

harry turner - 74



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EGOLIST

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ZIMRI

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A R T, G R A P H I C S E T C :

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Preface

Listen sonny... er..sorry I thought I was writing the editorial for Iseult..

The Howling dog laughed...Nope, I didn't intend to get back to the subject of modern poetry either..

Lets see, the convention, yes, Tynecon '74 was a super con; our poetry soiree went far better than I anticipated, eventhough I had

a few butterflies clomping around my stomach with hob-nailed boots beforehand. I would have liked to establish a more intimate atmosphere than the size of the con-hall permitted, bit it was warming to see the number of fans who came to hear us read our work, especially those who came back from the bar to listen to the second group of readers. It seems obvious from the interest displayed at the soiree that more folk enjoy poetry as a spoken, living experience than the printed word itself - there's hope for us yet?

In the final unwinding on Monday morning in the middle of all the conversation about train times and travel arrangements fans still found time to argue about concrete poetry and sound poetry and a final surprise: I was approached to organise another poetry soiree at the SEACON ('75)! I reeled back to Manchester amazed and full of new plans for next year.

And yet behind the moments of enjoyment, and there were many at this con, there are those hateful occasions when one aches to be elsewhere for a while; its a feeling that John Hall expresses so well in his honest and very entertaining piece. Although it expresses a reaction to the Bristol convention it could well apply to any con past or future, and this is why its included here at this very late date: the quality of timelessness and all that.

Before I disappear into the pages of z, a few words about the next convention. SEACON is going to be organised by a group of fans whose base is London and who are all active and experienced in various aspects of fandom, with sercon, fannish and professional interests well represented. Malcolm Edwards, Peter Roberts and Peter Weston are also concerned with the prospective bid for 1979 Worldcon..."Brittain's fine for '79" .. "OK for UK in '79" ?

The committee so far are: Malcolm Edwards, Peter Roberts, Greg Pickersgill, Rob Holdstock, Peter Nichols, Roy Kettle Your 50p registration should be sent to Peter Roberts, Flat 4, 6 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2. And looking into my crystal ball I predict this to be the best con for many years - see you there in a year...?

brian w aldiss



twelve magnificent ways to **DIE**

Are there twelve magnificent ways to die? In popular thought, there is only one - and that, in popular parlance, is on the job. What a lovely way to go!

For my part, and you know which part I mean, I should want it to be on a specific job, at a specific time. One would have to die right at the very onslaught of orgasm, so that one shot straight through from penis erectus to rigor mortis with no boring intermediate stages.

And the girl would have to be rather special. I would wish her to be English, or American, or Swedish, or Chinese. She would have to be a new lay. Yet she would ideally be a girl I knew pretty well - that is to say, one I had been after for some while. Maybe her consent had long been taken for granted, but hubby was always around. In other words, she would be that unfailing attraction, the Unknown She, and a bit of a chum as well.

She wouldn't have to be so madly pretty. She could be thin or rather chubby. But she would certainly have that one most underestimated, least understood element in sexual attraction: an alluring personal smell. No, aroma's the word I want. Atmosphere. That would be a good way to go, hypothalamus alight.

My preference would always be to die in the full flush of one emotion or another. In these decadent days, to die in battle has become less popular than it was - and a good job too. Still and all, there's much to be said for death in action, and it is my second choice! I've always felt a certain glow of sympathy for the mad Czech rebel, John Ziska, who snuffed it on the battlefield crying, "Make my skin into drum-heads for the Bohemian cause!" I'd settle for going out in patriotic anger like that. Much better than all those milk-and-water last words of people such as Hazlitt, who died saying, "Well, I've had a happy life". Besides, it wasn't true,

and Hazlitt was one of the Good guys.

Much better is Lord Chesterfield; consistently courteous till the end. There's a certain panache about his last words: "Give Dayrolles a chair." I'd settle for dying flamboyantly in character.

Just keep the tape-recorder playing to the bitter end. Have your curtain line memorised well in advance.

What's next? I think I'd take a hint from the Pink Floyd. Set the controls for the heart of the sun. No more significant a death than that! Slumped there in your great seat before the control console, spaceship plunging forward, cancer ineffectually gnawing tissues, crew screaming their silly heads off, the sun, the great sun, straight ahead, spewing out flame and gas in one almighty mad irresistible inferno! What would be grander than an incandescent end?

There are other science-fiction ways to go which have their own particular magnificence. My fifth death imitates Mary Shelly's hero in 'The Last Man', surviving a plague that carries away everyone else on Earth, until finally one is with a faithful dog, roaming the great cities of Italy, surfeiting oneself on the art galleries and museums of the world, finally to set sail in a small boat, heading for Golconda or somewhere equally vague in the glorious East. Celestial suicide in the sunrise.

Less megalomaniacal would be to die for science, possibly as the first pilot ever to be a faster-than-light starship which goes out of control and leaves behind all spacetime as we know it. This would be in many ways the opposite of setting the controls for the heart of the sun. One would plunge into a blackness beyond blackness, bursting into alien dimensions. One would attain infinite mass as one's velocity approached infinity, until one would eventually become a universe in oneself. No, perhaps that's even more megalomaniacal... But one is allowed a bit of self-indulgence at the point of death.

Some might choose to be the first astronaut or cosmonaut to die in space. This fate is recommended for narcissists, because the whole damned globe would be pinned to its billion corporate television sets watching you go. Me, I'm keen enough on publicity, but not that keen. Besides, slow asphyxiation is a static process; it doesn't even make very good TV. Okay, I suppose you could ham it up a bit.

If science has to have a hand in the affair, then let's plump for an exit which lies pretty prominently in anyone's cards in any case: a car crash.

Right. I'm driving fast on a good road in the United States. Arizona, in fact. I'm somewhat sloshed, having stopped off in Flagstaff, where the most agreeable, amusing, and civilised millionaire you ever met showed me over his estate, the high points of which were the absolutely fantastic lunch, his ravishing daughter, Bettina Sven-Anna (of rather mixed ancestry, including English, Swedish, and Chinese), and his library. The high point of the library, old Joe's treasured possession, was a complete set of my works, each volume bound in full crushed crimson morocco, and decorated with fore-edge paintings by Salvador Dali, in a way I might in other circumstances have regarded as entirely too ostentatious, but which, in the event, struck me as eminently appropriate. I signed every volume in exchange for certain intimate and immediately rendered favours from Bettina Sven-Anna. Then we had lunch.

Three hours later, glassy-eyed, I'm heading north again. Now I'm on the splendid State Route 64, speeding westwards through the Grand Canyon National Park. My car's nothing pretentious - a 4.390 c.c. Ferrari Berlinetta Boxer, medium blue with bamboo interior. There's nothing else on the road. I'm cruising at ninety-two, admiring the scenery, enjoying my memories of Flagstaff. A little inattentive, maybe. I find myself on a side road, travelling too fast.

I skid off the road to the right. Next moment, I'm plunging over the edge of the Grand Canyon. The great scar on the face of the globe, those multicoloured rocks from an older world, lie far below, coming up fast. As we plunge down, I'm

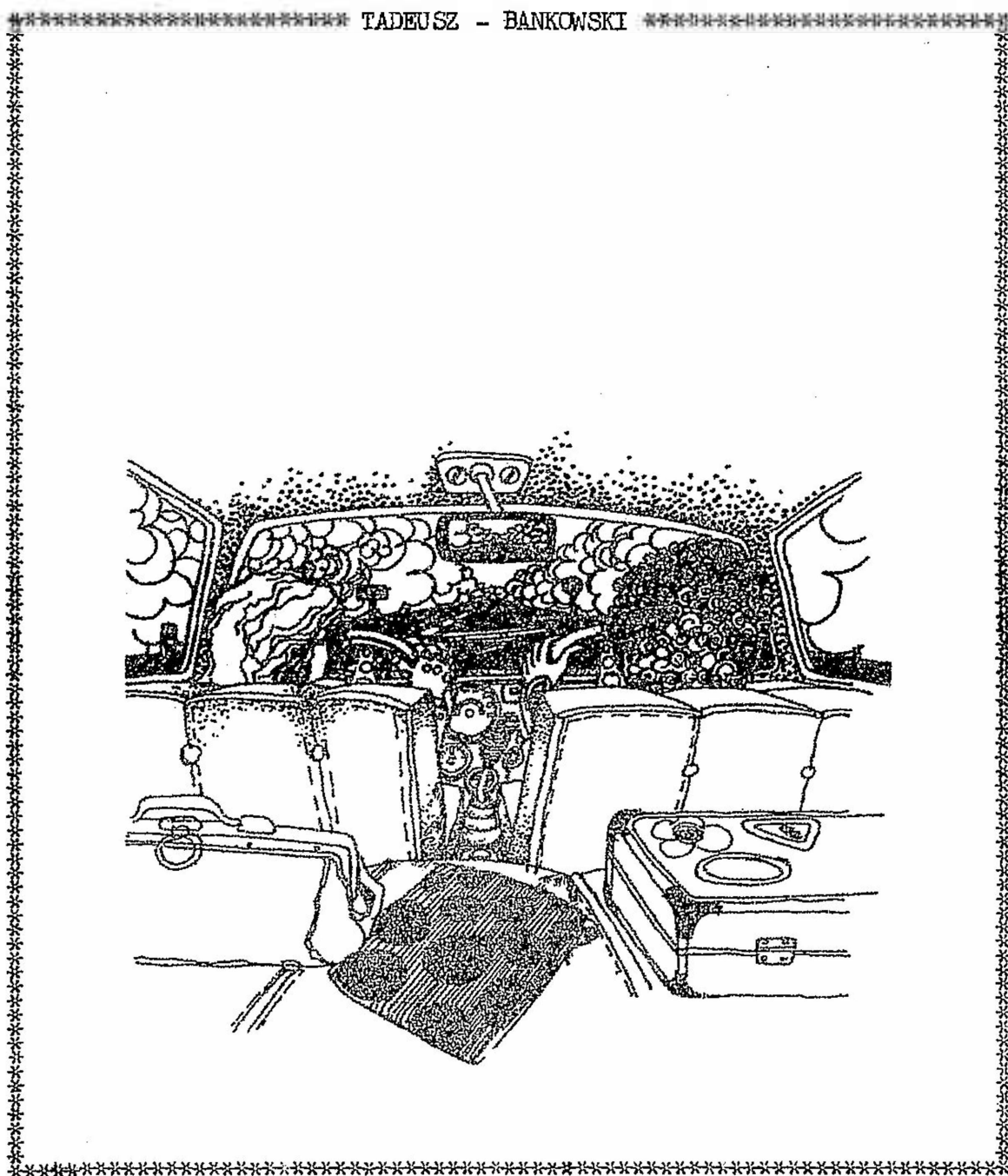
Well, that's eleven magnificent ways to die.

Although I have friends who dream of drowning in menstrual blood, or going out on a tide of LSD, I'd prefer hemlock and Borodin.

I've saved my favorite way till last. But it is very private, slightly sentimental, and unfit for the unsullied pages of Zimri. I keep it as my secret exit.

The rest is silence.

© Brian W. Aldiss - '73



opnbt
Tango von Slawomir
Mrozek

TOMIRA LIPiŃSKA
interviews

Inszenierung
von Gerstenberg
Bühnenbild
von Viktor
Teffing

Premiere Mittwoch
17. März 1971
8.20 Uhr
Stadtheater
München
Wiederholung
siehe
Wochen-
spielplan

SLAWOMIR MROZEK

(and the Editrix translates)

Slawomir Mrozek - a Polishborn speculative writer - is one of those people who, inspite of the heat, spends the summer in Paris hard at work. This (summer of 73) is his fifth year in Paris.

From a jug which has just been placed on the table a faint odour of July-flowers rises up. And from the slightly open window of the cafe "Clun" one can see a stream of people rushing by the boulevards of Saint Germain and Saint Michel, one of the busiest points in Paris.

--No, the noise doesn't bother me at all -- says the author of Tango.

--I live in Montmartre which is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the whole of Paris, but it is the narrow streets of this neighbourhood and its roaring television sets that is most nerve racking, the cacophony of three stations pours out of the open windows...

--What are you working on at the moment?

--Something I'd started not very long ago, a cycle of short stories. I'm hoping to finish them in Autumn and before sending to the publishers let some of my colleagues read them and give me their opinions.

--Your French colleagues?

--Well, as I write in the Polish language it is the Polish critics that interest me primaraly; although it isn't only a matter of language.

--Apropos publication, what have you had published since your stay in this country?

--Almost everything. Michel Publishing company published five of my books; two volumes of my plays and three volumes of short stories. The latest was a collection of short stories called A Mouse in the Wardrobe ("Mysz w Szafie") - that was in 1971. It was translated by Jerzy Lisowski, Anna Pozner, Claude Roy and Teresa Dziediszycka.

--But your work has been translated into many other languages as well as French.
--Yes, all European languages as well as some non-European ones. For example Persian and Japanese.

--One could say that a play for the theatre gets a double translation. What do you think of the theatre in France. Perhaps you go to premieres of your plays in other countries; there are after all a lot of them...

--I haven't seen too many of my own premieres even in France, though there are indeed many of them every year. As a matter of fact Laurent Trzief is planning to produce one of my latest plays, Slaughterhouse ("Rzeznia"). I'd only finished it this year (73) and it was originally written for radio.

--You've not had it published yet?

--Actually I've sent Slaughterhouse to the editor of "Dialog", a magazine which already published one of my plays: Happy Event /or it could be Lucky Event, the title in Polish is too ambiguous to translate correctly without reading the play itself, and your editrix hasn't yet had the pleasure.../("Szczesliwe Wydarzenie"). It has interested Erwin Axer who's planning to produce the play in Autumn.

--According to the long list of theatres which produce your plays in Europe as well as other continents, you can hardly complain about your successes there, but I'd hazard a guess that it is to your plays rather than the written word, as such, that you owe your popularity? Especially your one-act plays which are being produced both by pro and amateur theatre companies.

--I must admit that the fact that my one-acts are being produced by little amateur theatres not only in Europe, South and North Americas, but in countries further away still, like Australia, New Zealand or Africa, gives me most pleasure. I learned the other day that one of my plays was being produced by a small parish theatre in Hawaii.

--Can we hope for some more of your collections to be published in the near future?

--Yes. I am now preparing the second volume of my plays which will contain my latest work starting with Tango. I am also preparing the second volume of my short stories.

--At the beginning of the interview you mentioned your newest short stories; could you give me an idea, albeit a general one, of the problems you are concerned with this time?

--I don't really like doing this. Generally though, I'm still interested in the future and what we're doing to this globe of ours. As you see, it is a problem which concerns all of us.

End of interview.

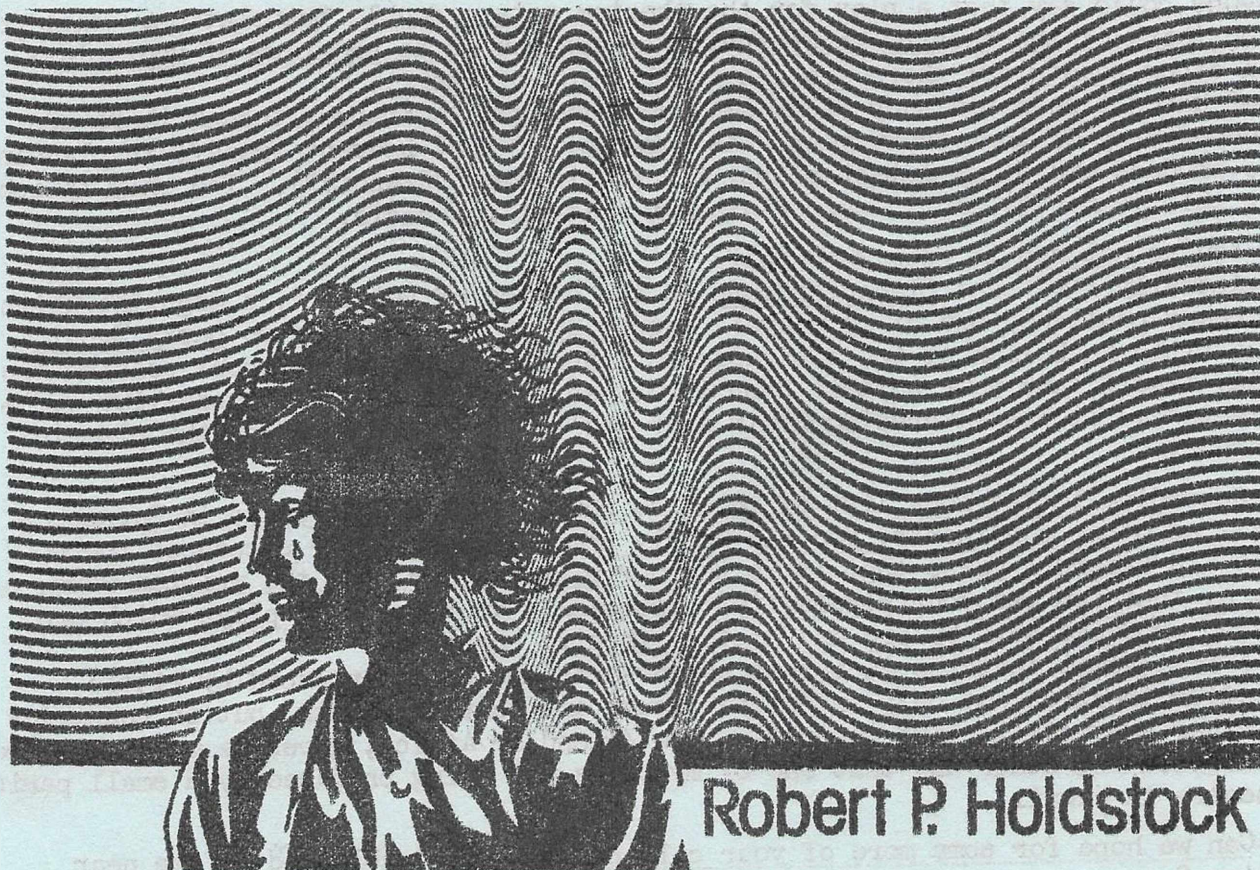
It is a great pity that Mrozek's work isn't published much in this country, for his latest short stories are nothing short of superb. For those who are unfamiliar with Mrozek's writing I recomend them most heartily - if you can get hold of any. If you like Harlan Ellison and Thomas Disch, I guarantee you'll love Slawomir Mrozek.

++FOR GILLION FIELD BECAUSE SHE LOVED LEONARD COHEN+

With Annie gone,
whose eyes to compare
With the morning sun?

Not that I did compare,
But I do compare
Now that she's gone.

+ + +



Robert P. Holdstock

SANDCASTLES

Wind-blown, the sparkling yellow sand covered me and stung me. I sat up abruptly and found myself plastered with tiny grains that were adhering to the moisture on my tanning skin.

The beach was peaceful, though strewn with reclining bodies. The sea rushed gently into shore and drained away, a peaceful swelling and ebbing, white-flecked and warm.

I noticed other people beginning to sit and search their surrounds for the maldoer who had kicked sand across them. But the only active people were four children building a sand castle, and they were right down by the sea itself. The tide was receding and the sand was damp and claylike and their castle was splendid. It reminded me of the sandcastles I had laboured for hours to produce in my childhood - buildings of magnificence, with corridors and chambers, and water-ways that traversed the castle in the mysterious depths where even the smallest child could never go.

My attention drifted to Marion. "wind," I said.

Marion was stretched out, oblivious to everything. She was very slightly built and I had been comparing her all afternoon with some of the buxom women who were sunbathing around about. I had a feeling that this would be our last summer together, but I didn't want to tell her in the middle of our holiday.

"Have you dear?" she said, without opening her eyes.

That was another reason why she and I were heading for a split. I hate being called 'dear'. It was a sign of just how much she took our not-yet-plighted troth for granted.

I hugged my knees and watched a sandskipper doing somersaults near my left foot. "No, Marion," I said patiently. "I meant it was the wind that blew the sand over us."

"No wind." she said lazily, shuffling slightly on her towel. "It's beautiful and warm."

She was covered with sand and I reached over and brushed it off her belly. She wriggled and giggled and slapped my hand away. "We're not married yet!" she said, opening her eyes a fraction. "Shall we swim?"

"No."

I was thinking, Omigod, how am I going to tell her that I can't face the thought of living with her forever. And why did she say such stupid things like 'We're not married yet', when we'd been living in the same two-roomed flat for the past six months.

People on the sunbaked beach were beginning to settle back. It must have been a sudden offshore breeze, I thought. That was it, a sudden wind from the marshes that lay inland.

But that sand had stung! And the wind had come and gone in an instant, as if someone had opened a door and shut it quickly, allowing a second's snow-storm to swirl through the gap.

The kids by the sea were laughing and kicking their sandcastle to pieces. One girl among them was crying and trying to stop the others in their fit of destruction. They pushed her away and reduced the sandcastle to a pile of oozing rubble. "What did we build it for," the girl sobbed, "if we're only going to kick it down. Stop it!"

A middle aged woman away to my left shouted down the beach: "Come here at once!" Her voice was shrill and unpleasant, a symphony of frustrations and repressions, channeled into one sharp note. The biggest of the three boys, the brat who had instigated the bombardment sulkily advanced up the beach and yelled as he was whacked soundly. The little girl began to build the castle again, the other boys watching and finally leaving to play ball.

There was something wrong with the afternoon. It felt... chilly. The sun was baking. My head hurt with its heat and I swallowed an aspro to try and get rid of the pain which grew worse as I became aware of it. I pulled a cardigan over my shoulders, but it still felt chilly.

I turned as I sat and looked up the beach. People as far as I could see. People sitting or lying, picnicking or drinking, or throwing pebbles at small bucket-made sandcastles. People everywhere. People on the sand and on the stones further up the shore. People in the tough grass at the dunes that separated the beach from the road.

It was always like this. Every summer the number increased. There had been a time when Greatstone had been a place to come to and get away from it all. Literally! Nobody, apart from the occasional beachcomber, or dog-walker from the cottages that lay in-shore about half a mile, nobody had come this far round the coast.

