

# VECTOR

THE CRITICAL JOURNAL  
OF SCIENCE FICTION

81

JUNE  
1977

a BSFA  
publication

60p \$1

ALDISS, SILVERBERG,  
LE GUIN & BLISH  
analysed

PHILIP JOSÉ  
FARMER  
interviewed



# THE BEST OF THE FUTURE AVAILABLE NOW...



There is a new direction in the field of Science Fiction. The early period, the time of Gernsback, Burroughs, and robots, gave way to the middle period of interstellar travel, Russell, and Campbell. Now the new wave of authors, led by the most farsighted of the 'old timers', are taking Science Fiction into its young adulthood. Experimentation is now mixed creatively with the tested craftsmanship of the masters. The great work of the past is now the foundation of the future. The best is yet to come, and GALILEO is where you'll find it.

GALILEO is a new science fiction quarterly (destined to be monthly) which will be available only through subscription and a few selected bookshops around the country. Its cost, at \$1.50, will reflect the quality of its contents in design, illustration, and most importantly, writing. (Subscribers will, of course, benefit from a reduced cost per copy). The great names we proudly announce on our covers are symbols of the fine works by authors both new and established which we will gather together for each voyage to the stars. An outstanding crew in every issue.

Our intention in publishing GALILEO is to pick up where editors like John W. Campbell left off. Science Fiction is—or should be—quality entertainment AND literature. It is the most important literature of our time, or any time. . . . History teaches, science leads. Our GALILEO offers a vision of mankind's future through the eyes of the poet and the scientist. There can be no true appreciation of the present, or the past, without the perspective of the future.

Science and theory are the raw materials, . . . what mankind might do with them is Science Fiction. GALILEO is the quality Science Fiction magazine, the best of the future, available now!

BRADBURY  
CLARKE  
CLEMENT  
& MORE!

This is one voyage I don't want to miss. Sign me up for the special subscription rate I have checked below. My check is enclosed.

Foreign subscribers add 50 cents per issue to these rates.

☐ 4 issues at \$4. (saving \$2.)      ☐ 10 issues \$9. (saving \$6.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: GALILEO, 339 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02115 U.S.A.





this trilogy, tells of Ged's schooling as a mage, of his tragic error and his struggle to rectify it by reversing the harm. As such it is a straightforward quest, but the tale is also symbolic of Ged's struggle to conquer himself. In Goethe's words: "In self-imitation the Master is first known".

Ged learns that the essence of a thing is its true name. When a man learns the true name of a thing he possesses that thing. In Earthea this is the basis of all magic, but it is also a complex metaphysical truth.

"As their eyes met, a bird sang aloud in the branches of the tree. In that moment Ged understood the singing of the bird, and the language of the water falling in the basin of the fountain, and the shape of the clouds: it seemed to him that he himself was word spoken by the sunlight."

(RWG; page 48)

Earthea is an ordered world, very much in the mould of the romantic, mediæval ideal: a literally fragmented continent consisting of numerous small island kingdoms. We do not see the greed of merchants and callousness of rulers, nor the plight of clerks and peasants, but this is no real fault (unless you query the whole raison d'être of fantasy). The focal point of the first book is the individual, Ged. His views form the child's perspective; there is reward in hard study, though the tasks may seem arduous and pointless:

"Ged sighed sometimes, but he did not complain. He saw that in this dusty and fathomless matter of learning the true name of each place, thing and being, the power he wanted lay like a jewel at the bottom of a dry well. For magic consists in this: the true naming of a thing. No sorcerer has ever said that. Only a mage of great power," he had said, "has spent his whole life in this one task of the true naming of things."

(RWG; page 48/7)

But the message is far from being purely didactic. Le Guin involves her reader (child or adult) in Ged's growing problems, and his first confrontation with genuine evil looses his shadow upon the Earth; the antagonistic he.

The unleashing of his shadow is a set-back from which he almost never recovers, and the death of the Archmage in saving time is but a further reason for him to despair. In spite of quick and easy learning, a period of slow, arduous re-learning follows for Ged. The simple things have become hard, but within Ged there has been a change for the better. He has made his mistake and has learnt from it - now he must ensure that he does not err again in acquiring his true powers. And more, he is determined to meet the evil he has loosed and defeat it, even if in that struggle he loses his own life.

He becomes a mage (ultimately he will be the Archmage) and is sent to the small island of Low Turning. The post is a modest one for a wizard, and Ged (known as Sparrowhawk) begins to display those qualities and characteristics which become more apparent in the two later books. He has learnt to shun riches, to shun any abuse of his power. He is in possession of both modesty and kindness, and so when he encounters and overcomes the great dragon, Yevaud, this victory has an added sweetness.

Thus far the story could be seen to be very much within the original Christian ethic. Ged has done evil and has repented. He now seeks to redeem himself, but avoids temptation in achieving that goal. This is all easily understood by child and adult. But Le Guin is already moving beyond this simplistic child, and leading us carefully with her.

Ged is now hunted by his shadow and lives before it, fearing to touch it and his magical power. He must learn to know the shadow is not a danger to his life. He is waiting for the full understanding.

of his powers. But in fleeing he gives the shadow strength, for it feeds on his fear. After a long flight, he turns and faces the thing he fears and pursues it. He gains strength from this action and ultimately, at the farthest reaches of Earthea, beyond all lands, he meets and defeats his shadow:

"Now when he saw his friend and heard his speak, his doubt vanished. And he began to see the truth, that Ged had neither lost nor won, but, naming the shadow of his death with his own name, had made himself whole: a man: who, knowing his whole true self, cannot be used or possessed by any power other than himself, and whose life therefore is lived for life's sake and never in the service of ruin, or pain, or hatred, or the dark."

(RWG; page 100)

Ged loses his fear of death and with it becomes a whole man. Later, in the last book of the trilogy, this encounter with "himself" is crucial in that it provides Ged with the strength to overcome the greatest of evils. We are given a brief taste of what Le Guin intends eventually to lay before us in full, Yin and Yang, the precarious balance.

The Tombs of Atuan continues the story several years on. We are introduced to Ahar, the eldest one, young High Priestess of the Nameless Ones. Atuan is the home of the ancient gods, savage and evil. There is something almost Lovecraftian about the mood created, yet Le Guin dilutes this with her description of Ahar's reluctant perversion. A gay young child becomes a cold, inhuman killer in the service of the gods. But her spirit is not entirely subdued, and in her investigations of the Tombs she displays inordinate courage and resilience. Her passive, sullen opposition to Kossil and Thar, her mentors, later turns to open defiance when she meets Ged who has entered the forbidden tombs to recover a potent treasure.

"Ahar brooded awhile and said, 'They must have been very brave men, or very stupid, to enter the Tombs. Don't they know the powers of the Nameless Ones?'

"No," Kossil said in her cold voice. "They have no good. They seek magic and think they are good themselves. But they are not. And when they die, they are not forgotten. They become what the gods are, and their ghosts whine on the wind a little while till the wind blows them away. They do not have immortal souls."

"But what is this magic they seek?" Ahar asked, enthralled. She did not remember having said even that she would have killed any who refused to join in the worship of the Inner Gods. "How do they do it? What magic is that?"

"Tricks, deception, jugglery," Kossil said."

(RWG; page 63)

Ged is trapped in the Tombs, encountering the powers of the Nameless Ones. His strength is sapped in the process of fending them off and so it seems to Ahar that his powers are small. She toys with him at first, giving him enough water to live, waiting to see what magic he will evoke if left there long enough.

"The truth was that she was afraid to touch him. She was afraid of his power, the evil he had done to what the Nameless Ones, the goddesses that kept their light burning and fed, and that he would be no different. The power that ruled in the dark places was on her side, not his."

It is the beginning of the end of the trilogy. The Nameless Ones are the gods of the Nameless Ones, and they are the gods of the Nameless Ones. They are the gods of the Nameless Ones, and they are the gods of the Nameless Ones.

"He bowed his head. His long hands, copper-brown, were quiet on his knees. She saw the fourfold scar on his cheek. He had gone farther than she into the dark; he knew death better than she did, even death ... A rush of hatred for his rose in her, choking her throat for an instant. Why did he sit there so defenceless and

we struggle? Why could she not defeat him?"

(TTOA; page 88)

What does the child think on reading this? Surely it is exactly what I thought when reading it. Strength is not in a display of power, but in knowing yourself, in self-confidence and honesty. That message impinges itself direct upon the emotions, and the purity of the fantasy adds emphasis to this. A Wizard of Earthsea is God's book; we see through his eyes. In The Tomb of Atuan we see God through the eyes of another, and this stylistic device is successful in creating the impression that God has matured considerably. It is also, at the same time, adds an air of mystery to his character. We see only his action and hear only his words, not his thoughts and motives. We are placed firmly in the shoes of Ahar and encounter God anew through her reactions.

Until this point the emphasis has been on the individual, and on the process of self-knowledge. Now, Le Guin extends this logically. Personal strength comes from within. But sometimes it is not enough.

"This is a most terrible place. One man alone has no hope, here. I was dying of thirst when you gave me water alone that saved me. It was the strength of the hands that gave it."

(TTOA; page 118)

And at this point God summarises the nature of the eternal struggle, speaking of the ancient gods:

"They have nothing to give. They have no power of making. All their power is to darken and destroy. They cannot leave this place; they are this place; and it should be left to them. They should not be denied nor forgotten, but neither should they be worshipped. The Earth is beautiful, and bright, and kindly, but that is not all. The Earth is also terrible, and dark and cruel."

(TTOA; page 118)

From this time on, Ahar, the Priestess, slowly becomes Tenar, the child, and begins to cast off her bondage. It is a lengthy process, "not a gift given, but a choice made". I sensed here that in the midst of what had begun as a fantasy in the romantic "medieval" vein, Le Guin had returned to her predilection with anarchy; the casting off of external restrictions and the return to self-government. Sebastian Faure defines the common characteristic of anarchists as "the negation of the principle of Authority in social organisations and the hatred of all constraints that originate in institutions founded on this principle." (Encyclopedie Anarchiste). It is a stance often taken by characters in Le Guin's fiction. God is an autonomous figure, and Tenar (previously Ahar) becomes one:

"Now," he said, "now we're away, now we're clear, we're clean gone, Tenar. Do you feel it?"

She did feel it. A dark hand had let go its lifelong hold upon her heart. But she did not feel joy, as she had in the mountains. She put her head down in her arms and cried, and her cheeks were salt and wet. She cried for the waste of her years in bondage to a useless evil. She wept in pain, because she was free. What she had begun to learn was the weight of liberty. Freedom is a heavy load, a great and strange burden for the spirit to undertake. It is not easy. It is not a gift given, but a choice made, and the choice may be a hard one. The road goes upward towards the light; but the laden traveller may never reach the end of it."

(TTOA; page 154)

Is this, perhaps, beyond the child? I do not think so. Children know of freedom and constraint. They know that compromise is the way of our world. But they also must have models, alternatives, and Earthsea is one such. It is easily accessible because it does not lecture; it demonstrates. Good fantasy is that which achieves this end of creating higher, purer states of being.

But Le Guin is not offering pie-in-the-sky. Her alternative is logically consistent. She realises that freedom is that which demands the greatest responsibility. Freedom is not

to act as one wishes, but to act correctly and consistently. Are her characters, then, messianic figures without flaws, without the taint of doubt? No, God is harrowed by self-doubt; he is on that road that "goes upward towards the light". But, congruently, the path that leads upward must also, because of Earthsea's internal Yin and Yang, lead downward. Thus it is that in the last of the three Earthsea books, The Farthest Shore, we follow God into the lands of death.

The Farthest Shore is by far the best written of these three books. Le Guin ties together the diverse strands she pulled into the cloth of her fantasy in the first two books, and seems to grip with the texture of life and death. Frankly, I was completely surprised by this book. Her literary is at its strongest, and her use of symbols without taut. The Farthest Shore tells of what happens when balance fails and evil takes hold of our world. In A Wizard of Earthsea Le Guin touched upon death and the world it had upon both. Here we see the hidden street of that to man, one profound instantaneously in exchange for their souls. Manifest as found being in Nephthysphalan in the form of the beheading figure of the Anti-ling. God sets out with the same prince. Arren. It took the breath in the darkness.

