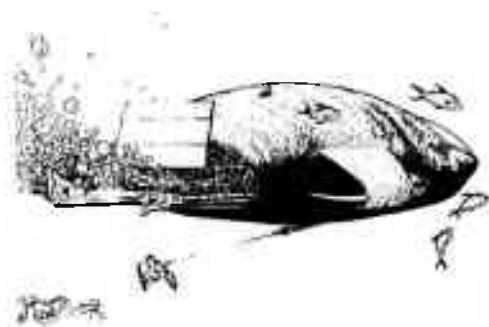


VECTOR 70

Autumn 1975

50p \$1.00

**Bob Shaw
Edmund Cooper
S.F. and the City
Books
Films**



VECTOR 70

Editor: Christopher Fowler
72, Lealworth Avenue,
Southcote,
Reading RG3 3DN
United Kingdom
(0734-594890)

VECTOR 70 Autumn 1975 : Journal of the British SF Association : Vol 2 no 2

Cover Art By Dave Rowe Interior art by Terry Jeeves

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Copy date for VECTOR 71: Friday 28th
November

Collating/stapling/folding on VECTOR
69 by Tom Jones, Peter George, Keith
Freeman, Martin Hatfield, Mike Healy
and the Editor.

Thanks to:

Florence Russell, for continued use
of her IBM Selectric, not to mention
teaching the Editor how to make tea in
a microwave oven.

Keith Freeman and Martin Hatfield,
for advice and support

...and Dora, Howard, Yvette, Steve,
Sandra, Sally and Margaret, for
providing a measure of sanity.

VECTOR is the official journal of
the British Science Fiction
Association Limited.

Chairman: Kenneth Bulmer

Vice-Chairman: Dave Hyle:
"Two Rivers", Ham Court, Weybridge,
Surrey KT13 8YE

Treasurer: Keith Freeman:
128, Fairford Road, Tilehurst,
Reading

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Green Pastures, Kentisburyford, N.
Devon EX31 4NM

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This issue of VECTOR is available at
the price of 50p (which is still non-
profit-making) It is regularly
available in the UK only to members
of the BSFA (membership enquiries to
David Symes).

VECTOR subscriptions outside the UK
are five issues for \$6.00 (or \$1.00
per copy air-mail) in the USA or
Australia. Equivalent rates else-
where. Please send sterling cheque
or money order, payable to "Vector".
or, failing that, cash in US dollars.

Back issues available at 50p each:
59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 67/68 (66 is now
no longer available); from the editor.
Cheques, etc. payable to "Vector".

Print run this issue, 600

Printed by: Sanderson Design and Print
Limited, 18 Portman Road, Reading

Collating/stapling/folding/envelope
stuffing by the usual gang plus loyal
members of the Reading SF Club

LEAD-IN

It's five past ten, Monday evening, October 27th. Outside the confines of the den in which I type this, darkness, cold, fog - a typical Thames Valley Autumn. Inside, I crouch over the IBM Selectric, squeezed in somewhere between the hundreds of books, magazines, papers (not to mention a globe of the Moon) which crowd these confines. Most of VECTOR 70 is at the printers, all that is left to do being the editorial and the setting up of the cover. I have spent most of the last five days producing the copy for this issue. By 8.30 tomorrow morning it will all be at the printers, on Saturday at twelve (DV) it will be printed; on Sunday it will be put together and stuffed in envelopes, on Monday, bulk mailed to Bracknell; and by Thursday, in your hands. By the time I return from Novacon on Sunday 9th November, the first letters-of-comment will be on their way...and I shall already be on the way towards VECTOR 71, the Christmas issue. So, here and now, I ponder what your verdict is likely to be on this, the first issue of the magazine which I have entirely produced.

I hope that your verdict will be a favourable one - certainly of the 50 or so letters received commenting on VECTOR 69 and the NEWSLETTER, the overwhelming majority were favourable. Glad to see the magazine back, happy that the BSFA is back in existence, full of good wishes (and offers of help) for the future - A tremendously encouraging response, not only for me as VECTOR editor, but for the whole committee. We are certainly doing our level best to follow up on your suggestions, and trying to make the BSFA a force to be reckoned with in sf. The next year could see some great things.

To return more specifically to VECTOR 70: I rather feel that your opinion of the issue will be dependent on your attitude to the major article, "Science Fiction's Urban Vision". Chris Hannett, the author, is a lecturer in the social sciences faculty of the Open University, chairman of the urban development course, and (obviously) a reader of sf. I believe his article is an important one, since it lends new insight into the urban future both for the sf reader and for the planner. It is serious, carefully researched, yet still eminently readable.

As well as this long piece, we have another of Bob Shaw's highly entertaining talks, "Time Travellers Among Us". Bob happens - and I'm sure that the rest of us will join him in this hope - that it will be the first of a series, to continue with "Telepaths...", "Aliens...", detailing the activities of science fictional archetypes in our midst.

Another familiar name this issue is that of Edmund Cooper, whose article on "Violence in SF" takes a look at some of the major works of the genre wherein violence has been used to various effects. Mr. Cooper lays stress on the moral use of violence in sf, which raises the whole question of whether there are situations in sf - indeed, in the arts in general - where violence is being used in an immoral way. It would certainly be possible to suggest that some examples of the use of violence are exploitative, and that this is to be abhorred - though I certainly do not ally myself with those calling for censorship to be increased. Adults are intelligent and morally responsible enough to decide for themselves what they wish to read/view. To take this decision out of their hands is to deny an important aspect of their humanity.

Passing on to other items in this issue - and stopping the editorial becoming "preachy", as Dora would say - I'm pleased that two of the review columns promised in the last issue have materialised. Keith Freeman's look at fanzines, and the cinema column. This latter came from an unexpected direction - rather out of the blue, in fact - in the person of Andrew Tidmarsh. We hope that he will be continuing to provide us with film reviews. Also re-instituted this issue is the Letter-column. This is more limited in space than I would like, but letters squeezed out of VECTOR appear in the NEWSLETTER.

The "Infinity Box" is rather less infinite this issue than last, mainly because it takes time to re-organise the flow of review books, and to get the old reviewers writing again. Thus I was particularly pleased to receive again out of the blue - a review from James Corley, who tells me he used to write for VECTOR about six years ago. His is a most welcome return. The rest of the reviews are by faces old and new, and the next issue of VECTOR will, with luck, contain reviews by a number of the old team that Malcolm Edwards built up.

What of the future? In between work on V71, due out for Christmas, I am attempting to put material together for a special James Bush issue, as indicated in the last NEWSLETTER, a task which is proving more time-consuming than I had originally anticipated, although I have received a great deal of help from Judy Bush; help for which I am especially grateful as it was given in the midst of hurried preparations for a visit to Greece. I am also working on the collection of material for the "Yearbook", suggested by Ken Slater. Any suggestion for items which should be included in this would be gratefully received and carefully considered. I'm hoping the Yearbook will be out in between the New Year and the Mancon, at Easter.

As you will gather, all this publishing is very time-consuming - it absorbs about 1/3 of my waking hours at present - and thus I am particularly happy to tell you that Keith Freeman is providing assistance on the business management side of VECTOR, and that once he hands on the Treasurership, he will be coming over to us to work as Business Manager, to encourage sales, distribution, and advertising procurement. The question of finding an editor for the NEWSLETTER is one which exercises my mind, but at present without solution.

As I see things at the moment, it is going to take some time before the ASFA settles down into a steady progress, and similarly, it will be some time before the content/style of VECTOR settles into a pattern under my editorial hand. I feel at times more like a publisher than an editor - so much of the work is of a clerical or production nature. I also feel myself pulled in a number of directions by different members of the AF world. Whilst remaining responsive to these people's ideas, I have a fairly clear view of the path which VECTOR should follow, and I hope that these first two issues together form a step along that path. One recent correspondent dared me to "give the rug some credibility" you're on, Mike - that's just what I shall be trying to do. A little time is all I ask.

Reading through this editorial - indeed, reading through the whole of V70 - I wonder whether it says too much - or nothing at all. In personal terms, to quote Don Maclean - "I'm all tied up on the outside/No-one knows quite what I've got/But I know that on the inside/What I used to be I'm not/Any more..."

Bob Shaw

Time Travellers Among Us

A question that is frequently asked in the sf world is: "If Time Travel is to become possible in the future, why have we not seen time travellers among us?"

Only this morning I was talking to a well-known sf author in the bar, and I said to him, "Can I have that fiver you borrowed last Easter?"

He scrutinised me keenly for a moment and said, "Bob, if time travel is to become possible in the future, why have we not seen time travellers among us?"

There are a number of possible answers to that question - a favourite one among sf writers being that anybody who visits us from the future has to obey the Prime Directive that you do not interfere in any way with a culture in a less advanced stage of development than your own. This Prime Directive is applied without fail whether the visitors are arriving from the future or from another world, say, beaming down onto a strange planet from the SS *Enterprise*. It is applied so often, in fact, and repeated and chanted and intoned that it is easy to get the impression that it has the status of a universal law - like the one about toast always landing on the buttered side when you drop it on the floor; or the one about ICS courses which states that no matter what course you do with them - accountancy, draughtsmanship, dress-making, it doesn't matter - you always end up as foreman of the machine shop. I've seen it all in the ads in the back of old *ASTOUNDINGS*, and I know.

The truth of the matter is, of course, that the Prime Directive was invented by sf authors and promoted by them for no other reason than that it provides a useful bit of plot complication. If Kirk, Spock and McCoy were allowed to do the logical thing and shoot any warlike primitives who attacked them, many episodes of *Star Trek* would have been over in about five minutes. Which might not have been a bad thing - it would have let you get onto the good ad on television, like the Cadbury's Smash commercials.

What it boils down to is that visitors from the future have to dress up in the clothes of the period they are visiting and be careful not to make themselves conspicuous, or to do anything which would influence the course of history. If they don't obey the rules the Chrono Police come after them, or the Paradox Police, or the Legion of Time.

Great stuff this! If any of you missed the Golden Age of sf - this is what it was all about. Mind you, I don't know what would happen if a time traveller carelessly changed the course of history, and the segment of the future he wiped out was the one in which the Paradox Police were formed! Anyway, they're still a fine body of men.

The point about time travellers blending into the background is important because it seems that the apparent evidence that the time machine will not be invented in the future is not admissible evidence. You can take it from me that time travel will become possible; and I'm going to go on to present a reasoned, carefully worked out, irrefutable, logical proof of that statement.

Unfortunately, I can't reveal exactly how it will be done

This is the text of Bob Shaw's talk at SEACon, Exeter 1975. First published in *TRIUNE* 21, reprinted by permission of the author and Eric Beniccliffe and Terry Jeeves.

One perhaps likes to think of a time machine as being something like a telephone booth, or a cage made up of shimmering rods which are joined together in a way which produces a curious aching pain in the eyes when you try to follow their geometrics. More Golden Age stuff, this ... I once actually drew a time machine on a gallezner stencil for the cover of a magazine. I chose to draw the telephone-booth type ... mainly because I didn't have a proper stencil-cutting stylus, and it is almost impossible to portray shimmering rods and subtle mind-twisting geometrics on stencil with a dried-up ball-point pen. The drawing showed the time machine in a shop window. There was a notice on it quoting the price at \$2,000 - but there was an extra bill saying that you had four years to pay. This happened a long time ago, but I think the idea was that you could put down your deposit, get in, drive four years forward, and reappear when you owned the thing. The only trouble was, I never figured out who actually made the payments in the meantime. This goes to show you what a complicated thing time actually is.

I'm firmly convinced that time is complex in its nature, and not a linear thing in the way it is so often regarded. It has always struck me as strange that time - the one dimension we know least about - is the one about which people are most dogmatic. For example, people often get precognitive dreams. It's an established fact. I've had them lots of times - and yet orthodoxy says they're impossible. There's this fantastic explanation about one half of your brain receiving its data a fraction of a second later than the other, thus creating an impression that an event which is actually new to you is one that has already occurred, already been experienced. This neurological trickery is used to convince you that the evidence of your senses is unreliable, in some special cases i.e. the ones where the nature of time is called into question. Your senses are considered good enough for minor things, like giving evidence in a murder trial. I mean, if you were walking along a street and heard a shot, and then saw a man running out of a house, and then looked in the window and saw a body lying there; and if you swore all that - they would be prepared to take some wretch away and hang him. Your evidence would be acceptable. But ... if the defence counsel got up and said, "The witness saw the defendant running out of the house and then he heard the shot, but because one half of his brain receives its information a fraction of a second later than the other this gave him the impression things happened the other way around," he would be laughed out of court.

In the case of precognitive dreams, they always ask you if you wrote it down or told anybody before the predicted event occurred. And - naturally - you haven't. When you get up in the morning, faced with the prospect of working all day, late for the office, feeling like death, ready to burst into tears, you can't be expected to take two or three hours off to tell people everything you dreamed during the night. Even if you tried, you would probably pick the wrong things, because precognition occurs in odd little fragments of dreams which are not recognised as significant until the event. A perfect example is a dream I had at the last Novacon. On the Friday night I dreamed that I was in a room helping somebody to look for their contact lenses, which had fallen on the floor. I looked down and saw them lying on the carpet, right at my feet, but they were much larger than I had expected and looked like solid hemispheres of glass. Next day I was ordering some drink at the bar, and the barman dropped an ice cube which fell at my feet. I don't know if you know this, but the ice cubes in the Novacon hotel aren't cubes at all - they use fancy bits of ice shaped like two hemispheres joined together on the curved side, like very squat hour glasses. This ice cube which fell had split in half, and when I looked down there were two little glassy hemispheres lying on the carpet at my feet, just as I'd seen them in the dream.

In spite of the difficulties involved, I have tried to tell people in advance, just to get the precognitive thing established with them - but I

is a very curious fact that events you decide to relate to people are the very ones which never come to pass. The only logical explanation of this is that there must be some kind of feedback from the future which is triggered off by your voicing a dream, and which modifies the subsequent course of events. In all probability there are Time Guardians - an undercover branch of our old friends the Paradox Police - whose job it is to prevent anybody from setting himself up as a successful seer. No doubt they think that they are very clever, but it was by seeing through their scheme that - in 1937 - I was able to save the life of our greatest statesman, Sir Winston Churchill! The fact that Churchill was living in London at the time, while I was 5,000 miles away, living in Western Canada, only goes to show the true extent of the fantastic powers we are dealing with here. There was a period of about two weeks in the summer of 1957 when I got a continuous run of precognitive dreams. Every night I would dream about something, get up in the morning, go to the drawing office where I worked, and when I walked into the office the other engineers were discussing the very thing I had dreamed about. I got mild enjoyment from the phenomenon for about a fortnight - then came the night when I had a vivid dream that Sir Winston had died. This put me in something of a spot. On the one hand, I wanted the supreme vindication of my precognitive powers, on the other hand, it was the time of the Suez crisis, and all that, and Britain had dire need of Sir Winston's presence among the living. In the end I did the unselfish thing. I hurried out to work without turning on the radio, rushed into the design office and - before anyone could utter a word - shouted, "I dreamed Sir Winston Churchill died last night!" The other engineers stared at me in silence for a moment - perhaps in some dim way they could sense the great wheel of time moving into new positions, or perhaps they just thought I had flipped my lid. In any case, I had the satisfaction of knowing that by voicing the dream I had tricked the Time Guardians into sparing the great man's life. As it turned out, I had wangled Sir Winston an extra eight years, and - even though he did not do too much with them - the whole episode shows you how a good knowledge of science fiction and science fantasy can be put to practical use in everyday life.

It may seem - to those of you who recall that we are supposed to be discussing time travellers among us - that I have strayed a little from the subject. But, in fact, my remarks have been very pertinent. The point is that, because of the nature of us, its writers and keen readers have acquired insights into time that are denied to ordinary people. You must admit that this afternoon you have heard me say things about time which mundane outside society would view with some scepticism. We - the writers and readers of us - are the biggest danger to secret time travellers, because we are alert to the sort of things that go on! If anybody is going to spot visitors from the future and queer the works for them, it is us right here in the convention hall!

At this point in my talk I'm going to stray away from hard scientific fact and become a little speculative. It is my considered opinion that in a very short time - just a year or two, perhaps - some of writers and readers will have deduced and learned so much about the activities of the time travellers among us that the time travellers will have to take action to preserve their secret. And what action will they take? At first I found this problem insoluble, then the other night I was sitting having a few pint whisky shandies and the whole thing became obvious to me. To preserve their secrecy, the time travellers have only to kidnap any of people who get onto them, carry them back into the past, and maroon them there! I predict that, in a year or so, leading of authors and fans will begin mysteriously vanishing. Even without me reminding them that they owe me a fiver.

That may sound improbable, but here the Time Guardians have slipped up again - because the evidence is available for us all to see... in the pages of our history books! The Time Guardians obviously expected the kidnapped AI people to sink without a trace in the vast swamps of history - but they reckoned without the genius and drive and ability for sheer hard work which all of authors have in such abundance. I would like you to look for a moment - with an unprejudiced eye - at any fragments of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics from the valley of the Nile. There are, in fact, the very first appearance in print of Roger Zelazny. His initials are clearly visible down in the right hand corner of most of them. The obviously mythological figures are of course, a Zelazny trademark, one that he has built up in many of his novels. As far as I can tell, when Roger found himself stranded back in the ancient world he decided to cash in on the situation, so he went around different countries inventing mythologies and spreading them all over the place so that he could write of novels about them in the 20th century. This explains why all the myth figures fit so neatly into his stories. Good thinking, Roger.

Other unrooned of authors and fans have made their presences felt in similar ways - going around carving drawings of apacemen and rocket ships in places where they were most likely to be found by later generations. The person I feel sorry for in all this is poor old von Daniken, with his CHARIOTS OF THE GODS and so forth. Possibly the carvings were put there maliciously in the first place, just so that he could grab the wrong end of the stick. That's just the sort of thing Brian Burgess would do.