Overnight the commuter populations of central Kent had found that, on the side of their cardboard-box homes that lay away from the metropolis that was London, there was a beach. Only fifteen miles as the car chokes. And like bees to honey they had come in swarms.

An elderly man sitting near me, clad in Bermuda-design shorts and a sweat shirt with 'University of 53rd Street' dyed into it, turned and regarded me with a smile.

"Shameful, isn't it."

"The crowds?" I said. When he nodded I went on. "I used to come here as a kid."

"Me too."

I pointed up the beach to the grass covered slopes. "I used to play at war up there. My brothers - I have three - would try and take the slopes by storm, with just me defending. We fought with sticks and grass clods. Great fun."

"Childhood is always great fun. When you're rich or live by the sea."

He looked out across the water. "I used to dream of building a raft and sailing across to France. It's funny, you know," he laughed and rubbed his arms as if he too felt the cold. "I came here today and I was looking about in the beach wood up among the dunes - it was early morning, nobody was about - and you know what? I found my old raft. It was rotted and crumbled but it was just where I'd left it thirty five years ago."

Was the man only thirty five plus... what?... six years? Forty one? He looked more like sixty one.

"thirty five years since this beach on which we sit last heard my voice, or felt my plimsoles depress it. That's a long time. I thought that only memories lingered, but maybe something more tangible does remain of each of us. It gives me comfort, you know. A piece of wood reflects a child's pleasure. A city the pleasure of a population. Maybe something will remain. Just maybe."

He seemed very morose. Maybe he was thinking what I was thinking, or the little girl's voice, crying. Why did we build it...? If we're going to knock it down?

People were standing up around us and running to the sea. Their voices were unworried notes in the still air. Their bodies were relaxed metamorphoses of the strained muscle and sinew that struggled in the metropoli of London and Medway and Mrrington.

Transient pleasure.

The old man was laughing. "Why do people come to the sea?"

I said, "To escape?"

He was solemn in an instant. "To escape," he echoed. "That's right, you know. They come to escape. From what? The rush and bustle, I suppose. The ratrace. The ruttness. Are you in a rut, Mister... I'm sorry I don't know your name."

I told him. He said, "I'm Gabriel Wilson. Pleased to meet you on this Big Escape."

"Pleased to meet you," I echoed. "Am I in a rut? Yes, I'm in a rut." I thought of Marion. She was still asleep and her body was red and getting redder. Physically she was almost pleasing, mentally she was not. We did the same things day after day, week after week. Home at six, bed at ten, sex play every other night, an intellectual play every Saturday night, scrimp and save the pennies on a Sunday and eat beans for tea so we could go to the cinema in the evening.

Somehow it all seemed trivial against the heavy weight that appeared to have settled on Gabriel's shoulders.

"I haven't really come to the beach to escape," I said. "My escape would lie in being transported to another era. Maybe twenty years on."

"Why twenty?" asked the older man, looking at me with interest. "Why not a hundred?"

"A hundred would be too far ahead. I wouldn't fit in. Kids of four would understand calculus. By thirty a man would be ready to retire. Too advanced. Twenty would be right. I'd still fit in and things would be evened out - jobs would be available to fit my rather mwagre intellect. Marriage would be sensible

and on the basis of five year contracts. There'd still be war, but who cares? The economy would surely have been evened out. People would be paid what they needed, and work as they could manage. It would be good."

"That would be good," said Gabriel. Did he detect that what I really meant was that I'd be far away from Marion, from my supervisor, from the friends I seemed to accumulate who didn't bother to do anything constructive, but just wasted their time in silly, childish pursuits that led no-where but to bed at the end of the day, and sour-pussed early rise migration to the city in the early morning?

"University of 53rd Street?" I asked. He looked puzzled for a second, then glanced down at his sweat shirt.

"Oh that." He laughed. He glanced at me then away, out to sea where a few people were splashing and playing water-volleyball. "My son's. He's at University in New York."

"I didn't know they had a University on 53rd street."

"They do," he said. "He's studying sociology. He came home for summer. We live in Cumberland, now. I thought it would be nice to come south for a few days, so we did, because what I say goes in my house," he smiled. Then his face grew solemn. "I wish we hadn't, now... but it's too late to worry about anything. Like my roses. They need pruning - cutting back. They're funny roses. Black."

"Black roses?" They're rare aren't they?"

"I don't know..." he seemed distant. I believed that he was unaware of me and prepared to turn away, but he suddenly laughed and turned to look at me. "They're not real roses. I like to think they are, but they are not."

"But you said they needed cutting back. Plastic roses don't need attention."

He shook his head. "Not plastic. They're living roses. They're just not... real. That's all."

"Where's the rest of your family? Shopping?"

It took a moment for my question to register. He snapped his attention away from the small girl down by the sea who was gradually creating a castle out of the sand pile that had been her former creation. "My family? They'll all be here shortly. There isn't an awful lot of time... I hope they hurry." He glanced at his watch.

As if that was a signal for his family to arrive a group of people came running over the dunes. Gabriel jumped to his feet and tore off his shoes. He looked at me with an expression of infinite sadness and then turned to face the running people.

"Hurry," he called.

"Where on earth have you been? We've been searching for you everywhere." The woman who shouted was angry and red faced. People on the beach were sitting up to regard the strange sight. Four fully clothed adults were tearing across the sand, carrying balloon covered suitcases. A child of maybe six, or seven, raced after them, yelling for them to wait.

A wind blew sharply and sand swirled across the beach, making people blink and rub their eyes. My legs stung as the tiny grains impinged upon my sun-sore flesh. For a moment the beach was aswirl with yellow fog, and people rolled to try and escape the nasty storm, shouting and objecting.

Abruptly things settled down.

Strangely, the coats on the four people who ran seemed to be flapping and billowing as if in a gale. Even Gabriel's shorts were blowing against his legs and his hair waved, greyly, above his old face.

"Hurry Gabriel," shouted the older woman. She raced past him and down the beach towards the sea. The two younger women followed and the youth who was wearing a T-shirt like the old man's. The small boy stopped by Gabriel and looked

down and shook his head. "Hi there."

"Where have you been all day?" asked the boy.

"I've been here, waiting for you," said Gabriel smiling. "I found that raft I was telling you about. We could do with that now..." his voice trailed off.

"Gabriel, John, come on."

The woman was angry. She had stopped to shout and now she turned and continued to race to the sea, shrugging off her coat as she moved. People were laughing on the beach, watching the mad group and laughing.

"Run, John. Go on..." The small boy raced down the beach after his mother (one of the younger women?). Gabriel turned to me. "I'd shake hands, Kevin, but I don't think we'd be able to. Twenty years, you said... in twenty years time you'll realise something very significant about that. Be seeing you."

And he was running. "Hey, Gabriel..." I called. He stopped, but before I could speak he said, "Do you like flowers? Gardening?"

"No," I called back. "hy?"

"Nothing... nothing at all. Just 'good', that's all. Flower-lovers are in for a tough time. Bloody black roses," he laughed, and turning was a figure racing away from me.

Marion sat up suddenly, realising there was a stir on.

I raced after Gabriel and reached the sea as he plunged in, seemingly oblivious to his grandson who stood at the waters edge. The other four were by now striking out through the waves, rapidly leaving the shore behind them.

Their suitcases bobbed and floated, trailing in their wake and held to their bodies by cords.

The small boy, John, was yelling as he stood among the discarded clothes that blew and whipped about in some unfelt wind. "Grandad wait... I can't go into the water... I'm scared... please wait..."

Gabriel was striking out and catching up with the group. They seemed, strangely, not to splash... it was as if their bodies made no impression upon the ocean.

The wind whipped up and dropped down in the space of seconds, and the sand swirled and the waves tossed and smashed against the shore. The group of five people swam strongly into the waves and seemed not to care that the beach was in uproar, laughter, conversation, all high pitched and distant as the voices drifted away into the summer skies.

The boy sobbed. I crouched beside him and put my arm around his shoulder.

My hand passed straight through him!

"Oh my sweet Jesus!" I couldn't help myself from swearing. I backed away and stood watching him. He stood there, gazing out across the sea, shouting. His voice filled my ears, his tears filled my eyes. The wind seemed to spring through from another dimension and chill my bones and my heart.

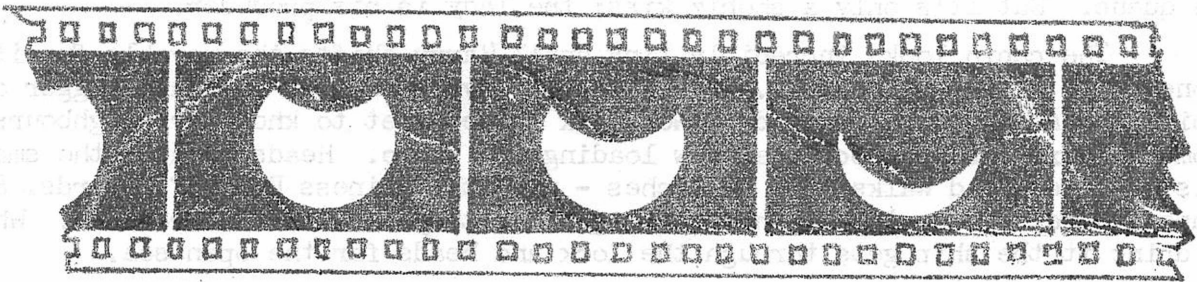
People still laughed. Among them, Marion. She was shaking with laughter, though she had very little idea just what it was people found so funny. I hated her, in that moment, more than I knew it was possible for one human being to hate another.

The beach rocked with mirth and slowly my mind began to explode.

They were still laughing and chattering when the small boy was hit by what I guessed instantly was the shock wave of the inland detonation. He seemed to spring into the air and, with arms flailing, legs waving, mouth caught open in a final inaudible scream, he flew effortlessly out across the waves to vanish into the distance, a small shattered speck.

Escaping.

Marion Turner



ECLIPSE TREK

The voyage of the Starship 'Monte Umbe'

It was the Thursday before Easter and the mail on the doormat looked like the usual junk. I flipped through it - Heron Books, Ponting's White Sale, Transolar -- TRANSOLAR!! My fingers went all wobbly. "Dear Mrs Turner - Solar Eclipse Cruise - cancellation - 2 bed cabin - please confirm." I rushed to the phone. Yes, it was all right for Harry to have that fortnight off. Yes, Transolar would hold the booking until I could send a cheque. Robert came downstairs bleary-eyed complaining that he couldn't sleep for all the excited shrieking. I plugged in the coffee-pot and sat there in a daze. I didn't really get back to earth until after Easter.

Six months earlier, happening to see Transolar advertising trips to the Apollo lift-off, I'd written to ask if they had any thoughts about the total solar eclips of June 1973, the longest until 2168. Back came a wonderful prospectus - a special 16-day sea voyage to Mauritania, arranged in conjunction with the British Astronomical Association, serious observers to go ashore at Port Etienne with their own transport and drive south to the line of totality, the others to view the eclipse from the ship. Only one little snag - there was a waiting list for bookings, It looked like another dream that never would come true.

Meanwhile, in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the authorities were preparing to inject a dose of realism into the situation. In the midst of a record drought, and with only one asphalted road in the whole country, they pointed out with the utmost courtesy that for hordes of inexperienced tourists scuttling about the desert in the hottest part of the year there were, mildly speaking, certain hazards. Worse than this, there was the fact that the sky was often obscured by sand blowing from the Sahara. Plans for the eclipse cruise were changed, there was a flurry of cancellations...

So here we are on the quayside at Liverpool, clutching our brand-new passports and festooned with red and yellow Aznar labels, and still wondering if it's really us or just two people we're dreaming about. And the sun's shining on the "Monte Umbe" with a big banner along her side saying "Transolar Eclipse Cruise".

"That's Patrick Moore!" says a voice behind me in the queue.

"Ooooooh, is it really?"

Patrick, hair flying, eyebrows waggling, arms waving, is busy haranguing his camera crew. He breaks off to greet and kiss a lady passenger. "Oho!" thinks the queue. But it's only a shobiz kiss; the lady is his producer.

The cabin looks incredibly tiny until Harry shifts the movable furniture - one chair - into the corner. After that everyone remarks how much bigger our cabin is than theirs. Up on deck we drink coffee, get to know our neighbours from the next cabin, watch the crew loading the cargo. Heads turn as the smallest waist in the world walks by - 13 inches - vide the Guinness Book of Records. At dinner there's free wine on the table, just as they said in the brochure. While we drink it the ship gets through the lock and heads for the open sea.

There's bound to be somebody somewhere who has worked out the odds against another planet in our galaxy having a satellite whose apparent diameter matches that of its central sun to within half a minutexof arc. I hope anybody who knows of this will write and tell me.

The little beds look narrow, but they turn out to be very comfortable. The gentle swaying of the ship, the steady throbbing of the engines beneath, the rushing sound of the waves, are extraordinarily soothing. Its like being carried along on the back of some immense, powerful, living creature. While I am thinking this, something starts to rattle in the cabin. Harry gets up and wedges the door with an old envelope. Then I get up and take the tooth-glasses and the water-jug and all the other odds and ends out of their brackets on the wall. During the heavy weather on the way to Tenerife a slow deep rhythmic creaking started up somewhere in the woodwork, right at the back of the wardrobe. But there was nothing we could do about that.

In the morning we had astronomical talks, and queueing up alongside one of the bars to get the special "Eclipse Post" franking on our mail. Then Harry would take the cine-camera and go stalking that blonde in the bikini, the star of our holiday films, while I hung over the rail watching for flying fish. Flying-fish cannot be seen unless you are not looking for them, so to stop myself looking I tried to remember something I'd read in Sartre about the surface of the sea and what might be under it. I never did remember what it was, but I know now what's down there. I knew it the night I saw a waiter casually flipping an empty champagne bottle through the nearest port-hole. Multiply that by all the bottles emptied on the Monte, multiply that by all the trips made by the Monte during the season, and by all the years they've been doing it. The whole Atlantic must be carpeted with empty bottles all rolling and clinking about down there.

At night there were star-gazing parties on the deck. The sky came right down to the horizon all round, in a way it never does at home, and was so crammed with stars that you had to look twice to pick out the familiar constellations. One night we tripped over an enthusiast lying flat on his back. Counting meteors, he said. We never knew how many he saw before he was hosed down by the sailors in the morning.

Sometimes by the faint light of the stars dark little figures were seen scurrying for'ard with sheeted bodies slung over their shoulders. I looked at them uneasily. Were any of us safe? Then the smell of laundry soap floated up, and a cloud of steam hid Antares.

After the first few days we were surprised to find that everybody on the Monte Umbe didn't love us. Unworldly creatures that we were, we had failed to realise that we weren't there just to enjoy ourselves and do as we pleased. We were expected to turn up for the bingo and horse-racing sessions arranged by the

ship's hostesses, whose job it was to entertain us and gently part us from our pesetas. These events were announced regularly over the tannoy and just as regularly cancelled, because it never occurred to anyone to go to them. The crunch came when on the night of the big Ship's Party only half a dozen people turned up; the rest were on deck watching for Skylab. Next day one of the hostesses was heard to declare openly that this time they had got a right weird mob on board.

In any one year the maximum number of eclipses possible is 7, of which either 4 or 5 will be solar eclipses. The minimum number is 2, both solar. However, from any one given place surface of the earth, a solar eclipse is on average only once in 364 years.

The "Sky at Night" team are hard at work. The Commander, in a Mexican hat and a pair of shorts as broad and blue as the ocean, is being interviewed by Patrick. "Tell me, Commander ..." "CUT!" A long confab. Things are moved around. Take No. Umpteen is chalked up on the board. They line up again. The producer gives Patrick a signal. "Tell me, Commander ..." "CUT!" The producer clutches her brow in despair. The sun beats down. A ring of interested spectators are jostling each other to get shots of the scene. Three tricoteuses have drawn their deck-chairs up as close as possible and are chatting and tattling as they watch the entertainment. Nobody clobbers them with the clapperboard or dives screaming over the side. This must be what it means to be a real trooper.

When we wake up on Wednesday morning the sun is just rising and we are in the harbour at Las Palmas. Soon we're bowling along in coaches on the way to the American Mercury tracking station at Maspalomas. The fields are dry and stony, dust flies everywhere from the new road being built. "See the banana trees!" says the guide. We have to look hard. They seem to be having a tough time surviving. Suddenly there's a rush to the seaward side of the coach, cameras click, and a familiar bird-of-prey beak zooms by. This is the arrival at Las Palmas of the converted Concorde which will fly along the track of the eclipse.

We pass a development site where dozens of new hotels are going up at top speed. What on earth are they going to do with the sewage from all that lot?

At the altitude of the tracking station there's enough of a breeze to make the heat bearable. In the midst of the stony desert and the tornout volcanic hills the Americans have managed to get enough agua to make a little garden, some grass with stepping-stones to cross it, and a fountain, deliciously cool. We tear ourselves away from the fountain and queue up to file uncomprehendingly past the rows of computers. Posters on the wall say "Skylab Benefits Humanity" and other slogans designed to discourage the development of a negative attitude towards space-travel.

Back to the half-built-hotel complex, and miraculously in our absence they've managed to finish one, install a tempting blue swimming pool, furnish the dining-room, and set the tables with bottles of wine and lots of crisp little bread-rolls.

The interior of the island, an old volcanic crater, is all green, masses of flowers, lovely houses in bold colour-washes and with interesting tiled verandas. We're going up one of those hairpin roads. "Angelito very good driver", says the guide. "He always close his eyes on the bends." Angelito gets us safely to the top where we have vertiginous views right down into the crater from 1800 metres above sea-level. Another stop above the harbour, where we can see the whole town spread out and the Mone Umbe at anchor at far far below. The photographers leap about like fleas, trying to snap everything at once.

At sea again, there's a feverish rush to finish off the preparations everyone's been busy with since the day we sailed. We watch the waning moon

creeping along the ecliptic towards the sun. Will it get there in time? We know that just because thousands eclipses have happened as predicted, this gives us no logical grounds to suppose that the next one will. But no one else seems to be worrying.

On E-day minus 1 there was a full-dress rehearsal on the deck. Positions were allocated to those with telescopes. Afterwards Harry and I retired to our cabins to get our equipment ready. "Equipment" is the word for starting conversations with. (On the homeward voyage it's "Nouadhibou"). "What kind of equipment have you brought?" unlocks the starchiest face at the breakfast table, and technicalities ricochet round your head while you munch your toast and keep an eye open for the Spanish waiter who ambles around dangleing two enormous coffee-pots. "Cafe solo, por favor", you say when he appears, but he's not standing any nonsense of that kind from foreigners. "Black Cawfee", he says firmly, pouring it out from a great hight.

Our equipment was probably the least impressive of any on the ship. We had an ordinary cinecamera, and ordinary still camera, both loaded with ordinary film, and a pair of 10 x 50 binoculars. For filters we had^a roll of black and white film, exposed to daylight and developed at full strength. Experts look down on these homely devices, but the ship's photographer was delighted to get a piece of our film and give us some sellotape in exchange. Harry took the back off his writing pad and cut out two viewers to which we sellotaped pieces of film. Then we made a filter for the camera lens and a screen for the view-finder, using a hairdresser's appointment card I found in my bag. The cine-camera was left unscreened, as we planned to use this only during totality.

We crept furtively out on deck, in case somebody came along to tell us about the fearful risk we were running in not using proper (expensive) filters, and give it all a trial. Through the film the sun appeared as a sharp orange-yellow disk, with no after-image. It looked grand.

As the day went on a heavy haze began to cover the sky. We had been expecting weather and position reports from the Canberra, sailing with an eclipse party from New York, but there was no sign of her. There were some sorries about our coordinates. The moon's shadow is only about 150 miles across, and to miss the centre line could mean a drastic cut in the duration of our totality. By 11pm only the brightest stars were visible, and we missed our only chance of seeing the Southern Cross. Someone said the wind was changing (good? bad?). The Commander was reported to have declared that conditions would be perfect on the day. But when we went to bed nobody really knew what was going to happen.



In 1860 Newcomb travelled for six weeks over land and water, shooting the rapids in a canoe, to observe an eclipse in North West Canada. It was cloudy.



The astronomer Janssen had himself flown in a balloon out of besieged Paris and across the Prussian lines to observe the eclipse of 1870. It was cloudy.

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john n. hall

Fear & Loathing in the GRAND HOTEL

I felt alright. It was sunny, I'd had a couple of Bacardis and the world was gonna be great. And so I happily choodled off on the Metropolitan line to Paddington, where I alighted and approached the main concourse from the West. Unbeknown to a great many people, there is a booking office at the end of the Terminus too and without thinking about it, I bought myself a ticket (Bristol Meads - single). I strolled happily down to the Departures indicator which is where Kid Grog had said he'd meet me. I arrived and stood staring into space for a few seconds, until weaving dwarfishly through the crowds came the Kid, beckoning impatiently. "C'mere, you fuckin' idiot." I followed his squat bum through the crowds where I found him and Johnny Abo. Grinning mightily, as if to say what mighty deed he had performed, Grog handed me a ticket, "Three Quid!"

Imagine the consternation, the disaster, the sheer unbeliability of the situation when I announced I already had a ticket. The Kid was at first amazed, then disbelieving, then angry. How could I dare get my own ticket. He was leader here, he was the main man. Why should I have the effrontery to get my own ticket? Johnny Abo laughed his laugh. Finally after much screaming at the top of our voices, Pickersgill stomped off to get his money back on the unwanted ticket.

Then we were three with only King Rat to find. I went and stood at the top of the Tube entrances, half knowing he would see me and avoid me, but not caring anyway since I was away from the Kid and it would provide good eyesight jokes later.

Sure enough that is exactly what did happen and I was summoned irritably back by the Kid to the little assembly. The King was being interrogated, "You haven't already got a ticket as well, have you?" demanded the Kid.

"No??" replied the King, as if it was inconceivable that anyone else but Pickersgill could be trusted with getting of tickets. Who would dare usurp his duties?