"You know what we will find when we come to the end of the world."

Spoken words about his world, perhaps about us, perhaps warning that he did not know.

From this time on, Ahar, the Priestess, slowly becomes Tenar, the child, and begins to cast off her bondage. It is a lengthy process, "not a gift given, but a choice made". I sensed here that in the midst of what had begun as a fantasy in the romantic "medieval" vein, Le Guin had returned to her predilection with anarchy; the casting off of external restrictions and the return to self-government. Sebastian Faure defines the common characteristic of anarchists as "the negation of the principle of Authority in social organisations and the hatred of all constraints that originate in institutions founded on this principle." (Encyclopedie Anarchiste). It is a stance often taken by characters in Le Guin's fiction. God is an autonomous figure, and Tenar (previously Ahar) becomes one:

"Now," he said, "now we're away, now we're clear, we're clean gone, Tenar. Do you feel it?"

She did feel it. A dark hand had let go its lifelong hold upon her heart. But she did not feel joy, as she had in the mountains. She put her head down in her arms and cried, and her cheeks were salt and wet. She cried for the waste of her years in bondage to a useless evil. She wept in pain, because she was free. What she had begun to learn was the weight of liberty. Freedom is a heavy load, a great and strange burden for the spirit to undertake. It is not easy. It is not a gift given, but a choice made, and the choice may be a hard one. The road goes upward towards the light; but the laden traveller may never reach the end of it."

Is this, perhaps, beyond the child? I do not think so. Children know of freedom and constraint. They know that compromise is the way of our world. But they also must have models, alternatives, and Earthsea is one such. It is easily accessible because it does not lecture; it demonstrates. Good fantasy is that which achieves this end of creating higher, purer states of being.

But Le Guin is not offering pie-in-the-sky. Her alternative is logically consistent. She realises that freedom is that which demands the greatest responsibility. Freedom is not

"For life? But it isn't enough to want to live?"

"No. But when we crave power over life - endless wealth, unassailable safety, immortality - then desire becomes greed. And if knowledge allies itself to that greed, then comes evil. Then the balance of the world is swayed, and ruin weighs heavy in the scale."

(TFS; page 43)

The quest is long and to the end of the world, the self-sacrifice and despair of both gods and mortal beings. The reluctance

his. All around them is decay and entropy; a loathing that threatens to spread on their own party if they succumb to the lure of immortality. Their journey takes them to the far south and to the West Isles, but their journey is not only in the physical world

"There, in the vast, dry darkness, there one stood beckoning. Come, he said, the tall lord of shadows. In his hand he held a tiny flame no larger than a pearl, held it out to Arren, offering life. Slowly Arren took one step towards him, following."

The end leads of death, briefly seen in A Wizard of Earthsea are more described in detail. The image of the wall and the long, dry plain that lead us down downward into the cities of the dead under a dark lot calling out to us. It is a journey that leads us to the end of the world, the end of the afterlife, but not her own inner aspects. "The Dry Land", the penultimate chapter of The Farthest Shore is a metaphor in itself. It is a journey that leads us to the end of the world, the end of the afterlife, but not her own inner aspects.

growth, then death must be its antithesis: purposelessness and stasis.

"Instead of fear, then, great pity rose up in Arren, and if fear underlay it, it was not for himself but for us all. For he saw the mother and child who had died together, and they were in the dark land together, but the child did not run, nor did it cry, and the mother did not hold it, nor ever look at it. And those who had died for love passed each other in the streets."

(TFS; page 183)

It is not a vision to instill nightmares in the child or the adult. Rather, it is a sad, convincing image that genuinely involves and moves the reader. Yes, that is how I would think death to be, was my own reaction. No hellfire, no pain, no passion; those are of life. Death must be as Le Guin sees it here, or it is nothing.

Ged triumphs and Arren becomes the One King who can unite all the fragmented lands under a benevolent monarchy. This is still fantasy, and has its own laws; Equilibrium is tenuously restored and Ged, tired, returns home to his mountain island of Gont.

I have missed such: the Children of the Open Sea, the numerous small incidents that form the meat of each book, the care and consistency with which Le Guin constructs her world, her characters, her themes. I had thought also to compare *Earthsea* to Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, but any comparisons are the superficialities of all such fantasies: dragons, fantastic kingdoms, wizards and allegory. The basic difference is in emphasis. Tolkien seems to wish for stasis and a return to simplicity, and whilst Le Guin shares this vision, hers is a progressive, not regressive, viewpoint.

I began by stating that children need examples, and we should take care to ensure the seed we sow is the best we have if we expect the ripening of healthy adults. *Earthsea* is the best seed we could offer our children. I also began by invoking the words of Schopenhauer on women, who have shared the historic fate of blacks and children - to be denied the virtue of intelligence:

"More fittingly than the fair sex, women could be called the unesthetic sex. Neither for music, nor poetry, nor the plastic arts do they possess any real feeling or receptivity: if they affect to do so, it is mere mimicry in service of their effort to please."

("On Women": Arthur Schopenhauer: *Parerga und Paralipomena*)

It is only recently that this popular misconception has been dispelled (and, indeed, in some quarters it still exists). It is a pity then that we must still treat the child in the manner in which Schopenhauer would have us treat such as Ursula Le Guin. *Earthsea* is a hopeful sign and should be embraced as a model of what juvenile literature can aspire to.

After all, why should juvenile remain a term of derision?

\*\*\*

*Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin; March 1977; Gollancz; London; £4.25; ISBN 0-575-02274-4; comprising: *A Wizard of Earthsea* (181 pp); *The Toms of Atuan* (160 pp); *The Farthest Shore* (208 pp)

\*\*\*

## A GALACTIC SYMPHONY

AN EVALUATION OF THE  
CITIES IN FLIGHT  
NOVELS OF JAMES BLISH

by

Martin I Ricketts

"... this is mighty woolly talk, without doubt, but it won't do you any harm to think for a moment about writing as an art that exists in the same universe with other arts."

--- William Atheling Jr. (James Blish)

Whether or not they represent his best work, the *Cities In Flight* novels will perhaps be James Blish's most enduring contribution to the field of science fiction. In all they utilise more or less the whole of orchestra from near-future socio-political speculation through hard scientific extrapolation to out and out space opera. Yet their beginnings were small. In one of his introductions Blish admitted that the germ of the series was a single short story in which he foolishly

"set out to throw away in 10,000 words an idea of Wagnerian proportions". In the event, it took him fifteen years properly to realize the concept of *Cities In Flight*.

The above quote is revealing of what may perhaps be the most significant outside influence on Blish's work: that of music. Indeed, the first novel of the series, *They Shall Have Stars*, has a prelude, an intermezzo and a coda - terms normally associated with only music. It seems not unreasonable therefore to suppose that the series as a whole could be considered







ever written. But the idea is not all: James Blish's talent is too subtle for that. *Amalfi* - and to a lesser extent the other characters (notably Dee Hasleton, a woman who has featured so far as more or less only a romantic interest) - become slightly more rounded:

"The end of time was certainly sizable enough as a problem ... but it provided him with nobody with whom to negotiate and, if possible, unwind a little."

*Amalfi* is a schemer and a plotter - these novels are indeed picaresque. But in this novel he suffers a slight come-uppance, which seems to carry the moral - if there is one - of the whole work:

"I know well that you are fabulously inventive; but human lives should not hang upon the success of a work of art..."

Then John, "telling the whole story of Amalfi's life".

The universe ends in *City in Flight* - no saving millions for Blish; *City in Flight* is no *last and first* novel. But there is irony here too: in another review of *A Clash Of Cymbals* it has been pointed out that "what *Am* was presumably the date (the began according to the events' meaning". (8)

The subtlety and power of *A Clash of Cymbals* is insidious, and I would guess that it has been the inspiration for at least one other novel. (6) Blish once wrote that the solution of a story should be surprising or inevitable but preferably both. That axiom is here beautifully achieved: *Cities in Flight* ends in a crescendo of fabulous invention, and its sound is unmistakably the creation of James Blish.

(1) Writing as Wm. Atheling Jr., James Blish emphasized in an essay in *The Issue At Hand* (Advent; Chicago, 1964; p 38) the virtues of symphonic development and

explained why it should be applied to literature. Nor is the idea of the symphony rendered as literature new. The most recent example is probably Anthony Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony*.

(2) & (3) *The Issue At Hand* (p. 38)

(4) Too much should not be made of this "fault". Scientists discussing their work would to my mind be more likely to lecture one another than would "ordinary" people engaged in "ordinary" conversation, especially if one of them did not know too much about the topic under discussion and wished to learn (or, of course, if the one speaking happened to be a bore - which could apply equally well to "ordinary" conversation). It seems to me not to be as "unnatural" as some other critics have implied.

(5) *Jin Gaddard 14 Cyber 4* (March, 1973) published in *Science Fiction*

(6) *An Age* by Brian W. Aldiss. Though admittedly circumstantial, the evidence is strong. *An Age* is dedicated "for James Blish whose cities fly words too", and is prefaced by a quote from St. Augustine who is also quoted in *A Clash Of Cymbals*. Consider, among others, a passage on p 71 of the Faber edition of *A Clash Of Cymbals*: "... If there were worlds and galaxies of anti-universes, they existed only in some metaphysical separate existence where time and the strange gradient ran backwards, and as a *re* 'Both

running down, as losing energy with each transaction. Though the two arrows of time seem to be pointing in opposite directions, they probably point downhill, like fingerboards at the crest of a single road".

## CULTURE, ANARCHY AND SF

A FEW LATE THOUGHTS ON  
FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND

by  
Brian Griffin

In 1973 100 books were published which might not be counted as *late* but which might be counted as *late*

a very earnest survey of what might be called the State of the Language, by a lecturer in English Language at University College, Swansea; while the other was a widely fantastic piece of sf. *Reader to Frankenstein Unbound* by Brian Aldiss, and *The Survival of English* by Ian Robinson (C.U.P.; paperback editions, £1.50).

Robinson is indebted (greatly to his detriment) to Dr. Leavis's moral assumptions and cultural elitism, while Aldiss's background is, of course, mainly of the sort that the poet would find in the fact that Robinson holds the post since held at Swansea by Virginia Woolf, who came to the post in 1910, and who was to leave it in 1917. For me, marks the point at which these two widely opposite approaches met, with revealing consequences. I'd like to sketch out some of the implications, which I think are pretty neat.

First, then Ian Robinson's *The Survival of English*. Robinson's message amounts to this: that while we in this country still go on speaking words, we are losing our language, which is a way of conducting events in the world and thereby making sense of it. He is uncomfortably convincing, too especially when he produces examples from the press, the television, the poets and the New English Bible. It's only when he produces his own proposed passages in the last chapter that Robinson lets us down badly. For this (and so be it for now) then our old friend, Ian. (I'm sorry to be so late in the matter of ending up like the heart-man of Dr. Marlowe's to end. After the doctor's death I had you imagine language, once dead - but not dead, suffering and gutting. Living shape and import, becoming more (and of itself again) - I feel more more people than ever that Marlowe had told me about the "eternity of the heart". They were rearing, and something very rapidly - I like to think of Professor George Stinner as the Marlowe was the man for "big trouble" not ever actually doing anything. Marlowe Robinson says that this is the result of an ending of our "traditional value-forming elite", and the lack of a convincing replacement.

For now's Joe Robinson, the hero of Aldiss's *Frankenstein Unbound*, disappeared from a brightened twenty-first century, and talking with Lord Byron in the Villa Medici. Near Geneva:

"What a spellbinder he was! We sat and drank before a smouldering fire while he conversed. I have tried to convey a pale memory of our meeting, but further than that I cannot go. The range of his talk was beyond me -- even when not particularly profound, it was salted with allusions, and the connections he drew between things I had hitherto regarded as unconnected were startling."