One of the things which put me on to all this was my visit to the King Tutankhamon exhibition last year. I looked closely at his sarcophagus - they can't touch you for it - and thought to myself, "Where have I seen that face before?" The beard gave it away. King Tut was John Brunner.

And when you look dispassionately at the history of the Trojan Wars, isn't it obvious that the whole thing was written, scripted and masterminded by Harry Harrison? I mean, that business of hiding inside a giant horse and springing out of it at night is straight out of a Stainless Steel Rat story. Nobody else would ever have thought up such a crazy idea.

The next significant event in history is the decline and fall of the Roman Empire - engineered entirely, of course, by Isaac Asimov so that he could work out what he was going to put in Volume 3 of the Foundation series.

The Dark Ages came next, mainly brought on by L. Sprague de Camp, and then - because of writers had been so active in the preceding centuries - an early form of sf fandom began to flourish. Britain led the way with the invention of conventions, and the first permanent convention hall was built at Stonehenge. News about the good times they all had at these affairs filtered across the Channel to French fandom, who promptly got jealous and came over here in a giant excursion in 1086. Because they were principally interested in finding about conventions, or cons, this invasion was known as the Norman Con Quest.

Things settled down after that for a while, until we had the beginnings of the Transatlantic Fan Fund - in 1492. Columbus wasn't a very good TAFF delegate. He only won the election because he had a lot of votes bought for him by Queen Isabella, and I suspect he wasn't an sf fan at all, but some magazine huckster like Ron Bennett or Rog Payton. Legend has it that he hurried back to Isabella, not even taking time to write his TAFF report for SPECULATION, and reported to her, all excited - that he had found a country where the natives were so simple that they were prepared to trade land against trinkets.

"That's marvellous," Isabella said.

"I know," Columbus replied. "Here's three strings of beads - we've to be out of Spain by next Thursday."

Other if people did get across the Atlantic later on, though. Michael G. Coney went over and settled on Coney Island. Frank Belknap Long went over and settled on Long Island. Vargo Statten went over and settled on Staten Island. Volsted Gridban went over, but he was refused entry because there was no way the Americans were going to stand for part of their territory being labelled Gridban Island. Dan Morgan sailed for the Caribbean and became a successful pirate. And John Russell Fearn went over and started all the ghostly legends of Sleepy Hollow by Russelling a few ferns...

Back on this side of the Atlantic things were going smoothly - a lot of the feuds which war or enliven the sf scene began to break out. In the 16th century there was a lot of trouble with the New Wave element, led by Martin Luther. And, up in Scotland, a dispute over ANALOGS editorial policies led to the Massacre of Glencoe - in which the John W. Campbells slaughtered the John D. MacDonalds.

Anyway, I hope I've said enough to let you see that this threat to sf authors and readers is deadly serious. Now that I've let you in on the secret, you are ~~now~~ at risk than ever. In fact, I think I've noticed that a few people have disappeared from the back of the hall already!

"What can we do about it?" you are asking yourselves.

Well, most of you are asking what time the bar opens, but some of you must be asking what can we do about this threat from the time travellers amongst us. My answer is that we shouldn't wait around, passively, to be kidnapped. We should carry the battle to the enemy by going into the future and destroying their time machine factories. Our technology has not yet reached the point of being able to build time machines, but - luckily for us - some years ago Walt Willis invented a non-mechanical method of time travel - namely, the subjective induced acceleration mode. You know how slowly time goes when you are miserable? And how quickly it goes when nice things are happening to you? Well, to send a volunteer into the future you start off by bringing time to a virtual standstill for him by putting him in a cold gray room, with a Lena Zevareni record playing, nothing to drink but tea brewed in the Novacon hotel, and make him read right through a file of WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY. After a day or so of this, when he's really in the stasis, you pull a lever and he drops through a trapdoor into a luxurious suite where nude girls cluster around him offering him cigars and glasses of champagne. This speeds up his time flow so abruptly that he goes into a kind of temporal overdrive, and vanishes into the future.

Last night, while the rest of you were enjoying yourselves at room parties, a group of un serious-minded types started on this project by sawing a hole through the floor of Harry Harrison's room into the room below.

All we need now is a supply of champagne, cigars, and nude girls.....

--Bob Shaw



Violence in S.F.

Edmund Cooper

When I was first invited by Mr. Strick to give a little talk on this subject I thought it was going to be as easy as falling out of a tree - dead easy. Having given it a little thought, I now know it's going to be exactly like falling out of a tree. One can only hope that what hits the ground won't turn out to be as queer as a clockwork orange!

Before I talk glibly about violence - and I hope I'm going to offend some people as I do; after all, what would be the afternoon, very dull, without a little offence - I think it's something we really ought to define. What do we mean by violence? One might paraphrase Bertrand Russell: I am firm, you are aggressive, he is dangerously violent. One has to think in terms of some definition that means something to you that means something to BE also. After all, we're dealing with an abstract noun. I really like abstract nouns (they're very, very nice; they earn me money. Truth, beauty, honour, integrity, love - all abstract nouns. We now add violence. Good, let's consider some concrete examples of violence; let's bring the concept down from the realm of abstraction into the world of reality. One example of violence - let's make it topical - an American airman in a plane over Vietnam. He presses a button at a given point, down goes the napalm, whether it's the Vietcong who collect, whether it's the Vietnamese who collect, it's the people who collect. The result of pressing the button up there is violence, down there. Another example of violence and, it seems to me, a rather different kind: a soldier with a fixed bayonet. He's on a battlefield; his opponent is right in front of him, and with his fixed bayonet, he disembowels his opponent. He sees the blood and the guts spill out. That's another kind of violence.

Well, it's my conviction that there is an essential difference between the violence that results from the pressing of a button in the plane that dropped the napalm and the violence that results in somebody being carved somewhat by a bayonet. One seems to me to be a remote, impersonal kind of violence; the other seems to me to be a very immediate, very personal kind of violence. The violence which Mr. Strick is referring to in his introduction is an immediate kind of violence. I hope, eventually, to discuss both.

There is a third kind of violence that one might consider - people will probably argue later. I think I'd describe it as ritual violence. In a repressive state, for example - you can argue about this later: Russia? South Africa? Greece? - the violence imposed by the state has a ritual stretched to it. In a country where capital punishment exists, for example, and somebody commits a murder and gets the chop, that is also a form of ritual violence. But we also have milder examples of ritual violence nearer home - after all, what else in soccer, rugby, boxing, wrestling - a ritual violence. It's one that has its own kind of codes, its own kind of rules, it's indulged in as a sort of spectator sport. It still belongs to the class of ritual violence, I think, that is indulged in by a repressive system.

Having at least given one or two examples of what I mean by violence, I think I'd like to briefly skate over the evolution of the use of violence in at - earlier on John Sladek, in a very entertaining discussion, mentioned Mary Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN. Well, casting my mind back - and I'm not a great expert on the field of science fiction; I'm too damned busy writing

It - casting my mind back it seems to me that FRANKENSTEIN is probably the first true sf - where violence was immediate and real. You remember the plot, it's very brief and simple: Frankenstein, a student in Geneva, has this thing that he can create life, so he begs, borrows and steals various limbs, bits of this and bits of that from various charnel houses, and he is going to use electricity to pour in the vital force. Of course, as Ms. Shelley probably would have mentioned, creating life in itself pseudoscience that the alchemist pursued for several centuries and electricity, at the time of Mary Shelley's encounter with sf, was a mysterious force not well-defined. It could have magical properties, and it was a perfect mechanism for sticking together a few spare arms, ribcage, cranium and so on, and then using this magical force to breathe life into it. So the monster is created and, of course, being a very grateful monster it rather likes the idea of being created. It loves Frankenstein. Unfortunately, Frankenstein does not love the monster, because the monster, having been stitched together rather quickly with a few leftovers from the Wimpy Bar, is a hideous thing, utterly repulsive and therefore when it makes an approach to Frankenstein, Frankenstein rejects it, and as they say in the current vernacular, it gets all hung up, uptight, or whatever. It doesn't like the situation at all, and proceeds to revenge itself, very violently, with immediate violence, upon Frankenstein's family. It then takes off into the northern fastnesses with Frankenstein in hot pursuit. He never catches it. He gets killed incidentally, if you've not read the end of the book - so many people don't these days - and the monster disappears into the infinity of the Arctic wastes, presumably to accomplish its own death. A tragic novel, a very violent novel, and I think the first really violent of novel.

Another early and really violent sf novel which I think has something in common with the Frankenstein motif is Robert Louis Stevenson's DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE. You will recall that Dr. Jekyll was rather inquisitive scientist, possibly a pseudo-scientist who felt that he ought to be able to polarise the forces of good and evil in order to study them thoroughly and examine them to see how they developed, as it were. So, very, very quickly, because Stevenson didn't know very much about medicine (in any case, there wasn't that much for him to know) Dr. Jekyll is made to whip up a very potent brew - much better than Tavern Egg - which he swigs down, and which releases all the evil forces in his nature and lo! a new personality emerges, that of Mr. Hyde. Whereas Dr. Jekyll was an ethical and humane and sensitive person, the new creature that emerges is totally ruthless, very violent indeed, and goes about committing unspeakable savageries. In the end of course, to telescope the plot, the evil side, the Mr. Hyde side, takes over from Dr. Jekyll and so finally encompasses his destruction, the end of his research.

Well, two very violent early sf novels. We can quarrel about whether they can be classed as sf later, but the violence I think has very clear parallels. In the FRANKENSTEIN novel the monster has his love rejected and therefore instantly turns evil; in the HLS novel, the purity, if you like, of Dr. Jekyll's intentions and ideas is overcome by the bestiality that emerges, is triggered off. In a way, it's just as if Frankenstein had created another monster, only in this case it's Dr. Jekyll.

Well, the two great sf writers of the 19th century of course were Verne - in that order - and Wells, and they wrote a certain amount of violence into their novels because, after all, it is very difficult to have a plot in which you have no violence. Sir Thomas More tried it somewhat with UTOPIA, and I think William Morris tried it with NEWS FROM NOWHERE and Samuel Butler tried it with EBERTON, and none of them was terribly successful as a novel. They may have been successful in influencing people, but they were not terrible successes as novels. Well, Verne and Wells did use violence, but it was not that immediate violence of the soldier disembowelling someone with a bayonet -

It was the remote kind of violence of the guy pressing the button, and technology does the rest, and the violence happens 10,000 feet below. But for one rather impressive exception, I think, on the part of Wells. Most of his novels, you will recall - as with Verne - were novels of ideas. The people were important to move the plot along. But he made a radical departure with both his technique, I think, and his characterisation, when he wrote *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU*. You will probably recall that the theme of this book is: can it be possible to translate animals into humans, or humanoid. So, a series of long and agonising sequences of surgery are performed on various animals - wolves, tigers and so on - to produce an agonized and tormented bunch of half-men. Half animals and half men, they can't ever be fulfilled in either role. The sequences which describe this production are really very ghastly, very grisly - the whole effect is very violent. This is very much a departure for Wells; he never quite got back to the intensity of violence which he gave us in *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU*. Don't worry, I've not forgotten that my theme is: is it justified? I'm coming back, I hope, to that at the end.

After *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU*, I think probably the next fairly universally known novel in which violence was manifest was *BRAVE NEW WORLD*, written in 1932 - that makes it 40 years old - a novel of violence written by a pacifist, because Aldous Huxley was very much a devout pacifist. I say "a novel of violence", but not until the end of the book is violence manifest. The violence is implicit. You remember the story is set several years in the future - a nice, tidy, clean, eugenic, air-conditioned nightmare of a world, in which people are bred in bottles, they are conditioned in infancy. Their IQs are measured to 3 decimal places. They are routed to specific tasks. There is no great sexual hang-up: everyone can have everyone, and it's all going to be very nice except, of course, that it doesn't turn out to be too terribly satisfactory. The implicit violence stays there in the form of unrest, until we go through 2/3 of the novel; and then - I won't use the term hero and heroine - but two of the main protagonists go to a reservation where they see how primitive people are allowed to live in the old way. At first they are very sceptical and very condescending but at the same time they are a little fascinated and the girl in the story is particularly fascinated by a young man who is a very primitive type, but he is quite eloquent, he speaks quite good English. He is known as The Savage eventually. The Savage is brought back to civilisation because, of course, he'll provide a new sort of sexual kick. But he very much wanted to experience civilisation but, having seen how utterly hygienic it is, he gets fed up with it and retreats into a sort of social isolation: he withdraws, goes away, lives in a small cottage by himself, castigating himself more-or-less like St Teresa of Avila did to get back his purity, because he feels that he's been corrupted, he's been made dirty. But the plastic society won't let him alone, and the girl who has interested herself in him brings her friends down. We end up with an orgy of violence and sex and at the end of it The Savage is so disgusted with himself that he hangs himself.

After *BRAVE NEW WORLD*, perhaps the next really significant novel of violence was 1984. There the violence was both remote and, ultimately, immediate. You all know the plot - I don't have to go into it heavily. Very oppressive state that rewrites history and devalues truth daily and people who lived and were prominent and have to be liquidated are taken out of the history books and it is as if they never existed. Now here the violence has become very subtle because it's not a question of what you might call beating people over the head with a blunt instrument or disembowelling or dropping the bombs - here we're now dealing with the rape of the mind, because in the terms of this novel the whole populace is constantly and unwittingly being brainwashed.

Of course, there are heretics, and they're taken out of society pretty smartly - and they're taken out by violent means and they're made to recant by violent means. You remember the hero, Winston Smith, is finally caught up with by the Thought Police, so very cunningly they find out the thing he dislikes most in the world, the thing that really terrifies him - and it turns out to be rats. So they threaten to put his head in a cage full of rats. For him, that is the ultimate violence. At that stage he is prepared to sign anything. That was an extremely violent novel. It left a tremendous impact upon people.

After 1984, we come to our old friend, which has now hit the headlines, A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. Funnily enough, I remember reading A CLOCKWORK ORANGE when it was first published. In publishing terms and for poor Anthony Burgess' sake it was a dreadful flop. The hardcover edition didn't sell well - it didn't even get reviewed too well - and half of the paperback edition had to be burned. But later Stanley Kubrick came along and gestated it, and now Penguin are printing it by the hundred thousand. Well, you know the idea of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. It's set in a future society - if you can accept the kind of idiom in which this book is written - you probably need a stiff gin and tonic to get the first ten pages - it's then full of impact. It tells the story of a young bunch of cut-throats, thugs, tearaways, out for kicks. And the only way they can get kicks is to revenge themselves on the society that won't give them what they want. So they go around the countryside, doing the equivalent of kicking old ladies in the teeth, and perhaps the most violent sequence of the novel consists of a multiple rape which takes place - curiously enough; and I've often thought this needs looking into - in the house of a middle aged writer who is busy writing a book called A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. Anyway, the writer's wife suffers considerable indignity at the hands of these four young thugs - Alex and his droogs, as they are called - and two of them take turns sitting on the writer and compelling him to watch. You might think, as Alex would say, the ultimate in ultra-violence. But no, worse is to come because eventually the law catches up with them, and Alex, who has been a real tough cookie and bashed everyone within reach for bashing, suddenly finds himself on the receiving end of the bashing, because some bright psychological character has decided that he can totally recondition him; and puts him through a series of Pavlovian reconditioning processes by which, for example, the sight of an attractive and naked girl makes him physically sick and by which, at the end, if a small boy should come and punch him in the face or bite him in the tender parts of his anatomy he will simply whimper and cry and ask the boy's pardon for having offended him. Again, the rape of the mind motif. Alex was busy being tough with society; society gets tough with him in the way that Orwell's 1984 type society got tough with the heretic there.

Right, those were recent, impactful, significant novels in which violence, I think, was used by the author for good effect. In THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU I think Wells was telling us that there are certain ethical standards - norms, levels, values - beyond which you must not go. In BRAVE NEW WORLD Huxley was saying, OK, you can create a society where you have eliminated violence on the surface, but it won't stick. Eventually there will be a trigger mechanism, such as The Savage, that releases repressed violence that is not catered for by this totally hygienic society. In 1984 Orwell was saying, one beyond Hitler, not only can you fool some of the people all of the time, but you can repress all of the people all of the time, if you use the right kind of technology for it. And Anthony Burgess, I believe, was saying, look folks, you're having nice new inventions every day. We've got plastic disposable throwaway this and throwaway that. Life is becoming easy; you can do it quite nicely on the National Health. And so on, and so on. We are building a horribly secure world that is going to build people who want to burst out of its

horrible security and find their own adventure. And if this world consists of superhighways and towns that spread from the Mersey down to the South West there is not much for them to do when they've listened to the records and been to the local equivalent of the disco and got high on whatever it is - there's not much for them to do but to go out and get real tough with someone, because that is where they will collect their kicks.

So I am submitting that these are all highly moral books. I'd like to go very quickly onto comparative approaches in contemporary sf - because, after all, although *THE ISLAND OF DR MOREAU*, *BRAVE NEW WORLD*, 1884, *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, are relatively close they're also history. I'm thinking of writers like Clarke, Asimov, van Vogt on the one hand; and I'm going to juxtapose them with writers like Vonnegut, Bester, and Brunner on the other hand.