On the train, settled down with bottles of Mateus Rose and sandwiches and, in my case Turkish Delight, we talked happily of comics, Philip K. Dick, Sharks, Deadoto etc.

By the time we arrived at Bristol Temple Meads I was beginning to realise that I was in the wrong place. We fell out onto the platform with the boys screaming "THIS IS EASTER, THIS IS BRISTOL WE ARE GOING TO THE CONVENTION WHOO-FEE" etc., etc., ad nauseum. Passing the barrier and handing my ticket to the man I realised in a blinding flash "My God, what the hell am I doing here?" I had a good woman at home, a ton and a half of writing to do, a record collection and a little amount of stimulant that be it ever so small would make me feel so much better than any piss I drink here. Why was I here? I couldn't face all those people at that hotel even just for two days. People who I had so little

in common with mostly. I'm no intellectual - I'm just an actor. I can't do anything but fool about and make myself ridiculous which was what the noisy and drunk-on-Mateus-Rose pair beside me were out to do also. We are the jesters, gnetlemen, laugh at our jokes and pity us please, cos' we are lonely and frightened really and we can only strangle each other in the end, so have pity on our miserable little lives we need your adulation your appreciation, but most of all we need your sympathy.

In straightway to a pub opposite the station that was playing Frank Sinatra's Watertown album, and the King did his beer mat juggling trick to the amusement of a sailor and the profferment of a glass of noxious naval liquor was the King's reward for his entertainment.

An hour and a half later, drunk to the eyeballs we staggered off in the direction of the Grand Hotel. I hid while the others registered and amused the receptionists, avoiding the smiles and waves of USAF fandom and the lovable Sam Long here all the way from Florida, cos he loves ya people give him a great big hand and he will give you Apollo moonshot badges and talk to you of esoterica you only barely understand, our man Sam --here we are, and you think we're stupid too don't you? Mind you we feel the same way, but I reckon you stand the better chance of being right.

So of we rolled to Ramino's room where having discovered the secret of the internal relay TV I bopped to the closing minutes of Top of the Pops thinking, Christ, I must be drunk, this is The Sweet. Back comes King Rat "Hey this is great isn't it?" I agreed, and almost cried for some reason, and decided we'd better find the others but they found us and an expedition was mounted in the direction of the bar. We were here, we only awaited the arrival of the rest of you, we will now scream abuse at Gerald Bishop, Fred Hemmings and others, and tear our con programmes up in memory of and old tradition, pour beer over each other and sod the expense we are HERE, WE ARE HERE, WE ARE HERE, I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE, BUT THEY DO AND I CAN'T TAKE IT, I'M GOING INSANE AND NO ONE BELIEVES ME, LAUGH YOU BASTARDS, LAUGH AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TROUBLES WILL DESCEND UPON YOU BUT YOU CAN BE HAPPY NOW AT LEAST, AND IF YOU AREN'T THEN YOU HAD DAMN WELL BETTER LOOK HAPPY ANYHOW!!!!!!!!!!

Many things happened that night; we tried to get to a party reputedly being held at Prestiges place but got no further than the screaming traffic of the City Centre playing with cars like Gretans with bulls and discovering the entire population of the West of England also wanted a taxi of which there were only three and the Kid had a tantrum in the middle of the world to make things even better.

The next morning I was asleep on Pickersgill's floor without a pillow and a very stiff neck. I was believing again as I lay there and I thought it was only a passing nightmare I was going home tomorrow and by Sunday everything would be alright. Yeah, alright now, dontcha know, alright now.

The Kid threw me a pillow and we listened to the Tony Blackburn Show while he stomped about putting his thrice turned trousers on in order to go down to breakfast and I elected to have a batch and soak my cares and stiff neck away. The water was steaming hot and I ached all over. Pickersgill had gone down to breakfast, which I was fairly sure I couldn't eat even if I conned my way in to the restaurant. I lay and basked in steamy peace, Jimmy Young was phoning housewives on the radio and I was almost laughing. I'm very coy, and I always lock bathroom doors etc, and get scared when people can be heard moving in the next room and then start banging on the door. Which is what was happening.

Christ! It must be a porter or summat, I'd have to bluff my way through. No, I can't do that, better come clean and go home straightaway, this is too much like hell on earth anyhow and I don't want no shit with the managment and fuzz and all those, Oh Christ, I'm sunk, caught in the altogether taking a bath in a room I'm not supposed to be in. They know Pickersgill from his antics at the reception desk last night, they'll know I'm not him, O God....

"Open this door, y'fucker. I'm going to puke!" It was the Kid.

"Come on, Hall, open this door!" Wearily, and sighing my relief I climbed out of the bath, wrapped a towel around me and opened up. In he rushed looked at the bath threateningly and then made for the loo. He stood there for a long while and then turned around and sat on it. "Ah, that's better. I'm ok now."

I waited for him to go away again, but he obviously wasn't so with a little embarrassment as possible I climbed back into the bath, deciding that if he tried anything I'd drown him. He sat there and related to me a horror story concerning what they serve for breakfast here, and how he had vomited all the way from the lift to here. Sure enough, later, when we went out I observed a half dozen or more damp, evil-smelling patches on the carpet.

During that day, the Friday, I met a lot of people that I wanted to meet, most of the Newcastle crowd, and in particular Mauler and Sitarboy and the real, genuine, Smiff, of whom it was said and they were right. Smiff and the Kid had a little contretemps at one point when drink throwing became briefly the fashion once more. "Don't ever do that again!" Said the Kid mopping his face and accepting that any ensuing violence would be a lost venture mostly on account of the gargantuan proportions of Smiff. Gannets had a small attack of Mass Hysteria, and me and Johnny Abo were closeted in a corner with Sitarboy and Smiff trying to explain that this behaviour was by no means unusual, indeed by some standards, pretty everyday. At this point Sitarboy uttered the first memorable line, to wit: "These guys are all fuckin' crazy!"

Sitting earlier in the day, moping over a 20p pint of unexciting beer, whose middle-aged beaming welsh visage should enter the room, but Brynley 40, a man I had literally never expected to see again. So amazed was I by his appearance that I could think of nothing really to say, probably a very desirable state.

Oh yeah, Friday began to be alright, rapping with Sitarboy, Smiff, Mauler and Dug;ass the Silent about Rock and getting hit over the head with several Delaney novels on repeated occasions for what Sitarboy deemed blasphemy. Then later I went out for a small solitary toddle around the town, cos I had a headache and a breath of fresh smog would probably help. So I walked, and walked, and got ever more miserable

I still shouldn't be here, I mused, and became increasingly tactiurn and angry with myself. Finally sitting on a bench gazing at the Clifton suspension bridge away off in the distance I cursed my indigestion and walked back to the Hotel determined to get drunk and destroy everyone. In the hall of the Hotel lurked Holdstil, who having snared me in his repulsive web of endearing naivete, introduced me with great pomp to Lisa Conesa. She looked me up and down and I stared at her sullenly, and she said: "Oh, that wars a terrible pickcher off yourself you sent, you know." Meekly, I agreed; found out in public, and wandered off.Goddamn, damn, blast another debacle. Holdstock - it was all Holdstock's fault, I'll get that stupid bastard. So engrosed was I in these venomous thoughts that I very nearly walked into the no-man land of Simone fandom, where drunken discharges were filling the air, basically by the Kid. The drinking set in.

Late that night I wandered off in search of six or wight room parties followed and laughed at by various Birmingham fans. On my journeys I was relieved to discover more interesting substances than beer, which improved my disposition no end. I got to wandering back to the lounge between times, making an exhibition of myself before the good Miss Conesa, Offwhite Boak and Julis-and-Mauler Show. Finally and inexorably making a debut for Falling Down Fandom in the Con Hall to the vast amusement of such as Prestige I caught the second memorable line from Rog Peyton, who was struggling to read the name tag on the vomit coloured jacket of the Pig. In so doing he was heard to utter "John Pissoff?"

Somehow, depressed again, I found myself in the Kids room with Brynley. There we sat and talked about our depressing lives and woes. Brynley had had a run-in with the bomb squad for being found in a suspicious place with JJ Miasma.

JJ had made a motorised getaway to deepest Wiltshire, but Brynley had had to verbally extricate himself from suspicion not only of being a terrorist but of being a freeloader too. The Kid came home a veteran of many battles for the mental possession of some middle thirties broadening flesh, of which he had emerged as victor, apparently. On my and Brynley reminding him of former days of Bristol, of my namesake Graham, the founding father of Simone fandom and the miserable fate to which he was consigned, and of various gideouts by the Holy Grail herself in the Mercat orial mansions on the hill, his only comment was to cackle fiendishly as: "AAAAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHE HAD HIS LITTLE BOOGIE!!!" all the time stomping his putrescent feet against the door.

Well, I lay and considered my lot in the darkness with the Kid snoring like a hog in the bed and Brynley snoring in stereo in the bathroom and thought well, it ain't been too bad a day. Nowhere near as bad as the day before anyhow.

Saturday, O glorious Saturday, I'm going home today and fell back to sleep. Meanwhile apparently Brynley's sock had assaulted King Rat on the latters entry into the room. Awaking on the bed to slug jokes, I found myself going down again. Fandom is here, all the pathetic souls of lost fandom fleeing from their grim realities in Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, Newport & London, we are all here, and suddenly we are somebody. Yeah! We are somebody. WE ARE SOMEBODY. You all are. I'm not. I don't belong, I am now one of you. Who am I kidding? Laughing at the Con bids and annoying Sitarboy, whose outburst was more revealing than he could ever know. He was one of them. I laughed. I ran the risk of blowing their dreams. "Shuddup you fuckin' idiot!" I shut up. I was one of them after all.

Tantalised by the prospect of a brief, sordid peccadillo with Julia, her straight man came to collect and I realised that we are all lost in the wastelands. Why do we have to mock each other? We are all as sad, as ludicrous, if you like, as each other. We are Time Captains, but we only write astral records of misery. We are lost, lost forever. We should be more together - we should love each other a lot more. But I'm not one of you. I have a life of my own. When I try hard enough to fool myself at least.

Sitting in the bar again, emissaries returned from the City Centre with news of a terrible disaster. In a moment of childish jest, the Pig had kicked King Rat causing his spectacles to fall to the hard sidewalk and shatter. Tearfully and blind the King had roared off into the deserted heartland of the Easter city, careening of shop windows and lamp-posts in an eventually successful endeavour to shake off his apologetic pursuers, including Pig himself whose memorable line "I did that before and that never happened" has since been enshrined in Ratfan memory.

Still sitting in the bar reeling with the news, I beheld a squat cloud of dust that resolved into the Kid speeding towards me, scarf flying behind him, palms outward, arms outstretched, mouth open, eyes popping. "Fer Gods sake, Hall, Please. If you value your life, or even mine for that matter, please. No Blind J kes!"

Later still, in the darkened Con hall watching an entirely unmemorable film about bendy toys conquering the world, who should sit down beside me but the King. "You alright?" I asked looking at the selotape encrusted spectacles. "Yeah, I'M alright." said he matter-of-factly.

Come five o'clock I was going home. Yeah, I was going home. "You idiot" pronounced the Kid. "Don't go," pleaded Julia, for which I was grateful, since I reckoned she was the only one who meant it. But I went. Out on the street, it was raining. I walked in the middle of the road getting wet, half meaning to throw myself under the nearest truck, but as usual, not one truck came along. Then as it rained harder, I felt my self sighing with relief. I'd won. I'd triumphed over them. I'd gone and left them, I didn't have to face them anymore. I was free. Free, at last. A fantasy I held onto for a fortnight at least.

ECLIPSE TREK

PART 2

The story so far: The SUN, an unassuming yellow star, has risen as usual, little knowing that the inconstant MOON, a mere satellite, is craftily planning to eclipse it at 9h. 21m. GMT. Documents revealing the plot have fallen into the hands of members of the BAA, who have sought the help of Captain VINCENTE MIRALLAVE, Master of the M.S. Monte Umbe. Despite attempts to bribe the helmsman on the part of COMMANDER H, a leader of men, who is convinced that he has got better coordinates, the Captain successfully reaches his secret destination somewhere in the Atlantic. Agents of the BAA are planted in suitable positions to obtain photographic evidence, although JENI, an embittered hostess, still hopes to foil them at the last minute by organizing a shuffleboard tournament on the sun-deck. Under pretext of feeding the rabbits an enigmatic character known only as BILL THE WEATHERMAN pursues his mysterious activities. Is he preparing to expose PATRIC M, a TV personality believed in some quarters to be none other than the Astronomer Royal?

Meanwhile, back at Nouadhibou, events are taking a turn that will affect the fortunes of all aboard the Monte Umbe....

Now Read on ...

On Saturday 30th June we were in latitude 19° N. I got up at 6.30 and rushed out to see the tropical dawn. It wasn't there. A man came along and told me that this morning it would be taking place on the other side of the ship. Having reached the spot chosen by the Captain, the Monte had come about during the night and dropped anchor. For those who don't understand the language of the sea, this means that the sharp end was pointing north instead of south.

The band of haze still circled the horizon, but the rest of the sky was clear. The wisps of cloud high above slowly brightened, a cone of pale rays fanned upwards, and suddenly the sun appeared, already a few degrees above the horizon, looking like an enormous perfect pearl. We were going to be lucky after all. Spirits rose and everyone ate a hearty breakfast.

Harry and I secured a place on the afterdeck among the ropes and things. We had our gear impressively decorated with the important-looking labels issued by the travel agency - "Solar Eclipse Observation Equipment - Do Not Disturb." By nine o'clock every bit of deckspace aft was occupied. There wasn't room to put a foot down. The foredeck on the starboard side was bristling with a double row of telescopes, although on the port side, reserved for the BBC, nobody had put an appearance as yet. An announcement was given out to the crew, with the time and duration of totality and warning not to watch without filters.

The sea was calm and the ship, with engines on slow slow, remarkably steady. Next to us a couple with a 6-inch refractor were trying to project an image of the sun on to a battered box lid. A camera-case was suspended from the mounting into which they were stuffing bottles of shampoo and hairspray in an attempt to get the right weight for a counterbalance.

Towards 9.20 we started watching the sun through our filters. After a few minutes I thought I could see a black mark at the top of the disk; next second someone announced "First contact!" Soon there was a noticable nibble out of the solar disk, then a little bite, then a hearty chunk. A spectator thought it looked like a slice of melon. Another one (me) thought it was like a Cheshire cat grin in the sky. Harry was busy taking pictures every ten minutes or so.

The light began to grow dimmer and the air cooler. Colours drained away. Without filters, the sun seemed as bright as ever, but you could see obliquely that there was something horribly wrong with the shape of it. There was a strange stillness and a chill in the atmosphere that stirred up irrational feelings of dread and foreboding. Even the Spanish sailors went quiet, an event almost as rare as the eclipse itself.

As the last sliver of the sun became narrower and narrower, I got ready to switch my eyes to the white-painted bridge of the ship, where I hoped to get a view of the shadow-bands which occur at the instant of totality. Suddenly a gasp went up from the whole ship - "There it is!" Shadow-bands and Bailey's beads were all forgotten and everybody just stared. The universe had turned negative. There in the sky was a black sun, rimmed with a ring of silvery light and surrounded by the corona. The corona was a beauty, pearly-grey spikes all around the disk and long streamers stretching out in the plane of the sun's equator. Round the advancing limb of the moon was a pinkish-orange glow which I didn't at first realise was the chromosphere, because I'd always seen it shown bright red in books.

There was a shout of "Filters off!", and all the cameras got busy. Harry started filming. Behind us a group had their heads down over some radio equipment, not even looking at the eclipse. I took time off to survey the sky. Charts had been passed round showing the stars that would be visible if conditions were right. The sun being in Gemini, we should have seen Castor and Pollux close to it, the three planets Mercury, Venus and Saturn, and the unusual sight of Orion high in the sky, with Beetlejuice almost at the zenith; but the haze blotted out all except Venus, which shone steadily just below the coronal streamers.

By mid-totality the ship was plunged into a deep twilight. No-one had been quite sure how dark it would become, & a few people, expecting a midnight gloom, had gone as far as to bring torches. In the event, with the brightness of the corona and the scattering effect of the haze, it was rather lighter than a night of full moon. When Harry got the other camera out to try a few still shots, he found that he was able to read the figures on the scale quite easily.

The chromosphere was now visible at the top of the disk, and I was looking at it through the binoculars when suddenly a dazzling brilliant flash shot from the edge of the eclipsed sun. It was the "diamond ring" the first shaft of sunlight striking through a lunar valley, and the end of totality. The corona vanished and the sun was shining again. Light, warmth, and colour came flooding back. For a moment we couldn't believe it had lasted six minutes, but yes, someone had timed it - six minutes four seconds. Tension relaxed and people began packing up their equipment. Cheers and clapping were heard forward as one of the hostesses called for a big round of applause for Almighty God and His successful performance. We lingered for a while with our filters to watch the last phase of the eclipse as the moon slowly drew away from the solar disk. Then Monte Umbe weighed anchor (no, I don't know how much), and set off north. The passengers went down to lunch. A few celebratory champagne corks popped, but judging by the beaming faces round the tables, most of us were away up already.



As late as the 18th century there were doubts as to whether the prominences and corona were really solar phenomena. An observer in 1733 described the prominences as red clouds in the moon's atmosphere, and the corona was thought to be due to scattering of light at the moon's edge. More than a hundred years later a series of photographs showed the moon gradually covering up the

prominences at one side of the sun and uncovering them at the other, while the shape of the corona was found to be the same in photographs taken at different locations. Not long afterwards Lockyer and Janssen demonstrated that the prominences could be seen without an eclipse by using the spectroscope.

Late in the afternoon word went round that the coast of Africa was in sight. I got on deck in time to see a little boat shoot alongside from which the Mauritanian pilot made a flying leap to scramble up a dangling rope-ladder. We were sailing up the inside of that little tongue of land sticking out at the bottom of the Spanish Sahara. Through the dusty haze we could see sheer cliffs and the vague shapes of low buildings and some sort of mining gear. It was sand all the way. A great pinkish cloud of it began to blow out from the shore, and soon we had the desert in our hair and teeth and down the back of our necks.

The Monte Umbe, which had looked small in the big harbour at Las Palmas, was enormous at Nouadhibou, dwarfing the little fishing vessels with their star-and-crescent flags. We caught our first whiff of the rotten-fish smell from the local fertiliser factory. A representative of Mauritanian TV, his camera balanced on his shoulder and his blue robes blowing in the breeze, took pictures of us taking pictures of him. We couldn't wait to get down the gangway and set foot on African soil.

Hearing that the Monte Umbe was on the way, the Mauritanians had been up all night revaluing their currency and printing nice new clean banknotes. They'd worked it out so that one ouguiya equalled one pee. Odd names these natives think up for their money. We found our way to the police post where a harassed official, obviously not having much luck with all those peculiar names on the passports, was writing out 24-hour passes. At a desk piled with crisp notes and shining coins another official was changing various sorts of money for ouguiya, and giving brisk explanations in French, Spanish, and Arabic by turns. While we were all milling around, the sun dropped into the sea and night fell over Africa.

We were up early next day. (Again! That's twice in twenty-four hours!) At the dock gates we passed between rows of black faces all silently staring at us as if we'd just beamed down from starship Enterprise. One of our party called out "Bonjour!", and we got immediate friendly grins and shouts of "Bonjour!" in reply. Human after all, we were, in spite of our funny colour. Four of us piled into a taxi and set off to explore the African continent.

At Nouadhibou market business was already in full swing. Rows of stalls displayed lengths of cloth, wooden dishes, leather goods, and native garments, including the becoming blue robes worn by the men, some of which were later to be seen striding about the decks of the Monte. Goats wandered everywhere, their udders tied up in little bags. A few wretched cows tugging hopefully at some dried-up brown stuff. Every bit of food laid out for sale was covered with a crawling layer of flies. Nobody bothered to move them on; it would have been a waste of time trying. An unaccustomed tourist, I felt a momentary sense of intruding as we walked round, staring at everything, among these people who were just quietly going about their daily shopping. Did they mind? The Moslem women in their black robes threw handfuls of dust and shouted curses when the cameras pointed in their direction, but a very pretty girl with a baby on her back offered to pose for pictures - "Vous donnez un cadeau?" We gave her some coins, then decided to beat it when we saw that some of the others had got the idea and were lining up for a group photograph.

Sidi attached himself to us as guide while the rest of Nouadhibou's children followed at a cautious distance. He led us past the cinema (surprise), the little Catholic church (surprise again) where the French father lived alone on the edge of the vast desert, the tailor's shop with a pair of flared jeans sketched on the wall to show that the latest fashions were not entirely unknown, the water-wheel - but Sidi didn't seem to know what it was for; he was only about

seven and had probably never seen rain in his life. Then we were at the Post Office, where I hadn't the nerve to steal a notice I saw tacked to the wall:

You wouldn't want to risk blindness through looking at the eclipse?

NON NON NON NON NON NON NON NON NON NON NON NON NON

You will be sure to get your filters from the Red Cross post?

OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI OUI

The professional vendors now began to appear with trays of carvings, beads, and silver jewellery as thin as rice-paper. Stop to look, and you are immediately hemmed in by a ring of helpers, advisers, interpreters, and just plain lookers-on. Rival salesmen tug at you, trying to win you away. With four kinds of money - African francs, pesetas, pence and ouguiya - you wonder how you'll manage to work it all out, but when the bargaining starts it's the same in any currency. They say "deux mille", you beat them down to "deux cents", and both parties finish up satisfied that they've had the best of the transaction.