They were joined by Shelley:

"The two poets talked together, the dogs slunk back into the room and fought under the window, the fire flickered. The rain fell. The room seemed very small."



human imagination and human culture, not necessarily bearing any relation to absolute truth: time is nothing but a tissue of inter-relating fictions, constantly changing; and all the authors are human - Mary Godwin, Shelley, Byron, and whoever it is who's supposed to be writing Joe Rodenland into the myth. And this is, again, a very Leavisian thing to happen; for according to Leavis, his precious cultured elite will "create possibility". God is out of it. Every time I read a Leavisian dictum like that it seems vaguely insane; and I suppose it is to Brian Aldiss's credit that, in Frankenstein Unbound, he reveals the insane implications of the Leavisite position, developing them with science-fictional logic. Likewise, the Leavisite confusion of Life and Literature is her bared to the skies for all time. ("The graven image of reality had been destroyed for me, so that I no longer had difficulty in apprehending Frankenstein and his monsters, Byron, Mary Shelley, and the world of 2020 as contiguous. What I had done - so it seemed - was wreck the fatalism of coming events. If Mary Shelley's novel could be regarded as a possible future, then I had now rendered it impossible by killing Victor (Frankenstein).") "Somewhere there might be a 2020 in which I existed merely as a character in a novel about Frankenstein and Mary" -- etc. etc.)

Still, Aldiss is wise enough, or agnostic enough, to ward off the final despair. Somewhere in those memorable but desolate final pages, with the protagonist entrenched before the City of Dreadful Light at the far end of time, there remains a spark of divine potential within the mythic being who was once called Joe Rodenland. "Trembling, I set the swivel-gun to rights. If other attackers came for me, they should meet the same reception as the monster before I met my Maker ---." All he needs is a Maker, a Divine Author, like Ransom in C. S. Lewis's Perelandra. Yet the Author is tardy in showing his presence; seems, in fact, to have lost interest. Perhaps Myth, after all bears no relation to Cosmic Fact; and because there is no Fact - no Logos - even the Myth is falling apart into fragments, like the structure of space/time. It begins to seem as if Frankenstein Unbound were an uncreation

Myth as senseless as some of the old Creation Myths; which is an uneasy thought.

I don't think I need to emphasise the relevance of all this to sf as a whole, in which the human mythopoetic faculty reigns supreme and unfettered. I certainly don't want to introduce a note of moral earnestness into the discussion. Olaf Stapledon's works, for instance, are examples of Myth regressing from a steady vision of cosmic absolutes, back into an inchoate Nordic despair; but Stapledon is nevertheless a maker of great and noble myths, and anyone who cannot enjoy his must be a very dull dog. Likewise, I sometimes like to revel in Moorcockian anarchy. I've even been known to enjoy Ballard. But the fact remains that all the sf I like most - from Aldiss's Non-Stop through Wyndham's Chocky to Rob Shaw's The Palace of Eternity, somehow connects up with certain beliefs which I hold to be objectively, universally true; and sometimes - especially when I've just finished an issue of New Worlds - I get the jumpy impression that this kind of sf is being swamped by the other kind. Whatever happens, of course, the human mythopoetic faculty will persist to the end. But the question remains, like in the song: Is that all there is?

## SILVERBERG OLD SILVERBERG NEW

by  
Chris Evans

Robert Silverberg has received his fair share of attention in the pages of this journal, and the present writer has been more guilty than most of extolling his virtues. The elements which I admire most in Silverberg's work are his inventiveness, his portrayal of character and his narrative skill. Many of his books are superbly crafted, textbook examples of how to use sf concepts to enhance the human interest of a story. Barry Malzberg has called him the most technically gifted writer in sf, and this strikes me as an astute appraisal, for as well as expressing his strengths as a writer, it also gives a hint of his limitation - limitations which I hope to touch on herein. The four books under examination offer the opportunity to study Silverberg in action in two different phases of his career. Master of Life and Death and Invaders from Earth were first published by Ace in the late fifties when Silverberg was still a young, relatively inexperienced novelist; The Masks of Time and The Man in the Mask belong to the late sixties, a period when, by his own admission, Silverberg was beginning to make a conscious effort to improve the quality of his fiction.

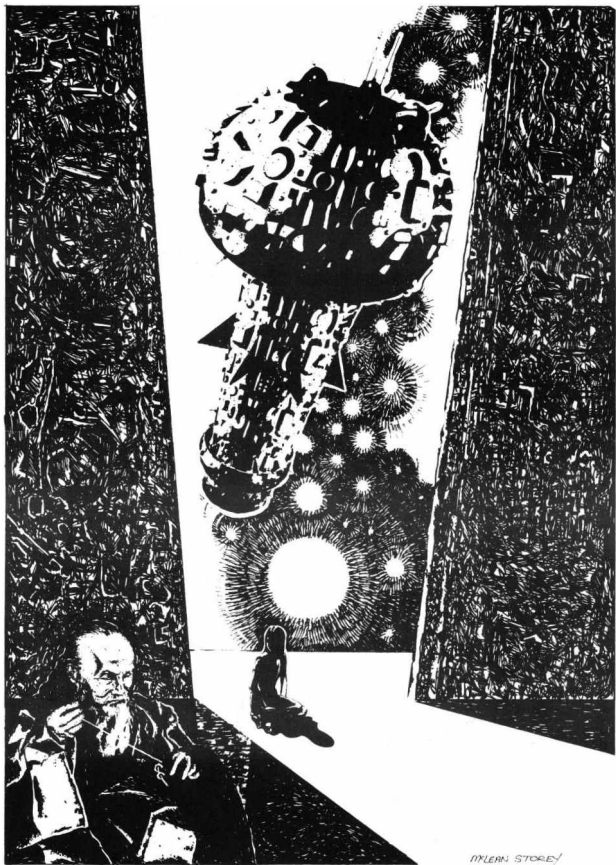
Starliner series 1968

My initial reaction to these two hardbacks was to wonder why Sidgwick & Jackson had seen fit to publish them separately. Culled from the parent volume, A Robert Silverberg Omnibus and dressed in tawdry dustjackets, at £3.50 a time they seemed a rather blatant attempt to cash in on the author's current popularity. To my surprise, however, I found that both books were much better than I had expected - not neglected classics by any means, but competent, entertaining adventure stories. (Still, I would advise even Silverberg completists to wait for the paperback editions.) Naturally, there are instances of sloppy writing and the plotting is somewhat jerry-rigged in places, but overall the unassuming abilities of the young writer outweigh the flaws of inexperience.

Master of Life and Death has the following influences: population control, fil travel, terrorizing, immortality and contact with aliens. That's a fantastic array of ingredients for any writer to tackle, and Silverberg makes

CONT. P. 22





MYLEAN STOREY

DOI: 10.1002/eqe.2511 | *Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics*, 2021, 49, 1–15  
© 2021 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

PUF: Sam Wineco bought that. It was going to be the first serial published in Stars and Stripes. The original title was "The Scattered Bodies" because that had been actually I saw the bodies scattered. I sold it to Baltimore as "The Scattered Bodies" but then I changed it to "The Finch" because that had been a manuscript I had written for a magazine after the German resurrection. When I dug out the manuscript I saw it was the same as the one that Dohl, who edited Galaxy at that time, he said it was too big a subject to put in one book and I had to do it in two. So it was published in magazine form and then collected and put in book form later on. So I started writing it in 1945 and it was published in 1947. I used various parts of the original novel. It's greatly expanded. I've put in a lot of new material. I've changed the title to "The Finch". That's about 250,000 words. I hope to cut it down to 200,000 words. I've been working on it. I think it's probably come out 300,000 words. I'm afraid it's going to be a big one. Every time I write a book I write a book that's too long. I want to know when it's coming out. telephone calls from all over the country ...

DJF: Oh, I think it is. After all, you have the entire human race at your disposal along a river which may be ten to twenty mill miles long. I could go on forever writing on that, but I won't for the simple reason that I'd get tired of it and so would the readers eventually. It's a combination adventure/philosophical/theological novel. The funny thing is that Betty Ballantine turned down *The Way Scattered Soldiers Go*. She said it was just an adventure novel, which to me was ridiculous. She wasn't reading very deeply into it.

☎: 041 4 139 6000 ☎ 44 1477

NY: The Magic Labrynth. It's a quotation  
 from the poem "The Third Nowel" by  
 Hafiz Abu Al-Yazid". The poem forms a sort of  
 backbone for the whole series. I've become very  
 fond of it. I read it every day. It's written  
 in the third novel very strongly. Before I  
 started the third novel I reread the first two  
 and I realised I had read them in a way that  
 is to be answered. It's really tremendously  
 complicated. I wanted to do more character  
 work. I wanted to do more of the kind of  
 that takes room. I've introduced new character  
 people who either don't appear in the first two  
 novels or who appear in a very different way.  
 I think read fast and coherently because you  
 need to see the single-eye viewpoint. You see that  
 first time through the novel. I've got the  
 second one solely through the eyes of Mark  
 and I've got the third one solely going to be  
 a multiple viewpoint. There's a 000  
 word section that's concerned only with the  
 character of a woman who's a very young  
 Australian woman who happens to have been  
 first mate on a future airship transport  
 ship. Then they go on to deal with the  
 dealing with Herman Goering. And I've tried  
 to develop Cyrano de Bergerac and a number  
 of other characters. I've got the first two  
 first two novels. Besides that I'm working  
 out what's going on behind the scenes all the

W.F.: Well, that's somewhat justified. I'm reminding that a great deal in the third novel, and I plan some subsidiary uses in which our protagonist will, as he goes up the river, meet some of the great names of the philosophers, economists - including Karl Marx and we will not only find out how they lived and what they believed on earth, but also what they're doing in the sky. I think that the conditions are so different. How are they adapting to it? The trouble with Rottensteiner is that he's seen everything in the first two novels. The first novel is the story of the instruments, the second one is the prelude, the third one is the symphony. That's

Dr. F. F. Moore: "I don't know anything about human nature. One of the things about the Riverworld - a thing which is obvious, even if I haven't said it - is that it is that certain people are capable of change, and certain people will remain inflexible, and there's bound to be a certain amount of violence in the world. I think that the high of mankind itself right up to today. You'll find out in the third novel that there's a certain amount of violence in the world, a great deal less, because now, after thirty years, societies have been established and those who were basically peaceful have managed to live with a certain amount of violence. You have your inflexibles, those who attach to do things by violence. One of the things I'm trying to show is the meaningless of violence."

DP: I believe that Rottensteiner is a Marxist and it's basically the Marxist attitude that human nature is OK. What people have always fought about are economic things - land and money and so on - but in the Riverworld you've put everyone in a situation where they don't have to fight about these things ...

P.D.F. But he's overlooking the human desire for power. Although there's enough for everybody in his particular grail, there are people who like to eat and drink to excess, or people who like to control people - which you can see in the United States and other countries today. In my opinion, all the three main systems are obsolete: capitalism, socialism and Marxism. We need something with the humanitarian spirit that, theoretically, should be guiding us; we should be driving toward a different sort of system - one which will take care of everybody. Perhaps I agree with you, Richard, that Puritanism is a mistake. But in order to do that you have to do away with nationalism; you have to do away with religious fanaticism. The new system is the only one that's reasonable.

DP: So "Riders of the Purple Wage" is your utopia?

[illegible]

DP: Your career appears to have progressed in rather a jerky fashion, as though it were a matter of finding an amenable publisher every few years. For instance, Galaxy/Beacon Books published *Flesh and A Woman A Day* in 1960, then there was another breakthrough in 1968 when Essex House started publishing your highly erotic set of novels...

DID: Well those occurred when people came to me and asked me to write certain things I did. I was asked by one of my friends, who became the editor of the Galaxy/Breton line, to write a novel. He said he thought Gold had sent a novella called "The Screaming Goddamn" to Ben Miller at FAMU. He returned it to me saying it was terrible. I wrote him matter into two small a space and suggested he send it to the publisher. He said that Horace Gold wanted a novel from me, so "The Screaming Goddamns" became Flesh. Gold wrote me back saying that he would like to see it submitted to him. My book was the only one he accepted. By the way, the French edition contains the essential parts. Again, Brian Kirby, whom I met through the publisher, was the person founding Keesee House and he wanted to raise money for the house. He asked me if I could do pornography has no plot, no characterization, just one are some after another. He wanted to know if I could do something like that. So pornography, as he called it, I was kind of reluctant to do it because I didn't want to do a satire on Gothic romances - you know, the vampire/vampire story and also on the dark side of life. But I decided to do it. At the same time - nobody seemed to catch it. I was surprised that it sold well. When I jumped in, I had a lot of fun. I wrote very much about sex. I was writing it and I was beginning to get tired of writing it.