Arthur Clarke - like Wells primarily an ideas man. He uses people to get his ideas across, but the people don't really mean anything too much to him. Think of a classic Arthur Clarke example of violence: this duon - and it was splendidly done - between the impregnable fortress on the moon and the invincible ship that's attacking it. (In "Earthlight") But that was what you might call remote, impersonal violence. You didn't get a sense of real people actually heaving their guts thrown on the floor. You didn't get that kind of shock. You got, as it were, a conflict of ingenuity, a conflict of technology, a conflict of science and you felt that when the show was over, the cleaning up wouldn't be too bad. The same, I think, goes (one has to generalise quickly in this kind of discussion) with the typical kind of Asimov writing. He primarily, like Clarke, is an ideas man. People are mechanisms to move his plot along, to get across the ideas he wants to get across. The same thing with van Vogt, except that van Vogt adds to this. At least to me, he's totally incomprehensible - but he's also a speed merchant. Van Vogt drives his novels - he doesn't write them he drives them along at 150 mph, and you can have people being tortured on one page, resurrected on the next page, being brainwashed on the third page and dismembered on the fourth page, to emerge immortal on the fifth page. This will happen in a typical van Vogt novel. Well now, this of course is violence. But it's not the ultraviolence you experience when you read the rape scene in *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*; in other words, it doesn't mean anything. You're going along too fast, disaster after disaster. It only takes van Vogt three pages to wipe out an entire solar system! Another 6 pages and he can repopulate a new one. So I classify van Vogt with Clarke and Asimov, not because I'm trying to say they're all the same - they're not; they're quite different - but I'm saying their use of violence has one thing in common: it is remote, it does not have immediacy; it is not personal.

But take, for example, Kurt Vonnegut: *THE SIRENS OF TITAN* or *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE* - it follows on, where one ends, the other begins, it doesn't really matter. Vonnegut basically is shrieking out to us and saying, look, I'm not saying police systems are bad, I'm not saying communism is bad, I'm not saying capitalism is bad, I'm saying that whatever state you have in a highly technological world, you are on the receiving end, brothers. His heroes are little men who get the dirt done on them. And, take *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*, there is this poor little guy, (we're going through different time sequences: at one stage he's a fat American middle aged slob and then we shift back to his war experience when he was a poor little guy in the army and finds himself a prisoner of war taken to Dresden - lucky him - in order to collect the results of the fire-bombing). As Vonnegut hastily points out several times in the novel, because he really wants to rub it home, we all think of the A-bomb on Hiroshima as the ultimate in violence in the last war: in point of fact, in Dresden 30,000 more people died in one night than died in Hiroshima.

Well now, when Volnegut writes about that fire-bombing and the results, he doesn't describe great raging infernos, but in two or three sentences, when he has his hero coming out of the slaughterhouse and looking at the gore - the little bits of meat that he thought were fried dog and turned out to be fried bodies - then the real impact, the real violence comes across. Again I am suggesting this is an entirely moral use of violence. He is shocking you out of your skin. He is saying, look, man's inhumanity to man has been surpassed - it's the State's inhumanity to man. The State doesn't care about the individual any more and he's using the fire-bombing of Dresden as a symbol of this.

Or take Bester: a splendid example from Alfred Bester would be THE DEMOLISHED MAN. The hero is a man called Ben Reich. The time is set in the future and Ben is splendidly schizoid and paranoid - he's got the lot. He wants to own the entire solar system virtually; he will use any means in order to expand his commercial empire. Rape, murder, mayhem - well, he has that lot before breakfast, before he gets down to really serious stuff. The novel starts like this and it goes on, violently. Who is Ben Reich opposed by? He's opposed by a group of telepaths who have banded together with - from our point of view - highly moral and laudable aims. He manages to have a corrupt telepath of his own to combat them, but eventually they prove a little too strong for him and the violence that he's been dishing out as a kind of latterday super tycoon dinosaur for 2/3 of the novel in the last part is movingly dished out to him - not in physical terms, but again in the rape of the mind, because these telepaths have a mechanism by which they can bring their telepathic strength together in order to really bust him. Now it's not their purpose to drive him mad: they're going to do far worse than that. They're going to totally erase his personality. At the end of this novel we end up with this real tough super tycoon of the future reduced to quite literally and physically the level of a baby.

Well, there again, I think this is an example of the moral use of violence. I don't think Reich's violence was moral, but I think the telepaths' was. And I think that Bester was saying to us - whether it's right or wrong is open to argument - that if you have to confront people who are going to use every conceivable means to impose their will upon you, whether you like it or not, you're going to have to fight very dirty back, otherwise you will very likely cease to exist.

Another novel on the immediate violence side is the controversial STAND ON ZANZIBAR. Let me be honest and confess that I haven't read it all; I've read most of it. It's not a novel; it's a sequence of scenes. It's a vast mural, if you like - a tremendous sketch. It's a tremendous sketch of a future world, grossly overpopulated, where violence is the norm, where it's not safe to go out on the street at night not just because you might get mugged - you might trigger a riot, and the riot might spread and trigger revolution. Practically every character in Brunner's novel meets a rather ghastly end. One of the most ghastly ends, to my mind, is meted out to a character called Donald. Donald is a quiet, rather scholastic type, but the state needs him and turns him into a killing machine, who ironically is programmed to destroy the one scientist who can offer a hope of saving humanity. Well, throughout Brunner's epic slices of several novels, the theme of violence continually runs and reruns. It's not just that he's enjoying the gore - he's saying we're going to have a world like this if we're not careful. Lash out more on birth control pills, do lots of things, build more schools, give people more rewarding jobs or something - but for Christ's sake, unless you do something we're going to have this kind of world.

Right. I have gone through the books I propose to discuss to illustrate the use of violence. It is my contention that we cannot really afford to have a censorship. I sense what Philip Strick is getting at when he says he's troubled: so am I. I'm very, very troubled because I think we lie between two evils. If we don't have any censorship the boys who are in it for the kicks will just go on and on and on. They'll say, what can we have next? I know: we'll have six gorillas raping the Queen on ice, or something like that. The point is it can escalate; it can go on and go on and go on. But if you have any faith in human beings - and I have a little, although people tell me I'm very pessimistic - I think that in the end they will provide their own verdict or their own censorship if you like, by not giving the money to the guys who shove out the pornography and the carnography that is thinly disguised as entertainment - the plastic Harold Robbins types of this world and so on.

So, I am suggesting that any serious writer, if he can have any kind of social conscience, is bound to be his own censor. And I'd like to add a further thought before I finish: and that is: if the guy hasn't got a social conscience, then he's probably a lousy writer.

--- Edmund Cooper



Science Fiction's Urban Vision

Chris Hamnett

Introduction

It is probably no exaggeration to say that one of the most pressing problems faced by mankind today is that of striking a satisfactory modus vivendi between man and the city. An increasing number of people have been focusing their attention on the future of the city, and more especially on the position of man in the city of the future. Yet, on this most crucial of issues, hard data is most frequently lacking. It seems relatively easier to predict and evaluate the future of the city as a physical entity, than it is to do the same for the city as a social entity, or the city as the home of man. The importance of the quality of life, and of urban life in particular, both now and in the future is commonly agreed upon, but few people have any concrete ideas on what it could or should be like. Even speculations are rather thin on the ground, and few of those that do exist are capable of giving us any idea of the realities or possibilities of the plethora of possible urban futures, let alone their problems.

Science Fiction and the City

It is in this context that an examination of science fiction's urban vision can prove illuminating. As Bertrand de Jouvenal (1) has noted: "The lack of any clear image of the style of life we are building is a cause of anxiety. This anxiety is revealed in the most characteristic literature of our time - science fiction". Just as the novelist can frequently be providing us with a more vivid account of certain aspects of contemporary life than our own time and in other cultures than the social scientist, so too the science fiction writer is, in some cases, capable of providing us with a richer description of what life could be like in the city of the future, than the conventional futurological predictions and speculations. Such works of fiction could parallel the function attributed by Raymond Williams (2) to the novels written in the aftermath of the industrial revolution, i.e. harbingers of change. Suzanne Keller's (3) dictum that, "We cannot know, prove or test the future, but we can imagine it" is clearly relevant.

Science fiction, or social futurism as it should be more appropriately called today, given the nature of its main emphasis, is a remote descendant of the pulp fiction of earlier days, though its principal concerns still lie with technological and social developments, rather than with the character development and other concerns of the traditional novel. As a result of this stress, and the fact that almost all of it originates in the highly developed and highly urbanized societies of Britain and the US, a large part of recent writing has been either directly concerned with, or embedded in, urban settings. No doubt the role of the city as the originator, or at least the breeding ground for change has also played a significant part in its frequent selection as a basis for speculation. Such writing is of interest for several reasons, prime amongst which are the warnings about the dangers and problems potentially inherent in certain urban developments which it holds up for our scrutiny. Often many of these developments are hyperbolic in form,

and assume the unfettered continuation of current trends. Many too are oversimplified in conception and dystopian in character. However, this is only to be expected to some degree, given the nature of the work of science fiction; particularly the need to capture and hold the interest of the reader. Were this not so they would cease to be what they are and, rather paradoxically, lose much of the interest they hold for us. They must perhaps be judged upon their own criteria, and what is of value to the student of urbanism extracted

These very criticisms of the speculative work of fiction do have, in addition to the point made above, certain advantageous corollaries. For one thing, in the very act of rejecting that which we might find abhorrent, albeit in some grossly distorted or exaggerated form, we obtain a clearer idea of exactly what we do desire and what we wish to avoid. Indeed, it could be argued as Jencks (4) has that magnification of the picture is essential in order for us to clarify it. As he put it: "The advantage of pushing present tendencies to... extremes is that the extremes indicate possibilities not otherwise exploited and present alternatives in a clear light". Dystopian projections also serve the purpose of providing us with vital feedback. Feedback, especially of a negative kind, provides us with indications that things are not as they should be and enables us to see that alterations are required. Human history is a vivid witness to the failure of those societies who have either failed to monitor their environment or neglected to take appropriate corrective measures. If and academic social futurism are merely extending this monitoring and evaluative process into the future: a very necessary state of affairs in a world where the pace of change is itself increasing. It is also perhaps true to say that in the realms of speculation the writer is less constrained by the restrictions and limitations on thought born of detailed factual knowledge.

In practice however, writers, including science fiction writers, are rarely able to construct completely unique situations which have meaning for us. For on the one hand, the writer, despite his greater imaginative abilities, is, like the rest of us, constrained by his experience. As Emrys Jones has stated (5) "Even the visionary can only operate within his own cultural framework". Imagination is essentially the ingenious recombination of that which we know or can conceive, rather than the creation of entirely unknown situations - the creation of which would be a contradiction in terms. On the other hand the reader can only meaningfully apprehend that which has some degree of meaning to him; that which generates some degree of resonance. Sf is valuable insofar as it relates to what we already know. It is thus not entirely surprising that most sf tends to fall into one of two categories: those situations in which almost all the variables are held constant, only one or two being varied by the writer, and those situations in which a fairly substantial number of variables are altered. By and large, this second category is comprised of what we might term pure fantasy and, for our purposes, is of less value.

Finally, three other traits possessed by many sf writers would be mentioned all of which have a bearing on the kind of sf usually written. Many science fiction writers tend to merely project existing trends rather than devising plausible new trends or reversing those already in existence. As Michael Moorcock has asserted: too many sf writers rationalize, react and reject, rather than reason. But it is precisely the continuation and extension of what we already know that lends such writing its impact and dramatic power, so this is in part understandable. Lastly, and again this is one of those things partially inherent in the form, many stories utilize ideas purely as a basis or setting for some relatively unimportant drama or adventure, rather than developing or extending these ideas in any meaningful manner. This account has tried to minimize the analysis of such stories, concentrating instead on those that focus on the city.

The order of treatment that suggested - if not dictated - itself, was the consideration first of the aspects of urban form and structure, both high density and low density. Secondly, and interrelated with the first theme, the social and psychological aspects of future urban life are considered. The role and importance of change and development within urban society comprises the third, more speculative section. This in turn moves into the implications of complexity and increasing technological sophistication, and the problems they pose for human control. Finally, those works which deal with man's control and treatment of himself in the urban context are considered.

The High-Density Future

One of the most important characteristics of cities is that of form; a concept sufficiently all-embracing to encompass density, spatial extent, and the like. Rayner Banham (6) has commented on this score that there are basically two types of urban-based sf - Los Angeles based and New York based - corresponding to the basic dichotomy in form manifested by these two cities. Even here, however, familiar cultural backgrounds are dominant, the New York high-density type fiction comprising by far the largest element of the genre, though often inseparable from their wider societal background - usually involving rising population and shortage of resources. In this respect of writers predate the ecological-conservationist school of thought by many years. In Isaac Asimov's *THE CAVES OF STEEL*, (7) for example, a Malthusian picture is painted of an Earth with 6 billion inhabitants where increasing pressure on resources has forced the acceptance of greater and greater degrees of efficiency. Efficiency, states Asimov, implies increasing scale and as an extension of the rise of factory based industry in the Industrial Revolution the "Cities" arise swallowing up existing settlements. The entire population is concentrated in some 800 "Cities", each of which has on average a population of some 10 million people. "The bulk of the land area being given over to the robot farming of real food as a luxury supplement to the staple diet of artificial yeast culture." These "Cities", "the culmination of man's mastery over the environment" are portrayed as not only quantitatively different, but qualitatively different, from the cities we know. They are roofed over, and burrowed in: the "steel caves" of Asimov's title, urban freeways having long since been superseded by moving pedestrian pavements of various speeds.

Written in the early 1950s, *THE CAVES OF STEEL* presages Herman Kahn's conception of three great urban complexes in the US, Was-Wash (Boston-Washington), Chi-Pitts (Chicago-Pittsburgh), and San-San (San Francisco-San Diego). Asimov presents us with a New York of 20 millions, 2,000 square miles in extent, which is almost linked with Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia. London is similarly portrayed as extending from Norwich to Canterbury in the east, to Brighton in the south, and Coventry on the north-west.

What Asimov conveniently avoids, of course, is the concept of diminishing returns to scale which states simply that past a certain point the advantages of size are outweighed by the disadvantages such as congestion, bottlenecks and the like. Such things in themselves are not, necessarily a sign of diminishing returns to scale, however. As Alonso has pointed out, (8) if the marginal revenue of one extra unit of urban production exceeds the marginal costs of producing it, then the city may still grow even if the marginal cost is itself increasing. Asimov circumvents this problem by fixing the point of diminishing returns at a very high level: "New York by itself was almost too large to be handled by a centralized government. A larger city, with over fifty million population, would break down under its own weight".

Asimov's London, is, in fact, a common stereotype, almost exactly paralleling the London described by Anthony Burgess's *THE WANTING SEED* (9) (note the Malthusian overtones of the title). Burgess captures the idea of the rapidly expanding megalopolis with the throwaway line: "Intending migrants from the Provinces to Greater London had, it was said, no need to move: they merely had to wait". Such wit aside, much of *THE WANTING SEED* conforms to the fairly standard formula of exploding population, larger cities, ministries of infertility, synthetic foodstuffs, and round the clock shift work. So too with Harry Harrison's *MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM!* (10), since filmed as *SOYLENT GREEN*, though Harrison does throw in a few of Mirth's concepts of urbanism (11) such as impersonality, segmental and predatory relationships and enowme. Set in a New York of 35 million in 1999 we are presented with food riots, a tenuous order enforced by the police, and the imminence of total social disintegration. There is some development of the environmental impact of noise and pollution, but much of it is included purely for the purpose of heightening the atmosphere. "Through the open window rolled the heat and stench, the sound of the city; the multivoiced roar that rose and fell with the hammered persistence of waves breaking on a beach; an endless thunder". It is indicative of the dystopian element in such writing that the stress lies on constraint rather than choice. The high density city is rarely viewed as the expression of choice, but rather as the inevitable concomitant of over rapid population growth and associated over population. Unfortunately, the rationale for this is all too frequently merely that of the provision of some suitably oppressive environment as a backdrop for high drama of one sort or another. Viewed objectively, there is little that is stimulating to the student of the urban future in this area of SF's development.

Life in the High-Density Future

The theme of the spatially extensive high density city has been developed further, but usually only where its social and psychological implications are treated in more depth. In *FOUNDATION*, for instance, the first volume of Asimov's *FOUNDATION* trilogy, (12) these issues are touched on when Asimov describes "Trantor", a world of forty billions and the administrative centre of a huge empire, supplied with food daily by fleets of ships from the agricultural worlds. All the land surface of the planet, some 75 million square miles overall, is one single city, nine tenths of which lies below the surface and utilizes the temperature differential between the surface and the lower levels as the power source of the city. Gail Bornick, a newcomer to Trantor, is informed when looking over the city plan from an observation tower, that Trantorians never venture to the surface. As it is explained to him:

"If you're born in a cubicle and grow up in a corridor, and work in a cell, and vacation in a crowded sun-room, then coming up into the open with nothing but the sky over you might just give you a nervous breakdown. They make the children come up here once a year, after they're five. I don't know if it does any good. They don't get enough of it really, and the first few times they scream themselves into hysteria. They ought to start as soon as they're weaned and have a trip once a week"

In this context Piers (13) has pointed out the differentiation between culture and nature and their compatibility. Men, he has stated, cannot possibly live in a completely "ersatz" artificial world; there are, and should be, constant elements of our natural condition - our attachment to landscape. He quotes Le Corbusier to the effect that whereas the traditional dimension of the pre-mechanical age was one of "congruent size", now the balance has

been upset, and that he must act rapidly to restore the values of landscape to our cities. This assumes there are both clear and distinct limits to human adaptation, and a "natural" environment, however.

One writer who does transcend the somewhat mundane visions examined above, producing genuine *Bildungsromane* or novels of ideas rather than merely utilising ideas as a basis for a scenario, is J.G. Ballard, and it is a tribute to his writer's craft that he is able to do so without losing one iota of dramatic impact. If anything his work gains from the laconism and compactness stemming from the compression of a variety of ideas into a short space. Two of his short stories, "Billionium" (14) and "Concentration City" (15) are superficially comparable with the two novels of Asimov's already referred to, in that the first takes a 3% population growth as its starting point, and the other examines the "earth as city" concept. The resemblance ends here, however, for both focus on the psychological adaptation of the individual to city first and foremost. In "Billionium", set in the first decade of the 21st century, world agricultural production has kept pace with population growth but only by checking and reversing the outward growth of cities so that 95% of the population is trapped in vast urban areas, the "suburban" margins of which are being reclaimed for agricultural use. There is no 'countryside' and the overriding quest of society is the "internal colonisation of the city" where space is already at a premium. The situation is intensified and compounded by an ingenious but disturbingly plausible double bind whereby individual household optimization works against societal interests, in that as three children is the required minimum for a private room, there exists a hidden incentive for larger families.