While the Monte Umbe loaded up with bananas to take back to the folks at home, we had one brief beautiful day to spend in Tenerife. Sailing time was 17.00 hours - not a minute later. We arrived back on the quay at 16.59, wildly hoping. Would the Captain be standing there at the top of the gangway, debonair in his white tropical uniform, smiling broadly and telling us that he had only been pulling out legs after all, that we weren't really going to sail at 17.00 hours but instead could have another whole day to investigate the shops in Santa Cruz (only at that moment beginning to open after the siesta), to roam among the cedars, the flowering eucalyptus, the forests of pines at the foot of Mount Teide, to sit on the beaches whose sand (they told us) had been brought all the way from the Sahara? Would he? No, he wouldn't. The gangway was relentlessly drawn up, the ropes cast off, and we sailed away, leaving 300-odd hearts behind in Tenerife.

There were still lots of lovely lazy days sunbathing on the deck. On the homeward voyage, however, morale began to crumble a bit at the edges. One astronomical society challenged another to a game of shuffle-board. The hostesses immediately pounced and in no time at all they'd got an Astronomical Shuffleboard League doing battle on the sundeck. Now they'd got their foot in, it was but a short step to the Grand Ship's Concert and the Queen of the Cruise. But the weird mob had not entirely lost its fighting spirit and attempts to organise Glamorous Knees and Knobbly Grandmothers Contest were firmly ignored.

So now here we are back at Liverpool, and the sun's still shining as the Aznar labels disperse to catch their various trains and buses. We'd bought a Sunday paper and we sit smiling rather smugly as we read about the currency crisis getting ready to hit holiday-makers. And Harry's thinking that perhaps he'll get a bit of peace and quiet now that I've seen my eclipse. He doesn't know that my thoughts are already winding into the future. 1976 - Australia; 1977 - Venezuela; 1979 - Canada; 1980 - India

It could get to be a habit.

Marion Turner - 1973



E. C. TUBB



Earl Dumarest — WANDERER

To ask any author to explain how he constructed a book, why he chose the characters he did, the situations and conflicts, the background and relevant matter is, in a sense, to ask him to strip naked and parade around for critical inspection. In other words it isn't easy because much that goes into any work of creation takes place in the subconscious, ideas and incidents welling up as if newly born but, in reality, the product of much mental digestion, usually on a very deep level.

For example, The Winds of Gath contained an idea which I had used ten years earlier in a short story. The source of that then, can be found, but the rest came in dribbles, some as simple ideas, the rest as a logical extrapolation of those ideas. I cannot explain how they came, but I can explain the development of those ideas into material which, intended at first for one book only, grew to fill many more.

Much of the added wordage came as a direct result of the central character. Earl Dumarest is a symbol of everyman because every man is on a personal quest the aim of which is to find happiness. The routes and obstacles may vary, but always there is one basic common denominator. True happiness is extremely difficult to find. Always there is an impermanence because one of the rules of life is that nothing ever stays the same and true happiness and fulfilment is not only very rare but also very intransigent. Mankind is born to strive and Dumarest, as a symbol of Mankind, does just that. To him all life is a battle and survival the prime necessity. To us all life is a battle and, unless we survive, the battle is lost.

I talk of Dumarest as a symbol because that is exactly what he is and was intended to be. A man searching for something, his home, his world which again

is a symbol of happiness. Whether, if he ever finds the object of his search, happiness will come as an automatic reward, is open to doubt. In many cases the seeking is better than the finding and to travel holds more comfort than to arrive.

Any story-teller has a choice of how to tell his story. I chose the method of fast-moving action set against a colourful background and, because this type of story telling is labelled 'space opera', it is open to many criticisms which are unjustified. I am not now talking about how good or not the writing is and certainly I am not claiming that each reader must receive the ultimate of satisfaction from what I wrote. Tastes differ and opinions vary. I believe that to hold interest a story must be entertaining and, as I like to read stories containing fast action and movement, that is the type I chose to write.

As each book is intended to be a complete story in itself it is inevitable that all should contain some common factors and, if read all at once, some repetition is unavoidable. All mention of the mechanics of space travel - and by mechanics I am not talking about the scientific explanation of how faster than light vessels actually work. I don't know how they work. No one does. It is just a device in order to break free of the limitations of our own solar system and expand the boundaries of fictional action.

But I have made certain assumptions. Stars, even when close, are still a long way apart. It will take time to get from one to the other and, without going into detail of subjective time, which I find confusing to understand and an unnecessary complication in story telling, such travel will give rise to certain inevitable consequences. How do you minimise the boredom of a long journey? It would be nice, even now, to take a drug at the commencement of a long trip and, apparently minutes later, arrive. So I propose that there is a drug which will make time apparently pass very swiftly. Quick time, a compound which will slow the metabolism so that hours become minutes and months become days. A convenience for those who can pay for it. For those who can't there is another method. To be carried in caskets designed for the transportation of beasts; to ride doped, frozen and ninety per cent dead.

In both cases apparently time is diminished, the difference lies in the fact that those who use the drug and travel High, are safe and comfortable. Those who ride Low, risk a fifteen per cent death rate. They wake with the loss of body fat - the condition is not a total stasis - and inevitable physical weakness. The difference is similar to riding in comfort in a Pullman and riding the rods. Naturally, if you can afford it, you don't ride the rods.

And as we have a High and a Low we also have a Middle, normal conditions under which the crew work for short journeys or work in rotation.

So much for the mechanics of space flight as I have proposed. What of the worlds which lie scattered through the galaxy? Why are they mostly barbaric with feudal overtones?

Well, think about it. First they are not all the same, each world has its own culture, some are of a high level of technology, a few are gathered into combines, but most, and I think inevitably, are dominated by strong houses or rigid systems with a strong element of barbarism.

Cultures follow a rough pattern and can be likened to steps of which there are three. One, perhaps the most basic, is the tribal society in which everything has its place and there is a place for everything. A populace which is introverted, dominated by a priest-king and happy only with rigid and formal conditions. A taboo-ridden society in which everything strange is both suspect and frightening.

Could such a culture ever have ventured into space?

Then there is the barbaric society. Nomads, hunters, adventurers, looting, stealing, destroying, perhaps, but smashing older cultures in the only way they can be smashed, changing them in the only way they could be changed.

And then comes the city-dwellers, civilisation. Not wholly a tribal culture though tending to lead towards it as we can see. A merging of tribal and barbaric

for mutual advantage, but not so taboo-ridden or so superstitious, not so frightened and resentful of change as the true tribal-society.

Civilisation must come before inventions can be made and discoveries found. But the true city-dweller, the completely civilised man will not be the ones to reach out and colonise new worlds. That must be left to the barbarians.

And how could colonisation take place?

Assuming that a means is found to traverse the stars and that it is readily available to all who can pay for it, a logical deduction can be made. First there will be a strict hands-off policy. This world is mine, get to hell out of it and find your own! Those who have paid for the transport will, naturally want to own and rule. How, in such a case can you avoid a feudalistic element in the new settlements? A feudalistic and barbaric, because those with the guts to make the effort could be nothing else.

And so I do not envisage a simple extension of the world as we know it once we do reach the stars and settle on a host of worlds. There will not be a firm, central authority because such an authority could never maintain its rule. There will not be a succession of nice, neat, Hiltons spread from world to world - who is going to build them? And when we talk about extending our known conditions to the stars remember that, in this present day, slavery still exists, aborigines still remain, monarchies and dictatorships and feudalism still prevail. And human nature, from our earliest known history, has not changed. The old motives still apply: hate, greed, love, fear. There is still a ruthless ambition and there is still violence and it is a fair assumption to say there always will be.

For life itself is a continual act of violence.

And in the future on other worlds, as now, barbarism and sophistication will be very close.

A background then against which to set a character. Conflicts which he must face and somehow, resolve. A problem, and a quest, and forces which care nothing for him as a person and elements which seek, not to help him, but use him.

The universe in which Dumarest moves, lives, has his being.

A hard one, because all life is hard and harder still if the cushion of wealth is lacking. So Dumarest must make his way as best he can - as every man must.

But there are institutions. Religions have a strong survival factor built into them as a basic necessity - if it wasn't there they wouldn't be around for very long. And the old plea, used now, in the past, and why not in the future - be kind, be tolerant, be charitable. The Golden Rule which sums up the quintessence of an ideal - treat your neighbour as you would wish him to treat you. Summed up in a simple credo - There, but for the grace of God, go I.

I do not think that the Church of Universal Brotherhood is an impossibility. In fact I think it will be inevitable, one side of the human coin, the gentle half of the human duality.

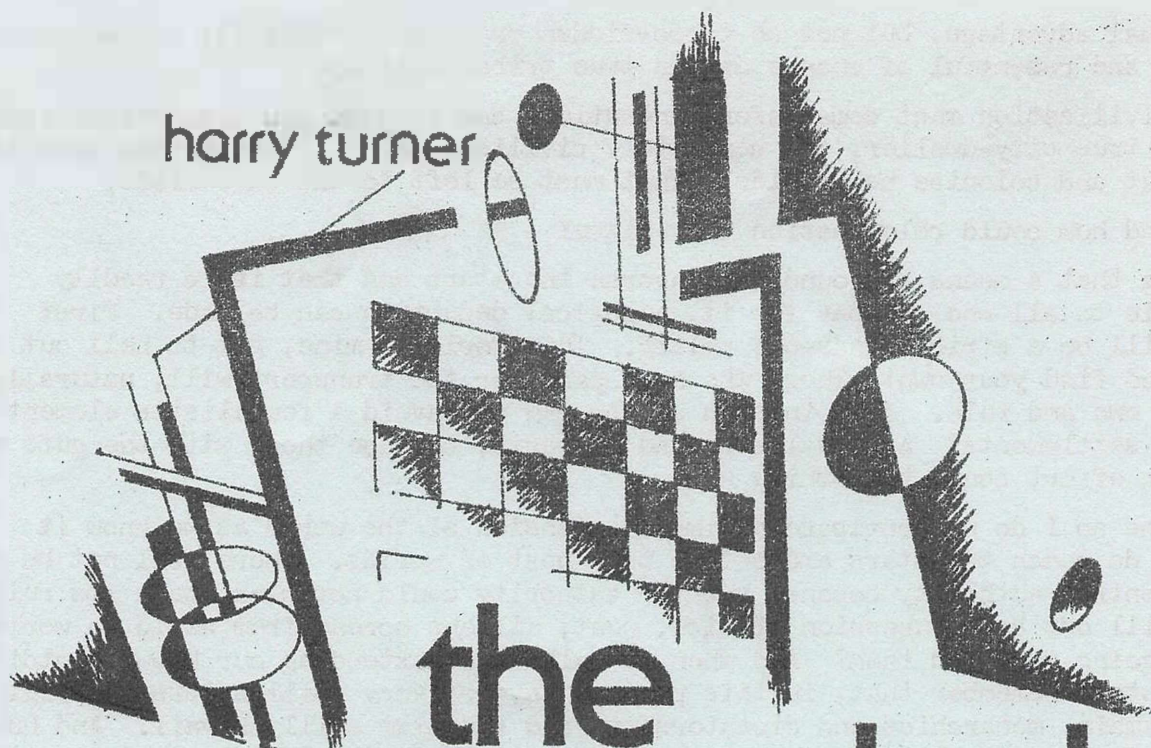
The Cyclan represents the other.

A group of men, an organisation dedicated to the concept of pure reason. Such an ideal bathed France in blood during the French Revolution and, in later times, caused Russia much woe. They are not evil - that is an accusation against them I have never made - for evil is the converse of good and both are the product of emotion. A cyber has no emotion, to him the only pleasure he can ever experience is that of mental achievement. And the aim of the Cyclan is not to dominate - ambition is close to greed - but to ensure that mankind lives at an optimum of efficiency.

To become, in short, machines, living units who have no feelings and who can be directed as the planners dictate.

Sounds familiar?

The future isn't as far away as we think. --Please turn to page 41--



the open-ended game

a collation of
inconsequential
conversations for all who
prefer a discourse of reason
to exposure to works of art

Prelude I - SPRING

We are all hungry after a busy evening discussing plans for Zimri. I return from Nick's Grecian Grill with chicken and chips and Lisa pops the food, still wrapped, into the oven to keep warm while we clear the papers off the table.

- Hey, whatever happened to that article you promised on art? she asks out of the blue.

I blush... long ago, when Z 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ had just been mailed, I thought it a good idea to write an article about art in view of all the comments. Gaily I jot down points for inclusion as they occur to me, but as the list gets longer my enthusiasm wanes. I never get around to finishing the job since there are always other things to do of more pressing urgency. Secretly I hope Lisa will forget the whole thing. No such luck.

- Well, I have a few doubts about it now, I confess. My basic problem is that I'm not a writer, just a drop-out from the literate society. I hate gratuitous verbalising and lack the essential faith that everything can be explained in words...

Lisa raises her eyebrows: they disappear behind her fringe.

- But you can't think except in words, she asserts, and you can't express your thoughts until you put them into words.

My eyebrows rise towards a receding hairline but don't make it.

- You may argue me into a corner occasionally and make me admit that some things can only be expressed in words, but if there's any communication in art it's in terms of sharing ideas, feelings, and emotions in areas where words are inadequate. Areas where the visual artist often works alongside the musician and mathematician.

There are so many possibilities to be explored. Representation, describing appearances, is only one of them, and today it is perhaps the least challenging. Certainly in this century, Western artists have largely lost interest in the conventions of pictures that tell a story or record a scene, and discarded forms that imitate the visible world in favour of a non-objective world.

Critics often confuse the situation by invoking narrow, often irrelevant standards and trying to impose them, unjustifiably, on an artist's work. Like, there's no point demanding realism from the abstract, or literature from everything. There are many standards and no one of them is necessarily right or best. It's an open-ended situation so far as the artist is concerned. By all means try to figure out what the artist is aiming to achieve; but, if you haven't a clue, then you can't decide if he's succeeded or even if it was worth his effort. Art's there to be enjoyed not just explained. If you want to get inside a picture, open your mind to the possibilities that the artist has explored and reported on. Be receptive, don't automatically reject the new and unfamiliar, let it grow on you, live with it for a while. Don't give in to the impulse to make instant judgements and evaluations that get in the way of seeing what's in front of you.

- Keep going you're doing fine, encourages Lisa, ever the editrix.

- I am? Well, just slip in an interlineation while I get my second wind...

"Too many people become certain of too many things too early in their lives, over-eager to have everything settled in their minds. They lack both the wisdom and the courage to expose their hastily adopted ideas to healthy doubts."

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II quoted in The Guardian 18 January 1969

- Lets get back to this idea of artists deserting appearances for abstraction, prompts Lisa.

- It seems generally assumed in our literate society that there's a "natural" way of seeing. No training is required to "see" a photograph, which reproduces appearances. For a start, nearly everyone who's clicked a camera will agree that it is quite capable of recording things he's never even noticed in the viewfinder, often producing a print that is a travesty of the mental picture he wished to preserve. We have to learn to manipulate a camera to make the images it records approach the images we see.

This is because the camera lens is indiscriminating. The eye, guided by the brain, is selective. To the eye, all things appear in focus simultaneously. Yet this is known to be an illusion created by the eye's ability to focus automatically and virtually instantly as it scans a scene in depth. We focus on something within our field of vision at each instant, but never on everything. To see at all, we've got to isolate and select in this way.

Retinal images are ambiguous so we rely on all sorts of clues to resolve these ambiguities. In certain circumstances we can't tell whether an object is small and near, or large and distant; whether an unevenly shaded area is hollow or protruding.

We help our imperfect vision with other sense impressions: sound, smell, taste, touch. The brain coordinates these impressions, combines them into subjective images and concepts, to be screened, edited and shaped, to a surprising degree, by our expectations, preferences and prejudices, our immediate wants and needs.

With such a complex process it's not surprising to find that cultural conditioning plays a part in determining how we see, and that nonliterate cultures

exist that have developed different ways of seeing to us. In one of his books, Marshall McLuhan tells of the difficulties experienced when showing training films in African villages. The adult audiences missed the intended point of the film because of the many conventions of literacy that had gone into their making. The Africans tended to concentrate on irrelevant background incidents at the expense of the main "story-line"; they needed perceptual training before they mastered the inbuilt visual conventions of the film and got the message.

In a similar way, many forms of non-objective art demand changes in the way people see - many people seem unable to separate the superficial decorative appeal of an abstract composition from its constructive significance. There are the visual equivalent of folk who, as Tom Lehrer puts it, like a tune they can hum! They appreciate the melodic element in music but can't grasp its polyphonic depth...

I break off, my nose twitching. There's an acrid smell of scorching paper. During my monologue the oven has reached the significant temperature of 451 F. Lisa dashes to the rescue and returns plucking charred newsprint from our supper. In the momentary panic the article is forgotten. Smoked chicken has a distinctive flavour. Given time, I think I could even acquire a taste for it...

Prelude 2 - SUMMER

I turn into Manley Road feeling at peace with the world. My reverie is shattered as a voice yells my name - on the opposite side of the road Peter Presford is climbing into his van.

- Lisa's out, he informs me, can I give you a lift back to town?

The sun blazes down, the pavement is hot: I feel in no hurry to dash back to the dusty city centre. We chat briefly and I wander on to the coolness of nearby Alexandra Park to pass the time until Lisa's return.

It's pleasant near the lake. I whip off my shirt and stretch out on the grass to sunbathe and read Solaris. I'm eager to find how the novel (or at least its translation) compares with the film, which I'd seen in London. Vadim Yusov's photography made Tarkovsky's film an unforgettable experience for me, right from the opening sequence. Those Monet-like views of water, leaves and waving reeds, the woodlands with the vibrant patterns of sunlight; Kris awaking to see Hari, her head a glowing silhouette against the bright Solarian sky - all golden russets, ochres, yellows and warm browns on white; one sudden zoom-in on the bulkheads of the station that momentarily converted the screen into a vast abstract, two great green expanses toning sharply to define a common edge, a keen vertical stroke hovering on the golden mean... I find myself halfway through the book before I recall the purpose of my trip.

Back at Manley Road I find Lisa cooling off in the garden hiding behind huge sun-goggles and a diminutive bikini.

- How's the article going? she promptly demands.

I improvise wildly.

- In his Philosophy of Art Herbert Read recommends that the best preparation for a true appreciation of contemporary art is a study of the writings of Whitehead and Schrödinger. I just wondered if by chance you have anything by them in your library...

I falter into silence before the inscrutable gaze of those damned black goggles. Inwardly I vow to settle down and sort out all my scribbled notes the moment I get back to the studio.

Prelude 3 - AUTUMN

Nick delicately skewers chunks of lamb as he prepares the kebabs.

- Eet ees all a matter od dunamei summetros, eh? he quips.

Nick is the only eating-house proprietor I know who is an authority on dynamic symmetry. Over the months, it has become the staple topic of our conversation, the way most folk exchange pleasantries about the weather.

So far as I recall, it started when Bronowski's Ascent of Man series was being screened on TV and he'd been wandering around the magical island of Samos, discoursing on Pythagoras' discovery of the mathematical basis of musical harmony and the fact that a right angle is something you turn four times to point the same way.

Nick was all steamed up by this episode. In between tossing and turning burgers on the charcoal grill, spitting chickens, spreading relish on hot dogs, and stuffing vine leaves, he revealed that he was born on Samos and is a devoted admirer of his compatriot Pythagoras, first genius and founder of Greek mathematics. It seemed that I was the only immediate member of his clientele who shared this deep interest: our friendship grew and blossomed.

I found that Nick really is an expert. We talked about early cultures whose arts and architecture had been based on static symmetry, and the big breakthrough when the Greeks realised that there is a symmetry of growth and arrangement of plants, shells and the human skeleton. We deprecated the influence of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, unsuccessful Roman architect, purveyor of false theories on the Greek tradition, and inspirer of pseudo-classical architecture. We discussed the golden section, and whirling square rectangles. When lingual difficulties intruded we scribbled diagrams all over the counter menu, much to the disgust of Nick's wife who had to search out another copy for impatient customers.

Tonight I am telling Nick about Jay Hambridge, self-styled American expert on dynamic symmetry and author of innumerable books on the subject published by Yale University. On a visit to the British Museum he found compass marks on unfinished Greek volutes, and realising their significance he was able to reconstruct the long-lost method of drawing an Ionic volute.

Nick's luxuriant moustaches curl in a faint sneer. I sense the gesture implies that Nick would have passed the information on to Jay without all that research and hard work. I hastily point out that Hambridge's discovery was made over sixty years ago. Nick promptly forgives him and starts off on one of his anecdotes while the kebabs sizzle.

It's a story from Diodorus Siculus, a Sicilian Greek historian, about the sculptor Rhocus, who'd served his apprenticeship swiping ideas from the Ancient Egyptians and passed on his skill to his two sons. These two, Telecles in Samos, and Theodorus in Ephesus, each carved half a statue and when the two parts came together, they fitted exactly, so that the statue appeared to be the work of one man.

I look impressed. Later, when I regale Lisa with the tale, she is sceptical.

- Maybe I should get Nick to write this ruddy article on art, is her only comment.

Interlude - WINTER

I like to keep up with what the younger generation of artists is doing. The Whitworth Art Gallery puts on a regular exhibition of work from colleges throughout Britain - the Young Contemporaries - and it's usually well worth a visit.

There's a decided element of the surreal this year not only in the works but in the titles. I have a feeling that titles are superfluous on works of art except as a convenient means of identification, and the large proportion of works titled UNTITLED shows that I am not alone in this prejudice. But I admire an apt title: I DON'T KNOW, BUT IT TOOK A LONG TIME seems to anticipate the inevitable question... There are a few exhibits that provide audience participation this year, like opening boxes and switching on mechanisms. There's one item combining both activities near the gallery entrance. A young lady has opened the box but neglected to switch on the power, and is bent double

peering into semi gloom. Always ready to oblidge, I lean over and close the switch. A red neon sign promptly flickers into life inside the box. ECHO it proclaims, and immediately there's a progression of ECHOs receding to infinity.

- That's good, announces Lisa (for it is indeed she) staggering back in amazement, thank ghod you rescued me - I was beginning to get vertigo staring at a million images of me disappearing into the depths. How's it done?

I switch off and on again by way of demonstration.

- Two-way mirror at the front and another mirror behind the neon sign, I guess. When the sign lights up, the reflections keep battering between the mirrors.