[0]: What happened to Essex House?

NJF: They went bust, for the simple reason that their distribution was to pornography stores, and the people who buy pornography books weren't interested in that sort of thing. The sf reader found out about it too late. As a result, the Kanex House books are pretty valuable now: they're rather rare. A Feast Unknown first edition will bring in \$50 now at the second-hand stores.

Q: What sort of reply do you normally make to someone who accuses you of writing evasive or corrupting books?

PJF: I just tell them I'm doing it for fun. They don't realize what I'm actually doing. I never would have done it if I hadn't been asked. It just didn't occur to me, but as soon as I was asked to write something for Brian Kirby all these ideas clicked out. They must have been lying fallow.

16. Do you have any other comments?

1. The first step is to identify the problem. In this case, the problem is that the user is unable to access the website.

Q Did it feel bad about the self-censorship?

NJF: Not really. If I'd been compelled to censor the Essex House books I'd have fed back to you this one I just decided to contribute to a Yearning collection. It's a fantasy like Waking Adventure stories. There again, sometimes in my books which are regarded as adventure stories there are deeper currents. I was very much disappointed at the reception of Life as it was usually thought of as another Barzan novel, but that's not true. The structure is based on Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces, and anybody familiar with that book, reading Lord Dargy, will see the Joseph Campbell structure. The cyclic adventurer, the heroes of classical mythology, primitive religion and so forth. There's a hell of a lot more in that book than

DP: Do you intend to continue the Grandrith/  
Collier action?

Caliban series

PJF: Yes, I have a contract to do one. I'll continue it until the Nine are all killed off. I might kill off Doc Caliban too. My relations with Ace were discontinued for a number of years because we were having a quarrel over the payment of royalties. As you know Ace got into a tremendous amount of trouble with a lot of authors on that, but we finally straightened that out. I have a contract to do the fifth World of Tiers novel - The Lavastile World. It's called.

\* **PLANNING** **WEEK**  
 1997-1998  
 1998-1999  
 1999-2000  
 2000-2001  
 2001-2002  
 2002-2003  
 2003-2004  
 2004-2005  
 2005-2006  
 2006-2007  
 2007-2008  
 2008-2009  
 2009-2010  
 2010-2011  
 2011-2012  
 2012-2013  
 2013-2014  
 2014-2015  
 2015-2016  
 2016-2017  
 2017-2018  
 2018-2019  
 2019-2020  
 2020-2021  
 2021-2022  
 2022-2023  
 2023-2024  
 2024-2025  
 2025-2026  
 2026-2027  
 2027-2028  
 2028-2029  
 2029-2030  
 2030-2031  
 2031-2032  
 2032-2033  
 2033-2034  
 2034-2035  
 2035-2036  
 2036-2037  
 2037-2038  
 2038-2039  
 2039-2040  
 2040-2041  
 2041-2042  
 2042-2043  
 2043-2044  
 2044-2045  
 2045-2046  
 2046-2047  
 2047-2048  
 2048-2049  
 2049-2050  
 2050-2051  
 2051-2052  
 2052-2053  
 2053-2054  
 2054-2055  
 2055-2056  
 2056-2057  
 2057-2058  
 2058-2059  
 2059-2060  
 2060-2061  
 2061-2062  
 2062-2063  
 2063-2064  
 2064-2065  
 2065-2066  
 2066-2067  
 2067-2068  
 2068-2069  
 2069-2070  
 2070-2071  
 2071-2072  
 2072-2073  
 2073-2074  
 2074-2075  
 2075-2076  
 2076-2077  
 2077-2078  
 2078-2079  
 2079-2080  
 2080-2081  
 2081-2082  
 2082-2083  
 2083-2084  
 2084-2085  
 2085-2086  
 2086-2087  
 2087-2088  
 2088-2089  
 2089-2090  
 2090-2091  
 2091-2092  
 2092-2093  
 2093-2094  
 2094-2095  
 2095-2096  
 2096-2097  
 2097-2098  
 2098-2099  
 2099-2100  
 2100-2101  
 2101-2102  
 2102-2103  
 2103-2104  
 2104-2105  
 2105-2106  
 2106-2107  
 2107-2108  
 2108-2109  
 2109-2110  
 2110-2111  
 2111-2112  
 2112-2113  
 2113-2114  
 2114-2115  
 2115-2116  
 2116-2117  
 2117-2118  
 2118-2119  
 2119-2120  
 2120-2121  
 2121-2122  
 2122-2123  
 2123-2124  
 2124-2125  
 2125-2126  
 2126-2127  
 2127-2128  
 2128-2129  
 2129-2130  
 2130-2131  
 2131-2132  
 2132-2133  
 2133-2134  
 2134-2135  
 2135-2136  
 2136-2137  
 2137-2138  
 2138-2139  
 2139-2140  
 2140-2141  
 2141-2142  
 2142-2143  
 2143-2144  
 2144-2145  
 2145-2146  
 2146-2147  
 2147-2148  
 2148-2149  
 2149-2150  
 2150-2151  
 2151-2152  
 2152-2153  
 2153-2154  
 2154-2155  
 2155-2156  
 2156-2157  
 2157-2158  
 2158-2159  
 2159-2160  
 2160-2161  
 2161-2162  
 2162-2163  
 2163-2164  
 2164-2165  
 2165-2166  
 2166-2167  
 2167-2168  
 2168-2169  
 2169-2170  
 2170-2171  
 2171-2172  
 2172-2173  
 2173-2174  
 2174-2175  
 2175-2176  
 2176-2177  
 2177-2178  
 2178-2179  
 2179-2180  
 2180-2181  
 2181-2182  
 2182-2183  
 2183-2184  
 2184-2185  
 2185-2186  
 2186-2187  
 2187-2188  
 2188-2189  
 2189-2190  
 2190-2191  
 2191-2192  
 2192-2193  
 2193-2194  
 2194-2195  
 2195-2196  
 2196-2197  
 2197-2198  
 2198-2199  
 2199-2200  
 2200-2201  
 2201-2202  
 2202-2203  
 2203-2204  
 2204-2205  
 2205-2206  
 2206-2207  
 2207-2208  
 2208-2209  
 2209-2210  
 2210-2211  
 2211-2212  
 2212-2213  
 2213-2214  
 2214-2215  
 2215-2216  
 2216-2217  
 2217-2218  
 2218-2219  
 2219-2220  
 2220-2221  
 2221-2222  
 2222-2223  
 2223-2224  
 2224-2225  
 2225-2226  
 2226-2227  
 2227-2228  
 2228-2229  
 2229-2230  
 2230-2231  
 2231-2232  
 2232-2233  
 2233-2234  
 2234-2235  
 2235-2236  
 2236-2237  
 2237-2238  
 2238-2239  
 2239-2240  
 2240-2241  
 2241-2242  
 2242-2243  
 2243-2244  
 2244-2245  
 2245-2246  
 2246-2247  
 2247-2248  
 2248-2249  
 2249-2250  
 2250-2251  
 2251-2252  
 2252-2253  
 2253-2254  
 2254-2255  
 2255-2256  
 2256-2257  
 2257-2258  
 2258-2259  
 2259-2260  
 2260-2261  
 2261-2262  
 2262-2263  
 2263-2264  
 2264-2265  
 2265-2266  
 2266-2267  
 2267-2268  
 2268-2269  
 2269-2270  
 2270-2271  
 2271-2272  
 2272-2273  
 2273-2274  
 2274-2275  
 2275-2276  
 2276-2277  
 2277-2278  
 2278-2279  
 2279-2280  
 2280-2281  
 2281-2282  
 2282-2283  
 2283-2284  
 2284-2285  
 2285-2286  
 2286-2287  
 2287-2288

DJF: I was just reading them for fun and entertainment. They enormously attracted me, like they did hundreds of thousands of other youths. It wasn't until recently that I began to realize there was much more to them than I thought when I read them as a kid. Then I started to incorporate them into my own "creative mythology," as I call it, my own

world view. I still get a kick out of rereading it, but I don't read it as often as I read *Ulysses* but it doesn't mean anything to me because I suspend my sense of judgment. When I read them I let all the nostalgic feelings come up. That kind of gives them a little gliding, you know.

BP: In many areas of the popular arts what was considered trash in earlier decades of the century has become the object of high regard over the past few years. You get critics like Leslie A. Fiedler praising popular literature and advising serious novelists to turn to pop images like Jerry Lieber and the like. Do you think it's possible to read the trash and get any sense?















First black mark against you, Chris. The layout was so help at all in trying to follow this article, in that the text was all in one line (being nasty now). But I've no doubt there was a good reason, wasn't there?

(Yes. But to explain it would involve a lot of technical printing talk that would use up the rest of the letter column.)

A final point. Chris Evans' review of *The Time of the Hawklands* seemed to me to lack the wrong attitude. I enjoyed the book. I really enjoyed it. I thought it was a good one. You've got to enter into the "spirit of the book". This complaining review is as wrong as the one that called Connor's *Willow Run* a "goodbye salute". It can't be bad if I liked it, and it slugged Bob Dylan.

Arthur C. Clarke: *Not Lasse*

I loved Judy Watson's "The Last Plink". I've sent it to my friend... who's chairman of the "Law of the Sea" Conference. It's his spare time as President of the UN...

Head reviews with interest - he scribbled at the number of books I've not read.

But can you please increase type size? My old eyes can only read VICTOR in direct sunlight.

Congratulations for hard work!

(We've tried in this issue to reduce the number of pages and to make the type larger. But in order to cram in all the very good material that we get, we have to have to have some of the pages that reduced type-size - Ed.)

Don Malcom: 42 Garry Drive, Paisley, Newfremshire

Andy Sawyer's claim that Lasser Books lied to the readers seems to be rather an exaggerated claim. Lasser Books have probably been in the bit of a mystery to most of us. Perhaps I can add a little to the story.

I had two novels published by Lasser. They were not commissioned but taken over-learn as they were. So the Lasser formula, which were not written to a Lasser formula. Nor did they lie to anyone. They were beginning-middle-end stories (shudder) which were not certain (gangs of horror) people and do not claim to be anything else. Any lies, therefore, were made being perpetrated by others. But just where omission begins in a story would puzzle any writer. Both stories sold 30,000 in the States and Canada, and were *The Iron Rain*. Did those figures in less than five months. More none.

I met Roger Elwood in Edinburgh and what an experience that was. The Club took place during the Edinburgh Festival on a sweltering August Saturday. Being from Paisley (not Glasgow as listed in the Eastern TV booklet), some 30 miles west of Edinburgh, I was an foreign as the Japanese, Germans and Scandinavians. Roger's place was three hours late. (Some of us might think that he travels by broomstick.) After meeting to convince him that he would not be able to take a quick drive up to Luck Ness and get back the same day, we joined the Festival crowd. Suddenly, Roger decided that he would like to buy a new pair of shoes. I preceded him into a shoe shop. By this time, Roger had decided that he didn't want shoes, and gone out alone, leaving me standing there in the stable. He was seen in the Prince Street and went up the Mound, towards St. Giles Cathedral. Abruptly, he disappeared into it and came back looking like a ghost. He was pale. Peeling part of the paper off, he said: "Would you like a bite?"

Back at the hotel, among the things he asked me if I was to church. Although we were getting nearer to being married, the conversation took place in a lift - I said I was not, but that church-going of the sort it did, did not automatically brand anyone an Christian or non-Christian.

Now Lasser books. Roger said that they were aimed at a totally new readership, to be found in supermarkets, drug stores and such similar spots. If not one regular of reader supported the magazine, then he was going to be heavily financed and advertised. He was looking for an essentially non-readership. Presumably he knew what he was doing. However, it appears that he did not get it. The readers that the Lasser books were aimed at, or at least, not as many of them as he had anticipated. Only the first six Lasser books were marketed in Britain and none of them were taken out. After that, they hoped to get sales by mail order, which, I think, was a mistake. However, it's doubtful if British alone would have made all that much difference. The audience he wanted was in North America.

I want to bring in here Mr. Morgan who, in the *VICTOR REVIEW* of 1982, wrote that in 1977, apparently almost did himself an injury by having to finish stories by Bounds, Backman and myself in 1982-85.