In the world of "Billionium" over one hundred people can inhabit the top three floors of an old rambling house, living in cubicles, the statutory minimum size of which is four square metres for a single individual. Unscrupulous landlords can manipulate wall and ceiling partitions to such a degree that "someone timid of his rights could be literally squeezed out of existence" (a new gimmick this). The central character of the story, a man called Ward, spends most of his spare time, like everyone else, "scanning the classified ads in the newspapers" in search of a marginally better room. He does in fact discover a cubicle of four and a half square metres, of which his friend Rossiter comments: "You were lucky to find a place like this... it's enormous, the perspectives really zoom". The conception of adjustment to changed norms is reinforced by reference to the period fifty years earlier, when:

"People had indeed lived one to a room, sometimes, unbelievably, one to an apartment or house. The micro-films in the architecture catalogues at the library showed scenes of museums, concert halls, and other public buildings in what appeared to be everyday settings, often virtually empty, two or three people wandering down an enormous gallery or staircase. Traffic moved freely along the centre of streets, and in the quieter districts sections of sidewalk would be deserted for fifty yards or more.

Now, of course, the older buildings had been torn down and replaced by housing batteries, or converted into apartment blocks. The great banqueting room in the former City Hall had been split horizontally into four decks, each of these cut up into hundreds of cubicles".

As Ballard's narrative develops, a circumscribed situation of almost total isolation emerges where Ward, brought up from the age of ten in a municipal hostel, has gradually lost touch with his parents living on the

other side of the city. He has, in Ballard's words, "surrendered his initiative to the dynamics of the city", aided by the frequent population "locks" in the streets when huge crowds become immovably jammed, sometimes for days on end. The crux of the story occurs, however, when Ward and Rossiter team up to rent a new place in a semi-derelict house. Here, behind a forgotten, panelled over door, they discover an empty room some 15 foot square. Ballard's description of this is superb:

"For an hour they exchanged places, wandering silently around the dusty room, stretching their arms out to feel its unconfined emptiness, grasping at the sense of absolute spatial freedom".

The parallel between the narrative and those psychological experiments which utilize goggles or spectacles to produce inversions of notions of up and down, and left and right, is marked, as are the results which usually follow on their removal. For after living secretly in the room for a time, the cubicle becomes unbearably cramped and Rossiter and Ward begin to seem "the only real inhabitants of the world, everyone else a meaningless by-product of their own existence, a random replication of identity which has run out of control". Clearly, Ballard's central concern is the limitations of human adaptability. Whilst not explicitly rejecting the idea that man has an infinite capacity for adaption, he seemingly suggests that there exists some "natural" state of psycho-spatial equilibrium to which individuals swiftly return, circumstances permitting.

Ballard's short story "Concentration City" seems, at first sight, to concentrate on a very similar theme, that of man's conception of space and his attitudes to it. Once again space is a saleable commodity, but this time its price is measured not on a two-dimensional basis, but instead in cubic feet, for Ballard presents us with a three-dimensional urban area stretching indefinitely in all directions. The conception of "free space" has lost its meaning, instead, it is equated to the theoretically amusing but practically absurd concept of "non-functional space". Much of the power of Ballard's writing stems from his plethora of ideas which enables him to leave many of these undeveloped in order to stimulate by understatement. Unlike certain writers Ballard is never placed in the position of having to attempt to suck blood from a stone.

Description is very much a means to an end for Ballard, for he poses more fundamental implications of this closed world, namely the closed nature of its thought. The task of science is outlined to Franz, the central character, by one of his physics teachers at the University. It is "to consolidate existing knowledge, to systematize and reinterpret the discoveries of the past, not to chase wild dreams into the future". In this world, the conditions for the continued existence of which are an obsession with order, preservation and systematization, speculation and experimentation have died out to be replaced with agoraphobia and a fear of pyromaniacs - the activity of whom could denude the city of oxygen.

Franz rebels against this claustrophobic, closed society by way of his striving for "free-space" a conception denounced by others as unreal and contradictory. To this end he searches through the greatest street directory in the country but to no avail. Occupying millions of volumes it still covers only a limited section of the City, and no one at the library has any idea what lies beyond. He decides as a result to ride the supersonic vacuum tube "Supersleeper" train through the City until he finds free space. His technique is to buy "local" papers wherever the train stops on the basis that

lower priced space should be an indication of "free space". In fact, the only areas where they do fail is in the rapidly expanding areas of "Night Town" huge dead areas that start off as ordinary neighbourhoods. As one fellow traveller puts it to him:

"A bottlenck in the sewage system, not enough subways, and before you know it - a million cubic feet have gone back to jungle. They try a relief scheme, pump in a little cyanide, and then brick it up. Once they do that they're closed for good. Eventually there'll be nothing left but these black areas. The city will be one huge cemetery".

Suddenly, on the tenth day of Franz's journey the indicator board on the train which, till then had consistently read West, now reads East. The other passengers, none of whom have been on for more than two or three stops (personal mobility is decreasing just as in "Billenium") insist that the train has always been going East. This inexplicable switch causes Franz to give himself away to the authorities - he has, of course, been travelling illegally - but even they are unable to explain what has happened. The transport authorities put the curvature down to some innate feature of the City itself. The story ends with the police doctor trying to rid Franz of his notion of free space by comparing the city to time, neither of which one can escape from. This fails to satisfy Franz who asks what was here before the city was built. "It has always been here", the doctor replies, "Not these particular bricks and girders, but others before them. You accept that time has no beginning and no end. The City is as old as time and continuous with it". At this juncture Ballard provides the final twist. Looking at the date clock, Franz discovers that the date is exactly the same as when he left three weeks ago. The reader is left to draw his own conclusions, which are clearly that the city is infinite, co-extensive with space and time, and subject to the laws of Relativity.

Even if this was the main point of the story it would be disturbing enough, closely paralleling Bussiter and Ward's sudden realization of the anti-like quality of their existence in a world of continual population growth and urban expansion - a moral echoed by most of stories about the city. It is not, however, a fact which enables Ballard to be vindicated of the charge that he exhibits the antipathy towards the city commonly found in many commentators. That this antipathy is of a long lineage has been well documented by Marion and Lucia White (16) and Scott Grear (17) amongst others, and few writers are exempt from it. A rare exception is to be found in Michael Moorcock who speaks to us through his alter ego, (18) Jerry Cornelius, the central character of THE FINAL PROGRAMME. "He (Jerry) never felt really comfortable unless he had at least fifteen miles of built-up area on all sides. It wasn't natural, he felt, for a man to live any other way".

It is clear, especially in "Concentration City" that Ballard is pursuing a deeper, more fundamental, metaphysical theme than merely that of the likely dangers of an anti-like urban existence, or the existence of an infinite city. I refer to his stress on the perils of decadence, stagnation, and ossification potentially inherent in any situation where growth and change are not possible and social introspection occurs. Ballard shows a closed physical environment, a concentration camp of a city, but the moral he draws from this is equally applicable to other contexts.

Much the same can be said of Clifford Simak's major work CITY (19), for he too is concerned with introspection - be it at the individual or the social level, though careless readers might assume he too is following the well-worn path of anti-urbanism. On the contrary, both he and Ballard appear to believe that the city as it exists today, despite its failings and shortcomings, is

fundamentally anti-entropic, and represents the highest stage so far reached in man's struggle to wrest order out of chaos. Mention of entropy, or the decline from higher states of order to lower ones, raises the interesting point that almost all science fiction about the city is concerned with cities rotering on the brink of decline and collapse. No writers, to my knowledge, have dealt with the opposite problem in an urban context. By this I mean that none have explicitly considered the issues raised by Buckminster Fuller's concept of "ephemeralization" or by Alvin Toffler in his book *FUTURE SHOCK* (20), i.e. an excess of choice, novelty, transience, and ephemerality, particularly in the built environment.

Low-Density Dispersion: Causes and Implications

In terms of Rayner Banham's dichotomy between high density New York type *sf* and low density Los Angeles type *sf*, Simak's *CITY* is the only really outstanding example of the latter. The book is cast ingeniously in a series of legends relating the past age of which no vestige remains. The first legend relates the breakdown of urban-based culture made possible by transportation advances which greatly reduced the "friction of space".

"With the family plane, one hundred miles today is a shorter distance than five miles back in 1930. Men can fly several hundred miles to work and fly home when the day is done. There is no longer any need for them to live cooped up in the city. The automobile started the trend and the family plane finished it".

The city is depicted as an anachronism whose function was that of a tribal place, a walled enclosure, a place of trades and commerce whose existence was necessitated by poor communications and the minimization of the distance between home and workplace. As a result of these developments in transportation the cities are gradually deserted, everyone moving out to country estates of between ten and one hundred acres which are purely recreational as a result of the rise of hydroponics. As one of Simak's characters notes: "The city as a human institution is dead".

Simak's theme is not dissimilar to Frank Lloyd Wright's concept of "Greenacre City" projecting as it does existing trends towards lower densities, suburbanization, and steadily lengthening journeys to work. Certainly it is very far from being an imaginative, and entertaining but fundamentally inconceivable fantasy. Both Mel Webber (21) and Brian Barry (22) envisage what Webber has termed a "non-place urban realm" developing in the post-industrial societies, especially the USA where the development of communications in general and transportation in particular has allowed the development of "community without propinquity" (23). Barry views the current geography of the United States as typified by a limited number of growing "daily urban systems", up to 150-300 km in diameter, separated by declining "inter-urban peripheries". Barry further believes that this pattern is in process of inverting itself as a result of the acceleration of the outward movement of upper-income white populations from the central city to the expanding outer edges of the daily urban systems, aided by new electronic technologies that replace the movement of persons by the movement of messages.

This development was foreseen by Richard Meier in 1962 (24) in his book *A COMMUNICATIONS THEORY OF URBAN GROWTH*. Meier believed, however, that the telephone exerted a *depersonalizing* influence, and that face-to-face contact was psychologically necessary in certain cases. For this reason he was unable to accept that the downtown area or Central Business District (CBD) - an area traditionally alleged to be very much dependent upon face-to-face contact

would undergo diminution or total elimination. Although there would seem to be much sense in Meier's view of the psychological necessity of face-to-face communication, he possibly understated the future role of holography, and it is this development that could possibly prove Berry right in the long run. The theoretical principles of holography, or wave-front reconstruction, were first stated by Dennis Gabor in 1947, but their practical implementation was only made possible by the invention of the laser in 1963. In essence, holography entails the recording and transmission of 3-D images, and their reconstruction elsewhere. Such images are almost totally realistic and may be viewed from any direction without losing their veracity. Berry put the matter succinctly when he said:

"Traditionally we have moved the body to the experience; increasingly we will move the experience to the body, and the body can therefore be located where it finds the non-electronic experiences most satisfying."

The potential implications of holography have been interestingly detailed by Berry:

"Let us imagine a particular space, circa 1886, a home in the suburbs of Phoenix. A man is sitting in the middle of a circular room and on the curved walls around him he can see the ocean-surf breaking over the rocks and foaming up the beach, a fish-hawk trembling in the luminescent sky. Across from his site another man, and the two of them are talking to each other. Once in a while, the boom of the surging surf and cry of the hawk intrude upon their conversation.

Let us now say that the room is underground and has no "real" view at all, that what is experienced on the curved walls is an image on a "flat-wall" television screen, pre-recorded in Hawaii, and now being replayed electronically. Let us further say that the first man is "real", but that the second man is being broadcast by laser beam from a satellite and recreated, in colour and full dimension (you could walk around his image and see the back of his head) by 'holography', so that though he is "there" in Phoenix at that moment, he is "in reality" at the same moment sitting in his study at the University of Edinburgh."

In fact, Simak - writing in 1952 - prefigured Berry's ideas in a classic passage:

"What need was there to go anywhere? It was all here. By simply twirling a dial one could talk face to face with anyone one wished, could go, by means, if not in body, anywhere one wished. Could attend the theatre or hear a concert or browse in a library half-way around the world. Could transact any business one might need to transact without rising from one's chair."

The similarity between the concerns of Simak and those of Ballard grows increasingly apparent during the course of the book. It is only towards the end of *CITY* that Simak makes them fully explicit, however, as the following passage demonstrates:

"John J. had come after the break-up of the cities, after men had forsaken, once and for all, the twentieth century huddling places....

And here was the end result. A quiet living. A peace that

could only come with good things. The sort of life that men have yearned for years to have. A material existence, based on old family homes and leisurely acres, with atomics supplying power and robots in place of serfs...Decadence - a strangely beautiful - and deadly - decadence.

Man had forsaken the towering cities, the huddling places, two hundred years ago....And yet here was another building place. Not a huddling place for one's body, but one's mind. A psychological campfire that still held a man within its circle of light.

(Agropbobia is a thing a man can't fight.)"

The themes, or theme, of dependence, decadence, stagnation and ossification developed by Ballard and Simak bear an interesting resemblance to the belief in environmental determinism held by geographers until recently. But whereas these beliefs related essentially to the more primitive and less developed societies, the determinism of the SF writers relates primarily to situations of extreme sophistication and development. The conception common to both would seem to be that there exists an optimum position or range where human freedom and development is at its height. Prior to, and subsequent to, this position, he is trapped in the first instance by his lack of control over natural systems, in the second by his lack of control over developed technologies and life-support systems. Man becomes a slave to his own ingenuity.

Change, Vulnerability and Development

Towering above both Simak and Ballard's undoubtedly excellent work, the classic of this genre is without doubt E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" (25) written in 1902. Though Forster could not in any sense be described as a science fiction writer, this work stands as an enduring monument to what is a central concern of many such writers: the necessity of challenge and external stimuli in a dynamic society. Forster, as will be seen, was strongly opposed to Berry's belief that "increasingly we will move the experience to the body". Forster, Simak and Ballard all seem to agree that one of the pre-requisites of a healthy society is that the body must be moved, within reason, to the experience.

The setting of the story is a cityworld - the two have become indivisible and indistinguishable - in which everything has been automated and everything is brought to the individual, none of whom need stir from his small hexagonal room beneath the surface of the earth. "Like the cell of a bee" is how Forster describes them. Not only food and water, heat and light are conveyed to these cells, but automated medical and dental treatment as well. The cityworld of the "Machine" has become one huge, impersonal servicing machine. Video-phones have enabled enormous increases in the scope and extent of the individual's social network, but personal contact, and indeed all first-hand experience, has been reduced to virtually nil. The civilization prior to that of the Machine is described as one that had "mistaken the function of the system and had used it for bringing people to things, instead of things to people." The situation is compounded by the homogeneity of the cityworld. As Forster puts it: "Thanks to the advances of science, the earth was exactly as it all over. What was the use of going to Peking when it was just like Shroesbury". Thus, in addition to his criticism of total dependency on indirect experience, Forster points to the necessity of variability in the range of environmental stimuli. In this he is not alone, for Piero and Happoport, amongst others, have also pointed to the existence of an optimum range of input stimuli from the environment.

The possible consequences of such developments are outlined through the person of Kuno, a very similar figure to those of Ballard's stories where situations are commonly depicted through the perceptions and actions of a single rebellious individual. Kuno is such a rebel unlike his mother Vashti who is presented as the apotheosis of the drugged, subservient, technologically dependent conformist. Vashti is such a creature of the machine that, at one moment of spiritual crisis in the narrative, she seizes the Book of the Machine (the machine operating manual) and thrice kisses it, each time experiencing the "delirium of acquiescence".

The first signs of Kuno's growing doubts occur when he asks his mother to visit him in person. Later when attempting to visit Kuno she is overcome, "seized with the terrors of direct experience", just as John J. is in Smash's CITY. Shortly after this incident and Kuno's first illegal trip to the surface, all visits to the surface, already frowned upon as deviant, are forbidden as unnecessary, and the already incipient doctrine that the only worthwhile intellectual labour is that of sifting and analysing the work of those before becomes prevalent. Fact finding and first hand study are shunned as shoddy and second rate. At this juncture the stage is clearly set. The rest of the story is almost inevitable. As in "Billionium", "science retreated into the ground to concentrate herself on the problems that she was certain of solving".

Indirect experience triumphs, and with it a growing reverence for the Machine and an increased tolerance for its faults. "Humanity, in its desire for comfort, had over-reached itself. It had exploited the riches of nature too far. Quietly and complacently, it was sinking into decadence and progress had come to mean the progress of the machine". The Machine gradually breaks down, but "the human tissues in that latter day had become so subservient, that they readily adapted themselves to the every caprice of the Machine". The Book of the Machine has become a venerable object, simultaneously a symbol of the Machine's omnipotence and an expression of a craving for a higher authority. This manifestation of man's "fear of freedom" has been neglected, even in Erich Fromm's seminal work on the subject (26).

Kuno's rebellion lies in his return to the belief that "Man is the measure", and his rejection of the prevalent belief that "man must be adapted to his surroundings". He perceives that the inhabitants of the Machine have "lost the sense of space" and therefore a part of themselves. The end of the narrative finds Kuno and Vashti weeping as the machine stops.

"The sin against the body - it was for that that they wept in grief: the centuries of wrong against the muscles and the nerves, and those five portals by which we can alone apprehend - glazing it over with a talk of evolution, until the body was white pap, the home of ideas as colourless, last glossy stirrings of a spirit that had grasped the stars."