We compare notes. Lisa hasn't been round all the rooms - as it's my second visit I offer to give her a conducted tour and promptly get entangled in a maze of chicken wire hanging from the ceiling. It has a myriad tufts of green wool fastened all over it (JUST A LITTLE GREEN says the catalogue). When I realise it's an exhibit and not a man-trap, I stop thrashing about and find my way out. Meanwhile there's a startled squawk from Lisa, who's nearly tripped over a faintly obscene piece of soft sculpture on the floor (AFTERBIRTH). An attendant hovers in the doorway eyeing us suspiciously, but we are chuckling over other sculptures - a laced boot whose toe-cap is metamorphosed into the corked neck of a bottle (titled BOTTLE, what else?) and a clenched fist inside a cracked glass jar (BOTTLED VIOLENCE). Like I say, the surrealists are out in force this year.

As we wander around the conversation turns to inspiration and creativity.

- It's a funny thing, but the present upsurge of interest in the creative process was largely the reaction to Sputnik in 1957. The US hawks panicked with the thought that their educational system might not be producing enough original scientists to maintain the American technological lead in the world. Before the war, creativity tended to be regarded as an offshoot of genius - granted by nature, and like the weather, something we can do little about. But in the presence of the Soviet "threat", creativity could no longer be left to chance. Funds were made available to many workers in the field once research on creativity became legitimised as the properly serious concern of the military and government...

Anyway, creativity isn't regarded with quite the same awe it once had. In a way it's problem-solving. An ability to play with concepts, ideas, relationships freely and recognising new and significant patterns and combinations. There's no fundamental difference in the creative process whether it's painting a picture, writing a poem or formulating a scientific theory. The mathematician is often an abstract artist who hasn't cultivated the ability to express himself in a plastic material...

We wander into the last gallery, admiring the large black and white CAR PET spread before our feet.

- Creation is a solitary experience. As an artist, I arrange or discover a problem and set out to solve it - and when I've got the solution, the basis of evaluation as to its "rightness" is inside my mind. I know whether it's successful or not, whatever anyone else may say.

- That sounds a bit arrogant: and although I agree with you in part, aren't you forgetting something called "communication"?

- No. The artist's sole concern is the act of creation, and at that time he's not concerned with other people's reactions.

We become aware of a pleasant pulsing sound, an unobtrusive modulation that has gradually asserted itself at a conscious level. It comes from what at first glance is a work bench with a beam across the top carrying a taut string, and concealing an impressive assembly of electronic gear.

We stand entranced by the subtly manipulated vibrations.

- Lovely, enthuses Lisa, what's it called?

- WORDS FAIL ME, THAT'S WHY I MADE IT, I read from the catalogue.

Postlude - SPRING, AGAIN

- So it just won't fit in, mourns Lisa.

She glumly surveys the pile of material that has accumulated in the editorial "in" tray. It is rather huge. The pile, that is. She sifts through it for the umpteenth time, ticking all the essential items on the list, and the result comes out a 96-page Zimri.

- I'll just have to be ruthless, decides Lisa, thinking of all the production problems and the postal bill, I have to agree.

- And so far as your article is concerned, I just can't manage those colour pages you've included, she continues.

- Well, I had plans to do some screenprinting for the occasion, but I've been so busy one way and another, of late...

- Don't bother, says Lisa, I know, I know. There's the poetry booklet, and if I'm going to get out Zimri in time for the con you can't embark on an ambitious colour printing programme.. Look, be practical. It's not only a matter of time, but space. This will have to be edited ruthlessly....

Her violent gesture disturbs the pile of manuscripts, and confusion reigns momentarily as leaves flutter floorwards.

- I get your point, I concede as order is restored. But given more time...

- Christ, mutters Lisa fervently, eyes upturned to heaven.

- Given more time, I persist, the article would turn out to be a work of art in itself...

- Stop, says Lisa firmly, this is what I'll do. I'll print the bits and pieces you've written about writing the article, just to whet the readers' appetites, and promise them that you might get around to the actual article next issue. How does that grab you?

- You're the editrix, is all I can say. Now, what about the rest of this stuff...

Note From the Editrix

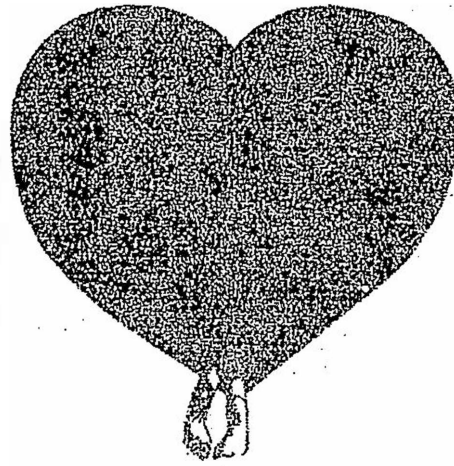
The exhibition Harry was talking about there was the 1973 NORTHERN YOUNG CONTEMPORARIES supported by the Granada Foundation & the Arts Council; it was held at the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester - 17th November to 22nd Dec.

The works (paintings, sculptures, constructions, drawings, prints or films) Harry mentioned were: JUST A LITTLE GREEN, '73 (Chicken wire, wool and steel cable) by Andrew Clive Davies - Birmingham; ECHO, '73 (Wood, neon light and mirror) by Diane Davis - Leeds; CARPET, '73 by Michael John Donnelly - Bristol; AFTERBIRTH '72 (Lagex, cloth, kapok) by Penny Eastwood - Leeds; WORDS FAIL ME THAT'S WHY I MADE IT, '73 (Electronic sound equipment) by John Patrick Fitzgerald - Liverpool; BOTTLED VIOLENCE, '73 ((Mixed media) by Frank Jennings - Leeds; I DON'T KNOW BUT IT TOOK A LONG TIME, '72 (Biro & acrylic) by Martin Wells Mitchell - London Chelsea; and BOOTLE, '73 (Ceramic and mixed media) by Rob Malston - Leeds.

There was also a super colour etching by Lynda Hunter from Leeds called WOMAN EATEN ABOUT THE FACE BECAUSE OF HER NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE, and from Clive Jennings (Newcastle University) USED FRIENDS - mixed media; LADY EATING A TIGER (oil on canvas) by David Fletcher from London: Royal College of Art; and last but not least oil on canvas called A HOUSEWIFE WHO'S HAD ENOUGH. It really was a superbly fascinating exhibition none of the titles we are a disappointment once I was confronted with the exhibits themselves - life took on a new meaning when I left the gallery - I wished I could have touched the artists concerned...

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING
ENTIRELY DIFFERENT...

poetry!



BEHIND HIS EYES

Michael Butterworth

trylops rests his head
smiles
leers
brokenboned creature...

his wife
rests in an armchair
after the satisfying meal
burping
making little
satisfied
noises

the same noises
for a thousand years
they are beginning
to depress trollop - they
always had done
- disgusted with the pathetic animal...

upstairs in his
bedroom he sits down
on his bed and
stares up at the wallpaper
a thousand
lightyears away...

his spaceship
rests in his head
it revolves
slowly in his mind
a dinky toy...
he puts it

between his legs
and points it upwards

a line of black...
he is seeing
the universe edge-on
the ship
revolves infinities of

awareness before his eyes
glints of sunlight
come from behind his eyes

2

there's no blood
inside my skull
there's a blue sea -
 water holly hocks
 yellow
 dandy lions
 beneath the level sur
 face face the sun

and in the gloom
on the bottom of the sea
i've no fun

 and
 on the ground in
side
 the power house
 on land near
 by
 the stream in
side
 the black doors
 on the river side
a dark seed
 pod
 grows
it flies in the sky!

ALONG THE BEACH

Along the beach
where she walks each day. A thousand
eyes for the slaving sea
and its grey sucking mouth, the sky.
Ears for its infant sound.

Rippling, gently now -
a calm surface of foam.

Rising and falling, a million
little foam-flecked breasts,
filled with volumes of
the deep blue-black. A silent
surface, screaming with want.
Shudders for her mother,
remembering the womb, its
dark warm place.

Michael Butterworth
1974

MORE THAN EVER

- - - lisa i conesa

More than ever
the sky was tearing itself apart over his head
with crashes of rippling metal-sheets
Through the fringe
frayed vaginal crack
he was staring into darkness

Fusing the sky
with alcoholic flashes
and stood for a moment triumphant
in the azure afterworlds

But
again
crashing
tearing
metal

Tightly clenching his eyelids
he soared into darkness

THE DEADLY SEDUCTION OF LIFE

- - - Gerald England

Will the dead never rise?
Are the dead gone for ever?
Is there no eternity?
Wait Wait
Wait in vain

I hear the cries
I hear what was never
I am lost in uncertainty
Open the gate
I am insane
No-one hears
the eternal law
- 'Tis fate 'Tis fate
Let the heavens rain

Will the dead never rise?

THE PURPLE HOURS

An anthology edited by one lisa conesa is still available from the editorial address @ 35p each.

The collection of poems includes some from
Brian Aldiss; John Brunner; Robert Calvert;
Chris Fowler; John N. Hall; Mike Moorcock
& many others!

I
I stand on a beach,
beneath my feet are eroded particles of the land,
call it sand.
Before me black swirling waters that surge forward,
dying waves clawing their way from the sea.
Above are clouds that only partially obscure
the light from a moon.
I am alone.
I wonder where I am,
why I have come here.
There is something primaeval about this situation,
a man alone on an austere beach confronting the sea.
It raises a strange kind of wonderment in me
that I should have outgrown long ago.
there is much that I have outgrown, desires that
have withered away, so much so that I wonder if
I am human any more, but I realise I must be
or I would not have taken myself to this place at this time.

Time, the word is so important to me
although that should, if a correct perspective is taken,
not be so.
I am the master of time, I have not bowed, like the rest
of humanity, to its onset, accepting the wrinkles and
decay it bestows. I have stood and watched it pass by
me and remained unaffected.
I am, for all practical purposes, immortal.

I do not remember the name I was given as a child
I do not remember being a child, though it seems
that I did but recently. Now all I have is the physically
unchanging image of myself as a man apparently
twenty five years, yet a quarter of a century
is but a minute portion of my lifespan. My body
remains unchanged though my perceptions have without
doubt altered a considerable degree as have my interests.

II
Gaius Tentius was a merchant in Rome at the time the Caesar
Julius ruled, a moderately prosperous man who had no enemies
and a wide circle of acquaintances who thought him a bland
if pleasing person of somewhat dubious ancestry.

The convert to Islam, Carole the Frank, beat cheerfully
the drum on ships that rowed across the Mediterranean.

For thirty years Petros from Greece wandered Europe
Preaching the gospel and following the precepts of
Francis of Assisi.

Giovanni Arema, a prosperous merchant, amazed the Medicis
with his abilities to withstand several attempts on his life.

III
What is a name to me?
Sorcery with its emphasis on knowing the secret name of a thing
has always amused me. There were several sorcerers who, in ages
past, were terribly frustrated at my ability to withstand their

spells. There is no magic, of any kind, now.

I wonder when I ceased believing in the gods, in any god? It seems like something that has always been with me. Once, with a monk, I discussed the reason for the existence of the Wandering Jew. He told me that he was cursed by the Lord Jesus that he might bear witness at the Second Coming. I played a cruel joke on the monk and told him I was that man and told him of Jesus and destroyed his faith. Cruel indeed for I was in Athens when the Nazarene lived and never heard of him until some twenty years after his death and a further twenty before I found it necessary to become one of his followers.

I have made obeisance to many religions, doctrines, creeds. Always man tries to set up some tome or person as ideal that men should follow and obey. All trickle away to dust in the end. Sex, politics, and religion I care nothing for though the first was the last to die away. When man has exchanged one chain for another and that for a further one his basic problem remains constant -- his nature. That is the key to mankind. Perhaps one day he will stop trying to form a doctrine that satisfies his nature but will try to understand himself instead and base his actions upon that understanding. Perhaps, though I have seen little sign of it.

I wondered if I was a servant of god once when I was attempting to make sense of my situation. Of late I have wondered if, in fact, I am human at all. Perhaps I am a synthetic creature, a product of some totally alien race, put upon this earth to record the growth and change of homo sapiens and one day they will call for me and I shall give up all the relevant data. Certainly it is curious that I was not born before history began rather than in prehistorical times before man had begun the use of written symbols as means of communication.

IV

Once I lost a hand as punishment for stealing. It grew back within ten years. It appears that my mind has a picture of my body, a picture that never fades. Every cell in my body has no doubt been replaced many hundreds of times, always they have been replaced, none have ever been lost. Nothing about me decays or declines or changes except my attitudes.

I have indulged in hedonistic debauchery, in solitary asceticism, but that was long ago.

It took me less than two centuries to realise that, for one in my position, extremism of any form is pointless and revealing. I have spent most of my time as the faceless man. I have ordered my life so that I am always comfortable, one of the middle classes, that group between high and low that is always there no matter what the social environment. Because of my nature I have had to be cautious, for though I believe I cannot be killed entirely I do not relish the idea of pain and so have sought to avoid it. I have never been an explorer but have followed in their wake.

REVIEWS OF THREE SCIENCE-FANTASIES ^{by} BRIAN ALDISS

I:

Deposited in the Borchardt family vault,
The eternal dimension-wandering Bird of Thora
Spirals dispiritedly. Only the wretched
Freddy Frog Bonzoona, a spy, esper,
Android-doctor, and other despized
Freddy Frog Bonzoona, spy, esper,
Android-doctor, and other despized things,
Can hear the bird's mind-cry and recognise it
As warning from Beyond.

'Beyond' happens to be

In the power of the commercial empire of Smix-Smith Inc,
Whose boss has temporarily assumed the form
Of a seven-month foetus, to escape the machinations
Of the Dirac Pare-Ravers, those
Maligned (but nevertheless radioactive)
Robots who survived - and some say started -
The Seven-Minute War. Bud Snockerberg,
Who soldiered with Bonzoona in the war,
Is out to get the leading robot which
Could be behind the Decoy Galaxy of Erdna Mornot,
Troubled through he is by random fifteen million
Mmagahertz hallucinations (still radiating from
The Smix-Smith stronghold out on Ganymede).
In the end, it's Bud's fluff, Katey, known
In Thora as the Princess of Illusion, who
Kidnaps the ancient foetus and lets it play
Inside the time-vault where - although besieged
By ravaging devolved galactic hordes -
It grabs and opens up the Borchardt bird,
And finds the sweet machine
Links up with everything, including
The mind of Freddy Frog Bonzoona
(Wherein, it happens, all the rest takes place -
Yea, the great globe itself.)
It strikes me likely and I like it.

II

The partime wars of Universe Zeta
Have enmeshed Earth and its shadow-sister-
Planet, Lyrocupa.
Only one man, the reviled Dagor,
Lord of the Shallow Sea,
Can save the twin worlds from extinction.
But Dagor himself (who doubts it?)
Stands condemned by the Eternal Four.
Taking the lovely Myrror with him -
She in her wrap with pet marmoset -
Dagor flees to Venusport, where

A shift in space-time shipwrecks them
 In the last months of 3123
 Of course the Think Force is in hot pursuit.
 There in the gravity-powered city,
 Fergus of the Four confronts Dagor, who
 Letting fly with Lyrocupan leveller
 Hurtles the city into 9075!
 Its power failing, it sinks to Venus' molten core,
 To form a metabomb that blows
 The Zetan fuse, and all are killed
 In the ensuing dis-equilibrium -
 Except the marmost which, mating
 With its shadow-sisters, starts
 Life in Home Galaxy again.

III

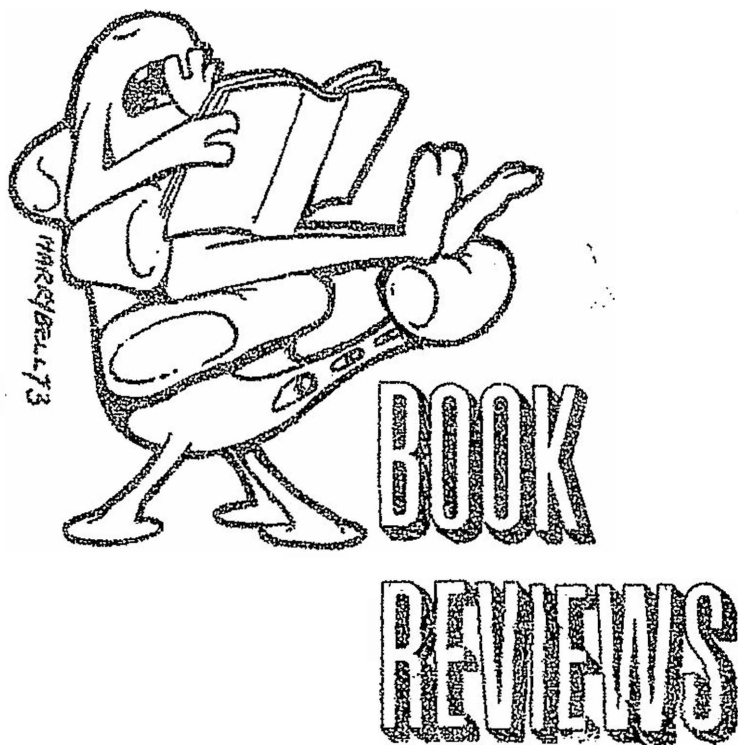
With eyes of lapis-lazuli, Blind Kro,
 Famed Dweller in the World of Symbols,
 Seeks out the aid of Demi-Marge to find
 His lovely Ristopha again. Coming
 On the Whistling Hunchback, Guardian
 Of the Tomb of Tearful Night, he draws
 His magic weapon, Runeyfroth. They fight
 While lizard-birds crawl from clouds, and suns
 Make off the heavens pin-ball machines.
 Kro 'wins. A gnarled tree grows from the dwarf's
 Entrails, splitting the Tomb. And there, beyond
 The Seven Symptoms on the Gate, stands she
 The Gods once knew as Ristopha - now changed
 Into a mighty pile of magazines.
 Many the awful ills that Kro endures
 Beyond the Beck behind the Beacon Hill
 Where even Runeyfroth becomes
 His many-visaged enemy. At last
 With semi-help from Demi-Marge
 All's well, and Ristopha has legs and lips
 Again. But wait! One Symptom still remains,
 Ravening and unchecked and Blind Kro's equal.
 Methinks there's going to blossom forth a sequel....

contd from p.

The first book in the series - though no series was intended then, it just grew - appeared in 1967. The Winds of Gath, published in America by Ace. As a hard-cover it appeared in England published by Rupert Hart-Davis in '68 under its original title, Gath. It was the only one to be graced with hard covers and the only one to be published in England until recently when Hutchinson brought out the four books of the series under their Arrow imprint, namely:- The Winds of Gath, Dceriai, Toyman, Kalin. It is to be hoped others will follow.

For the record the complete series to date in the order in which they were written is:- The Winds of Gath, Derai, Toyman, Kalin, The Jester at Scar, Lallia, Technos, Veruchia - all published by Ace Books.

Mayenne, Jondelle and another yarn, Zenya have now been published by Daw Books.



NEW WRITINGS IN SF 21 - edited by John Carnell . Published by Corgi @ 35p . 189pp

Reviewed by Kevin Smith

This was the last of the New Writings series to be edited by Ted Carnell before his death, and, accordingly, the Foreword is an obituary by Diane Lloyd, sf editor of Corgi Books. It is a great shame, then, that what I have to say about the book is not very complimentary.

The opening story is Passing of the Dragons by Keith Roberts. It tells of the problem of trying to understand alien behaviour. 'There's no real reason for an Epsilon Dragon to die. Nonetheless, they do.' Thus is the opening paragraph, and thus is the point, ostensibly, of the story. The two human observers trying to understand this strange happening are total opposites. Behaviourist (Second Class) Fredericks is, a middle-aged cynic who accepts nothing at face value, and our narrator. Pilot (First Class) Scott-Braithwaite is a young man with definite ideas of the 'rightness' of things. Thus the two are perfectly matched for witty conversation, though Frederick has a great advantage in that his asides to the audience about the Pilot (First Class) cannot be refuted by said Pilot (First Class). Both characters are too extreme to be totally convincing, and if my continual use of 'Pilot (First Class)' has been getting on your nerves you probably won't like Roberts' continual clever-clever style of writing either. In spite of what I've said, this is a story worth reading, and is certainly one of the better ones in the book. A critic isn't allowed to suspend his disbelief quite as willingly as other mortals, after all.

The next two stories I can only class a 'average'. Algora One Six by Douglas R. Mason is about the ultimate computer, this time placed in a synthetic body shaped like a beautiful girl. And guess what? The computer takes up an independent existence, did I hear you say? Correct, but this is saved from being a hack story by some good writing and an ending that is just a bit different. Commuter by James White is also well written and well paced. I refuse to say what it's about, though I'm sure you'll get it, as I did, before you're intended to. That's what spoilt the story for me.

Next is the story I didn't like, he says, rubbing his critical claws together with unsavoury relish. The Possessed by Sidney J. Bounds is a time story, with the philosophy of his particular version of time very badly thought out. But more of that later. Here's the plot. Rachel Waters has visions of many different places that aren't the Earth of 1976 (the setting of the story). Various non-entities achieve a short-lived fame by suicidal assassinations of influential people. Dr Shannon ties the two together by a remarkable sleight of hand and a theory of time travel. The visions are various possible futures. The assassins are possessed by the minds of people from these various and several futures in order to influence events so that their particular future comes to pass. The Earth of now (1976) has no power over its own future! SHOCK HORROR ENDING!! I found it pathetic. Let me tell you the theory of time as expounded by Shannon (Bounds). Time past is like unto a single broad stream. Time future is many tiny rivulets, each rivulet a possible future. They all merge into the single broad stream at the instant of now! Fair enough, up to there, but now put it in the context of the story. Why should anyone in any of all those 'possible' futures bother to try to influence events in his past to ensure that his present comes to be. If he did/does/will exist, so does his present, and therefore no action is necessary. Thus the whole raison d'être of the story collapses, and is in no way redeemed by good characterisation or style. The story telling method chosen may suit itself well to Stand on Zanzibar, but The Possessed is not 700 pages long, and the resulting jerkiness upsets the flow, and becomes tiresome. As I said, I didn't like it!