He and Andy Sawyer seem to suffer from the same arrogant assumption that what they want

is right and that everyone else is wrong. Mr. Morgan on the one hand seems unable to understand why anyone would want to read such stories, and on the other, answers his own puzzle by stating: "True, traditional of it is still to be found in *WELL* (but this is what the bulk of of readers seem to demand, is it not?)". Probably not. Just as Sawyer seems to be unable to tell him that he is wrong, etc., many readers want to read what they enjoy and understand. I haven't reached the stage again. Some of people will be trying to tell others what to read. It might interest Mr. Morgan to know that several readers have enjoyed or understood Michael Stoll's "Rice" that he should be writing more. Or stupid or not reasonably intelligent. Nor does it necessarily make Michael's story obscure or imply that he should be writing more. Obviously, we don't all function at the elevated level of intelligence and comprehension attained by Sawyer and Morgan, but neither, lads: living too long in a rarified atmosphere has his drawbacks. Not too very quickly lose touch with ordinary people. In conclusion, another point possibly not appreciated or understood by Mr. Morgan. It is very difficult for a writer to break out of a mould.

(I am sure that both Chris and Andy will want to reply to your comments, Don. Comment from Chris is really redundant, but I will say in defence of Chris Morgan, who is one of the most reliable reviewers, and for whose opinions I have a very high regard that his comments are misinterpreting what he says in his review if you think he is being "arrogant" or trying to "hide problems" or "hide his own views". In his reviews, Chris, like other reviewers, expresses his opinions, expresses his views and justifying them logically and articulately. Nobody in *VICTOR*, Don, is trying to dictate to his readers what you should read. But most everyone in *VICTOR* has a point of view, and has particular writers or understood by Mr. Morgan. It is very difficult for a writer to break out of a mould.

In answer, Chris, I am sure that some readers have been using you for target practice. I suspect editing is largely a thankless task, as I know it is. I am sure that you are a very good editor, or at least, have merely complied when they should have been editing, don't appreciate a hidden problem, and you are a very good editor, and you are fully capable of taking care of yourself, so keep pushing.

Tony G. Richards: 91 Wapin Way, Thorpe Bay, Essex

I have one apology and one grouse to make in this letter.

Phil S-P: obviously, in my letter to VBO I implied that Phil was some kind of arrogant bitch-coner. I have never met him, but my only impression was that he was scathing comments in VBO and it certainly read as if he had some personal grudge. Dave Wignover, Tom Jones and Chris Richards assured me that Phil is an concerned and dedicated editor. I am sure that I am perfectly happy to accept his (though I feel that my own view is that he will stand). Page Phil, I and I hope that there are a few of you who hate to think ill of any member of the NSFR.

Anybody except that (in Lord, here I go again) Dennis Tucker. There I was, happily browsing through VBO when I came across such phrases as "Bang your head in shame" "immediate writing" and "breads full of rice pudding" - I expected the ad to strike up "Bringing in the Sheaves" at any moment. You're left off the twenty Hall Mary's, Dennis, and the wearing of the crown. I am sure that you are a very good editor, and you are certainly not going to apologise for "bystander outbursts" when faced with such an arid pompous attitude.

And now, my one major complaint about VBO - it was not stapled properly and the bloody thing kept falling apart. Hang your head in shame, Fowler, and send me an immediate written apology. (Watch it, Tony, or you'll find this issue of *VICTOR* is stapled all the way round. That will ensure it doesn't fall apart. I hope, it might make it tricky to read... - Ed.)

Douglas Harbison: 10828 - 73th Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 0A8

... VICTOR 78: Although many of the reviews are of books that have been around for quite a while, I have enjoyed reading them. I am, indeed, a review addict. I enjoy reading them through magazines just to read reviews, even if I don't read the books. I don't disagree (and with the time lag, I often have read the books in question, if they're by writers I know or have read or recommended). I am in the new Aldis, and I am sure that you will want to read it soonest. Alas, I then have to wait until I can get it. I am sure that *Paradise*, a novel far more complex and sure than the others. Yet his review, filled with neutral responses as it is, does not allow that the book has done a great deal. What he wants to say by saying that "We must in far from explicit" in fact, is that the book is not characters, and never really allows us to get into them, even Alvin. I am sure that to me, one of the great strengths of Mr. Puss writing in this novel as in her others, is her laudable suggestiveness concerning the

emotions of her characters. I recommend, as well, Samuel R. Delany's introduction to *Alvin*, which is a very good one. I am sure that *Picnic on Paradise* is short, yes, but it packs more into its few pages than many works twice the length.

The other place I want to mention is Ian Watson's very provocative "Whether Science Fiction?" as a great admirer of Ian Watson's work. I am sure that you will agree with me. What he has to say is a lot, and I haven't fully appreciated it all yet. I tend to agree with him, and wish only to call to his attention Delany and Bush's definition of af in terms of its subjectivity: "That which has not happened" (as opposed to fantasy: that which cannot happen). Once this has been allowed, you can go for as much as an little "style" (also, I'm doing it suggesting that style is separable from content; and I don't mean to). I mean that if a work of "style" will have to be great in order that it might do precisely what Watson asks of it, I think that what we do not yet know. Style as a form of linguistic mining! Yes, that's sort of what I'm after. The argumentative point I wish to make may simply be to a misunderstanding of his point on my part. But I sort of take him to be saying that the idea that of concepts are metaphors is a dangerous one. I cannot agree. I agree with him in that taking such an idea too far can lead to the withdrawal from the field that has afflicted some of our writers. I would agree that (a) since all language is metaphorical (I believe this, even if I cannot prove it), and (b) since quite a lot of language is metaphorical, one thing, of concepts can be a form of reality. I believe this is a form of metaphorical thought. My next? The richness of the work we do a process occurs will be greater, surely?

Nevertheless, in terms of what Watson is saying about the potential of af in an expanding universe of knowledge, in terms of what he is saying about the changes going on in scientific thought today, I can only agree with him that af's potential to be a tool of discovery and to allow (I suspect it will be quite slow) make itself irrelevant, is great. I wonder what the Pussies would have to say to his theory of af, though? They're for the irrational, whereas he, I suspect, is right, might agree that af is non-scientific, but would hold out for its being built on a rational base, and therefore while allied to fantasy, not able to be a form of reality. I am sure that we psychologically need both af and fantasy. I am sure that we need both. I believe that the best food from both kitchens will be the most complex and well crafted.

(14-2-77)

PUBLISHERS' PRESS OFFICERS, ETC PLEASE NOTE THAT LISTS OF BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW, AWAITING REVIEW, ETC, APPEAR IN

NEWS 3

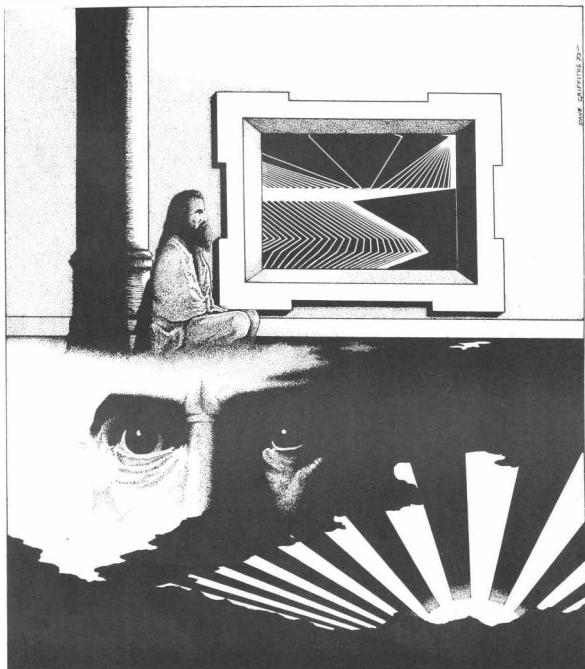
WHICH ACCOMPANIES THIS MAILING OF VECTOR 91 ALSO, FURTHER REVIEWS OF BOOKS APPEAR THEREIN

THE MAIL LIST OF VECTOR 78 WAS EARLY PRESENTED BY THE R. JUNE 1982 ISSUE OF VBO.

COMMENTS ON THE MAILING OF VECTOR 78, PLEASE CLIP, MAILING, PLEASE CLIP

VECTOR 78, (in early October, 1982) contains a list of books received for review, and the editor's comments on them. The editor's comments on them are in the back of the book.

The VICTOR editor welcomes submissions of manuscripts of a critical nature, and of reviews. We are particularly anxious to receive critical reviews of books. If you are interested in reviews and want to submit a review, please send it to the VICTOR editorial staff consisting of one over-worked human being and an IBM Selectric which cannot, unfortunately, read the editor's mind. To get a bit behind in answering letters, I am sure that you will agree that the big stick of printers' marks is likely to be in the money. I am sure that you will agree that the greenback dollar, 50, please, be low if you submit material to us.



his task even more difficult by confining them within an intricate network of plots and counter-plots. Walton, the protagonist, works for the Bureau of Population Equalisation, whose task it is to kill off all but the totally healthy by selective euthanasia, in addition to forcibly transporting groups of people from over-populated regions to the wide-open spaces of Patagonia and the like. Walton is a corporation man, faithful to his duties but occasionally (though not often) troubled by the moral implications of his decisions. It is the twenty-third century and a group of scientists are working on Venus, attempting to make the planet habitable and hence provide more living space for the crowded denizens of Earth. Walton, inheriting the top job at the Bureau following the assassination of his predecessor, discovers that an ftl ship has secretly been perfected and is on a year-long jaunt about the cosmos in search of further habitable worlds. Mot on the heels of this revelation he learns that a method has been developed for counter-acting the degeneration of cellular tissue, thus indefinitely extending the human life span. But the world is over-crowded and immortality would only make things worse. Walton scarcely has time to ponder the import of this discovery before his brother Fred, a member of a group who oppose the principles of Population Equalisation, steals the secret and tries to blackmail Walton into resigning in favour of himself. The starship returns to Earth, bringing good news: they have discovered a planet suitable for settlement. However, a race of aliens inhabiting a gas giant in the same solar system are opposed to any colonisation. Then Walton is informed that the terraforming experiments on Venus have backfired, initiating an atomic chain-reaction in its atmosphere. They need the new planet.

The above outline would provide enough material to see most authors through several novels, but Silverberg wraps it all up in under 150 pages. Dilemma follows dilemma in a manner which would be farcical were it not for his ability to keep the plot moving at such a frenetic pace that the reader is steamrollered into swallowing his incredulity and keep turning the pages. Of course the book is rushed and under-developed, but it is not the product of a naive imagination. The ideas in the book are present simply as motifs, or narrative hinges - Silverberg lacks the experience to extract the juices from the fruits of his inventions - but he demonstrates considerable skill in weaving together the various threads of his narrative. The book is entertaining in the same way that a juggler's act is entertaining: the dexterity and fluidity of movement are what impress, even though ultimately the entire exercise is frivolous.

Invaders from Earth has, thankfully, a much simpler plot. Kennedy is a public relations man and his company are hired to fabricate details of a human colony on Ganymede in order to stir up public support for the extensive mining rights which their clients hope to secure on the moon. The native Ganymedeans are naturally concerned at the infringement of their territory but are placid, non-aggressive people. Kennedy is successful in creating a hostile climate of public opinion towards the natives by inventing a story of their attack on the fictitious colony. At this point he is shuttled off to Ganymede (Silverberg's scanty rationale for this move scarcely hides the fact that it is simply a plot necessity) where he meets the natives and discovers that they have an advanced, non-technological civilisation and that the corporation's designs on the moon will mean their eventual genocide. He gathers information with which to denounce his employers, but his notes are discovered, he is captured and deported. During the descent to Earth, however, he forgoes the gravanol pill which puts the rest of the crew to sleep and protects them from the stresses of deceleration. They land in a deserted field and he is able to escape before the others awake by the simple expedient of walking away from the ship. I found that a bit hard to swallow - a blatant example of hasty composition.

Invaders from Earth is basically a thriller, less ambitious than Master of Life and Death, and not quite as successful. I sensed that Silverberg would have liked to have spent more time with the Ganymedeans than the one brief chapter which the limitations of

space allowed him. But all the seeds of his future growth are visible in this book. Viewed from the cosy armchair of retrospect one can see the signs of a developing talent: the gift for characterisation, an awareness of the complexities of human relationships, an instinctive grasp of the possibilities inherent in the concepts which he employs. But, at this early stage, everything is subservient to the demands of the plot.