Forster, like Ballard, is suggesting that certain things are essential corollaries of human existence, notably contact with nature and open space, and a specific quantum of direct experience unfiltered by all but our natural senses. The implications of these ideas for urban design and planning are clear, especially with regard to further increases in the size of urban areas with diminished access to the countryside (which itself is undergoing steady urbanization), and to the further growth of covered shopping centres and the like. In this respect it is worth bearing in mind that some technologists regard the presence of windows in the new thin-skin clad office blocks as inefficient. They require both more in the way of central heating due to the heat loss from windows, and more in the way of air-conditioning due to the "greenhouse" effect they can exert in summer. Complete enclosure allied

with artificial lighting would, they claim, make it little different from natural light!

Forster and Ballard also both share the view that fresh challenges and experiences are always required. The implications of this view are that there should be no finished "utopias", instead cities should be continuously evolving in a dynamic fashion. In systems terms cities must always be open systems rather than closed systems - only in this way can the human brain receive enough fresh inputs to function harmoniously. Once information received becomes repetitive or incorrect, and corrective feedback mechanisms are unavailable, disorganization rapidly ensues. This theme has been interestingly explored by Barrington Bayley in his short story "Exit from City 5" (27). City 5, for reasons we need not delve into, is basically a completely self-contained lifeboat floating in space some five miles in diameter and holding two million people - the last remnants of humanity. There is no possibility whatsoever of leaving the city, the perpetual functioning of which is guaranteed by the complete conservation of mass-energy. The city is thus conceived as a sort of perpetual motion machine, a technical impossibility in terms of the second law of thermodynamics, but no matter since the essence of the story lies in the effort to maintain the city as a functioning social and psychological entity. This is done by the comprehensive monitoring of all social tendencies, allied with their regulation and redirection into promotion of stasis and stability which, it is believed, is the only feasible way of preserving the city forever. As Kord, the chief planner, states

"any uncontrolled process beneath the dome is a danger to the city. The element in the human psyche that reaches out, that explores and discovers must be eradicated. It means destruction to us. The outward, aspirational life must be replaced by an inward life of symbolism and extremely close personal relationships.... There must be no new directions, no individuality, no innovations or originality of thought"

As the story commences, however, dissatisfaction is once again beginning to manifest itself as it has many times before in the history of the city. Again, our archetypal rebel figure, given unconscious vent to it:

"There's something a bit dead about City 5. Nothing ever comes in from outside. Anything that happens has to be generated right here.... I feel restless, dissatisfied, I just wish I could go somewhere".

Opposition is not confined to youthful dissidents, however, it has even permeated the planning committee itself:

"It has been known ever since the early formulation of dialectical materialism that motion and tendency, opposing forces and so on, are the very basis of matter whether it takes physical, mental or social forms. If the principle of opposition, as for instance in a class struggle of some sort, is fundamental, then how can you be sure that a static or self-perpetuating state is ever possible? You cannot name any Earth society that remained stable for all time".

So too, another member of the planning committee puts it thus:

"As we see it, you fear initiative because it will upset the balance, but we fear stasis because it produces a movement in the other direction, towards decay. The city

can die through a progressive depletion of psychic energy, as well as through an explosion of it...In fact...we now question whether a society can be kept in good health without innovation and change".

The story ends with an ironic victory for the pessimists, the city being totally destroyed in the struggle that ensues from the attempts of Lord to impose a wholly static order and purge the opposition. The implication would seem to be that the second law of thermodynamics is not confined solely to physical phenomena.

Complexity and Control

Stasis apart, it is evident that Forster's attack is directed, at the most general level, at the gradual, almost imperceptible, inversion of human values of the sort that we are witnessing today in man's struggle against the motorcar. Piers captures this well when he says:

"When a person finds himself in the middle of a network of urban motorways, he wonders where man is. Man, who should be the master of urban landscape, because landscape is the expression of the city he created, finds himself imprisoned".

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, economic values such as cost-minimization and efficiency were largely subservient to other social and cultural values. They seem, however, to have become increasingly dominant since then, to the stage where they have frequently ousted other values completely. Such values are certainly not undesirable in themselves, they become so only when they dictate the extent to which other values can be taken into consideration is an issue. Forster is not alone in stressing that man should be the measure of things. Elt Pedlar states in his essay "Dens ex Machina" (28) that:

"The individual is losing his voice and is becoming irretrievably immersed in the complex system of increasingly intelligent artificial affects around him...What is happening now is that most aspects of our activities are considered in statistical blocks, programmed for efficiency".

This sort of situation has been described, admittedly in a rather unlikely manner, in David Alexander's "Disposable Unit Man" (29), where in the usual world of scarcity, overpopulation and overconsumption, life has become so complex that mankind has turned over the organisation and decision making to a giant municipal computer. But not only does the computer exert total control over the life of the municipality's inhabitants, it also exerts control over their continued existence through its ability to "shut down" entire sectors of the city, killing some in order that the others might survive. Much more realistic is the situation depicted in Rick Raphael's "The Thirst Quenchers" (30). Here, in a grossly over-industrialized America of 500 millions the hydrological cycle has had to be placed under total control in order to avoid the, by now, potentially destructive vagaries of nature. As Raphael puts it, nations could "no longer evade the situation that had been forewarned and foredoomed a century earlier by the pioneers of conservation...Only by the total conservation of every possible drop of moisture could the nation survive". There is total possible re-use of water, rivers and reservoirs are non-existent due to their potential evaporation losses, and snow is sprayed from the air with a molecular film to lessen losses from south facing slopes. When a disaster does occur - the fracturing of several huge underground storage tanks by earth tremors - near chaos is just averted.

The moral is clearly that as human demands upon the environment increase, the associated environmental control systems have to become so complex that the dangers of natural disasters increase far more than proportionately. Mankind should leave a large margin of safety rather than living on a knife edge. Asimov, in *THE CAVES OF STEEL* (7) has also elaborated this thesis in a more explicitly urban context:

"In primitive times, individual population centres were virtually self-supporting, living on the produce of neighbouring farms. Nothing but immediate disaster, a flood or a pestilence or a crop failure, could harm them. As the centres grew and technology improved, localized disaster could be overcome by drawing on help from distant centres, but at the cost of making even larger areas independent. In medieval times, the open cities, even the largest, could subsist on food stores and on emergency supplies of all sorts for a week at least. When New York first became a City, it could have lived on itself for a day. Now it cannot do so for an hour. A disaster that would have been uncomfortable ten thousand years ago, merely serious a thousand years ago, and acute a hundred years ago, would now surely be fatal".

The prospect of environmental catastrophe is not the sole danger stemming from increasing complexity of social, economic and spatial organization. Society has long walked a tightrope between freedom and control, but increasing complexity all too often carries with it the corollary of increased control; a necessity for the efficient ordering of the complex systems created. Such control may be directly political, or it may be of a more sophisticated kind such as the control of consumption as depicted in J.G. Ballard's "Subliminal Man" (31) which, as the title suggests, conjures up a world where consumption is stepped up to meet production through the intensive use of subliminal advertising. Christopher Priest's "Double Consumption" (32) is very similar, except that the subliminals are used to mould the whole of the nation's moods and fashions. In a Britain where birth rate has been falling and economics dictate a steady increase in internal productivity least widespread redundancy occurs, large surpluses of consumer goods become widespread. Increases in consumption prove inadequate, however, and a marriage reform act is introduced which, with the aid of transition drugs, encourages the breakdown of the single family in favour of dual families and households, partners switching regularly once a week.

But by far and away one of the most intriguing depictions of control in an urban context (as opposed to a societal context) is Ballard's "Chronopolis" (33) which takes the control of time as its subject matter. Set in a timeless world, every clock is derelict - its hands ripped off; only timers survive for use in hospitals and kitchens and other places wherever a fixed interval of time is required. The implications of this are described through the person of Conrad, a schoolboy, and his teacher - Stacey - who takes Conrad on a trip to Chronopolis, the Time City, in order to point out to him where the obsession with time and the timing of activities has led society prior to the great revolt against the Clocks. Once holding 30 millions, the city is now largely deserted with barely 2 million people hanging on in the outlying suburbs which surround the vast city centre some 40-50 miles in diameter. As they drive in:

"One suburban centre gave way to another, to long intervening stretches of congested ribbon development. Mile by mile, the architecture altered its character, buildings were

larger, ten to fifteen storey blocks...In the distance, two or three miles away, the tall rectilinear outlines of enormous apartment blocks reared up thirty or forty storeys high, hundreds of them lined shoulder to shoulder in apparently endless ranks, like giant dominoes.

Conrad, however, was looking only at the clocks. Never had he visualised so many, in places so dense that they obscured each other. Their faces were multi-coloured; red, blue, yellow, green. Most of them carried four or five hands.

Stacey explains that all these were for the different time zones of the population, these varying according to professional category and consumer shift. Stacey outlines to Conrad the working of the city:

"In its heyday this city was a fantastically complex organism. The communications problems are difficult to imagine merely looking up at these blank facades. It's the tragedy of this city that there appeared to be only one way to solve them."

"Did they solve them?"

"Oh yes, certainly. But they left themselves out of the equation."

Time. Only by synchronising every activity, every footstep forward or backward, every meal, bus-halt, and telephone call, could the organism support itself. Like the cells in your body, which proliferate into mortal cancers if allowed to grow in freedom, every individual here had to submerge the over-riding needs of the City or fatal bottlenecks threw it into total chaos...The old metaphor of the cog in the wheel was never more true than here."

The essence of Ballard's thesis is the delicate balance between the freedom of the individual and the efficient organization of society. This is overt throughout the story, but at one juncture Ballard pointedly drives his message home just to be sure. Conrad, despite all of Stacey's criticisms, expresses the view that though life in the city must have been highly organized "it is better than the sort of life we lead". But, as Stacey points out, "Don't you think there's a point beyond which human dignity is surrendered", Conrad clearly does not think so, and in his refusal to be convinced, Ballard, it seems to me is stressing that the struggle for human dignity is an endless one, in that there will always be those who place efficiency before all else.

Conclusion

It might be thought that too many of the works examined in this article focus on the philosophical and more abstract issues of future urban life as opposed to the more concrete aspects of the built form itself. Those who think that could do worse than reflect on Reinhold Niebuhr's warning against belief in "Salvation through Bricks". According to Weber, city planning has been characterized in the past by the preparation of portraits of "desired long-range futures for the physical-spatial city" rather than by "systematic forecasts of social change". Whilst the importance of the physical environment is undisputed, and as a generalization it is probably valid to assert that whilst values and culture of a society are manifested in the built environment, the reverse is not so. Thus, just as the spatial pattern of cities is, in part, a reflection of the distribution of income within a society, so too, society's other values find their expression in the city. But just as we cannot, except in the most minor way, redistribute income within a society

by rearranging the spatial patterns of its cities, so we cannot significantly amend the values or priorities of a society by adjusting its physical artifacts and expression. The causal link is by and large uni-directional, contrary to the beliefs of many of the nineteenth century reformers such as Owen, Cadbury, and Howard who hoped to reform the individual by locating him within an improved physical environment.

This is not to totally dismiss the role and relevance of the built environment for it clearly has a major part to play in shaping life in the city of the future. A city out of scale and out of sympathy with the individuals; a city which does not provide opportunities for the growth and development of the individual, can de-humanize. What needs to be stressed, however, is that cities do not arise by spontaneous generation; they are the expression of society's values. Richard Hoggart (34) has pointed out that the tower blocks of today are just as much a reflection of society's evaluation of their residents, as the terrace houses of the last century that they replaced were. The crucial determinants of the built environment are the values that will determine the future urban form. If the discussion of such values fails to occur, the future of the future is out of our hands. As Marshall McLuhan once put it (35):

"There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening".

--- Chris Hannett

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Freeman on Fanzines

Nebula 5 (31.7.75): Dave Taylor, 15 Alys Gdn, Upton-by-Chester. Qtrly. 15p. Reviews and (mostly) fiction.

S of BSFA J (various): Don Miller. DN Age 61: Eric Wentcliffe, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, CW4 7NR. Frequent - every 2 to 4 weeks. News, reviews of the American scene.

Fanzine Fanatique 11 (8.8.75). 12 (17.8.75): Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Road, Lancaster. 2 monthly? Trade. Fanzine reviews, letters, reprints (mostly about fanzine production, collecting etc.).

SF Contact 2 (\$ 9.75): Graham Poole, 23 Russett Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL51 7LN. Irregular. Interest. Discussion of BSFA etc. and Graham's ideas.

After the Flood 2 (8.8.75): David Griffin, 83, Kaplin Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8RF. Qtrly. 25p. Rune Forsgren, N-form 16587, S-905 90 Umea, Sweden. 2:50. Half Swedish, half English mix personalzine.

New USA SF Books 26 (8.8.75): Joanne Burger, 55 Blue Bonnet Ct, Lake Jackson, Texas 77565, USA. 2 monthly. \$1.50 a year. Lists of books about to be published.

It Comes in the Mail 17 (23.8.75): Ned Brooks, 713 Paul St, Newport News, Virginia. 23605 USA. Qtrly? Trade. Personalzine - and one of the best.

Bruce Robins Pnz/book list (23 9 75): Bruce Robins Annual - I'd have more details if the editor of VECTOR didn't still have my copy.

Orion Express 1 (25 9 75): Paul A. Ryan, 29 Morrill Ave, Nailton, Leeds LS15 7EP. Jereq. 25p. Personalzine, art-fiction-poetry.

LOGO 9-75 (30.9.75): Kevin Easthope, 6 Ipsley Grove, Birmingham B23 7SY. Irreg. Usual. Personalzine - fairly serious.

Enochians from Neptune (1.10.75): Mike Neams, 61 Borrowash Road, Spondon, Derby DE2 7QH. Qtrly. 61 or trade. Personalzine done in diary form - nearly 100 pages. Quite a few letters but still suffers (as do all personalzines) from a surfeit of the editor's own style. Perhaps should be read a few pages a day?

Spang Blah III 3 (4.10.75): Jan Howard Finder, PSC box 614, US Air Force Base, I-33761 Aviano, Italia. Qtrly. Free. Newszine, basically for news on sf outside USA (it says) - used to be news for Americans outside the USA. Packed full of news and is subsidised by the opticians I'm sure! Good.

Black Hole 6 (7.10.75): Leeds Union SF Society, Leeds University, Leeds 2, Yorks. Qtrly? 15p. Fiction, reviews, art and articles. General mix. Value for money.

Requiem SF/Fantastique 6 (7.10.75): Norbert Spehner, 455 Saint-Jean, Longueuil, Quebec, J4M 1Z3, Canada. Bi-monthly? 76p. Written in French, and I don't know enough French to more than puzzle out a very little....can't judge.

The Inverted Ear Trumpet 2 (11 10 75): Richard McMahon, 287 South Lane, New Malden, Surrey ET3 5NR. Irreg. 10p. Young enthusiastic fan who's fighting with his duplicator - we might see who's winning with no. 3. Personalzine with reviews and articles. Room for improvement but well worth encouraging.

Scottish 70 (13.10.75): Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Avenue, Sorbitoo, Surrey
 RT6 6QL. Twice yearly. 25p. Article (Dob Shaw), book reviews, letters,
 fanzine reviews and Ethel's inimitable "nattering". Despite calling VECTOR
 "VAGARY", one of the best fanzine review columns around.

ERG 52 (?): Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannockburn Road, Sheffield S11 9FE. Qly. 3
 for 50p, 7 for £1.00. Almost a personalizing, but written as a genuine.
 Dependable is probably the word most used about ERG, .. in the middle of the
 series on production of fanzines that (it's promised) will be issued as a
 separate publication when finished. Would be worth getting for this alone.

--- Keith Freeman

((Is this the kind of fanzine review column which readers want? This is
 the question which Keith asked me to pose to readers. Do you want short
 reviews with basic information on address, price, etc? Or would you prefer
 to see one or two fanzines reviewed in depth, and an even shorter listing
 of other titles? Let us know what sort of column you want to see on these
 pages - Ed.))



Jeeves

The Celluloid Dream

Andrew Tidmarsh

THE CARS THAT ATE PARIS directed by Peter Weir. 1974. Australia

I would not have seen this extraordinary film had I not been encouraged to do so by an enthusiastic review. And, of course, the point of a review is to supply information and to alert a potential audience to the agonies or delights of certain films.

Paris, as we generally accept, is situated in France, occupies a bulky site on the banks of the River Seine. Forget these facts, these misdirections. Paris, of course, is a small community somewhere in the vast empty interior of Australia. And, as far as I am concerned, Australia is as alien a country as would be Mars, if only we could visit Mars.

We are introduced hesitantly to Paris, to the illuminated ward of the small hospital that serves the town. We view the light through the eyes of a man who has experienced and survived a crash, who learns suddenly that his brother is dead. Death is a shock. The survivor, however, is unharmed, and the car in which he was a passenger is salvaged, reluctantly, by the town's inhabitants.

We see, then, that the car and its associated attachments - engine, radio, tyres - are the central elements in the lives of the folk of Paris. Indeed, we begin to understand that life has been modified to such an extent that the car literally dominates the people for whom it was intended to be a useful gadget.

This film is science fiction, a film of startling depth. Ballard has covered in detail in his work the merged facets of sexuality and the automobile. This film, however, eschews reference to eroticism, the bodies of men and women. Instead, it focuses pointedly, poignantly on the shape, the structure, the ferocity of cars - smashed cars, burnt cars, twisted and tormented cars.

The survivor of the crash, predictably, is afraid of cars and cannot drive himself, in his brother's car, away from Paris. He cannot escape from his fear. He is trapped; he is uncomfortable. And he is told by the town's mayor that he is ill.

Paris is a tightly knit community. The town itself can be reached only by driving down a narrow, winding road. Visitors do not successfully thrust their way down this road; they are unwelcome and are always destroyed: a slick road, an oft-apollotered tree, a burnt-out wreck. Victims who weakly crawl from their burning cars are dragged, screaming, to the town's hospital where an enthusiastic doctor experiments with their bodies and their minds.