My confidence in the New Writing series was given a boost almost immediately, however, by the next story, What the Thunder Said by Colin Kapp. It's one of the two best of the book, and my favorite. Kapp's ideas with regard to unusual kinds and uses of technology are generally novel, and he keeps up his record here. The descriptions of the stupendous thunderstorms, especially, are so very convincing. Disbelief is forcibly ejected! His theme is a fairly common one — how to recognise alien intelligence when it hits you over the head. — but the handling of it is extremely good and has all the competence one expects of Kapp. One line I particularly enjoyed: "These were the origin of the dreaded thundercells of Baba." Neddy Seagoon move over!

Tangled Web by H.A. Hargreaves is a bit below average story. It's a none too subtle clobbering of bureaucracy, and loses out because of that lack of subtlety. Things become almost painfully farcical as the story goes on. The underdog hero wins in the end, but hadn't you expected that?

The Tertiary Justification by Michael G. Coney is the other very good story. There are ideas aplenty, assembled in a well paced fashion with just the right amount of suspense added along the way. More astute readers than I may, perhaps, work out the direction the story is taking before the end. I didn't, and was pleasantly surprised as a consequence. Coney walks the tight-rope between the 'page-three-givaway' and the 'deus ex machina' extremes of ending very well.

To summarise, New Writings 21 was a disappointing collection. Were these really the best seven stories available? Budding writers take heart! Two stories were very good, one slightly less good, three on one side or other of average. One contains a basic flaw, but otherwise is basically terrible. An excellent story instead of that one would have made the book a good buy at the price. As it is, pay your 35 pence if you're keen, but don't expect too much.

DEATHWORLD - 1 by Harry Harrison - Sphere Books @ 30p - 160pp

Reviewed by Jim England

This book, although complete in itself, is the first book in a trilogy. On first starting to read it, it seemed to me to be an example of space opera of the most typical kind - extrapolating the American Wild West into future centuries hence. All the ingredients were there.

The hero, Jason, is a professional gambler, "quick on the draw". He is visiting Cassylia, "the playspot of the nearby cluster of star systems", when he is approached by Kerk, from the planet Pyrrus, who wants him to use his psi abilities to convert 27 million credits into 3000 million by gambling at the Casino. Jason agrees, partly out of respect for the fact that Kerk is even quicker on the draw than he is.

At the Casino, Jason moves "with a positive, self-assured manner... like the owner of inherited wealth" and has a "professional talk" with the wine waiter about what he is to drink. (Shades of James Bond and "shaken; not stirred"!) Then he starts to play dice. Trouble starts when he finds that the Casino is using dice with magnetic dots on one side, and in the fracas Kerk breaks a man's wrist by squeezing it with his "thumb and index finger".

Jason wins his 3000 million credits, which he learns is for weapons to defend against hostile creatures on Pyrrus, and departs with Kerk. The rest of the tale concerns his adventures on the "Deathworld", where the gravity is nearly 2g, temperature variations are extreme, volcanic activity is abundant, human life-expectancy is 16 years despite "milli-second reflexes", because of the great variety of hostile planetary fauna.

I must confess that, after over 20 years of reading it, I am getting rather tired of space-opera in which 19th or 20th century America is transplanted into the far future, complete with six-guns (or equivalent), extremes of wealth and poverty, gambling, booze, private enterprise in everything, and "get-up-and-go" heroes with the ideal of "making it". I do not believe in faster-than-light spaceships or in "psi" abilities.

But, having got these prejudices off my chest, I must add that I enjoyed this book. I agree with the New Scientist reviewer who said it was "Hard to put down". What sets it far above the level of 'average' space-opera for me is not so much the plot and its action, but the quality of Harry Harrison's writing. He is an author who takes time off from dialogue to include good passages of description and the occasional philosophical aside, which lets you know that he is no fool. I'm looking forward to Deathworlds 2 and 3.

/= Deathworld 2 and 3 is now available from Sphere Books @ 30p each and will be reviewed in the next issue of Zimri.=/

THE UNDEAD - Vampire Masterpieces - edited by James Dicke -- published by Pan Books @ 30p - 224pp.

Reviewed by Jim England

It would be presumptuous of me to criticise the literary style of the stories in this collection since each one, as the title says, is a "masterpiece" in the Horror genre by a highly professional writer. Whether you like them or not will depend upon whether you like the genre.

The book starts with a remarkable introduction by James Dicke, a lecturer in Islamic Studies whose hobbies, as listed in Who's Who, include "flagellation"! It is remarkable because it occupies no less than 16 pages, and appears to have been written with the utmost seriousness, - the author's tongue never once entering his cheek. It concludes with the question being solemnly asked:- "Were there ever vampires in Britain?"

Thereafter, we have thirteen stories with such titles as Dracula's Quest, The Room in the Tower, The Hound and (the wonderfully evocative) When It Was Moonlight by such masters of the macabre as Bram Stoker, Ambrose Bierce, H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith, - some of whom have also written noteworthy science-fiction. The original dates of publication of the stories range from 1894 to 1954. Some of them were originally published in Weird Tales from 1924 onwards.

Naturally, a vampire of some sort enters into every one of the stories. Knowing this in advance tends to dull their impact as the stories, in turn, follow the pattern:- INTRODUCTION - ENTER THE VAMPIRE (!) - CONCLUSION

The introduction, of course, is very important. There must be a "sinister brownish-purple autumn twilight", or thunder storms, dogs howling, winds wailing, tombs or churchyards...or something...to set the mood. And this must be done expertly. Otherwise - horror always being so close to comedy - there is the danger that the reader will commit the unpardonable sin of laughing his head off. I must confess that I laughed quite a lot. But if you like this kind of fantasy there is enough here to give you insomnia on many a Winter night - if that's what you want!

DISCOVERIES IN FANTASY: edited by Lin Carter - published by Pan/Ballantine @ 40p

Reviewed by Harry Turner

Some folk I know listen only to the masterworks of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, slamming their doors firmly against all other musical manifestations. This has long been a source of puzzlement to me; I can't stand the idea of such a limited diet. I prefer to stretch my ears. After all, there's so much that's worthwhile among the minor works of the Great, in the neglected works of neglected composers, as well as in contemporary sounds and other traditions of music-making. That way I enjoy many unexpected pleasures.

So, in principle, I endorse Lin Carter's efforts in the fantasy field, rescuing authors from undeserved oblivion as well as reprinting the Greats for the Pan/Ballantine Adult Fantasy series.

This volume of short stories is a mixed bag, the longest item being The Miniature by Eden Phillpotts. I must promptly confess to personal prejudice here: I recall Phillpotts as one of the mainstays of the "circulating libraries" so popular in the 30's - a prolific author who made occasional forays into the realms of fantasy, which I, as a young sf enthusiast found watered-down and disappointing. This story is an "Olympian" view of Earth as but one of many creations in the universe, a potted history of man's rise and fall. Reading it today only exposes the lapses from objectivity, the distortions of the author's period and prejudices. I found it tedious. Carter drops the name of Olaf Stapleton into his introductory notes and, perhaps unfairly, invites obvious comparison.

But I was cheered by the inclusion of two tales by Ernest Bramah, an author whose reputation in this country, based on his Kai Lung stories, has surely never wavered, though Carter says he is forgotten in the US. Bramah created an Oriental world far removed from reality but delightfully conceived, consistent and credible. He wrote entertainingly, with wit and an oblique humour, in a polished style that is still fresh and engaging today. The Vision of Yin tells of the predicament of Yin when, after years of strict training, he is admitted to a family secret (orally handed down from father to son for ten generations) about a prosperous future that awaits the son who fulfills certain conditions, only to learn that the exact conditions can't be revealed because a remote ancestor lapsed into idiocy before divulging the vital details to his son... And as a savour of The Dragon of Chang Tao there is this typically Bramahish exchange when the hero seeks admittance to the chamber of the wealthy Shen Yi:

"One whom he expects awaits," he announced to the keeper of the gate.

"The name of Wo, the son of Weh, should suffice."

"It does not," replied the keeper, swinging his roomy sleeve specifically.

"So far it has an empty, short-stopping sound. It lacks sparkle; it has no metallic ring... He sleeps."

"Doubtless the sound of these may awaken him," said Chang Tao, shaking out a score of cash.

"Pass in, munificence. Already his expectant eyes rebuke the unopened door."

Richard Garnett is a name new to me and Lin Carter's useful notes inform us that he is the grandfather of David Garnett of Lady into Fox fame. Of his two stories, I found The City of Philosophers, with its tongue-in-cheek comments on rival schools of philosophy, and amusing development of situation, the more enjoyable. We are promised a full volume of Garnett's short stories in this series; I look forward to its publication.

The two remaining stories are by Donald Corley. Personal prejudice creeps in here again. I can only quote from Carter's notes:

"...if Corley lacks the gem-like precision of Garnett or the glittering irony and wit of Bramah, he has something uniquely his own. You may call it 'gorgeousness' if you are not repelled by the term, the sort of verbal richness that bejewels the pages of Clark Ashton Smith's work or the Arabian Nights. It is however a gorgeousness devoid of Smith's mordant humour and verve..." Maybe gorgeousness turns you on. But not me.

I like Carter's presentation in this series: the notes are informative and helpful if you are tempted to seek out more of an author's work. But the book deserves a better cover than the inept laboured literal artwork of Peter Le Vasseur.

THE INVINCIBLE by Stanislaw Lem - published by Sidgwick & Jackson @ £1.95 - 221pp

Reviewed by Peter Linnett

I must be about the only sf reader in the country who hasn't read Stanislaw Lem's Solaris, judging from the extensive reviews and discussion in various magazines when it came out. A Canadian critic (writing in Foundation-3) went so far as to say that Lem's literary arrival in North America "will have the impact of a revelation". Our friend Franz Rottensteiner (who can hardly be accused of impartiality) has hailed Lem as "the best sf writer not only of Europe, but of the world".

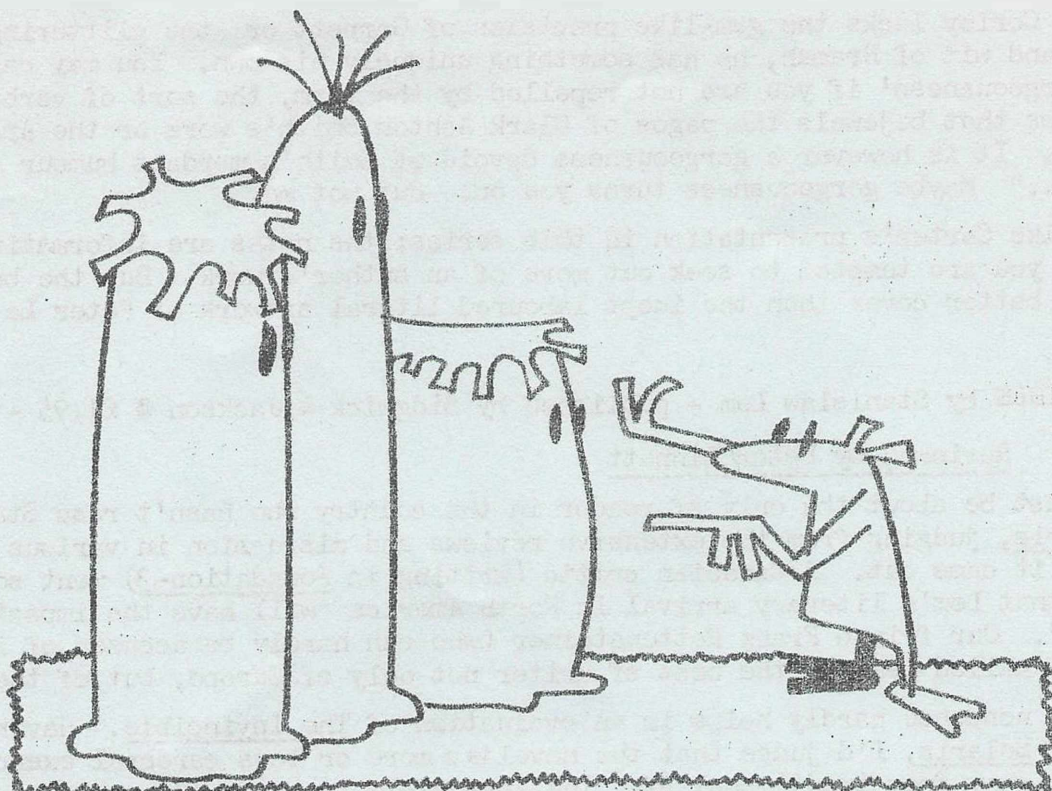
This nonsense hardly helps in an evaluation of The Invincible. Having seen the film of Solaris, I'd judge that the novel is a more or less cerebral exercise, moving well away from traditional sf. The Invincible is quite the opposite - good, hard sf, well in the Astounding tradition. The chapter headings read like Doc Smith's: 'Catastrophe', 'Rohan to the Rescue', 'Unlike Anything Ever Seen Before'.

The novel deals with a space cruiser (The Invincible of the title) assigned to journey to a planet called Regis 3 in search of its missing sister ship, The Condor. On reaching the planet the crew finds the ship with all its personnel dead - apparently of starvation, although there is plenty of food aboard. The rest of the novel is devoted to the crew's investigation of the mystery. Once again, as in Solaris, Lem comes up with an apparently sentient natural form, a cloud which exists somewhere over the uninhabited Ragis 3, and which is connected with the deaths of the Condor's crew.

There isn't really much more to be said: the story, in the manner of most sf of this kind, is unpretentious, doesn't aim high, and moves along nicely (impeded occasionally by great snatches of dialogue). None of the characters really comes alive, apart from the hero, the crewman Rohan, and the Commander of the ship. The adventure inherent in the plot is the thing, and as such The Invincible will appeal to a lot of English readers.

Unfortunately Lem's fluent style is let down by the often poor quality of the translation (inexplicably, the translator is not named): Rohan "plunks" himself down on his bunk, experiences a "jolt of tremendous severity", and is "gripped by a terrible fear". I could quote more; and I assume this is bad translation, not bad writing directly translated, which makes criticism difficult. On the whole The Invincible is entertaining and well-sustained, but it is not the work of the "greatest sf writer in the world".

Note from our research dept: The Invincible was translated from its original Polish to German to American -- Wendyne Ackerman did the German-to-American Translation. If you've read any of the Ace Perry Rhodan novels you know her style.



Atom

Now I Don't want you Boys to GET EXCITED -

he's only here as a **GUEST...**

GREG PICKERSGILL

reviews

FANZINES

ERG from TERRY JEEVES 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield S11 9FE

Here's one that offends virtually my every principle, fannish and otherwise, but no matter how much deprecation is heaped on it comes up smelling like a rose; quite probably because it's without a doubt the nicest fanzine in Britain. The secret lies in the editor, of course. Terry Jeeves is a fair old chap always ready with a little avuncular advice to the youngster just coming out with his first crudzine, a good fellow in the old style who'll only come out fighting if you deliberately antagonise him. And what's wrong with that if you can do it, eh? Anyway, he may not be the greatest most vibrant alive scintillating leader amongst fen we have today but he turns out a good fanzine. Virtually everything he writes about radiates easy bonhomie and enthusiasm, even when he's pissed off at something he seems to be less than enraged, more slightly bemused that such an unspeakable thing actually could happen. But ~~does~~ definitely have a talent that imbues even the most apparently tedious nonsense with easy readability. This seems to be because whatever it is - his hobbies, wartime reminiscences, day-to-day happenings - is written with obvious enthusiasm and spontaneous pleasure at communication with others. This prevents his material from falling with all the manufactured impact of a school essay

(for instance) as is usually the case with people writing non-fannish material like this. The Pardoe's output is the first example that strikes me. There's no doubt about it, no-one without exception in British fandom could write material on the same subject Jeeves does and make it compulsive. It seems to me this is a talent possessed only of the older guard of fandom, a word capability that has fallen away from people who've entered within the last ten or so years. God only knows why cos I don't. Different world to grow into, perhaps; I notice that whenever the present day (and often present fandom) impinges upon Terry Jeeves he doesn't like it much. Strange.

Anyway, here yer go, a nice old fashioned fanzine, with book reviews and all (even they're not so bad as they're more or less just subjective responses, no pretensions or frills, and a fucking sight more readable than anything ever produced by Philip Payne and his tedious ilk) and a nice fanzine to see once in a while, but I sure a hell wouldn't like to see it from anyone else. The only problem is that Jeeves' success with this format sometimes leads others into thinking this is the best way of producing a fanzine and they do so without Jeeves' unique style, inevitably ending up with dull bland and boring trivia.

ISEULT 4 from ALAN BURNS Goldspink House, Goldspink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 1NQ

Well you have to admit that little old fan Ian Williams sure has prescience. Way back in MAYA 5 he typed the title of this fanzine as INSEULT and left it uncorrected, saying it set a useful precedent, descriptive as it was. Now in those days I didn't think there was too much wrong with ISEULT when I bothered to think about it at all; other than being pretentious, whimsical, loggoreic, and generally pandering far too fucking much to the little lost poet lurking in the sensitive souls of the more silly fans. As an outlet for amateur fiction it was far surpassed by Rob Holdstock's MACROCOSM, though I admit it did give the more artsy-fartsy type of fanwriter a bit of a gallop he would have been denied in MAC's pages. With this issue, though, the title sure enuff merits its added 'N', as fandom's arch-crazy Alan Burns has taken over from founder-editor Lisa Conesa and has gone one better than all before him in producing the most masturbatory fanzine since anything of Steve Carrigan's.

Never a man for doing anything by half Burns casually despises the readership, and immediately wipes out any notion that they might expect editorial policy to be even slightly formulated with them in mind. It is all going to be the way Burns thinks it ought to be, and no messing. I can't think of any fanzine that's run more than two issues with this policy, especially when coupled to such fundamentally uninteresting fare as is offered herein. Actually, in the words of Brian Robinson (extracted from his perceptive letter herein) INSEULT little resembles the old ISEULT, more 'a poor copy of ERG with a poetry page.' And as Burns (longtime buddy of Terry Jeeves) lacks in any measure Jeeves' easy bonhomie a poor copy indeed it is. And the poetry page is grim, as one might expect from an editor who virtually boasts his ability to 'write poetry at the drop of a hat' (page 25). An example of this instant art (literature-as-excrement?) from within is;

".....But to take a ship with necrodorm and wake
The sleepers is a fearful risk, you musn't wake them up too brisk.

Minutely you apply the power, heat banks at one degree an hour.

And when the frozen sleepers stir the vibro units start to purr."

from 'Dormouse' by Burns page 19.

Admittedly he might excuse this as not 'serious poetry' (it's part of a 'space ballad') but his serious poetry is so vile I refuse to quote it. Anyway, he claims Lisa Conesa envys him his skill, she apparently having to put time and effort into her poetic works. Well, someone's putting someone on here, for sure. Conesa's poetry might be pretty poor, but not for the lack of effort. At least she seems to take her themes and styles seriously, even if the result may be unbearably 'poetic,man'. Like all of the poetry herein. There's not a damn thing here which isn't rubbish under the guise of poetry, Kevin Turnbull being the worst at fault. Look, all I ask of poetry is that it gives me some insight into some aspect

of existence, however small, or that at least it engages my attention by some original use of the language, or is just bouncy and enlivening, or some damn thing like that. None of this shit here does anything other than bore or repels. One thing by Turnbull, nothing more than a twelve-line catalog of rare metals (doubtless meant to inspire wonder at the variety and multiplicity of nature) shows me nothing beyond the fact that the author has a copy of that famous old fannish standby THE BIG BOOK OF FACTS FOR LITTLE MINDS. I'd feel quite safe in saying that Turnbull's poetry, heavily featured herein, means nothing useful on any level, and I'd be happy to refute any suggestion that it's written solely for the sake of the language used with a scornful laff. Conesa's material herein is pretty much like her usual output, not bad, not good, suffering mostly through trite and shallow themes coupled with good writing, or the reverse. If she ever matches things up right she'll be ok.

Oddly, the articles, although one might imagine from the names they are written by a pseudonymous Burns, are the best things herein and might be better served by a superior fanzine. They're generally free from the lack of reason and reasonability that pervades the rest of this fanzine, and the ~~Coney~~ Arden piece is as neat a precis of the place and use of drugs of any kind in society as I have seen anywhere.

There's one piece of fiction, by Burns, written in a painfully stilted fashion that begs comparison to the pared down masterpieces of Borges. It screams 'significance!' from every syllable, and has as much of that rare commodity as a lump of shit in a sewage farm.

And the letters. Apart from a bit of pally chat with a few cringing cronies Burns spends most of his time being snide and bitter to the fans who wrote horrified letters about INSEULT 3, the first which he edited after taking over from Conesa. They didn't like it, don't like Burns (despite never having met him; has anyone?) and say so. I agree with them, every one. In the lettercolumn comments Burns places a lot of his defence on the fact that he was an active fan many years ago, and doesn't need any assistance from anyone to produce a good fanzine. I've only seen one fanzine of his and that was dire, full of short and uninformative pieces about trips to SPAIN, 'How to Build a Robot' and all that shit. It seems a pity that all his fanning experiences hasn't taught him to lay out a lettercolumn properly, and not to interpose his comment so blatantly into the text of a letter; and if he can't resist that at least use a slightly less garish delineation of his own comments from that of the correspondent. The entire fanzine is rather cloddishly executed, in fact, seems to me Burns is a congenital idiot, despite everything.

This fanzine is no longer anything to do with Lisa Conesa, it has no resemblance to the fanzine she edited under the same title, and I don't think she likes its current metamorphosis. "Enclosed herein is the ~~latest~~ latest ISEULT" she wrote when sending it to me. She may well be right. So, okay, you have a fanzine that no-one likes, that no-one will, in the long ~~result~~, even bother to LoC argumentatively, so what do you do. You fold. And that's what'll happen here. No fanzine I've ever known has been produced without regard to the readership with any success, and no idiot like Alan Burns is going to prove that theorem wrong.

