The Tolkien Society of America, for which Archie Mercer used to be British Agent, has now been merged into the Mythopoeic Society, for which Archie Mercer is in no way responsible. Queries concerning existing T.S.A. subsciptions, as well as those concerning membership of the Mythopoeic Society itself, should be addressed direct to the latter body at P.O.Box 24150, Los Angeles 90024, USA.

This of course makes no difference to our own home-grown Tolkien Society, for which Archie Mercer (address on contents page) remains Treasurer. (£1.00 for four issues of The Mallorn, plus any intermediate publications.) Professor J.R.R.Tolkien himself has expressed his willingness to be the Society's Honorary President (after all, it is really his fault). He has recently returned to Oxford and is settling down in Merton College, but is greatly distressed by some ill-disposed person having stolen his M.B.E. medal, as well as some of his late wife's jewellery. (It should have been a knighthood — you can't steal that!)

OBITUARY William G.Ritson died peacefully on April 21st 1972. His mother writes: "His father, sister and myself wish to thank you for the great pleasure receiving your bulletins gave to him. He was a writer, actually saw his first installment of his children's story in print before he died, of which we are very proud. He had muscular dystrophy and it took untold courage and determination on his part to do what he did. He always took great interest in all your writings and was a person you would all have been proud to know. His hobbies were astrology, stamp-collecting, chess-playing, was very interested in tape recordings, reading, but his true vocation was to be a writer. His family wish you all the best in your endeavours in your work and hope you may continue to give as much pleasure to many, many more people as you have to our son. God bless you all."

MEMBERS SMALL ADS (which appear free)

PHILIP PAYNE, 15 Wilmerhatch Lane, Epsom, apologises for any letters unanswered or fanzines un-locced, but he is in America and will not be returning until late September.

URGENTLY REQUIRED Doc Savage No.1 (Man of Bronze); Killing Machine — Vance (Berkley ed.); Book of Ptath (200 Million Years AD) — Van Vogt; This Immortal and Isle of the Dead — Roger Zelazny (Ace editions); and early Ace books, especially "D's". Write listing titles, condition and price required to: Chris Bursey, 32 Melville Rd., BIRMINGHAM, B16 9TJ.

MODELS EXHIBIT FOR 1973 CONVENTION Here is a chance for all sculptors and model makers to exhibit their work at the next SF Convention. I (Kenneth Mardle, of 44 Charles Bradlaugh House, Haynes Close, Tottenham, London, N17 ORD) am willing to organise a collective exhibit of Convention members' work. Will all those BSFA members (and other fen) write to me who are interested in constructing models of b.e.m.s and various other creatures, or those who would like to try. I shall give them advice on materials, and size of models, as well as on methods of model making. Any subject (even fringe SF/fantasy/astronomical/entomological) would be suitable if people would write giving some idea of what they have in mind. Small models (and those already made and hanging around the house somewhere) would be considered. This collective exhibit will (I propose) be run and organised by me in the Artroom. Please write, anybody who is willing to make models for exhibition.

HELP YOUR FRIENDLY VECTOR EDITOR Entering my second childhood without ever having properly left the first, I am anxious to locate copies (to buy, or just to borrow) of Lost Men in the Grass and The Death of Metal, both by Donald Suddaby. I would

also be glad to hear from anybody who knows Eric Frank Russell's address. -- Malcolm Edwards (address on contents page)

HOW IS A FAN GROUP FORMED ??? Graham R. Poole, of 23 Russet Rd., Cheltenham, Glos, GL51 7LN, wants to know — also, how to keep a group in being once it exists. Any advice of any sort is welcome (apart from "Forget the idea!).

YOUR CHANCE TO RULE THE GALAXY 4000AD, Waddington's new space game, is now being played postally in a small and eccentric fanzine called War Bulletin. Issues are every 3 weeks, 5/20p in UK, plus 25p per game. From Hartley Patterson, Finches, 7 Cambridge Rd., Beaconsfield, Bucks. PS: we also play Diplomacy and several variants thereof, and carry news and articles on postal gaming.

WANTED In OMPA mailings circa 1963-5 Dick Schultz of New York included one of the earliest Diplomacy zines, Brobdingnag. These first issues are now impossible to obtain in the USA, but there must be a number rotting away among the piles of old OMPAzines sold at Conventions. I will pay good prices for them — say double original cost + postage if in good condition. Am also interested in any other old Diplomacy zines. Hartley Patteron, Finches, 7 Cambridge Rd., Beaconsfield, Bucks, UK.

VIEWPOINT is a ~~terrible~~ mixed fanzine, and No.8 reveals the dastardly truth behind Vector 59. Copies are going quicker than the Oz school-kids ish, so get your 10p to Fred Hemmings, 20 Beech Rd., Slough, Bucks, SL3 7DQ. And don't worry if you miss no.8: the next ish contains Conreps from Chessmancon and Eurocon. By the fans who survived the event! (Ad placed by Dave Rowe, who appears to be implicated.)

'CALLIOPE' Charlie Winstone is trying to compile a one-shot of Fan Poetry and Prose, and asks any would be Poets (&/or Prosicians?) to send their efforts to him for inclusion in Calliope. Please enclose s.a.e., should the material need to be returned. Charlie Winstone, 71 George Rd., Erlington, Birmingham, B23 7QE.