Why, then, is the film's protagonist allowed to live? He provides access, he allows the audience to be drawn gradually into the mysterious atmosphere which engulfs Paris. But this is handled sensitively and does not become obtrusive. The camera's range widens, images which bear little relation to our preconceptions are thrown sharply at us. And we feel, we absorb the bitter message that we ourselves could easily be becoming as obsessed with machines, with cars, as the apparently psychotic Parisians are.

Stated baldly, the theme of the film is the introduction of an innocent into an alien society. The innocent and the society could both, so easily, be already with us.

Unfortunately, no explanation is ever offered as to why the people we watch act so strangely, why they tolerate their own extreme behaviour. Obviously, Paris has succumbed slowly: has been hypnotised and now finds woven into its basic fabric the car and distorted manifestations of the car. The pattern is familiar: slow change is undetectable, past patterns of existence are minutely modified, easily forgotten.

The innocent wishes to escape, but cannot. The townspeople try to be friendly, to befriend, try to draw the stranger into their pleasant, obsessive world. We observe the disparity, the gulf that separates beings from different worlds. And with whom do we sympathise? Who is the real victim? And of what?

The film progresses. Background details are clarified, suggest themes which are not overtly discussed: a deranged surgeon, rebellious youth, sentient cars. The denouement shocks: savage, destructive, a kaleidoscopic display of smashed and smashing cars, shredded people. The innocent is corrupted, learns that a car can be his salvation. Simultaneously the Parisians realise that they have been acting foolishly, and belatedly discard their vehicles.

The converted innocent suffers. The evolved corruptors survive.

Please, consider your laughter carefully: don't titter at lines which cannot honestly be funny. The film is both warning and observation, though enjoyable, it is deadly serious.

ROLLERBALL directed by Norman Jewison. 1975. USA.

This film offers its audience a glimpse of the "near future" - a time wherein wars have been abolished and wherein everyone is obsessed by a brutal and cathartic game. For all this, I would not contend that ROLLERBALL is a science fiction film.

The introduction is superb: subdued pictures, valedictory music; we focus upon the arena that is the dominant feature in the supposed society of the future. Majestic voices growl; the camera pads beside a jogging line of bulkily uniformed men; overcast tunnels redly spew forth gladiators. The involvement of the crowd is vocal and loud. The calm announcer's voice explains that the game is about to begin. A sudden explosion thrusts a silver sphere onto the Rollerball rink: the whirr of rollerskates, the metallic rustle of active engines, the rhythmic chanting of the crowd. "Houston, Houston, Houston." Waves of energy surge around and around, and finally swoop toward the heavy ball. There is a pick-up, a moment of silence, a roar, and the trophy is held aloft, roundly embedded in a rigid fist of black leather and steel. "Jonathan E! Jonathan E!" Houston's captain receives, reflects, drives forward and...SCORES! Houston predictably win.

The examinations of the game are the film's most vital sections. Great affection for the impact of fist and jaw, or toe and head, overshadow the absence of explanations: how many players form a team? (OK, two); what is the purpose of the game? What actions constitute fouls? why was the game created? Lack of detail and lack of background are this film's most irritating and, to my mind, damaging faults. The game is never contrasted with the ordinary life of a denizen of the future. Ultimately, the film can only be

judged by what it shows or tells its audience; and, as the information is poor, the demonstrations weak, the overall impression is of an inadequate film. Presumably there are reasons for the disregard of authenticity; most obviously, the film is no more than a fantasy, an exploitative exploration of the way that a game can be used to destroy people. This opinion is too harsh, however.

A mysterious "Corporate War" has upset the structure of the world in which we presently live. Amalgamations have spawned six giants: ENERGY, FOOD, TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS, HOUSING, LUXURY - which clearly control the messy sphere of human endeavour: almost, breath is monitored; almost, smiles are provoked; actually, relationships are modified or rendered obsolete. Most importantly, the Corporations sponsor Rollerball (though the film hints that the game predated the Corporations). Sponsorship enables the Corporations to manipulate without appearing to reach out and touch, and forces upon everyone the knowledge of the right of executives (those who "manage" as opposed to those who "work") to tell the world what to do. If a worker disobeys a directive he will be denied access to Rollerball, and will metaphorically cease to exist. And, of course, the attractions of the game are immense. Yet the players only play so that they may be seen to die.

Jonathan E is a success: For ten years his efforts have held Houston in a position of superordinance. He has become a hero, and, unfortunately, a personality who transcends the bounds of the game. This is an indiscretion. Jonathan is advised to retire. Amazingly (or, to view the situation another way, predictably) he realises that he would be no-one if he lost contact with the game. And ROLLERBALL becomes no more than a cliché: an examination of the conflict between worker and management, between individual and corporation. Though science fiction has dealt with such themes, I believe that they are no longer interesting and ought to be discarded. If must not stagnate or surreptitiously strangle itself by allowing all manner of clichés to be passed off, indeed flaunted, as the pure quill. Notwithstanding its extravagant backdrops, ROLLERBALL is as devoid of content as a pink bud of candy floss. It could be argued that the film is stunningly photographed, powerful exciting; a one hundred and five minute glimpse of the future (yawn!). I decline to stray these points, I believe they are trivial.

James Caan, as Jonathan E, presents his inarticulate character competently - as indeed do the other actors featured in the film. Caan, however, is never allowed to develop a multi-dimensional personality, and his chosen mannerisms (indications of fear and anxiety, sardor and amusement) become boring after repetition and thereby pathetic. It is, of course, futile to mention shortcomings of this nature when the film in which they occur is not concerned with such matters. ROLLERBALL focuses totally on Rollerball; the only dramatic tension is created by the featureless gaps between games; no characters are real, or are important, or transcend the fierce images of the game. The game predominates, the game is the film.

The plot unfolds during these long intervals which separate the powerful and absorbing action sequences. Jonathan E confronts the stodgy Mr. Bartholomew, chief executive of ENERGY: their conversation is unmemorable, repetitious, intriguingly vacuous (courtesy, presumably, of William Harrison, upon whose brief story "Rollerball Murders" the film is based). Jonathan E confronts Mr. Bartholomew (in the midst of a moronic and sparkling party for moronic and sparkling executives): their conversation stumbles across a number of illuminating clichés. Jonathan E is given a new female companion (who promptly, forgetfully, disappears). Jonathan E descends into a pastiche, locably accompanied (and how degrading!) by Ralph Richardson (as an ageing, abstracted "scientist") and a bubbling bowl of water (as the immensely powerful computer, ZERO). Jonathan E forbids the destruction of his protegee (who,

unfortunately, has been stomped into cabbage-like submission); a few tears. Jonathan E is visited by his wife, Ellen: their conversation is long and fruitless, Ellen departs. Finally (thankfully!) Jonathan E confronts Mr. Bartholomew, and graphically breaks a fellow-player's neck across the executive's lap. And so, Jonathan E, by persevering and by refusing to change (opinion, expression, allegiance) from the start to the end of the film, emerges triumphant. The music, composed by Andre Previn, crescendoes.

The fact that Jonathan E survives the final destructive ordeal points up no moral. The survival of the film's star is, sadly, unsurprising. ROLLERBALL will be remembered for the brilliant stunt-work it displays; and though it is a weak and hackneyed film it has been glossed in such a way as to ensure its commercial success.

Ahl

--- Andrew Tidmarsh



EDITORIAL EXTRAS

This may be hard for those of you who have never been involved with the production of a magazine to credit, but this "extra" is actually being written before the editorial itself. This is being written to fill a page, so that we can get most of V70 off to the printers, leaving the editorial pages until later in the day. Which is incidentally, a beautiful sunny Autumn day here in Berkshire (Monday, October 27th). The colours of the trees are so beautiful, that, combined with my lack of the company of Certain Persons of the Female inclination in the last week whilst V70 has been in production, fill me with all kinds of strange desires. Mainly, to get out with my Praktica full of Ektachrome and photograph someone autumnal in the midst of sun-lit yellowing leaves, etc. Yes, that will be very good therapy after the strains of continuous VECTOR work. I'd like to say that I'll be taking a break from VECTOR for a while, but by the time it's out to you, the readers, it will be November, and time to solicit articles, etc, for V71. I hope to be catching up with my reading, so as to do some decent reviews myself in V71... and then there will be a cover by Dave Griffiths (please?)... and the prolific Mr Tidmarsh will be writing on Disaster Stories/Films... and Chris Morgan will be making a come-back all out in time for Christmas, now doesn't that make you glad to be a member of the B9FA?

the infinity box

NINE HUNDRED GRANDMOTHERS by R.A. Lafferty (Dobson; 1975; £3.50; 318 pp.
ISBN 0 234 77206 7)

Reviewed by James Corley

I picked up NINE HUNDRED GRANDMOTHERS believing it to be a premature biography of one of Elizabeth Taylor's offspring. It turns out the title conceals a collection of short stories from R.A. Lafferty. Now Mr. Lafferty has always been a writer's writer, a stylist more appreciated by his peers than by the public. His stories have appeared in most of the major anthologies and magazines, and from the lips of the anthologists and editors praise has gushed in his direction as feverishly as rain on a Bank Holiday. Inevitably, if you have read anything in the past fifteen years, GALILEY, IF, DANGEROUS VISIONS, FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, ORBIT, then you will have read more than one of the stories included here before, since of the twenty-one pieces, ranging from "Through other Eyes", 1960 to the 1969 tale "One at a Time", only "Frog on the Mountain" is original to this book.

I shall return to this "Frog" later but first some advice to those of you who are already acquainted with Mr. Lafferty and to whom the praise of the anthologists has always been a mystery. I used to find it a puzzle myself, from time to time I would come across stories by this man and they seemed slight and insubstantial. That's how it is with one Lafferty story; with two stories something begins to hum; a bookful of them and the critical point is passed you discover addiction has set in somewhere around the third or fourth story. This then is the message - even if you have read some of these stories before and didn't see much in them, get the book and read them all together. You will discover something valuable.

Mr Lafferty's admirers have described him as unique. It's a valid claim to make. He has a folksy "down-home" style, American Primitive to tell a phrase; it hides a measure of sophistication, no elegance of construction and a great deal of talent. In short he is not in the great tradition of sf writers. And yet there are comparisons that can be made sometimes in his stories there is a poetry of imagery and a concern with childhood which is reminiscent of Bradbury. "Name of the Snake" contains a theme that can be related to Eliot's religious side. And "Frog on the Mountain" reeks of Hemingway (this isn't it, what I really want to say about "Frog" comes later).

So there are comparisons that vindicate Donne's law, but you have to admit that when you compare Lafferty you have to compare him with some of the best. Like most good writers he is concerned more with his characters than with his plots, and it's in his characters that Lafferty's idiosyncrasies and strengths show. They are quirky, odd people, ordinary people but always with something totally extraordinary about them. He has a feeling for the uniqueness of individuals, whether in conflict or cooperation the characters maintain their individual motivations, they make conversation but never contact. This is the strangeness to be found in Lafferty's stories, not the strangeness of situations or events, though they play their part. But the absolute, inevitable strangeness of other people. Lafferty does not believe in Donne's law - to him all men are islands. In "Through other Eyes" a character invents a machine that allows him to see the world as others see it. He finds that each pair of eyes he peers through perceives it in a totally

different way. In "The hole on the Corner" another wonderful invention opens up the way for analogues from other dimensions; switched from one level to another they wander into the homes of their other-dimensional counterparts and are accepted as one of the family even though they might be bright green with tentacles; they seem the same, their spouses only see what is already in their heads.

I mentioned his concern with childhood, if concern is the appropriate word since part of "The Primary Education of the Camiroi" involves the hanging of 1% of the schoolkids as an example to the others. It has been pointed out before that this procedure concentrates the mind wonderfully, but who before Lafferty has seen the educational potential? His attitude to children is ambivalent: he suspects that they are smarter than grown-ups but he distrusts them. His younger characters all seem to have been born with an instinctive and fully fledged comprehension. They can, as in "Seven Day Terror", invent disappearers out of old beer cans and they turn up again, smart as ever, in "Narrow Valley".

In contrast his adults have forgotten their insight into the world. They're still capable of inventing wonderful machines, machines a great deal more complicated than the junk constructions of the kids, but they never work in quite the way expected. The machine that changes the past in "Thus We Frustrate Charlemagne" changes it so successfully that it alters the expectations of the inventors, who never notice the change. In "Hog-Belly Money" the inventors give their garbage disposal the ability to make ethical decisions and let it decide for itself what ought to be disposed of. Its definition of garbage goes too far. And for a disturbing explanation of why the kids are smarter than the grown-ups turn to "Ginny Wrapped in the Sun". Ginny's a beautiful child, except when you look at her in a certain way.

But Lafferty's characters very rarely look at things objectively; in this universe beliefs are not changed by reality, rather reality is changed by belief. In "Narrow Valley" Clarence Big-Saddle decides to keep the tax collectors out of his valley; he can't remember the correct and ancient Red Indian spell, so he makes up some gibberish and shouts it loudly and confidently hoping to fool the gods into thinking it the right formula. It works, just like the beer cans actually make things disappear when you look through them and blink. For Lafferty is no science fiction writer, he writes fantasy, his universe contains no logic or science, it works by magic, by the whim and fiat of the bear that might be God in "Snuffles". A magic furthermore that emanates from the spirit rather than the grimoires. When he makes the mistake of giving a sound rationale for his scenarios, as he does in "Land of the Great Horses", a tale of a country that's only a mirage, it only serves to destroy the moody ambience created in the build-up.

Why, certainly Lafferty makes mistakes - who doesn't? His forte is character, and sometimes his plots get out of control. He is capable of writing himself into a corner from which there is no escape. When the hero of "The Six Fingers of Time", after discovering how to speed up his life sixtyfold, announces that he is about to reveal the secret of the universe, keen students of Lafferty will guess that a sudden and untimely death is not far away. But "Six Fingers", the earliest of the stories included here, is abnormal, for Lafferty does not usually subscribe to heroes and villains, only to differences of nature and differences of opinion. When, as in Blith's A CASE OF CONSCIENCE a priest attempts to find sin on an alien world, the only fault he finds in Lafferty's "Name of the Snake" is a cooking-pot cannibalism, and that inspired more by a sense of humour than by any personal like or dislike of missionaries. And sometimes his charm allows him

to stay comfortably in the escape-proof corner. The "Nine Hundred Grandmothers" of the title story know how time began but find it all too much of a joke: they're laughing too much to reveal it. Flash Gordon would never have got away with that on a Saturday morning.

And so we come to "Frog", chronologically last and by all means least of the stories in the volume. It is an emulation of Hemingway, undoubtedly the most unlovable of twentieth century writers - principally because he used his talent to sanitize his sadistic filth about the vandalisation of life with phoney dignity and sanctimonious machismo. I have always believed that the White House and the Pentagon used Hemingway as a training manual. If the model were not bad enough, it appears that in this one instance Lafferty's art fail him completely. It is a mess of a story in which a hunter, ludicrously burdened with a spiked suit of armour climbs, like a rollerball player on an outward-bound course, up a mountain so geologically improbable that it ought to either be allegorical or demolished. He slaughters various innocuous animals on the way up, partly for the bell of it and partly to allow Mr. Lafferty to slip in some irrelevant stuff about Prometheus. He loses an ear and a nose in the course of these encounters but the amputations do not disturb him much, presumably because he has lost his marbles long before. Meanwhile, his oldest buddy, previously killed on the same ascent, appears like Banquo's ghost to warn him about the final and totally predictable adversary. We are left with a nauseous impression that the story is meant to be significant. It signifies to me the awful fallibility of an otherwise good writer.

We have spent too long with the abominable "Frog", but it demanded attention like a black gap in an otherwise gleaming row of teeth. So let's turn quickly to some of the other stories. There are two about the Camirol, a race of super-human free-enterprise believers who get things done in a way that seems totally illogical to the visiting delegations from Earth who go to study their "Primary Education" and their "Polity and Custom". There are Lovansians of Earth, though not the typical kind, in "All the People", in "In our Block" and in "Guessing Time". There is a different and more extensive visit to the speeded up world of "The Six Fingers of Time" in the paradoxically titled "Slow Tuesday Night". The book in short is a barrel of apples with only one bad one in it. A better average than most could claim.

You may find you disagree with Lafferty's highly personal and ironical philosophy, but you will be entertained by its red-necked poetry, by the Dickensian names of his characters, by his inspired use of language. I suspect NINE HUNDRED GRANDMOTHERS would escape even the creative book-burning of the eighth year of Camirol education.

THE HOST MAN by Andrew Hamilton (Dobson; 1975; £2.75)

Reviewed by Peter Hyde

One strand in my writing is the exploration of the implications of technological change, and Andrew Hamilton's *THE HOST MAN* is a story in this tradition. Organ transplants we know about, but what if brain transplants were possible...?

Clearly, the fundamental issue is: who is the survivor? In Hamilton's novel a commission of inquiry establishes the doctrine that the brain survives and that the host body should take on the identity and name of the brain it receives. This is the prologue; the remainder of the book explores the extent to which this is actually the case when the first brain transplant happens.

The brain of Joey Murphy, a not-particularly-bright Irish labourer whose body dies (one of the implications of brain transplants is sentences like this) in a building site accident and whose brain is transplanted into the body of Sir Anthony Clare, Bt., who died in a motor accident. (There is a slight problem here in that Sir Anthony suffered fatal brain damage when he "buried his head in the Bentley's radiator grill" and yet his features aren't mangled beyond recognition.)

Joey's response to his new situation and that of his wife Emma (ultimate rejection of the middle-aged body Joey now occupies) and Lady Clare (who attempts to turn Joey into her dead husband) are explored with some sensitivity. All of them are deemed to need psychiatric help to aid them in coming to terms with the situation, and this is provided in the person of Hugh (he is never given a surname), a psychiatrist attached to the University medical school where the operation was performed.