#### Silverberg Circa 1968

Ten years on, and the occasional awkwardnesses of style have been eliminated, the loopholes in the narrative neatly ironed out. Silverberg is the master of his material now, giving his characters more time for reflection, pausing to admire the scenery before introducing the next plot-twist, using irony, metaphor and symbolism to assist his aims. His books are longer, although his plots are simpler, and he is all together more relaxed - a choreographer rather than a puppet-master. All is not perfect, however. The excesses of youth have been replaced by the indulgences of maturity: in his effort to make his characters psychologically plausible, there is the occasional tendency to overwrite, to repetition, especially evident in the opening sections of The Masks of Time (first published in this country as Vornan-19).

Vornan-19 materialises in Rome on Christmas Day, 1998, claiming that he is a time-traveller from the 2999. After spending a short time travelling through Europe and attracting considerable publicity, he is eventually taken to America as a guest of the US government. The authorities cannot decide whether or not he is a fake: his behaviour is strange and he seems to possess considerable physical prowess, but he is elusive when questioned on the world of the future. Leo Garfield, the narrator of the novel, is a physicist who has been investigating the time-reversal of sub-atomic particles and when he is enlisted as a member of Vornan's cortege, the question of Vornan's authenticity is naturally of utmost importance to him. His initial scepticism soon wavers under the elfish, charismatic spell of the stranger. Vornan is so non-conformist, in his attitude to the cultural conventions of the time, that Garfield, after some vacillation, reluctantly concludes that he does indeed hail from up the line. Vornan has arrived at an opportune time, for with the approach of the year 2000 an Apocalyptic movement has arisen, dedicated to debauchery in the face of the approaching Armageddon. Vornan, if genuine, is proof that the world will continue beyond the second millennium.

Silverberg's characterisation of Vornan - wry, elliptical, playful, amoral - is masterly, so masterly that in a sense it works against his aims for it eventually dispels the carefully nurtured ambiguity with which Silverberg seeks to present him: he simply cannot be a fake. Here I could be accused of quibbling, though, for the central aim of the book is not the elucidation of Vornan's lineage, but an examination of the effects of his presence on those around him and on the world at large. These effects, in short, are devastating: amongst the masses, a cult of Vornan worship arises, and amongst his attendants - Garfield and five other - he creates all sorts of emotional upheavals. Here Silverberg has taken a single idea (essentially The Alien Amongst Us) and meticulously explored its ramifications. The Masks of Time is the product of a controlled and cultured imagination.

The Man in the Maze initially struck me as curiously atypical of Silverberg, for it has a hesitant, almost rambling approach in the first few chapters which was oddly refreshing. Because Silverberg has become so adept at plotting, because the reader knows he is going to be led by the hand through a carefully landscaped fiction, there were occasions in The Masks of Time where the overweening inextricability of the plot progression induced a kind of blaseness in me so that I positively searched for signs that he was not totally in command of his material (this, I believe, is what Malsberg was hinting at when he paid

Silverberg the double-edged compliment of calling him the most technically gifted writer in sf). The Man in the Maze has a faint air of diffidence about it as Silverberg opens the narrative, holding the promise that perhaps the author will surprise himself as well as the reader.

So we find Muller at the centre of a deserted alien city, surrounded by a maze which has been designed to keep intruders out. Outside the maze are Boardman, an old friend of Muller's whom he now hates, and Rawlins, the son of another of Muller's former friends. Nine years previously, Muller was enlisted by Boardman to contact a race of aliens on Beta Hydri. The Hydrans, at the time the only other intelligent species known to man, did not respond to Muller's overtures, and after leaving their planet he discovered that they had tampered with his brain so that he radiated unwholesome emotions which made his presence unbearable to other people. Filled with hatred and bitterness, Muller has exiled himself on the planet Lemnos, somehow avoiding all the death-traps of the maze and finding sanctuary inside the city. But Muller is once again needed by humanity. Another race of aliens have been discovered who have been enslaving humans on the outer planets, apparently unaware that homo sapiens is an intelligent species. Muller, capable of transmitting the raw energy of emotion, is the only person who can possibly breach the communications gap. Rawlins and Boardman must penetrate the maze and then persuade Muller to leave.

Muller, Boardman and Rawlins are the only significant characters in the book, and all three are well drawn. I felt that Muller was slightly less convincing than the other two, since his festering hatred of humanity seems rather extreme, even acknowledging the profound trauma which he has experienced because of his affliction. Boardman is a schemer, a wily old man who operates on the principle of the greatest benefit for the greatest number and to hell with the individual, whilst Rawlins represents the idealistic young man, faced with the odious task of coercing Muller from his sanctuary.

The symbolism in the book is overt, the maze representing the barriers between individuals, and the bulk of the narrative, which charts Rawlins and Boardman's progression through the maze, is a direct embodiment of the theme of the novel, that of the problems of communication with others. For once, Silverberg lays all his cards on the table and plays straight with the reader. But the book fails to satisfy completely and once again I think the reason for this is that the author is simply too dominant an influence over his work. At a critical juncture in the narrative, Rawlins rebels against Boardman's instructions and confesses to Muller that he has lied to him. For a moment we sense that this is a wholly unexpected development, but then Silverberg reveals that Boardman has anticipated this contingency and uses it to his advantage. Thus Silverberg maintains the integrity of his plot but denies his characters the right to an independent life. Perhaps I am being too critical here, but it seems to me that Silverberg's expertise in manoeuvring his characters within the framework of the plot is precisely what prevents his work from being truly inspirational: the reader is subtly made aware that he is witnessing a carefully constructed tableau rather than being allowed to eavesdrop on the characters' activities. We are reminded that it is all a fiction rather than a slice of life.

Before I close this article, I'd like to touch briefly on a dominant theme in all of Silverberg's books. Silverberg is obsessed with power and its use as a tool of manipulation. This concern is common to all four books discussed here. Walton, in Master Of Life And Death, is the most powerful man on Earth, arranging for the purchase of a popular news-sheet in order to influence public opinion to suit his aims; Kennedy in Invaders From Earth, derives his livelihood from constructing realities with which to feed the masses; Vornan transforms the world by his sheer presence in The Mists Of Time; both Muller and Rawlins are pawns in Boardman's gambit in The Man In The Maze. As a result of this preoccupation, mass-movements often figure strongly in Silverberg's work: the Berserkelites, extreme supporters of the Equalisation measures in Master Of Life And Death; the Apocalyptists who

cavort insanely through the pages of The Mists Of Time. Silverberg's world is one in which the forces of coercion constantly do battle with those of irrationality, where the fate of the world may depend on the whim of an individual. It is also indubitably a man's world, for his female characters are described in terms of their sexuality (David Selig's sister in Dying Inside being a notable exception to this premise).

Silverberg has demonstrated time and again that he is an impeccable craftsman and one of the finest writers in sf. And yet he has by no means achieved a complete mastery of his art. Am I being greedy if I say that I would like to see him whet his jaded appetite on a novel which features a female protagonist and a cast of characters who are thrown together and left to their own devices? Perhaps such a challenge might be the impetus he needs to rouse him from his retirement. Meanwhile he has left a body of work which is thoroughly impressive and, yes, shows great promise.

Master of Life and Death S. G. Wilson & Janeway; London, 1977; 144 pp; £3.80. ISBN 0-283-06224-1

Invaders From Earth S. G. Wilson & Janeway; London 1977 144 pp; £3.80. ISBN 0-283-06225-2

The Mists of Time Yarnes; London; 1977; 242 pp. 60p; ISBN 0-486-08168-2

The Man in The Maze Yarnes; London 1977 193 pp 70p. ISBN 0-486-08168-2



# ICAROMENIPPUS OR THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE FICTION

by  
Brian M Stableford

In 1923 the publishers Kegan Paul, Trench & Trubner released an essay by J. B. S. Haldane entitled Daedalus, or Science And The Future, which became the inspiration for a whole series of speculative pamphlets collectively entitled "Today & Tomorrow". All kinds of specialists were invited to contribute predictions regarding the future of their disciplines. Most, like Haldane, adopted a symbolic figurehead from mythology as a title. James Jeans offered Eos, or the Wider Aspects of Cosmology; Vernon Lee wrote Proteus, or the Future of Intelligence; F. C. S. Schiller chose Tantalus as the character who best might represent "the future of man"; E. E. Fournier d'Albe set out to analyse Hephaestus, or the Soul of the Machine. On a lighter note, Andre Maurois contributed a cautionary fantasy entitled The Next Chapter, or the War with the Moon, and Robert Graves prepared a text called (rather misleadingly) Lars Porson, or the Future of Swearing. The total number of the booklets, issued during a period of some nine years, came eventually to over a hundred.

The would-be prophets varied widely in their ambition and their actual predictive success. Few, in fact, were completely misled as to the direction the world was going, and one or two were uncannily accurate, including the author of Aeolus, or the Future of Flying, who reproduced a newspaper report of the future detailing the victory of the Royal Air Force over an armada of enemy bombers forming the vanguard of an attempted invasion. Special credit is perhaps due to the writers who undertook to deal with touchy subjects of the future of marriage and morality, including Norman Haire (Hymen, or the Future of Marriage), C. E. M. Joad (Thrasymachus, or the Future of Morals), C. P. Blacker (Birth Control and the State) and Vera Brittain (Halcyon, or the Future of Monogamy), all of whom measured trends with some insight.

Only two of the pamphlets, however, were as ambitious or as outspoken as Haldane's initial offering. One - J. D. Bernal's The World, The Flesh and The Devil became a minor classic and remains in print. The other was Icarus, or the Future of Science which, as its title suggests, was a reply to Haldane's vision of the future, challenging its fundamental assumptions.

Haldane's vision of the future was going to cure all the world's evils and bring about Utopia. Haldane imagined in his intellectual climate of the day a growing dissatisfaction with the way technology was running the world and a current of anxiety about the kind of people scientific progress would ultimately lead to. He began his essay with the statement of these doubts:

"Was mankind," he asked, "released from the womb of nature at the dawn of the scientific era, and set against his, and now at any moment hurl him into the bottomless void? Or is human nature a more or

horrible vision correct, in which man becomes a mere parasite of machinery, an appendage to the reproductive system of huge and complicated engines which will successfully usurp his activities, and end by ousting him from the mastery of this planet?"

His answer to both of these questions was, of course, no. His choice of Daedalus as the figurehead of science derived from Haldane's distaste for the fact that the role of the scientist in society was all too often likened to that of Prometheus, stealing the fire of the gods for use by mankind. Daedalus, claimed Haldane, was a better symbol, because Daedalus "was the first to demonstrate that the scientific worker is not concerned with gods."

Haldane was particularly interested in Daedalus as the architect and creator of the minotaur, the man/bull hybrid. Haldane named Daedalus as the first experimental genetic engineer, and it was to the geneticists that Haldane looked for the salvation of mankind.

He argued that all infectious diseases could and would be wiped out where the public were willing to co-operate with the state in programmes for their annihilation. He predicted that plants might soon be genetically designed for the purpose of increasing crop yields, and that this would be so successful as to result in a food glut. He looked forward to the day when children would be produced ectogenetically, and predicted that despite religious opposition this would become the norm ("the biological invention," he noted, "tends to begin as a perversion and end as a ritual supported by unquestioned beliefs and prejudices"). From test-tube babies he went on to consider the sensitive subject of eugenic selection and interference with embryos developing outside the womb in "hatcheries".

All of these predictions were, of course, rather controversial. Expressions of pure horror were common, and the best-known emotional reaction to the picture of the future painted by Haldane is Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, in which the world foreseen in Daedalus is incarnated as a species of temporal hell.

Bertrand Russell, however, disagreed with Haldane on grounds which were rather more fundamental than the issue of whether the future Haldane saw would be pleasant to live in. He challenged the assertion that science ever could or would be used in the manner Haldane suggested, for the "betterment" of the general human condition.

"Dr. Haldane as a Darwinian," Russell began, "has not farth (through the use of scientific discoveries as a means to human happiness. Such as I should like to do with

only has made us somewhat sceptical. I am compelled to fear that science will be used to promote the

happy future, having been taught to fly by his father Daedalus. The destruction of his father's dream. I fear the same fate may overtake the population when making use of science were taught to fly." (This, we must remember, was written twenty-two years before the advent of the atomic bomb.)