SONF 5 from HOWARD ROSENBLUM 46 Moray Road, London N4

It seems like years since I last saw this miserable fanzine and in fact it was, the first one having come out at the Thirdmancon at Buxton in '68 (where I was neofan enough to pay 1/- for it), but it looks much the same as it used to - like a grey and smeary handkerchief that'd been left in a pocket for months - except for the fact that the paper is now green not white, but the ink is still translucent. Actually, it's nowhere near as vile as you'd expect anything from Rosenblum to be. I mean, I know he's got this reputation as the fan most people love to disregard, but just because he's an objectionable personality doesn't mean he's a total cretin. He doesn't have any editorial sense though, so I imagine that makes all things even in the long run. He is bloody stubborn, I'll give him

that, as in this issue he concludes two series that have been running over three or four issues since 1968. One, the Bryn Fortey fiction serial, is OK for something the Grand Old Man of fandom threw out in a spastic fit, and is rendered even better for the knowledge that he wrote it part by part as it was published and by the time he'd got to the final installment he didn't know how it had started (having no carbon and throwing away the SONF's it had appeared in, of course). The other, a 'Ring Cycle' by American fantasy fan John Boardman (a reprint, not original to SONF) is as Tolkien as you can get and no consequence whatsoever. If I want limericks I want them dirty, not fanciful. Oddly Howie failed to reject a 'conrep' by up and coming nonetity Vera Johnson, which is written from the viewpoint of a hotel lackey, and is quite readable to me, fitting well with what I've garnered over the years of the average hotel workers attitude towards conventional events. Definitely the worst thing are those tedious old book reviews of the latest paperback reprints. Included only to wheedle free books out of the grotesque Gerald Bishop, fandom's middleman to the publishing trade (and what mischance put that gurgling cretin in such a responsible position? Can the acquisition of a few rare bibliographic lists mean that much to an otherwise discerning publisher?) they are pointless beyond belief. Moments after reading them I can't remember what books were mentioned. Fanzine fans simply do not need this kind of information in this form. As I've said before and will doubtless often say again.

Aw fuck. Why does SONF exist? It's kind of obviously sustandard, without even the pretention towards filling some kind of niche that came inbuilt to some crudzines like WADEZINE or FREE ORBIT. It's not even an extention of the editor's personality as in SONF's case the editor injects little or nothing of himself into it. Even if it were issued for that it wouldn't work, it's not even a restricted circulation apazine where that kind of stuff can get away with a lot. I really don't see the point of it, if it's just to get fanzines it all seems a bit daft as Rosenblum is such a fannish institution by now (the next generation's Brian Burgess) that he'd get most of them anyway. It can't be the urge to publish a good fanzine as it's obviously so ramshackle, devoid of thought and intent, casually committed to stencil and bundled out. Anyone with half a brain could produce a fanzine better than this; he surely can't get any response to make it worthwhile, unless his buddies humour him along.

This is, in my opinion, an entirely usless, totally irrelevant, and finally disposable fanzine. I only wish someone would tell me why Rosenblum published it.

LURK 5 from MIKE MEARA, 61 Borrowash Road, Spondon, Derby DE2 7QH

Now here's one of those dull, bland, accross-the-board efforts I mentioned in my review of ERG. There's nothing especially appalling about this magazine - in relation to all-time horror fanzines like VIRIDIANA or FOULER - but it just seems so bitty, so messy, so uncommitted, and all the worse for the fact that the editor (s) seem genuinely aware of and affectionate towards fandom in all its tatty glory. Myself, I believe that any given fanzine should have some kind of defináte course - even allowing for the fact that that course might not be one I'd advocate or recomond - but this just goes all over the place without any direction at all.

A lot of LURK is directed towards fanzines; a large section of fanzine reviews (short but meaningful; evidence that the perpetrators know their stuff) and OMPA mailing comments. There's a large section of 'poll results'; introspective stuff this, a poll taken on previous issues of LURK intended as a 'guide for the production of future issues, its only fault is it's basically of interest only to the editors and doesn't justify the 4pp allocated. Whether it is any'use anyway is open to doubt, as surely any useful assistance is more likely gained from letters and conversation with interested and respected people rather than via a faceless poll. There's a chubby and interesting lettersection with good stuff from many British fanzine fans (which gives as much useful insight into fanzine as a dozen polls) whick shows that at the very least LURK has a strong following. All good fanzine stuff. Now to the rest, where we come to more complex matters. There's a clutch of the usual Philip Payne book reviews; Payne appears as a reviewer in almost every second-line British fanzine these days and I'm

beginning to wonder whether even if he had anything interesting to say in the first instance he still has anything left now. Surely to god it's possible to see enough simple book-reviewing in science fiction magazines, newspapers etc., without having it follow into fanzines. If you must have sf discussion in fanzines for fuck's sake let it have a bit of depth, even if not critical at least enthusiastic in some shape or form. I really don't see any need for a bunch of superficial reviews of the latest handful of paperback reissues in a fanzine, and I think it's a bloody good thing that the better fanzines tend away from that sort of thing these days, leaving it to the people of SPECULATION and VECTOR who can handle the thing properly. And yes, OK, I admit there is a place for the 'amateur' sf critic, but never ever in what is to all intents and purposes an ordinary fanzine for ordinary fans most of whom are no longer blown out of their sox with excitement at the latest Isaac Asimov reprint. Myself, I believe there should be a total fanzine available for this kind of material, rather like Mike Ashley's product of about five years ago - PLININ, MONOLITH, and XERON. All filled with sf news, author profiles, checklists etc. This is all good interesting stuff in its place and Ashley handled it very well, and even imbued it with enough fannish spirit (and fanzine reviews) to cause many a science fiction freak to nose tentatively into the waters of fandom and maybe even become a true fan. However and all, there isn't such a magazine in Britain today (that I see anyway) and LURK makes only a vague halfhearted gesture towards it with Payne's book reviews, and the Chestercon authors panel transcript, which is reasonably interesting for the pro's comments on their occasional bursts of excitement from the sf world. A fair and useful service, reprinting con talks, but like the book reviews it should be all bundled together in one specialist fanzine with the exception of large scale GoH-type address mabe.

LURK, therefore, is quite bifurcated in purpose, half of it directly fannish, half scientifiction fannish. Just a blur, a vague meld, neither one thing nor another, with both facets equally valid in their individual ways but somehow not at all complementary. LURK could, I suppose, be the basis for a more sf orientated 'fan' zine, but from all viewpoints the Meara's interests tend much more towards Fandom, with none of the fanatical bibliographic zeal that consumed Mike Ashley (the best recent practitioner of that art) until his departure from fandom for the doubtful joys of the Jehovah's witnesses.

Anyway, there it is, nicely produced, roughly fannish, okay for a read. It's no-one's fault that no-one gets excited about it, or can't remember what was in it a day after reading it. The hell of it is that Meara has such a nice grasp of fandom that if he only decided to cut out all the shit - 'general interest' articles (jazz guitar, unicorns, all that bollox), the sf, and whatever - he'd have a good little fanzine somewhat similar to EGG but different enough to be worthwhile.

BLUNT 2 from Selene, 131, Coxtie Green Rd, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5PT (Dave Rowe et al..)

Now here's a problem. I've had a couple of wierd problems in relation to this 'fanzine' which I'll forst relate in some fashion so as to (in typically roundabout way) make my position more clear. First off I hadn't intended to review this magazine at all, out of the sense of personal prejudice engendered by the fact that David Rowe had persistently refused to give me a copy (you don't **respond**, he said, despite the fact I'd taken care to tell him I'd enjoyed BLUNT 1 greatly) even though my name and person featured in it more than once. Long time Ratfan watchers will know that this is one of the fannish habits I find more aggravating - anyone mentioned in any context in a fanzine has a de facto right to receive a copy. And no, I don't hold to this religiously myself, as there are those mentioned in my fanzine who don't get copies, usually because I haven't the vaguest idea of their whereabouts, and they're usually mentioned pretty incidentally anyway. OK. Anyway, I came out with the idea of passing over this all as casually as possible, even when I finally found a discarded copy in a rubbish bin at NOVACON 3 and discovered that it did indeed contain some of the finest fanwriting of recent years. But on to the next hangup; simply, the style

of the fanzine and its originators drops me right off. Formatwise it seems almost near as dammit my concept of a professional fanzine if there ever could be such a thing. Too smart, too tidy; no warmth, no personality. Or now, maybe too much personality of the wrong kind for me. Cos here the failing might be mine, a failure to get next to the editors of this thing in any shape or form.

Myself, I know little of the Smiths. I've spoken to them briefly a long time ago and found them nice, pleasant, fannish. Archietypally fannish as are their editorial writings herein Rowe I know more of, but find him irritating, brash, noisy, bumptious, no more than a somewhat more talented version of the Arch-Nause of Fandom, Gerald Bishop. I can't really accept the fact that he, alone or part of an editorial team, is responsible for a good fanzine. OK, it's daft and irrational I know, and I should train myself out of it, and yes I know how irritated I'd be if someone said the same thing about me, but there you go. Maybe the fact of the matter is that I do paranoidly believe that people do say the same thing about me, and overlook my work accordingly. It's a hell of a world.

So okay. Be reasonable Gregory. Force yourself into this fanzine and try not to think about it.

Well hell, they've got all the ingrediencts of a world class fanzine here and no mistake. In-depth material on aspects of fanning, retrospectives by oldtimers, historical articles on fandom, pretty good fannish, lots of letters, the whole bit. Nice. Best of the bunch is Andrew Stephenson's PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG FAN. This is by god real writing! Meaningful, evocative, jammed with images not merely apt but wonderous in themselves. This is Sense of Wonder stuff here, I'm not ashamed (bloody proud in fact) to say that the last few paras left me with the same gazing-on-something-wonderful feeling that I haven't had since all those years ago when the first Apollo missions brought all that crazy Buck Rogers stuff right up close in front of my face. Andrew amazes me here, this is a chronicle of far-seeing aspiration - staggering to reflect that it's basically about producing art fanzines (almost as misleading a precis as saying THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE is about an alternate world in which the Axis won WW2) - and depth of self-knowledge that puts the rest of the fanzine into the far-distant perspective it deserves. Vucking knockout.

The David Rowe piece, apparently on the same subject, I think I read, but I can't recall. Ian Williams thinks Rowe is a great fanwriter.

Fan-history articles here include a piece on the FANTASY ART SOCIETY by Alan Hunter, a shattering resume of the fannish career of Walt Willis (the Spiritual Master of Fandom) by Ken Bulmer that left local Ratfandom with the unsettling feeling that the Master had in fact died instead of just 'died'. Odd. James Parkhill-Rathbone's finely written pieces is more unclassifiable, but effectively communicates the ways things are not any more. Jim Linwood's fannish fiction would have been a deal better had it not been so determinedly and transparently based on well-known Dick short story, but was just amusing enough; it's a good thing to see a bit of apt fan-fic about these days.

The letter column here is absolutely desperate. There's a lot wrong with the cut-up-categorised lettercolumn at the best of times, but this is a particularly vile example as it's badly laid out with everything crammed together with no separation space between each category, never mind individual comments. Entirely repellent and a weary toil to read, god knows what may be within, I haven't the energy to hack my way through again. This is arrant cretinacy in a fanzine that makes such a fetish of good layout, and whilst I'm all for simplicity in presentation this is not so much simple as moronic.

In an article entitled WHAT'S WRONG WITH FANDOM Julia Stone endeavours to sound arch, prissy and provocative at once; this may exert a certain fascination over the more desperately heterosexual portion of fandom but cuts no mustard this side of the city. This piece, once beyond the unbearable style, is suffused with the usual penetration analysis of the motives behind fandom that everyone with half a brain has figured out for themselves long ago in any case don't mean shit even if they

actually do have any bearing on the reality of the situation rather than being the smart ass drivellings of fans who once looked up 'psychoanalysis' in their BIG BOOK OF FACTS FOR LITTLE MINDS. Simply, she's been a dilletante fan for so long known she knows a bit about us all, but not enough to give anything she has any weight whatsoever. So her piece here, with all its conclusions, with all its comments of various fans and groups, is no more than an aggregation, though virtually the same thing written by someone more au-fait with the personalities and proceedings involved would have been a joy to read. Or, paradoxically enough, by someone with only the vaguest notion of the realities involved.

So there ya go. In addition to all that it's well produced, excellently laid out, nicely and sparingly illustrated. Too clean, sterile almost. And still I don't like it much, and it fucking broke my heart to see it in the top five of the CHECKPOINT Fan Poll, it really did.

Nice one Andrew, anyway.

Gregory Pickersgill -174

PROMISES PROMISES

Some of you who are looking for an in-depth study of Michael Moorcock's writings by Dave Britton - as promised in our last issue - are due for a sad disappointment. The reasons for this are many and varied. Dave Britton has recently been fully occupied transferring his stock^{of} books and porn from the House on the Borderland to new premises nearer the city centre. You will now find Dave beaming behind the counter of the newly-established ORBIT BOOKS in premises just off Tibb Street, ready to help all customers and your editrix entertaining visitors with hinebra.

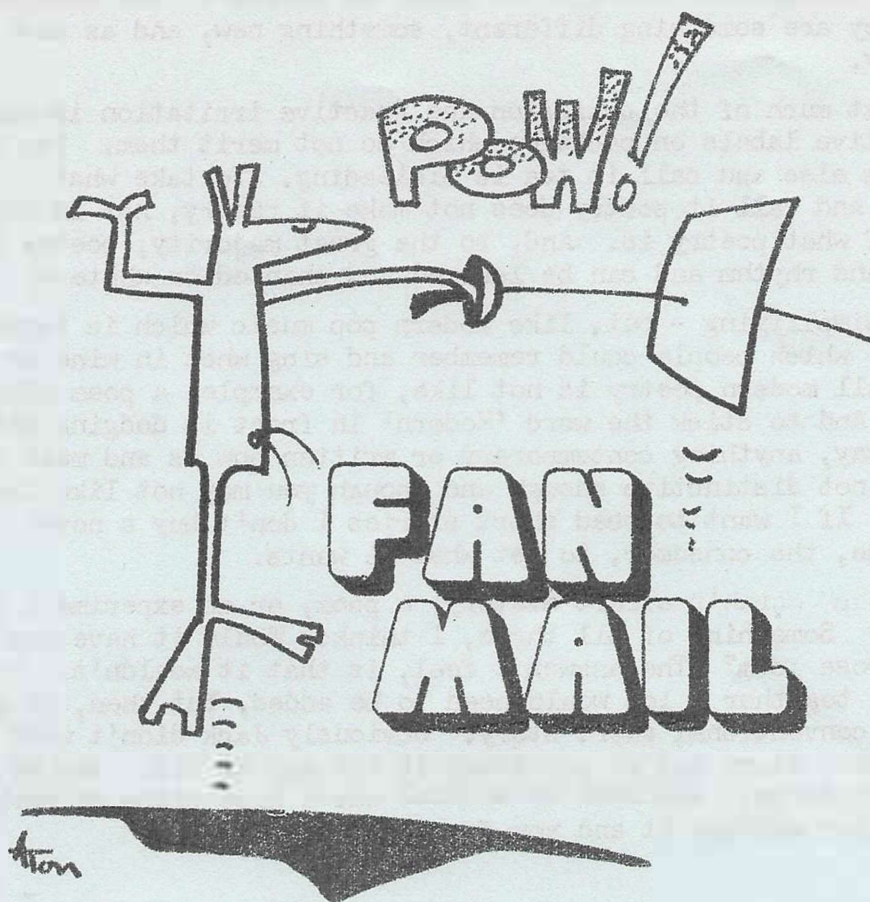
However taking our courage in our hands (both of them) we will make so bold as to promise that the next issue will contain in-depth con reportage from such renowned fans as Chris Fowler, Peter Roberts, Ian Williams (these last two names are perhapses) Lisa Conesa, the boss, and if I can get him to talk (Ha!) perhaps even some comments from Sebastian Turnworthy.

Full like taking a holiday in glamorous California? If you're a nice female between 30-40, and willing to do domestic chores, then Jim England is your man; he offers you free accommodation from 20th August for a whole academic year in San Francisco. His address is is (but write quickly giving all vital statistics and photograph)

Jim England
'Houndel'
Ounsdale Road
Wombourne
Wolverhampton
WV5 8BT

(I was going to apply myself
except that I'm too young and
anyway I might bump into Richard
Brautigan - ugh!)

US FANS PLEASE NOTE, JIM LOOKS FORWARD
TO MEETING YOU!!!!



TED TUBB - 67, HOUSTON ROAD, LONDON, S. E. 23

Zimri 5 received and read and appreciated - and take Chris Morgan to some quiet place and shoot him. As a review his treatment of Bob Shaw's THE PALACE OF ENTERNITY was a perfect example of the kind of thing which causes steam to come from my ears and strange mottled patterns to appear on my face. It's the kind of guff churned out when the deadline is close and anything goes and for him to say, I quote, that 'If the book is carefully analysed it is found to be rife with faults.' and then not to say what those faults are is reviewing at its lowest. And for him to add that - 'To give any details of the remainder of the book would be to spoil your enjoyment.' does nothing but give me the impression that he couldn't be bothered to read it, an impression heightened by the casual comment - 'It's not a deep book, yet it's well worth reading.'

Oh, well, who said reviewing was easy?

But Gray Boak managed to do it with a series of pungent remarks which told all without effusion - and George Hay showed a deft touch delightful to read.

And Jack Marsh?

I feel that his short story and your editorial on the new use of words in what you choose to term Modern Poetry have a lot in common. For a moment let me digress.

Poetry, to me, is a very rigid art form based on a stringent set of rules having to do with scansion, meter, rhythm and rhyme - a host of disciplines which determine sonnets, quatrains etc. Until fairly recent times a poet, to be so called, had to work within those rules or his work no matter how good or bad, was not considered to be poetry. It could have been called free verse or something else but it was not and could not have been poetry in the classical sense.

Now, once we throw aside those disciplines we could have something better

or worse but it will not be the same. In that case the art form you describe, being relatively new, should have a new name. In just the same way the compressed 'novels' by J.G. Ballard are not and can never be novels in the accepted sense of the word. They are something different, something new, and as such should have a new terminology.

I feel that much of the confusion and reactive irritation is caused by this using of distinctive labels on packages which do not merit them. Tea is tea - to wrap up something else and call it tea is misleading. To take what is in essence chopped up prose and call it poetry does not make it poetry, not in the classically accepted sense of what poetry is. And, to the great majority, poetry is something which has swing and rhythm and can be learned and chanted or whatever.

I'm over-simplifying - but, like modern pop music which is totally different from old ballads which people could remember and sing when in wine or just feeling happy, what you call modern poetry is not like, for example, a poem like Poe's Raven or Grey's legy. And to stick the word 'Modern' in front is dodging the question because, as you say, anything contemporary or written now is and must be modern. The labelling is not distinctive enough and though you may not like labels, they have their uses. If I want to read short stories I don't buy a novel - a label in that case helps me, the consumer, to get what he wants.

So - was Jack Marsh's effort a story, a poem, or an experiment in diverse spacing of words? Something of all three, I think. Would it have been as effective told in normal prose form? The answer, I feel, is that it wouldn't. For one thing if you run it all together a lot would need to be added, but then, if you did that, you would have a conventional short story. Obviously Jack didn't want to write a conventional short story and so presented it the way he did. And he succeeded in what he set out to do. THE DAWN OF NOTHING was a nice piece of work. Congratulations to him for writing it and you for publishing it.

But -

To return to your rules for the new medium - new meaning the art-form now called poetry but which is as different from the stringently disciplined poetry of classical times as Jack's story is to the normal short prose yarn. I may have got it wrong but what it seems to me what you are saying is that words must cease to have definite meanings and can be broken, misused, used in new ways, torn, tormented and used as sign-posts and map markings rather than as a universally accepted means of direct communication. And you also mention the betweenword. Does this mean the space between words? If, for example, I say - Night, death, final! - does it become something else if I write it -

Night

death

final.

Because if it does we are no longer dealing with recognisable symbols but are dealing with a series of spaces broken with variables and with an infinity of possible arrangements. As an art form this might be valid if we refuse to accept any discipline agreed to by others, but in that case the difficulty of communication increases to a point where all that is produced is gibberish. You could understand it because you have produced it - but how could anyone else? They might put their own interpretation on it, sense in it something appealing, even pretend they have full comprehension, but it could only be a pretence. There is no way they could possibly know your thoughts and emotions behind your production because each would be speaking an isolated and totally different language. By that I mean that the way you set out words, or parts of words the meanings you choose to give them at the time you use them, their very arrangement, the betweenword importance which can only be a very highly personal thing - all this would be impossible to decipher by any other person to any real degree of truth.

Of the poems in Zimri the ones which I liked best were the ones which were concerned with telling a story, an incident or emotion, and using words which I could recognise in a pattern which I could follow. Aldiss's AT THE JULIUS CAESAR HOTEL - could be summed up as the answer to a statement, 'Which is the more important, food or sex?' CREATION:- 'To an author in creative torment any excuse is a good

one to stop work.' REJECTION SLIPS BY DOWSON:- 'Nothing is permanent.' Your own EYES OF A WOMAN 'A personal involvement with a painting.' But Andy Darlington seems to have reached for abstruse words to be used regardless.

I think the greatest danger in the use of such methods of constructing 'poetry' - Oh, for want of a better name! - is that, as there are no disciplines, there can be no real way of telling the bad from the good. There is no standard against which a production can be set - my way is as good as your way - it depends solely on personal choice. A good way as any, no doubt, but how to select? You like it - your readers don't - or the other way around. How to judge one poem against another? How to tell who has written what? Such constructions almost eliminate the 'signature' of the author and much of the new poetry seems to carry a deadly sameness together with the uncomfortable feeling that all the author has done is to take a scrap of prose, eliminate the 'bridge words' such as 'the' and chopped it into a random pattern.