At Hugh's instigation, Joey and Emma go to the funeral of Sir Anthony Clare (Joey, of course, is in a sense present at his own funeral) and then stay in the family manor in Kent. Gradually, Joey finds that he has some of Sir Anthony's tastes and knows things that Sir Anthony would have known without thinking about them. Gradually in fact, Sir Anthony's identity is taking him over.

This it becomes apparent is just what the medical team wanted to find out: is the brain the natural survivor - would it survive the acid test of being placed in the body's natural environment? Apparently not - although the "explanation" is couched in mumbo-jumbo terms about information stored in the body's programme.

The resurgence of Sir Anthony's identity culminates in a visit to his old haunts in London; including the bed of his mistress. This, however, is too much and produces a schizophrenic breakdown and a long recuperative stay in hospital. Then, again at Hugh's instigation, back to Kent to the by now identifiable tragic conclusion. Science has profited, but at poor old Joey's expense.

That is the outline of the story, although Joey's relationship with his nurse, Maureen (who is in fact much more than just a nurse), and Sarah Clare (Sir Anthony's daughter) are also important. So too is Emma's affair with Timothy Clare (the eldest son - a rather overdrawn character, an excellent horseman but otherwise a leading candidate for Upper Class Twit of the Year). Altogether, this is an excellent novel, apparently the author's first in the sf field. An enjoyable and thought-provoking tale which deserves to be widely read.

THE OTHER GLASS TEAT by Harlan Ellison (Pyramid; 1975; \$1.50; 400 pp)

Reviewed by Andrew Tidmarsh

Tremendous!

Ellison's book made me realise that I am not leading a useful life. Ellison openly disdains things with which I merely mentally disagree; and I am depressed. Yet, to realise what can be done, what can be said - what freedom and individuality we humans still possess - is to realise that one can be brave, and act. I hesitate; I avoid situations in which I am uncomfortable; I placate. Occasionally, in small ways, I irritate people. I lay myself open and express views to which I know others object. Ellison is much harder; and much sharper: he shouts. And I am inspired: such violence, such commitment, such undeniable bravery.

"The Glass Teat" is Ellison's term for TV: the glass screen upon which so many of us suck, from which so much false nourishment is drawn. Ellison rips the American TV scene apart, spilling its mis-shapen and rotting guts across everyone's lap. He invites comment. Do you agree with me, he asks? I can only say that I do, though I am not wholly certain that my voice can be heard. In a way, this does not matter. Ellison's strength is drawn from within, and his visions are so powerful that they are self-sustaining. Furthermore, he relies for inspiration upon himself; his ideas spring - to my delight - from within his distinctly individual personality. I am envious. I realise, however, that Ellison would not appreciate sycophantic imitation.

THE OTHER GLASS TEAT is a collection of forceful, nerve-tingling essays, written for the LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS in 1970 and 1971. (A previous collection - THE GLASS TEAT - has also been published by Pyramid, but copies are, apparently, hard to come by in this country.) Ellison considers the effects that TV programmes have on people, and also the effects that people have on TV programmes - especially the much-maligned Spiro Agnew (remember that name?) and similar political reactionaries. Initially, Ellison enthuses: TV is potentially the most powerful educational medium ever invented; it cannot be dismissed even after twenty years of declining standards and an offensive descent to the level of the lowest common denominator. Examination of a variety of programmes and bitter personal experiences alter Ellison's tone: maybe the Glass Teat should be shattered and its fragments scattered to the four winds. The book generates agreement.

British TV is gradually dying; and the reason is commercialisation. TV companies must be profitable, or no programmes of any kind can be produced. Money derives from sales, and only visual pabulum - mindless, tasteless, inoffensive, unopinionated and (sadly) harmless - is consistently marketable. TV, consequently, loses its capacity for stimulation, excitement, education, and becomes despised. (Or, at least, it ought to become despised. But audiences no longer retain a capacity for criticism and are able to apathetically absorb crap which in bygone days would have told them that their time could be better spent: a book, perhaps, or the cinema, the theatre, the opera.) The BBC's present bankrupt situation is saddening. Her Britannic Majesty's Government is at fault: the refusal to raise TV licence fees to adequate levels is an admission that television has become as much a part of life as a healthily pumping heart and cannot, therefore, be economically priced (Maybe this is an extension of the irresponsible policy that has led to the decay - and seemingly inevitable disintegration - of the British postal system? See Stupid. Maybe the BBC will become a wholly-owned government agency, and able, therefore, to effectively disseminate biased political opinions? Ellison outlines the effects on American TV that political institutions can cause. The descriptions are unpleasant.) If anyone cared that the BBC will soon become unable to produce programmes of quality, the cry for a £20 licence would have been heard. But one does not carp. After all, 20 years of ITV (or IBA) have shown, in gory detail, exactly what television is: boring, tasteless, stupid, a panderver to supposedly "popular" taste. And, of course, that is what TV will wholeheartedly become. We get what we have neglected to refuse.

Ellison's book deals at brutal length with many aspects of life, which TV brings to the author's attention: political corruption, racial misrepresentation, the inculcation of destructive reactionary opinions, the degeneration and degradation of democracy, the weird sexual characteristics of advertisements, the implacable encouragement of violence. I was fascinated. Ellison glows.

If this book does not make you leap out into the street and verbally abuse the weakness and the hypocrisy and the greed and the egotistical nature of the "American way of life" (and more relevantly, the British way of life), maybe you're dead, maybe you must for ever crouch behind a shield of irresponsible avoidance. Ellison would despise you (or at least, wonder why you were not able to extricate yourself from a collapsing and corrupt society; and then be sorry for you, and then be angry that you weren't even trying).

The world needs people of Harlan Ellison's calibre and conviction, and so, to a lesser extent, does science fiction. (The continued existence of sf, after all, is less important than the continued existence of the world; though some people may argue that the two are inextricably intertwined.) Neither can survive unless everyone (and I mean everyone) fights for an improvement of standards, a reconsideration of what is tolerable and acceptable, and a radical pruning of what for so long has been complacently enjoyed and misguidedly applauded.

Thank you, Harlan Ellison, for forcing these perceptions from my befuddled brain.

THE GODWHALE by T.J. Bass (Eyre Methuen; 1975; 306 pp; £3.70; ISBN 0 413 33720 0)

Reviewed by James Corley

As an adolescent I had a deep and burning ambition to be a doctor. The one thing which stopped me from following up this ambition, apart from a lack of the necessary ability, was a hearty dislike of injury, blood and the insides of the human body in general. Also, I don't understand long words. Looking back, the only aspect of the job that could have appealed to me was that it got you in close proximity to nurses.

There are no nurses to speak of in T.J. Bass's THE GODWHALE but right at the beginning the hero, one (or should I say one half) Larry Dever, loses the lower portion of his body in an accident and is put into suspended animation until such time as medical science can fully restore him. He wakes to find himself regarded as frozen food by the protein hungry citizens of the Hive - the underground refuge where mankind has retreated after greedily disrupting the food chain and turning the Earth's oceans sterile.

Larry escapes - no mean feat without feet - and survives in the "Treenwalls" of the Hive. I have to admit that I found his survival surprising since he has only a scrap of kidney and not much intestines left. Mr. Bass, however, obviously knows more about these things than I do. I'm also surprised that the architects of dystopian underground cities are still careless about the design of air ducts and such like. You'd think that they'd know by now that these things are liable to become infested with a whole host of malcontents.

Anyway, Larry makes a friend down there, a genetic reject called Harlan. And this leads me to muse that the two writers Mr. Bass most reminds me of are Larry Niven, for the emphasis and quality of his hard science, and Harlan Ellison, for some of the rather unpleasant things which happen. But then there's also a character called ARNOLD, and he has me beaten.

Various adventures befall Larry and Har, including infestation by a peculiarly nasty species of maggot, but eventually they escape to the sterile oceans, which are not quite sterile because just off-shore live the semi-aquatic Benthites, who exist by stealing from the Hivem. The Benthites are described as a sullen race; I do not see how this adjective can be justifiably used about a people whose females are so willing to copulate with anyone who

can hold his breath for ten minutes underwater. Incidentally, and here I defer again to Mr. Bass's greater knowledge, the techniques needed to successfully copulate underwater are somewhat different from those in fashion up here. However, the whole thing is described so tastefully that I barely blushed.

Incidentally, since Larry Dever has lost all his best (important body) appendages, I couldn't understand why, once in the ocean, he didn't just fill up with water and sink. Even if this problem could be overcome he would surely, due to his altered centre of gravity, float head downwards and drown. Remind me to experiment in the bath with my Action Man and a hacksaw before I pass Mr. Bass's name on to Isaac Asimov, who holds strong views about such mistakes.

But what has this to do with a Godwhale you ask. And so did I. Rorqual Maru, the Godwhale, was giant, sentient, mechanical plankton harvester in the days when there was still plankton to harvest as a source of food. By a well wrought coincidence plankton is returned to Earth's oceans and Rorqual returns to service. But even though Rorqual's allegiance is crucial to the war between the Hive and the Hentaites it never seems to occupy a very central position in the plot, it's really no more important than ARNOLD - who has been cloned by the hive from an Alpha Renal Nucleus Of Larry Dever. No matter, THE GODWHALE makes a more eye-catching title than ARNOLD ever would.

Despite my minor objections about the Incredible Sinking Maru, Mr. Bass seems to be on good speaking terms with the biological and physiological sciences. He also has an incredible facility with long words. But just in case you have phobias similar to mine he throws in a number of sentient machines to keep you calm. I grew quite fond of these machines, they're a lot more human than the human characters, if you know what I mean. And if you really can get sentience out of only 3.2 megabytes it may explain why my bank's computer seems to have a personal grudge against me. Coming back to the book there is also an elegant piece of mathematical theology worthy of any pyramidalogist: YG = C explains it all.

I may have been a little facetious with Mr. Bass's THE GODWHALE. It can survive it. It can also stand the criticism that veiling it at around 100,000 words, it's somewhat too long, though I must admit that if handed a pair of scissors for editing I'd be hard pressed to know where to make the first incision. Mr. Bass himself made a creditable effort by publishing a condensed version as a 1971 GALAXY short story entitled "Rorqual Maru" which took up no more than 14,000 words, though it did leave a great many loose ends which in the novel are brought together and tied off as neatly as a suture.

So regard this review as unfair, biased and prejudiced. It was Larry Dever's nasty operation which set me off giggling and carping as a sort of psychological escape mechanism. But it was Mr. Bass's story-telling talent which kept me reading the book, and he needs to do to become a great science fiction writer is to use the scalpel a little less and the pen a lot more.

THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY by Franz Rottensteiner
(Thames and Hudson, 1975; £2.50; 160 pp; ISBN 0 500 27060 0)

Reviewed by Christopher Fowler

This volume would be more accurately titled "The Science Fiction Picture Book", since most of the space in it is taken up by illustrations. It seems singularly unfortunate that in trying to cover the field of science fiction - which

is essentially literature - Mr. Rottensteiner should have chosen to use pictures rather than words, the usual stock in trade of literature. What text he has written reveals his well-known and overwhelming contempt for Western (i.e. British and American) science fiction. Mr. Rottensteiner concludes that the "greatest contemporary sf writer" is the Polish Stanislaw Lem, author of SOLARIS. Surprise, surprise - for Mr. Rottensteiner is, so I understand, Mr. Lem's agent in the West, a fact which he might just possibly have allowed to affect his critical judgment: a critical judgment which seems to be singularly lacking in most of what Mr. Rottensteiner has written in this book. Whilst this might be forgivable in some hack producing a big, glossy paperback for the coffee-table, it is unforgivable in a writer like Mr. Rottensteiner, who claims to be a serious critic, and indeed sits on the editorial boards of such leading critical journals as EXTRAPOLATION and SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES.

A few examples chosen at random will serve to demonstrate the extent to which Mr. Rottensteiner had allowed his prejudices to cloud his judgment. On page 116, he says of Theodore Sturgeon that he has "merely adapted soap opera to science fiction, presenting schmaltz and tears rather than genuine feeling". Is this a sound judgment of the man who gave us MORE THAN HUMAN and other classics? And who knows more about love and genuine feeling than Mr. Rottensteiner will ever know about anything except how to vent his spleen. A second example, from page 132, where the "new wave" is considered. Of the four writers who are named as members of the American new wave, Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad, Samuel R. Delany and Roger Zelazny, one - Roger Zelazny - is not regarded by critics as new wave, nor has he ever maintained anything except the contrary. Mr. Rottensteiner suggests that the US new wave has "often degenerated into baroque myths or hyperbolized allegory". We may leave aside the question of why Mr. Rottensteiner considers baroque myth to be "degenerate", but consider that the only one of the four writers named to whom the term "baroque myths" can be applied is Roger Zelazny. Ellison may at times be hyperbolic, but he is seldom allegorical, whilst Delany is sometimes allegorical but never hyperbolic. This kind of spurious generalization is misleading, as well as downright unfair to the writers concerned.

It would be possible to go on at some length picking detailed holes in Mr. Rottensteiner's book. But as one of my reviewers remarked in the context of another book, I don't want to inflate its importance by giving it more space. In conclusion, if you want a big book full of illustrations of (often poor) examples of sf art, and stills from films (many of which are best forgotten) then buy this book. But if you really want a history of science fiction that tells you what it is all about, then buy Brian Aldiss's eminently readable, carefully researched and scrupulously fair BILLION YEAR SPREE. It has more critical content in one page than THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK in 160 - and at a quarter the price.

CITY OF THE CHASCH, SERVANTS OF THE HAWK, THE DIRD, THE PHOME by Jack Vance
(Dennis Dobson; £2.75 each, 1975. ISBNs 0 234 77181X/77283 2/77307 3/77320 0)

Reviewed by Peter Hyde

This is the first British publication of Jack Vance's Planet of Adventure quartet - although the books have been available in a rather hard-to-obtain American paperback edition for a while. (The quartet is also being published in paperback one part at a time by Mayflower, who have, however, only got so far as THE DIRD to date.)

The story starts with the survey ship Explorer IV which has been sent to the distant star Carina 4289 to investigate a mysterious surge of radio signals. On arrival in the vicinity of the star's one planet, Tschai, further activity which may be radar (implying detection) is perceived. The survey ship prepares to leave the scene and send in a two man scout boat to investigate. But just after it is launched a missile from the planet annihilates the ship and damages the scout boat. This boat is forced to crash land and immediately upon landing one of its crew is seized and killed by anthropoid natives. The wreck of the space boat is then taken away by a party of aliens after a skirmish with another party of aliens. Thus the scene is set for the problem whose solution occupies the remainder of the quartet: how is the survivor - whose name is Adam Reith - to get home.

This is no small task, for Tschai is a very singular world. It had become embroiled in space wars involving three off-world races: the Chuech, the Wankb and the Dirdir. Each of these now has enclaves on Tschai and maintains an attitude of hostile non-belligerence towards the others. Each of these races had in the distant past captured men who had evolved towards their masters to produce Chaschmen, Wankbmen, and Dirdirmen. To further complicate matters, there are in fact two types of Chasch: Old Chasch and Blue Chasch (Indeed, the existence of Green Chasch is also referred to). Additionally, there are two native races: the solitary Phung, and the Pnune, who live underground with their associated Pnumekin (a nice variation, this). Finally, there are assorted groups of men scattered across the planet living at various levels of civilization.

As the titles suggest, the four volumes detail Reith's adventures (in which he is joined by a woman and a fugitive Dirdirman) with the major races of the planet. The progress of Reith and his companions through this bizarre world is charted in Vance's usual style: spare and rather laconic, yet at the same time strangely baroque. For Vance fans there are the usual goodies: details of wording, customs, concepts (several of them explained by footnotes, a recent addition to his repertoire). Yet I can't help feeling that this time he has overdone it: the world is just too bizarre, the alien races just too many in number, the adventures too fast and furious. Sometimes, too, particularly in *SERVANTS OF THE WANKB*, there seems to be a lack of direction in the writing.

In *THE PNUME* the pace slows down somewhat and this produces I think the best volume of the four: Pnune life and concepts are allowed to emerge more fully than the other races'. With their underground passages and levels of 'secrets', the Pnune are among the most interesting of Vance's many creations. Despite this, both the book and the story as a whole end incredibly suddenly - almost as though Vance tired of the project - and leaves many questions unanswered.

All in all, this is quite an enjoyable saga, but one which will give more pleasure to those who are already Vance fans. Not really a good introduction to Vance - he can do much better - but there are rewards, particularly in *THE DIRDIR* and *THE PNUME*, for ploughing through the rather turgid writing of *SERVANTS OF THE WANKB*.

THE FLYING SORCERERS by David Gerrold and Larry Niven (Corgi, 1975; 65p; 316 pp; ISBN 0 552 09907 4)

Reviewed by James Corley

David Gerrold is a writer generally to be found haunting the more avant-garde corners of science fiction. In THE FLYING SORCERERS he undertakes, and the verb is chosen advantageously, a very post-garde comedy. His unlikely collaborator, Larry Niven, has built a sizeable and deserved reputation for galaxy ranging hard science. Here, however, he is confined to a planetary surface in a situation which allows little room for extrapolation. It would not take a crystal ball to predict disaster for any merging of two such disparate talents on a project alive to both.

I will grit my teeth and steel my nerves and attempt to describe the book they have jointly produced. It is about the efforts of a spaceman from Earth to initiate a modern industrial set-up in a tribal society firmly rooted in the magical stage. Not "rebi" magic, it must be pointed out, but merely the sort of hocus pocus naivety exploited by crafty witch doctors.

The book strives to be humorous in its description of the personality clash between the spaceman, mistaken by the natives for a magician, and the irreducible local witch doctor; it fails dismally. At least, I think it strives to be humorous, it certainly attempts nothing else. This lack of ambition forestalls much criticism. For instance the authors cannot be faulted for any lack of depth in their insipid characters, since the idea of giving their characters any depth has obviously never entered their heads.