WANTED New Worlds Magazine Nos: 173, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186. Send offers to: T.N.Parfitt, 5 Ringlow Ave., Moorside, Swinton, M27 5EX*

* Note: according to Mr Mercer, this postcode is M27 SEX. I take this to be, as it were, a Freudian slip. — MJE

E.C.TUBB (67 Houston Rd., London, SE23 2RL) is after the following magazines:

Air Wonder Stories: Dec.29; Mar.30.
Wonder Stories: Mar. & July 31.
Amazing Stories: April-Sept 1926 inc.; Feb, July, Aug, Sept, 27.
Amazing Stories Quarterly: Spring 28 (vol.1, no.2)
Astounding Stories: Feb, Dec, 43; Feb, Mar, Aug, Oct, 44.
Strange Tales: All issues
Unknown Worlds: All American issues

And has the following to offer in trade:

Air Wonder Stories: July 29 (first issue); Jan, Feb, 30.
Science Wonder Stories: Dec, 29; Jan, Feb, Mar, May, 30.
Wonder Stories: Feb, May, June, 32; June, 33; Oct, 39.
Amazing Stories: Jan, 27; Mar, Aug, Sept, Oct, 28; May, 30; Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, Jun, July, Dec, 31; May, Jun, July, Aug-Sept, 33; Jan, Feb, Mar, 35; Oct, Dec, 36; Mar, 39.
Amazing Stories Quarterly: Summer, 28; Winter, Spring, 29; Spring, Summer, 30; Winter, Spring, Fall, 31; Winter, Spring-Summer, Fall-Winter, 32; Spring-Summer 33; Fall, 34.
Wonder Stories Quarterly: Spring, 30; Winter, Spring, Summer, 32; Winter, 33.

SF PSEUDONYMS Halkett & Laing's Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature — a standard reference tool — is currently in process of revision, and Gerald Bishop (10 Marlborough Rd., Exeter, EX2 4TJ) has been appointed Consultant responsible for sf entries. Only complete publications will be listed, not individual short stories within anthologies or magazines. Anyone with information about anonymous or pseudonymous sf or fantasy books, or about authors who have had books published anonymously or pseudonymously, who wishes to help should contact Gerald for further details.

At the same time, Brian Robinson and Paul Skelton are compiling a Directory of pseudonyms of sf authors, which will cover pseudonyms used for writing outside the field. This will cover short stories as well as books. Again, anyone with information should get in touch with Gerald Bishop (but please specify which of these two works you can supply information for).

NEW MEMBERS

1257 Bertram, Robert L.: 116 Turners Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

1258 Cole, John G.: 4 Villa Rd, St Leonard's on Sea, Sussex.

1252 Dewell, Brian P.: 20 Thirlmere Ave, Horwich, Lancs.

1259 Kirk, Peter D.: 24 Moseley Ave, Wallasey, Ches.

1248 Duell, Anthony A.: c/o Armstrong Cork Co, Hazelhurst Rd, Worsley, Manchester, M28 4SQ

1251 Humphrey, Valerie M. (Miss): Hollywood, Billesley Lane, Portway, Alvechurch, near Birmingham.

1253 Jackson, Robert A.: 21 Lyndhurst Rd, Benton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE12 9NT

1255 Larkin, Gordon: 32 Victoria St, Whitstable, Kent.

1260 Melville, John: 6 Lakview Grove, Dalkieth, Midlothian, Scotland

924 Monteith, Charles M.: Faber & Faber, 3 Queen Square, WC1N 3UA

1254 Muncey, Robert P.: 50 Burlington Rd, Enf-ield, Middx

357 Myers, Alan G.: 2 Little Rivers, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

1256 McCann, Barry D.: 32 Haven Lane, Ealing, London W5.

1250 Noyes, Ralph N.: 129 Beaufort St, Chelsea, London SW3.

935 Noyle, Alastair B.: 32 Pemberton Park, Gelli Rd, Llanelli, Carms, SA14 8NN

1249 Robinson, Brian: 26 Marlow St, Westcott St, Hull, HU8 8NE

1261 Taylor, Robert B.: 23 Great Hay, Sefton, Bootle, Lancs, L30 0QT.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

1226 Burman, Sandra: now 27 Leaside Ave, London N10.

788 Coney, Michael G.: now 10287 Bowerbank, Sidney, B.C., Canada.

1219 Patterson, D.: now 4 Copeland Drive, Newtownards Rd, Comber, Co.Down, N.Ireland.

STATISTICS

Members with inland addresses (inc. Ireland and B.F.P.O.)	239
Members with overseas addresses	22
Total membership therefore	261

Continued from p.27

Andrew Stephenson, to whom many thanks. And apologies — the printers managed to lose most of the fine detail from his cover for the last issue. I hope this one will fare better. Its title, incidentally, is "The Explorers".

Things to come dept: I've a number of projects on the go, not all of which can be mentioned yet; but I can announce a few forthcoming attractions. Next issue will contain "To Barsoom and Beyond", a long extract from Brian Aldiss's forthcoming history of sf The Billion Year Spree. There will also be material by Harry Harrison and, I hope, James Blish, Michael Moorcock and Philip Strick.

After that, there will be an interview with D.G.Compton, plus an analysis of his work by Mark Adlard; an article by Joanna Russ titled "The Wearing Out of Genre Materials"; a reprint of Brian Aldiss's excellent speech at Chessmancon (when I get around to transcribing it); reprints of Speculation con speeches by Edmund Cooper and John Sladek (ditto); an interview with American author Gene Wolfe.

There will also be a series of articles under the general title "Author's Choice". These will form a parallel to the series of anthologies under the same title edited by Harry Harrison, in which authors select a favourite story and it is reprinted along with their comments about how, when and why it was written. We will be dealing with novels rather than short stories, and I think the results will prove very interesting. The first three contributors will be Brian Aldiss, Poul Anderson, and Harry Harrison.

Add the usual features: book reviews, letters, news, and regular columns by Philip Strick (missing this time but hopefully back next) and Peter Roberts -- and I hope you will agree there is plenty of interesting material to look forward to.

Vector

Journal of the British Science Fiction Association

September - October 1972 ; No. 61 ; 30p