The danger of the scientific revolution, Russell argued, was not that it would lead to a more perfect world, but that it would lead to a more perfect world.

"Science has not given men more self-control, more kindness, or more power of discounting their passions in deciding upon a course of action. It has given communities more power to indulge their collective passions, but, by making society more organic, it has diminished the part played by private passions. Men's collective passions are mainly evil; far the strongest of them are hatred and rivalry directed towards other groups. Therefore at present all that gives men power to indulge their collective passions is bad. That is why science threatens to cause the destruction of our civilisation."



It was while the "Today & Tomorrow" pamphlets were being published in Britain that science fiction was first designated as an independent publishing category in the United States. The pioneering Amazing Stories first appeared in 1926, although a special all-fiction issue of Science & Invention had appeared in 1923. The man who provided the prospectus for the new genre, Hugo Gernsback, was a would-be inventor who had emigrated to the States from Luxembourg in 1904, and had since been involved with a number of projects to do with the advancement of science and, in particular, popularising science.

Like Haldane, Gernsback had a great deal of faith in the potential miracles which might be wrought through science for the betterment of mankind. He was a confirmed Utopian. His manifesto for the new literature argued as follows:

"It must be remembered that we live in an entirely new world. Ten hundred years ago, stories of this kind were not possible. Science, through its various branches of mechanics, electricity, astronomy, etc., enters so intimately into all our lives today, and we are so much immersed in this science, that we have become rather prone to take new inventions and discoveries for granted. Our entire mode of living has changed with the greatest progress, and it is little wonder, therefore, that many imaginary situations - impossible 100 years ago - are brought about today. It is to these situations that the new romance must find their greatest outlet."

"Not only do these amazing tales make tremendously interesting reading - they are also always instructive. They supply knowledge which we might not otherwise obtain - and they supply it in a very palatable form ... New inventions pictured for us in the scientific fiction of today are not at all impossible of realization tomorrow."

Gernsback envisaged a fiction which would play the same sort of social role as mechanical invention: an inventive literature intimately involved with technological impact and advance. And though it quickly became no more than another sub-genre of romantic pulp adventure fiction its content remained infected with Gernsback's optimism.

There were a few stories in the fiction produced under the science fiction label in the twenties and thirties which seemed to doubt the essential virtue of scientific advance. But these tended to fall into the category defined by the question with which Haldane had opened his essay. Briefly, they bordered on the possibility of his becoming an evil and apocalyptic through over-enthusiasm for machines that he would see as a perilous. Haldane's response to this reaction to the effect that a scientific "Utopia" would be indiscoverable or Russell's consideration of the basic problem that scientific knowledge would be applied for the good of the race as a whole is evident in the sf of this period.

It was not until the late thirties, when John W. Campbell Jr. became editor of Astounding Stories, that the character of science fiction began to change. Campbell co-opted the philosophy of science into the philosophy of science fiction, asking that the authors who wrote for him should consider their imaginative ideas as hypotheses and should use their stories to work out the logical consequences of such ideas. His aim was to create a form of literature which was not prophetic or inspirational, but which would provide a medium for the methodical exploration of possibilities. Change was at first slow, in that most of the hypotheses favoured by the authors tended towards the incongruously implausible, but the effort of self-discipline was perceptible in the work of the best of Campbell's writers.

The thesis advanced by Russell began to invade science fiction, at least in Astounding, after 1938, but the explosion of the atom bomb in 1945 caused a sudden change of perspective which brought Russell's concerns very much into fashion and destroyed the last vestiges of Utopian complacency. The emotional reaction against the very notion of a hyper-organised Utopia, typified by Brave New World, was sidestepped by the main current of science fictional thought.

Science fiction in the fifties became less predictive and more analytical. The typical science fiction novel of the period featured a hypothetical society (set in the future or on another world) in which power is concentrated in the hands of a particular social group, whose priorities are maintained at the expense of all others thanks to manipulation of the masses by the methods provided by science and technology, from high-powered advertising to brainwashing. The Space Merchants, by Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth, was probably the archetypal exercise along these lines. Other novels saw the world run by hedonists, the medical profession, lawyers, insurance companies, schizophrenics and all manner of religious movements. Collectively, these novels bear eloquent witness to the now-general acceptance of the Russell argument that the questions which were important were not concerned with what science might do, but with what various power-groups might seek to do with it.

In the sixties the theme of science against man - that is to say, science being used by individuals and groups to the ultimate detriment of mankind - became dominant in science fiction. The focus of the science fiction story tended to fall much more on the present than the future. Instead of the future as playground or as experiment in thought, we find in the sf of more recent times the future as metaphor for the present, the imminent future which is today, but more so.

There have, in fact, been three major phases in the evolution of science fiction: the use of the future as an imaginary milieu, followed by its use as an imaginative, but logical, construction, and finally its use as a non-satirical metaphor. The older types have persisted but the focus of activity within the community of sf writers has changed.

The time when science fiction could claim any kind of kinship with the kind of exercise represented by the

"Today & Tomorrow" essays is now long past. For people associated with the genre would make such a claim today - even the illusion has faded away. It is arguable that the futuristic aspect of the science fiction story was decisively written to the third time never important, and it is certainly true that the futuristic quality of science fiction written today is not. The concept of the future as the primary fiction story has always been purely hypothetical, and the labelling of the milieu as "the future" or "another world" or "a parallel universe" is merely a convenient fiction. Prediction and speculation are the functions of prophets, not writers of fiction.

The intimate connection which has grown up in post-war sf between the imaginative construct and the perceived reality has been seen by some as a sign of "maturation" and by others as a process of decay in which the romantic adventures of the pre-war days have been gradually drained of their "sense of wonder". Both perspectives are valid according to the precepts of the people involved but what has happened is perhaps best regarded as an evolution stimulated by historical change.

The Utopian Hugo Gernsback looked forward, as did J. B. S. Haldane, to a better world brought about by the increased power which scientific knowledge would deliver into human hands. Gernsback referred to this golden future as the "Atom-Electronic Age", or the "Age of Power-Freedom". That era began in 1945, and we have lived it since then. The power is free - the power of the atom, the power of the electronic media, the power of the genetic manipulator. But it is free only in the sense that it is at large in the world. It has not, as Gernsback and Haldane anticipated, made us free - and while the problems of control and administration of the power remain unsolved it holds us under threat. It is this threat which is the primary force shaping science fiction today.

Although the last year of the war constitutes something of a historical breach in the evolution of the continuity of the publishing category, and the continued activity of a great many of its authors (especially

those promoted by Campbell), made certain that the new science fiction would lose nothing of the legacy of the old. That legacy was a vocabulary of symbols - an index of ideas - which provided writers with a way of talking about the new historical situation. The old sf delivered into the hands of the new a whole imaginative system for use in the analogical analysis and metaphorical interpretation which became its chief concerns.

Because of the genesis of the publishing category within the mass-produced culture of the pulps science fiction has been slow to win any sort of recognition - let alone acceptance - by the literary establishment. Perhaps it never will, in that it serves needs which are not primarily aesthetic. But the science fiction of today - that component of it, at least, which is not mass-produced pulp adventure - provides the only authentic mirror to the predicament of contemporary man in the whole literary spectrum. Perhaps it is time for the priority of aesthetic concerns in the study of contemporary science fiction to be challenged, and even set aside.

199

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION  
155 E. 42ND STREET  
NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

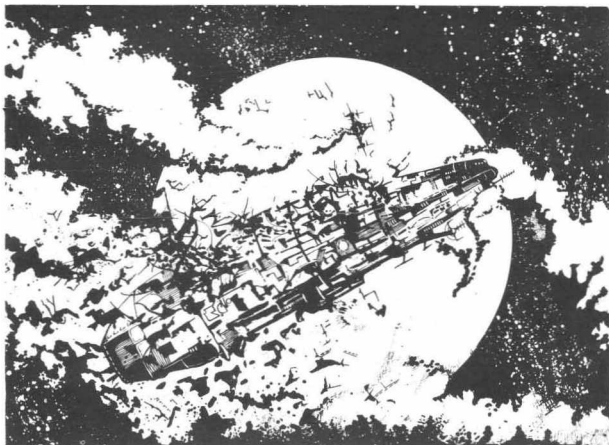
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION  
155 E. 42ND STREET  
NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

First published in JUNE, Spring 1978: University of York

pulp species will not die, and may, indeed flourish as we face a social climate of economic depression and uncertainty which is already renewing the demand for escapist fantasies. There will, however, also be a trend towards the greater acceptance - by the public if not by the literary elite - of the use of the science fictional vocabulary of symbols as a structure of metaphors. This is already becoming noticeable in the work of some authors in the literary "mainstream" and more and more authors are beginning to escape the sf label which has hitherto possessed them. The one variety of science fiction which may pass out of fashion is the mid-range - the science fiction of the Campbellian ideal, with its pretensions to scientific method and logical rigour. Those pretensions were always an illusion, and they are now fast becoming an unnecessary illusion.

It is almost impossible to find any realistic hope that in the future the problems of administration and control of the power granted by scientific progress will be solved. Technology is, and will remain, a medium of exploitation, providing the means by which men may compel or persuade other men to do their bidding. The sf which retains the label will continue to be a medium reacting against anxiety - an assembly of escapist fantasies. It is equally certain, however, that the other sf - the sf with respect to which the label will become redundant - will continue to reflect and dramatise that anxiety with considerable intensity. Science fiction, in this sense, provides the most explicit examples of today's literature of alienation, and the most effective of today's horror stories. It may also provide one of the most important and useful keys to the understanding of the world.

W. M. Stablesford, February 1979



## BRITISH SF: AN AMERICAN VIEW

by  
Cy Chauvin

Article of - during the Ben Wang period, 1984-1988 -  
which to were a very pronounced effect upon the  
American scene. It is apparent to have today if you  
visit the typical American bar what he thought of the  
eros of present-day Britain is, you would probably only  
get a blank stare in reply. Since Ben Wang and  
speculations have ceased regular publication, there would  
be strong facial protest - the British at once, and it  
to have for the overseas reader to get a substantive  
picture, and it is disastrous.

The picture seems to be a fragmented one, a puzzle: isolated novels and even more isolated short stories, published by American firms and discussed in American magazines. The picture is not complete. The article in *Aligarh* entitled "Between Fiction as Empire", pointed out that such writer works independently, and that we should consider and judge him or her individually. The article in *Aligarh* also pointed out that this tends to run the two American readers that of from Britain: simply as the work of another writer. It may be that the field has grown too big (even in Britain) for there to be any cohesive picture or view to be reached.

However, as shown in *Figure 1*, the environment is not the same for all countries. For example, the environment is more developed in the United States than in the United Kingdom. This is due to the fact that the United States has a higher level of economic development and a higher level of environmental protection. The United States has a higher level of economic development and a higher level of environmental protection. The United States has a higher level of economic development and a higher level of environmental protection.

Week Arthur Hargett up came in a letter to Foster. He compared two quotes - one by G. S. Lewis to SF Gilder Writings, and the other by Isaac Asimov in one of the University of Kansas SF Film Lecture series. The quotes he felt showed the contrast between the different attitudes toward it - the "pulp" and largely American tradition of Asimov, and the "Other" and mainly British tradition represented by Lewis.

Admiral said: "The of criticism in the few months left in the life, when Armstrong stopped once again, it was justification of the work done by writers in John Campbell's stable".

Lewis, on the other hand, said that: "If some fatal progress of applied science ever enables us in fact to reach the moon, the real journey will not at all satisfy the impulse which we now seek to gratify by writing such stories".