It is essentially a juvenile book, and if the spaceman had not impregnated the narrator's wife under the influence of the witch doctor's aphrodisiac I might go so far as to recommend it to readers under the age of ten. But why should I enhance my reputation as a child-hater? or, since the narrator is an alien, and the spaceman human, my reputation as an opponent of biology?

There are indications that in other hands the chosen theme could have been made interesting - the dangers of using a technology imperfectly understood, a value judgment of the primitive as opposed to modern society, the economic determination of the status of women, the social causes of crime. In the hands of Gerrold and Niven these themes are glossed over in little more than a paragraph. They have decided to concern themselves with building a balloon so that the spaceman can get off the island where he is stranded and back to his spaceship.

Building a balloon with no prior back-up technology is apparently an arduous task. Gerrold and Niven succeed in making it excruciatingly tedious, though it may hold some interest for those of you with a mania for building bicycle-powered airships from scratch and with no idea of how to go about it.

If anyone is now wondering whether balloon building is a fitting subject for a science fiction book let me reassure them that the science fiction is only a thin veil over a sort of unadventurous adventure story. It is Sanders of the River to space. It has already been pointed out (VICTOR 68) that Mr. Gerrold has said that he "reacts negatively to adventure masquerading as science fiction". He is to be admired for the strength of will exhibited in overcoming his negative reaction so consistently. For Mr. Niven there appears to be no excuse for perpetrating this crime of a book. As the first novel of a third-rate author it might be forgivable, but Mr. Niven has shown he can do better than this if he tries.

At whose door the major blame for THE FLYING SORCERERS should be laid is uncertain. The style of writing belongs to neither of them, indeed it would be difficult to find anyone who would lay claim to this style, or lack of it. Characters gasp, flinch, snap, snap back, scowl, mutter, scream, howl, snarl; they can in fact twist their vocal chords to anything except intelligent conversation.

At an early stage the authors seem to have realized that something extra was needed to lift this trivial affair off rock bottom; they have therefore introduced a running in-joke whereby the names of the native gods are recognisably based on the names of science fiction authors. Thus we have Quella and Vira, Eldia the small but terrible, Fineline, Fol and so on. This, as you will have guessed, is not so much a pun as punishment, and just how "in" the in-joke is can be seen from the other gods called Musk-Walt, Filiform and Roto'bar, who I presume are st authors otherwise the joke is as half-cut as the rest of the book, but who, to me, are unrecognisable. You say, in your greater wisdom, be able to deduce who Sp'nee is, but since Sp'nee is the god of atoms his true identity is possibly better left unrevealed.

On reflection, this in-joke may be the saving grace of the book. Working out the names does provide some measure of intellectual amusement. It's rather like a crossword puzzle - it's the challenge of solving the clues that keeps you going even though the finished product is meaningless.

But in case we are getting too enthusiastic about this dire book let us return to its humorous content. This is on the level of a cartoon where characters comically walk off the edge of cliffs with impunity. Most of the time it falls as flat as Donald Duck after the steamroller has passed over him. The best joke occurs as the narrator's sons, Orbur and Milvilla, are clambering over the frame of the balloon gondola. The balloon, incidentally, is called the Cathawk, witty isn't it? The narrator warns:

"Just be careful - don't fall off."

"We are going to tie safety ropes around our necks."

"Try your waists," I suggested. "It'll be even safer."

That was the worst advice I've ever read.

THE RAY BRADBURY COMPANION- A Life and Career History, Photolog, and Comprehensive Checklist of Writings, with Facsimiles from Ray Bradbury's Unpublished and Uncollected Work in all Media: by William F. Nolan; xiv + 339 pp; introduction by Ray Bradbury; A Brouccoli Clark Book; published by Gale Research Co., Detroit; 1975; \$28.50; ISBN 0 8103 0930 0

Reviewed by Brian Griffin

The appearance of this big, fat, well-produced 339-page bibliography-cum-personal-scrapbook-cum-potted-biography-cum-autobiographical-essay (Bradbury writes a good introduction) is an appropriate occasion for asking ourselves what we mean by the words "Ray Bradbury". On p. 42, for example, there is a facsimile of a letter written on a toy-dial typewriter when Bradbury was 12 in 1932 to a cousin in Waukegan:

endlessly fascinating though it is, I would hate to think of the RAY BRADBURY COMPANION fostering what Lewis called "the Personal Heresy". The name Ray Bradbury is, for most of us, the name not of a man but of a state of being, and the most that biographical data can do is make us feel gratitude towards the man who happens to bear this name, and who can often raise up this state of being. They used to call this the Poet's Muse: it's a pity the term is now so unfashionable.

Indeed, what strikes one most about the potted biography is its wild heterogeneity: I'd hate to be Bradbury's official biographer, endlessly trying to connect life with works. How about his for example: "1931: Circuses and carnivals exert major influence." Ah! Messrs. Cooger and Dark.... But no: what we actually find is: "That summer he is given live rabbit onstage by Blackstone the Magician". There's an excellent photograph of Ray Bradbury with Blackstone himself, taken thirty years on.... This wayward shying-away of life from art, or art from life, their refusal to be on any but the most indirect terms possible, is part of the fascination of the COMPANION. For, of course, Bradbury's art is now part of our lives, and is intertwined with them in the most intimate yet finally unsearchable way.

The function of the COMPANION, then, is to remind us of all the good things, and help us fill in the gaps. For instance, I now know that there are at least six stories in DARE CARNIVAL (1947) not incorporated in the later OCTOBER COUNTRY, and these must be sought out. And that is only the beginning, for Bradbury's total fictional output is listed here in chronological order (different editions are listed too), and Bill Molan makes fairly clear (he doesn't pretend to be selling a fully-equipped bibliography) all the overlappings, reshufflings, anthology appearances and solo magazine appearances of short fiction from 1938 on - a perpetual source of bafflement to people like me. Likewise, if you want to know whatever happened to that radio play, LEVIATHAN '99, you can find out here, and refresh your memory with a well-chosen facsimile of an unpublished mimeo-page (with, for comparison, a page of MOBY DICK's screenplay. John Huston seems to have been instrumental in intensifying Bradbury's ambitions, and must be held responsible for all the subsequent awkwardness and strains of style. But I think, in the HALLOWE'EN TREE, Bradbury is finally making a synthesis of new mythopoetic ambitions and old themes.) There are also facsimiles from projected film and radio versions of THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES: there is, in fact, far more than I can express in a short space. Here is Bradbury on record and tape (one US record company is making available transcriptions of several Bradbury radio shows of the '50s), radio, TV and film (fascinating glimpses of productions that might have been here). Here is Bradbury's published verse from 1937 onwards, letters, pamphlets, speeches, interviews, articles, reports, reviews, introductions, anthologies. Mouth-watering stage productions are listed (there is a facsimile of part of a "musical drama" called DANDELION WINE produced in 1967) and there are the usual freakish might-have-beens. Like an unpublished operetta (or operetta) called HAPPY ANNIVERSARY: 2116 AD (yes, there's a facsimile page of that, too). Authorised comic book appearances of Bradbury's work are listed (more fascinating might-have-beens: there was no attempt to syndicate a Bradbury-Mugwaini newspaper strip of MARTIAN CHRONICLES, still unsold. There was a compromise, and Bradbury did the text for a strip of "Mars is Heaven!" - there's a facsimile and it works surprisingly well). Here, furthermore, are books, theses, and articles about Ray Bradbury and a virtually exclusive coverage of references to him in books, magazines and newspapers. In a word, just about everything. Even foreign radio adaptations. Pity a nice adaptation for the BBC in 1963 (?) of "There Will Come Soft Rains" is not listed here, but Bill Molan admits that his data in this field is not complete. So Molan is human after all!

The price, of course, is what you might expect; but the COMPANION promises long years of usefulness (you can always force your local librarian to buy it), and in any case I can't imagine any author more suited to this kind of treatment than Bradbury. The best of his most recent work - "The Lost City of Mars" say, or THE HALLOWE'EN TREE (there's apparently an existing screenplay-for-animation of that, by the way) - depends greatly on the reader being on old familiar terms with Bradbury country over a period of twenty years or so. Bradbury is now an artist in Time. This being so, the COMPANION is neither a dry bibliography nor a merely personal scrapbook. It is a logical conclusion: apart from the introductory essay, Bradbury has had no hand in it at all, and the Time dimension has taken over. Open a page, and you're like Grandfather Spaulding in his cellar, mulling over bottles of dandelion wine. For instance, most of the covers of the variant editions of the major publications are collected here, and a mere glance at the cover of the first Corgi edition of SILVER LOCUSTS, or the Ballantine cover for FAHRENHEIT 451 - lost this many a year - bring back vivid memories. (There's a facsimile of the opening page of an unpublished 3-act play of FAHRENHEIT 451.) The same goes for all the early versions and adaptations (my first literary love, Clarissa McClellan, first appeared, it seems, under the guise of an inferior girl called Anna): you only have to read the words "Captain Wilder" or "the shop of the electric insects" and you're away on a trip in the fifth dimension.

Enough, enough. I only wish Bill Nolan could have included a photo of Joe Mugnaini. Or is it true that Mr. Mugnaini looks like his illustration of M. Mucignat in "Skeleton"?



LETTERS

Letters

((We received a very large volume of mail in response to VECTOR 68 and the first issue of the NEWSLETTER. Most of these letters are general comments on the BSFA, so they have been included in the NEWSLETTER. Only those which specifically comment on VECTOR 69 in detail have been included herein, due to the restrictions of space - Ed))

Ken Bulmer, 19, Orchard Way, Bormonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8LA

I have ... had a quick run through the copy of V69 and must say at once that you have made a most impressive debut and this is a fine issue. The look of the thing is good and with a few adverts and illos will fulfill the promise. The articles have a high interest ratio - at least for me - and the editorial persona comes over with just about the right amount of impersonal/personality. I do not envy you the task of editing an association journal, and I just hope everyone rallies around and gives you all the help possible.....

..On Chris Morgan's review of NWSF 23 - published a very very long time ago - I read this again and nod my head sagely...and realize that, thankfully, this is just his opinion. That he is misguided, the poor chap, goes without saying; but it was nice actually to see a review of the book at all. I suppose I ought to raise the question with a new editor of the relationship between review and criticism in the zine, and I tend to believe that there is no reason at all why V cannot handle criticism as well as any other zine, say Foundation. Simple little opinion-reviews may fill spaces; their value depends on the readers' opinion of the reviewer.

David V. Lewis, 6 Aldis Avenue, Stowmarket, Suffolk

Many thanks for the long awaited appearance of VECTOR 69. VECTOR LIVES! (- a whisper in my ear asks "for how fucking long?")....The current issue necessarily carries much out of date stuff, however it was good reading and it seems you are set fair to carry on in the tradition built up by Malcolm Edwards. Also in time I expect to see your own personality coming through. The big name articles were good and seemed somehow to even my dull mind to dovetail into one another well with a common theme running through them, however given individual interpretations. The reviews were all the more interesting as I had read one or two of the books mentioned and seen one of the films (Zardoz). It was a good film as sf films go but I thought some of the sets a bit cheap, i.e. many polythene bags and walls in evidence. Too much conventional equipment used to be a believable future era.....Please more art in the next VECTOR, the cover was good but the interior needs a little livening up. I passed a happy morning in the sun on the back lawn reading VECTOR, and am really glad the BSFA is back on the road again.

Hartley Patterson, Finches, 7 Cambridge Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 1HW

...In one sense Ken Slater is right: VECTOR has been one of the BSFA's headaches...the problems are finding and keeping an editor, keeping to a regular schedule, finding material and getting published....Myself I see no choice: VECTOR must continue if the BSFA is to continue to attract new members. Hard stuff on sf is what new members want. Recent issues have had about the right content, and in 69 you've picked some good reprints, particularly Bob Shaw. Book reviews are essential, even though the BSFA is yoked to dealing

with hardbacks which I can't get (can't afford to buy and local library won't order fiction any more, indeed they will buy no new fiction in the foreseeable future).....A column on fanzines (ah, I see you mention that). But as Bob Shaw says in his speech a fannish image can upset outsiders, so not too much of that.

Tom Jones, 11 Point Royal, Rectory Lane, Bracknell, Berks

First off in this VECTOR loc let me endorse the view that VECTOR must continue. If from no other grounds that economic, it would be worthwhile being a member if all one received was 6 (or even 12) newsletters a year. VECTOR is the one positive thing the BSFA produces. If VECTOR can become regular, and stay regular (with the aid of Kellogg's K7) it could become a real force in sf.

Now on to VECTOR @ which should really have carried an article on sex in French sf. James Blish's article was excellent. This flat plane convention for the solar system was carried out into the galaxy (after all, the models always show that as flat!) by sf writers. I remember a book by Capt. W.E. Johns where he half tries his heroes by making their spaceship pass between two suns. I believe there was a clever explanation as to why they couldn't go round them in a lateral direction but none at all as to why they couldn't go over or under. I'm sure this is because Huxley seldom have to think in 3 dimensions, except for one or two professions (aircraft pilots, astronauts). For most of us the majority of our thinking and actions are in straight lines, one dimensional, and the remainder in planes, two dimensional. Thus we are not used to thinking in 3 dimensions, and this certainly shows in sf. This one dimensional world theory is a favourite of mine so I shall force myself not to rabbit on about it.

I see a connection between what Bob Shaw and Tony Sudbery are saying. Most science fiction is in fact gadget fiction, and is usually pretty poor as literature. This type of story is full of action and wonderful things, it has a high gosh content. Two entirely separate groups of readers are attracted to this literature; juveniles and those wanting an easy relaxing read. This type of sf is analogous to the easy listening station music. To write good science fiction which is also good literature would appear to be very difficult as you don't see much of it. The rest of sf falls into the speculative fiction field. These stories employ science fiction backdrops, spaceships, esp and humans in funny shapes called aliens, but really they're mysteries or thrillers or Boys Own adventure stories sprinkled with the attributes of sf. This is not to say they're necessarily bad, this isn't so, but they do sidestep the issues. C'est la vie.

Pleased to see some good book reviews for a change. Concise, give sufficient information and say if the reviewer likes it. Unfortunately Cy Cheuvin's review lets it down. Here we have the mention of a little known literary magazine and a page and a half of blurb telling us the reviewer's criteria for the review which are so nebulous it boils down to "if I think it's good". There are few good critics in sf and the two who spring to mind are both accomplished writers. With this background their criticisms do not boil down to "if I think it's good". They give an objective criticism. On the other hand it's part of a reviewer's job to give a subjective judgment. This should not be preceded by 1½ pages of justification as to what's good or bad. After all, enjoyment is subjective and doesn't depend on someone's definition of good and bad literature. I'm afraid this was a review attempting to be a criticism and it failed on both counts.

A good issue, beautifully stapled (I wonder who did that?! - Ed), hope you can keep the standard up. Sorry the letter is somewhat fragmentary. Just think of it as a new wave letter.

Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield S11 9FE

First off, may I say how pleased I am to see VECTOR once again after these many moons. I know that many wise (?) men have voted the magazine into limbo.. silly of them, as when we first set up the BSFA, and conceived VECTOR..the idea was..VECTOR would link ALL members together, including the passive ones.. To such people, a VECTOR..IS worth the cost or a yearly sub.

..So to VECTOR 69..not a great deal of variety...but for the first time in ages, I enjoyed the whole of the issue. James Bligh was excellent. He got a bit confused in his explanation of "paradigms" at one point, causing me to read the phrase several times before getting his drift; after that it was excellent reading. Brian Aldiss was equally as good, and it was a pleasure to see him away from the New Wave style of prose. Sudbery wasn't on my wave-length but that doesn't mean I disliked the piece...just no reaction. Then of course, Bob Shaw was as superb as ever...The book reviews were also good.. but a trifle too wordy and aiming to be literary critiques rather than information as to what is available.

For the future??? Well, keep the material on/by authors on a par with this issue and you won't go far wrong. Reviews.. shorten 'em and include more titles in the same space or less. Add some interior artwork. The cover was excellent..so let's have other equally good stuff inside. How about a sale or trade column?? Brief fanzine reviews, and maybe listings of local fan groups. Otherwise keep up the good work...and DO keep it coming.

Sonya Porter, 6 Robin Hood Chase, St Johns, Woking, Surrey

Bob Shaw's article: I agree with his comment that "there is 'good' sf that gives no pleasure and 'bad' sf that is enjoyable". Fred Hoyle's writing wouldn't convince a 3-year old but I'll read anything he writes because his ideas are marvellous. On the other hand, although Heinlein is considered a Master, apart from his short stories, I find him unreadable (PS "Verbal indigestion" was the expression I was hunting for!).

Ref Tony Sudbery's article...and still talking of ideas, I tend to the old concept that sf is about ideas first and how those ideas affect people second. People and their problems are for mainstream fiction - too much of it in sf can ruin a good story. Remember that short-lived and much ballyhooed TV series "Moonbase 3"? Remember how it was billed as the first adult science fiction television series - concerned with people more than gadgets and bug-eyed monsters? Well, that's what sunk it. No action, no ideas, no sense of wonder - no different from Earth and its problems. Moonbase 3 just became Peyton-Place-in-space. And talking of gadgetry - which Tony seems to hate - it just goes to show that it takes all sorts to make an sf world, because I love 'em! The more, the wackier, the weirder, the better!

..Lastly, I must say I've enjoyed VECTOR 69 more than the others I've received. Maybe it's just because I've been in fandom 2/3 years now and am beginning to recognise names, understand the jargon etc. To anyone reading his/her first fanzine, I'd give this advice - stay with it! Fandom may seem weird now but in a couple of years time you'll wonder how you ever lived without it!

(Which is unfortunately all we have room for. The rest of the letters, about the BSFA etc, appear in the NEWSLETTER - Ed)