In terms of cinematic fiction of the 1930s and the 1940s, these persons went into the 1950s, and are given a valid distinction. Most of the art of that time was written as an aid to technology, and not oriented around human beings. In Britain, Edward Elgar, Benjamin Britten, Elton John and George Martin were the "other" tradition,

Adorno didn't believe: America is of the time and largely mass atrocities, while the common fiction of the four errors linked questions are all correct

I do have some objections to this idea of an "Other" tradition, however. Tradition, to me, implies influence; one writer changing the course of another's work. I really don't believe that there was such (if any) influence shared between the writers Adlard mentions. The science fiction they produced was isolated: individual mutants, freaks, and not the beginning of a new tradition in literature. Huxley undoubtedly influenced Orwell through *Brave New World*, but this was a one-shot deal (not a continuing influence), and Orwell was just as influenced by other anti-utopian writers (e.g. Zamyatin's *We*) - as he was by anti-utopians, that hardly takes in the whole field. There were alternatives to the pulp magazines in Britain, but hardly a whole other "tradition" - and the same alternatives were present in the US (e.g. George H. Stewart's *Earth Abides*, published 1948). And Stapledon was more widely recognised at first in the US - Forry Ackerman is quoted as praising Stapledon in Warner's *All Our Yesterdays*, a fan-based publishing house brought out one of his short novels along with two others by two other writers, and Dover Books has kept his four most noted novels in print (in a quality paperback edition) for years.

There were many post-war differences in the attitude and behavior in which scientists from the approached to Britain and the US during what has been called the "War Years" period (1944-1949). During this period, writers began to look outside of and far from the arena to the disintegration that fell with the scientific frontier of the two, and scientists differed respectively in America and Britain.

In the WW, writers looked toward fantasy-style Roger Reamsey and James O. DeLoach published police works. He had access to her at the peak of their popularity. Other writers like Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, Steven Dardanis, H. A. Lafferty, Jack Vance and Cordwainer Smith were editors. J. R. R. Tolkien, though a British writer, had his first work of popularity in the US. And Orson Le Guin's *The Last Head of Harlequin*, with its long trek through the wilderness, its tiny villages, princes and noblemen, probably owes as much to William Morris as it does to Hugo Gernsback. Harlan Ellison said that it was "the new mythology".

In Britain, on the other hand, writers turned toward contemporary realistic and avant garde fiction for material with which to invigorate their art. Realism was idea, rather than myth or fantasy. It is this attitude which led Brian Aldiss to suggest, in a speech given in Rio de Janeiro in 1967, that "locations like Mankai Island, Anguilla, Vietnam, Berlin and the Neger" might be "less stale" than other used in sf - such as the corridors of a giant space ship. The speaker was, of course, J. R. R. Tolkien, and he was found that writing about the subterranean future is too damned easy.... The closer

contradicted by - what the one says - honesty, perhaps: by the evidence of one's own reason. - ("The Decade of Stendhal on Literature and Civilization into the Remembrance of the Renaissance") Stendhalism, May 1970, p. 403

This tendency to think contemporary realism was the solution to the problems of originality and significance in sf was particularly strong among those writers who were frequently published in *New Worlds* (including such non-Britons as John Sladek and Thomas M. Disch). Michael Moorcock went so far as to say in an interview in 1969 that: "...the new wave has to do with science fiction (while) *New Worlds* has not to do with science fiction. New wave science fiction is ... traditional science fiction written with more gusto ... perhaps it's more colourful, perhaps it's more sophisticated in some of its characterisations - but it is still essentially science fiction ... Whereas, what *New Worlds* (writers are) trying to do is ... to write something that is essentially different". (*Science Fiction Review* 34, November 1969, p 11) Later, in an editorial written in *New Worlds Quarterly* 2, Moorcock went further: "...I think that the writers of *New Worlds* are at best a minor artform. It would be foolish to claim more than that." And: "Reasonably of readers accept the fact that sf, as such, can never be its very nature offer the richer."



# PHILIP JOSE FARMER

Interviewed by  
David Pringle

Copyright © 1977 David Pringle; interview conducted  
16th June, 1978

I'd like to start by asking a few biographical questions in *bookends of memory*. Sam Moskowitz says that you were born in 1918, had a happy childhood, and your parents were very religious. He adds that, though you were good at football, etc., you "suffered from a distinct inferiority complex and an extra-religious puritanical streak". Any comments?

You have to be rather cautious about what Sam Moskowitz says. I sent him forty typewritten pages single-spaced - a detailed biography - and he made quite a few errors of fact and interpretation. My parents were Christian Scientists, but they weren't fanatics. It's a little difficult to define - I was a rather receptive or sensitive child - but I believed literally in the things they told me. So there was a puritanical streak in our family, just as there was in most

families in the Midwest at that time. However, at the same time I had a sort of disbelief operating - a disbelief in the things they told me, which resulted in a tension...Not a schizophrenic attitude, but an alternation between what I'd been taught and what I tended to disbelieve. My sense of incredulity dominated at times. But I did read the Bible religiously when I was very young. At the same time my parents gave me access to any books I wanted to read. I read Homer's *Odyssey* at a very early age, Robert Louis Stevenson... *Gulliver's Travels* had a tremendous influence on my mind at about ten. Of course, Peoria, Illinois - in which I was chiefly raised, had a very good library - a lot better than many bigger cities - and I had access to books of all kinds. I could take my choice. So I would modify Moskowitz's statement somewhat in that my parents were not religious fanatics - it was just that I was inclined to take seriously what they professed. They had professed to be Christian Scientists, but they didn't practise it too much until they got old. I don't like Christian Science. I could never get them to explain it to me satisfactorily, mainly because I don't think they could explain it. Now I share Mark Twain's attitude toward Christian Science. He was pretty vehement about it, and wrote a book denouncing it.

Did you actually have a break - some time in your teens or early adulthood when you ceased to be religious - or was it a slow process?

When I was about fourteen I think I became an atheist. I was about nineteen when I really broke free. Of course, these emotional issues were still operating, because when I was about twenty I went to a revival meeting and became momentarily reconverted to a fundamentalist sect. But that didn't last more than about five days.

Why do you think religion has played such a large part in your fiction? Has it anything to do with your background?

like that. You might say that I was genetically a religious person - a philosopher, anyway. These religious issues really distressed me when I was young, because like all imaginative juveniles I did a lot of thinking about space and time, the contradiction between the limited and the unlimited, between time and eternity, immortality, sin - all that sort of stuff. So that thread has continued through most of my writings... Most human beings are religious in the sense of either being religious or anti-religious, and if they're violently anti-religious you know definitely they're very much concerned about these issues. It's people who become indifferent to the whole thing who've more or less freed themselves - or at least they think they have: I still think there's something operating down in their unconscious. We never really get free of our childhood.

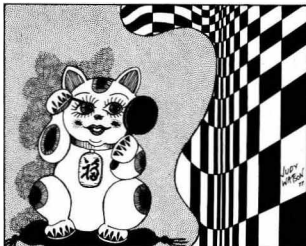
Perhaps that's a good argument of what your fiction is about. It seems to be so rooted in childhood, in a way. *Adventure*, *Peoria*, *Season of the Witch*, and so on. It seems to be trying to carry childhood wishes on into adulthood...

When I was young I read Burroughs and Doyle and the pulp magazines - the pulp heroes: the Shadow, Doc Savage, G-8 and all that. I hated to come to the end of these stories, so in a sense I'm fulfilling a childhood ambition by continuing these stories, but not as the original authors did. Now I can see the dark side, or even the humorous or ludicrous side, of my heroes, and so I write that. It's really a form of therapy.

Can we get back to the beginning again? You were a bit of a late starter, since your first sf story didn't appear till 1952...

I had a non-sf story published in *Adventure Magazine* in 1946, and actually when I first started to write I didn't write sf. I wrote stories that I sent in to the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, and magazines like that. They had rather a frank sexual content, which I was naive enough to believe they would publish. I soon learned different. I didn't write too much sf... I think I wrote about three stories which I sent in to John Campbell. Those were rejected. There was a long period when I didn't write anything at all, because I went back to college and I was married and raising a family, working very hard, doing a lot of reading. I just didn't attempt anything. Then about the early part of 1952 I got this idea for "The Lovers" and I decided to sit down and write it. Of course, you know the story - it went to Campbell and he was nauseated by it, and then it went to Gold and he was somewhat sickened by it, and then it went to Sam Mines and he realised he had something new.

(continued page 13)





## WHISPERS FROM THE PAST-

### BACK NUMBERS OF VECTOR

All the below back numbers are available from the editorial address, at the prices listed. Please make cheques payable to "Vector".

Payment from overseas: By sterling cheque or money order; in cash 15 US dollars only; or by Dollar cheque - please add 21.50 to all orders paid by dollar cheque to cover mailing charges.

80: March/April 1977 - A Song In The Depth of the Galaxies by David Wingrove; Michael Coney Interviewed by David Wingrove; book and film reviews; cover by David Higgins \$1/60p

79: Jan/Feb 1977 - Alternative Technologies for Spacehip Propulsion by Bob Shaw; Roger Elwood Interviewed by Chris Fowler; reviews; cover by Carol Gregory 60p/\$1

78: Nov/Dec 1976 - Whither Science Fiction by Ian Watson; Edgar Fawcett by Brian Stableford; Doris Lessing Briefing by Cy Chauvin; Merovitz's World by Andrew Tidmarsh; book reviews; cover by Carol Gregory 60p/\$1

76/77: Aug/Sept 1976 - Robert Silverberg Interviewed by Chris Fowler; Opening Minds by Brian Stableford; book and film reviews; cover by Brian Lewis \$2.40/\$4

75: July 1976 - Harlan Ellison Interviewed by Chris Fowler; book reviews, including David Wingrove's in-depth analysis of *Again, Dangerous Visions*; cover by Paul Ryan \$4/\$2.40

73/74: March 1976 - J. G. Ballard Interviewed by David Pringle and James Goddard; book reviews; cover by Paul Dillon \$2/\$1.30

72: February 1976 - Dan Morgan's Goli Speech from *Movicon*; Robert Silverberg Interviewed by Malcolm Edwards; book reviews; cover by Brian Lewis \$1/60p

71: December 1975 - The Stone Ax and the Bush Omen by Ursula Le Guin; Towards an Alien Linguistics by Ian Watson; book and film reviews; cover by Dave Griffiths \$1/60p

70: Autumn 1975 - Time Travellers Among Us by Bob Shaw; Violence in SF by Edmund Cooper; SF's Urban Vision by Chris Hammett; book, film and fanzine reviews \$1/60p

69: Summer 1975 - The Science in SF by James Blish; Early One Oxford Morning by Brian Aldiss; The Value of Bad SF by Bob Shaw; Science or Fiction by Tony Sudbery; book and film reviews; cover by ANKS \$1/60p

67/68: Spring 1974 - Three Views of Tolkien by Ursula Le Guin; Gene Wolfe and Peter Nicholls; Letter from Amerika by Philip K. Dick; Period of Transition by Michael G. Coney; After the Renaissance by Brian Aldiss; Down-at-Heel Galaxy by Brian Aldiss; book and film reviews \$2/\$1.30

64: March/April 1973 - The Android and the Human by Philip K. Dick; The Extraordinary Behaviour of Ordinary Materials by Bob Shaw; Author's Choice by Poul Anderson; book and fanzine reviews \$1/60p

61: Sept/Oct 1972 - The Arts in SF by James Blish; An Interview with Peter Tate by Mark Adlard; book and fanzine reviews \$1/60p

60: June 1972 - Through a Glass Darkly by John Brunner; SF and the Cinema by Philip Strick; The Frenzied Living Thing by Bruce Gillespie; Edward John Carnell, 1919-1972 by Harry Harrison, Dan Morgan, Ted Tubb and Brian Aldiss; book and fanzine reviews \$1/60p

59: Spring 1972 - An Introduction to Stanislaw Lem by Franz Rottensteiner; A Good Hiding by Stanislaw Lem; A Cruel Miracle by Malcolm Edwards; Why I Took a Writing Course... and didn't become a Writer by Dick Howett; SF Criticism in Theory and Practice by Pamela Bulmer; book reviews 61/60p

All issues before no. 79 are A5 format, with at least 40 pages of material. Issue 59 is A4 duplicated; all other

issues are litho printed.

Issues 59-67/8 are edited by Malcolm Edwards. Subsequent issues are edited by Chris Fowler.

No other back numbers are available.

The editor also has a limited supply of signed copies of the award-winning cover for VECTOR 73/4 signed by the artist, Paul Dillon, at \$1 or 50p each.

There are a very few copies of *NEKUS/VECTOR REVIEWS* SUPPLEMENT nos. 1 & 2 available at 30p each.