I don't know. That is probably the trouble as when I'm in a discussion on classical music - and I mean the stuff which seems to be more a mathematical exercise on a piano rather than an emotive series of mellifluous notes - 'You must learn to appreciate it!' they tell me. 'You must understand what the composer is trying to do! You have no right to judge without prior knowledge!' Well, maybe, but why should I be expected to make the effort? I write a book and I do not insist that a reader should suspend all his likes and dislikes and sweat so that he can appreciate what I have tried to do. My job is to entertain him. It does not enhance my work if I hold a stick in my mouth to hit the keys of a typer - and I should expect no credit for using self-produced hand-made paper on which to write. The words alone are important - that and the effect they have on the one who reads them.

And I'm wondering now that Jack Marsh has done what he has, just how many similar type story-poems are going to some through your letter box? Come to think of it I could write one myself - but no, emulation might be the sincerest form of flattery - but a copy can only be inferior to the original.

/ = Monsieur Jean Cocteau - from

The Cat that Walks by Itself: "I have only one doctrine, and that is that poetry is a separate language and not, as is popularly supposed, a special way of sing the language of common speech. The language of poetry is the highest form of expression given to man, and remains sublime, without ridicule..."

We must put up with being pushed aside, for it has been proven that every significant and enduring achievement has seemed, in its own time a failure. We must be burned to raise again, and every poet knows, alas, that, where his achievement is concerned, a successful issue is really a failure. Poetry is a religion without hope, but its martyrs guarantee the eternal truth of its dogma. What is the use of poetry? Answer: I know poetry is indispensable but I do not know what for. If I knew, and I told what I knew, I should be like a plant holding forth about gardening. ... In Madrid, a little while ago, Salvador Dali was talking to me about Tancredism. Don Tancredo, in Spain, is the man in a white costume and white make-up who stands stock still on a table in the middle of the bull-ring. The bull rushes forward, stops, sniffs, and turns away! There is a good deal of Tancredism in art. Standing stock still is one method of self-protection. But it just does not happen to be mine. " =/

TOM ROBERTS - Department of English, University of Connecticut, U.S.A.

Your remarks on poetry are very fine though they recognize only certain traditions in poetry and some of the others are fun too. A highly formalized poem that does something important offers us not only the "content" and the "struggle" of that content within a pattern, and the simpler and more obvious the form--I am thinking of poets like Herrick now--the more exciting the experience of finding the "content" really is important. I "liked" both your poems on page 4 and the poem on page 10--that is, I found them sticking in my mind and causing perturbations

even after I had set the zine aside and gone on to other things.

One difficulty in which poetry finds itself is that it no longer seems fun to readers: it has had impossibly high claims made for it. People who do not read poetry avoid it not only because some of it is difficult to read and the great bulk of it is mediocre but because they have been told that it is Important and will make them Better People. Who the hell would turn to sf if he thought it was God For Him? If we could manage to persuade everyone that in fact poetry is trivial and only entertaining and that they ought to be a little ashamed of themselves if they like it and that it is likely to damage them in subtle ways, they would turn to it quickly enough and read it in great draughts and be grateful--as we are--when occasionally they come across something that has staying power in their minds. We who read poetry get fun out of reading the inferior stuff too, just as we who read sf get fun out of reading even inferior sf--for an idea, a twist on a theme, a mildly interesting character, a moment's diversion. Unfortunately, non-poetry readers suppose that every poem is offered as a Revelation from beyond and that they are expected to admire each one extravagantly. So long as we talk about poetry as though all poems were great poems, no sensible person will read it: he will encounter too many inferior poems which make a mockery of the highest claims for poetry and not unreasonably conclude that there is much pretentious nonsense connected with the tradition. In short, I think a regular reader of poetry reads poetry in the way many of us read sf and thrillers--not expecting very much from any single piece but every now and then being agreeably surprised by some blockbuster lurking within the great mass of poor and mediocre stuff one normally encounters. And we ought to talk about the fun of reading the mediocre and forget for a while those rather rare moments, after all, when a poem actually twists one's way of looking at things permanently for the better.

Of course, there are various kinds of fun in poetry. I enjoy reading your longer poem on page 4 and I enjoy re-reading it--but then I also enjoy doing mathematical and logical puzzles; other readers certainly do not care for the kind of poem which seems to say, "Solve me." Still others are not satisfied to have a sequence of images do things to their unthinking minds which they cannot consciously follow: I am a little deficient in this respect myself--I am perhaps too much the puzzle-solver by nature.

/= And Marianne Moore went so far as to contend that the poet's work and the scientist's are analogous, for both are willing to waste effort, "each is attentive to clues, each must narrow the choice, must strive for precision"; like poetry, "science is the process of discovering." Biology courses in particular had affected her poetry, for "economy of statement, logic employed to ends that are disinterested, drawing and indentifying, liberate--at least have some bearing on--the imagination."=/

MARTIN RICKETS - 10 Greville Road, Southville, Bristol Bs3 1LL

Zimri-5 is satisfyingly symmetrical in that 'Dialog' links up nicely with the letter column, for some of Harry Turner's comments, I'm afraid, more or less sum up my understanding of modern poetry in spite of - or rather as defined by - your explanations. 'Unsemantic impressive-sounding blab(s)' is the impression I had from Dialog after the first few paragraphs (and I'm not trying to be deliberately hurtful or rude - I respect what you were trying to do). 'The meaning of meaning of words' is the phrase that first jarred me. A word either has or it hasn't (in which case it isn't a word) - it can mean many different things but each of those meanings are literal and absolute - even when the word is used synonymously or figuratively. There can be no such thing as meaning of meaning of words. For example the word 'swim' in the context of a man using his limbs to move through water means just that: a man using his limbs etc.... If we try to find the meaning of a man using his limbs etc..., whether we are asking why he does it, or its symbolical significance or whatever, we forget the word 'swim' altogether and use other words with other meanings to explain what we are after. In short, we are playing with ideas and not semantics, which boils down to what language is all about - communication of ideas; and ideas are sometimes so intangible that meaning has to be literal and absolute.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not against metaphor. Certainly not in poetry a la Robert Frost etc. Someone once said that one good picture is worth a thousand words. I think the same holds true for a good metaphor - it can convey meaning or image more vividly than paragraphs of 'precise' prose.

But then you say 'the metaphor seems suspended in mid-terminal comparisons'. Here's where it falls apart again, for a metaphor has to have terminal comparisons otherwise it ceases to be a metaphor. Without 'verification on an everyday level' it may mean something to the writer, but it communicates nothing, so what's the point? To say that it means something different to everybody is merely a hedge, a neat get-out. 'Grammatical dependance' along with punctuation is a keystone of meaning, and meaning is the basis of communication, and communication is the point of all written work.

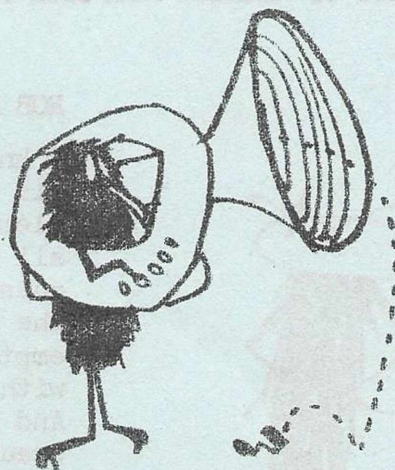
To me paragraph 6 on page 3 is unintelligible jargon and explains nothing, as does most of the piece from this point on. As far as the element of sound and 'melody' is concerned - I'd rather write music.

And then I turn the page and find poems by Aldiss - full of meaning and wit, so different from the sort of material you appear to be describing in 'Dialog'. Here, obviously intense emotion is described, or at least pointed at. Words and phrases by themselves aren't 'loaded with emotion', and if it's merely juggling of words and phrases that Modern Poetry is involved with, I'm afraid I don't want to know. I believe in what T.S. Eliot said:

'That at which I have long aimed... to write poetry... with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones, or poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry, poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem points at, and not on the poetry, this seems to me the thing to try for.'

/= I doubt, Martin, that the above quotation means the same thing to each of us how about this quotation, also from T.S. Eliot: "...the poet is occupied with frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meanings still exist." These meanings are inextricable from what Eliot calls the "music" of poetry, the vibration arising from each word's accumulated associations, and partly from the immediate context that qualifies it. Or, to consider this from a more intimate perspective, poetry is revealed in and through the "auditory imagination," which is the "feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and trite, the current and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilised mentality." Here one may sense how readily, in Eliot's mind, words press towards a resolution in the Word. And if I may be permitted one more quote, this time from William C. Williams: "In poetry the objective is not to teach or communicate, but to reveal." */

Changing the subject, some of Ted Tubb's comments were tangential to much of my thinking lately - especially with regard to SF criticism (and to literary criticism in general for that matter) and to his remarks on how many young authors have been permanently damaged by needlessly adverse criticism. On a television programme recently Robert Shaw, the actor (who has also had several novels published and himself once reviewed books for a newspaper), denounced as 'monstrous' the system of literary criticism whereby a critic has to choose, from a long list of



titles, various books which may have taken their authors years of heartache and sweat to complete, and review them in an essay of 1000 words or so. This resulted in my resolve never again to review a book unless my anger and/or intense admiration has been aroused by said book. In SF criticism particularly some of the worst criticism is being written today, especially in Speculation and - worst of all - M. John Harrison's essays in New Worlds. Glib phrases and pointless nastiness seems to be the hallmark of these reviews - criticism itself seems to be treated almost as a separate art, with much adherence to style and rhetoric, the reviewers trying to prove what virtuosos of literary criticism they are. In the case of the author/reviewer is this especially pathetic - for the review can then become dangerously hypocritical. M. John Harrison himself published three brilliant stories in New Writings in SF and then proceeded to write fiction for New Worlds that was, at best, mediocre. Yet he still poses as hatchet-man for NWQ. And of course there is the classic case of Michael Moorcock reviewing his own books in New Worlds under a pen-name.

ROB HOLDSTOCK - 11, Milton Ave, Highgate, N,6.



I know I'm not a poet and I damn well know it, but all this shit about image, elliptical poems, the element of sound. Jesus Christ, Lisa, what does it all mean? Am I losing my mind? /="Is that a serious question? Cos if it is, off hand I'd say yes you are!="/ The poem you used as an example was stilted, disjointed, empty, imageless, directionless, flowed uphill, walked with crutches and is everything that is BAD in poetry. And yet, a few pages later, 'In Time' is the most beautiful thing you have ever written, and it means something on a level so cerebral, so totally undatable that I just don't want to know about elliptical images, and the cold equations of warm poetry. Lisa, poems work or they don't. Don't they? /="Accuracy of observation is the equivalent of accuracy of thinking." (Wallace Stevens).="/ They work, when they are as introspective as YOUR poems, when they register with some memory, or emotion that is particularly close to the readers heart, a single phrase, a stanza, an image, however flickering, brings a sensation of 'identity', the poem adopts a meaning, a very special meaning to the reader, and if it doesn't, then the reader doesn't like it and you get cretinous statements such as the one I made above, that the poem is meaningless. I

used the above as an example, and I will immediately qualify it to what I really think, that the poem in your editorial doesn't work for me, and that's all. That's all I can say.

/="The relation between the poetry of experience and the poetry of rhetoric is not the same thing as the relation between the poetry of reality and that of the imagination. Experience, at least in the case of a poet of any scope, is much broader than reality." Ibid. =/

Brian's poems are in very great contrast to yours. His are filled with sequence. His poems Move, they tell of an emotional movement. Yours, beautiful in their way, tell of a static emotion, of an event in the past, a lingering sensation. They're different. Brian's poems I read, thought OK, nice, understandable. Creation is a masterwork that I shall write out and put on the wall because there is me every time I really get down to 'serious writing'. Hilarious if you've suffered a phase of non-creativity.

John Hall reads like a frustrated song writer, who's written some groovy words, gone down to the music makers and found he's five years behind time. John Hall is old fashioned, out of date, gone with the wind, has been, washed up, screwed up, out of sight backwards, six feet under... no good. Shit. Tell him to stick to writing pop reviews; they're undemanding of any talent.

/= Seeing as I don't agree with a single word you said about John's poetry, I shan't tell him anything of the sort, so there.=/

Ted Tubb's long article, reading like it was written between scratching his left ball and walking out to the kitchen for another cup of coffee, is an entertaining statement of the obvious. Somehow it reads like the viewpoints of someone who rarely goes below the top layer of anything he thinks about. Of course, it's difficult to gauge how much IS fiction (i.e. how many of the notions he's made up to get his forceful, entertaining, but still rather rigid ideas across. I suppose I'm really getting at his comments on reviews and reviewers because somehow it seems to me Ted is demanding reviewers to 'synopsise' books and nothing more. To me a review is not a review without mentioning the essence of the book, but for Christ's sake, a straight plot summary has all the intellectual achievement, and reader satisfaction, of Noddy. A review is a discussion of a book in relation to and as a distinct entity from, other book: on the theme, in the series, by the same author, as valid a statement as an expression of the author's ideas that may already have been advanced in part in other books... hell, it's so much that it quite literally becomes something totally subjective, and thus you get good reviewers and bad reviewers, and the good reviewers are the ones who can see what a book has to offer over and above its story. And maybe there are reviewers who can entertain with straight synopses, but they're rare. And there I've said what I feel in a single word: entertainment. A review is a piece of entertainment in the same way the book was, or a song, or a play. Damon Knight realised this a long while ago. So did James Blish, and a lot of other writers who write reviews to entertain, albeit cerebrally in some cases. There is entertainment in criticism, by God!

Also this business of building novels from skeleton, up through muscle and blood to final layer of skin. Ted Tubb (page 17) makes writing a novel sound like building a boat. It's nauseating. Oh, I know it's how ninety nine point nine percent novels are written, and it's always tempting to sit down, think up three plots draw connecting lines, divide it up into chapters, invent everything from base characters to philosophies, and write it in two weeks. I couldn't do it. I have more respect for literature. A novel is something that expresses. I don't care what, but all this shit about 'never writing from yourself' suggests that either I'm wrong, or I hear some pretty crazy things. I feel that anything more than a basic notion for a story at the start of writing destroys the final product in terms of art. It just seems wrong, somehow, to write with geometrical precision. It'll sell, but is it art? (who said that?) I'd rather write with my balls than with my slide rules, and sure, I'll sell once every two years, but one day there'll be a call for novels that are less than plots interwoven, with a narrative hook, and a certain 'sympathy' with the lead character (requirements today). One day they'll want novels that are like poems. To enjoy them you need to feel 'identity'. And I'll be waiting... /=At the head of the queue you mean?=/

A disappointing 6on Rep from the Winner of the Smooth and Slick Operators Award for services to Lust, 1973, Bryn Fortey (at the last count). Why wasn't I mentioned more? Why mention all these people like Hall, and... Hall... and er... Still, a nice recording of the event, and since the Con WAS a memorable one (for the wrong reasons, but that's the way the innocence crumbles) it will be forever good to read over.

Gray's fanzine reviews were weak. He sounds like he did them on sufferance. You see, they don't call me Mister Astute for nothing... /=No indeed.=/

BRYN FORTLEY - 90, Caerleon Road, Newport, Monmouthshire NPT 7BY

With Zimri 5 you have approached the degree of competency I imagine you are seeking. Nothing really brilliant, but nevertheless a very readable issue, and with Zimri you have a fanzine capable of attracting contributions from professional writers - something very few British fanzines have done in quite a while... If you continue to provide a platform for the fannish outpourings of science fiction fandom, aided and abetted by the more talented of the authors - such as you seem to be doing - then your continued place in the hierarchy of fandom is assured. /=your words are like balsam, I really needed them, ta.=/

With The Dawn of Nothing Jack Marsh provided still further proof of his writing potential. He wastes not a word. Indeed, with this particular story he was, if anything, too economical. At times it struck me more as a plot outline that could have been more fully written to more telling effort. One of these days Jack will break through to selling success.

ALAN STEWART - 6, Frankfurt am Main 1, Eschenheimer Anlage 2, F. R. Germany.

Modern poetry? Well, I don't know, but whatever that was by Jack Marsh was great stuff. That kind of violent story of primitive lusts and emotions has to be told in this semi-poetry style, I suppose, or all the real feeling of violence dissipates away in an ordinary narrative style.

I always enjoy reading book reviews and the ones in Z5 were no exception. Chris Morgan's criticism of The Palace of Eternity has made me decide to hunt it out in Frankfurt's bookshops, which have a goodly selection of English language SF, although I'm still looking for Dangerous Visions volume one, nevermind three! And please, Lisa, what does ZIMRI mean? Is that the name of some character from those dreadful sword & sorcery stories? Or did you just make the name up? Pray tell.

/= Tut, tut Alan, you're not paying attention and not following my clues. When you asked me that question in the last issue I answered it in the letter following yours. But I'll forgive you and put you out of your misery: ZIMRI is the name of a character in one of John Dryden's poems of the same name. Remember: "Some of their chiefs were princes of the land;/ In the first rank of these did Zimri stand,.." and so on? =/

MIKE GLICKSOHN - 141, High Park Ave, Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3, Canada.

It has always seemed to me that there is a certain kind of thinking required for appreciation of poetry. I can't explain what it is, except by saying that it's whatever I haven't got. Even your editorial remarks made little sense to me, although that may have been because you seemed to assume a degree of familiarity with the jargon of poetry. "The first phrase graduating in minus." Is this English we're using here? / = Well, yes, a kind of poetic English I guess. =/ Whenever I read people trying to explain the meaning of an art form, I'm always brought to realise how much is required before one can even understand what they're talking about. I suppose it would be the same if I tried to explain calculus to someone who knew nothing about the language of mathematics. Therefore, rather than talking about what poetry is or does or can be, I'd rather someone showed me specific examples and said, "Look here, this is what I mean." Simple minded, I know, but at least there's a possibility of getting through then, and not leaving an audience frustrated and tempted to ignore the whole topic. Perhaps it's just impossible to do with modern poetry because of the intense subjectivity of the material, which leads me to believe that I'll likely never know more about it than I do now. (Currently the intersection of understanding and the subject of modern poetry is the null set.) But then in college my favorite poet was Pope so what can you expect? (I liked several of Brian's poems, though: I have no idea how they relate to Pound, but I could appreciate them for what they said themselves.)

/ = But it is quite wrong to assume that just because one likes modern poetry, one does not like the old masters - if indeed you so assume - I too admire Pope and Dryden and John Donne and the rest of them .. some more than others. =/

Ted Tubb has a fascinating contribution. Clear highlight of the issue. His description of BYM was frightening, though. I hope he hasn't met too many of them, but he makes them seem like daily intruders in his life. I'm a BYM, but I don't think I've ever been quite like that. And I hope that Mister Tubb isn't quite so cynical as he would appear in this piece. I've never read any of his work (how's that for a refreshingly honest approach) ~~but I enjoyed it very much~~ but the honour of fandom is at stake here. We can't let Ted Tubb meet only the nerds of the microcosm. All you nice British fans, get in there and do decent things for the man!

To edit a book, you first have to convince a publisher that you have

something that will sell the book. This may be a name and a reputation for good taste (Terry Carr, Bob Silverberg) or a brilliant concept (Roger Elwood, for example.) Note that the concept doesn't have to be brilliant. You've got to find a publisher who thinks it is.

In an interview in ENERGUMEN 9, Bob Silverberg said: (Ah the facility with which I typed that! To be able to do so though, I had to move about 25 heavy boxes of books, hunting through them for the bound volumes of NERG, then stack them all back in the closet. But such strenuous research is commonplace for a true letter-hack. Now watch Lisa edit out the quotation!) /=As if I would!=/ "I don't see any drawbacks in editing anthologies. The delights are several; first, one gets a decent excuse to reread one's old favorite stories, and second, one gets paid a reasonable amount for work that's a whole lot less strenuous than writing novels." Bob also says, "Three regulars /anthologists/ seem to be about as much as the market can hold.

Roger Elwood is an example of someone who just materialised with a lot of ideas for theme type anthologies that he was able to sell to publishers. So in answer to Jim England's question, nothing stops someone from getting in on the action. If you've got ideas, you can sell the product.

ARCHIE MERCER - 21 Trenethick Parc, Helston, Cornwall, TR13 8LH

Thank you for Zimri 5. (What: no new co-editor yet? Malcolm Muggeridge or Brian Aldiss or Lord George-Brown or anybody? Never mind - if I may mix metaphors a trifle, you're now afloat on your own tightrope.) /=uuuuuch!=/

"Dialog" - not English I agree, which brings up the point that when John Campbell renamed astounding "Analog" he was in a sense slapping his non-American readership in the face with a wet piece of software. But that's by the way. Regarding the content of "Dialog": I'm very much afraid that it contains not just seeds, but the flower, leaf, stalk and root of its own demolition. Because obviously, if a piece of supposed "communication" requires an explanatory article, then it wasn't any good in the first place.

/=I wasn't actually explaining what my poetry means, but rather how it was built up or constructed - the meaning is there for you to find or not as the case may be.=/

That, of course, is assuming that the purpose of language (=words deliberately arranged in order) is basically to communicate. By "communicate" I mean "convey a concept accurately from one mind to another". That, at any rate, is the ostensible purpose of language when I use it. However, judging from your above-mentioned explanatory remarks, I'm beginning to wonder. I'm not sure that you, and those with similar ideas, are trying to communicate as such. Instead, you seem to be launching groups of dissociated words haphazard on the ocean merely in the hope that some day someone will recognise some of them as words. Or, if that's not actually your intention, I don't see that as things are you can hope for anything better. Unless your reader can pick up from what you write something as near as possible to the ideas you had in mind when you wrote it, it is not valid as communication, and you might just as well be writing graffiti in damp sand.

The above aspect entirely apart, I don't want to read about an owl being tortured.

Now on to Ted Tubb. He really ought to do this sort of thing more often. It's readable, it's informative, it's potentially useful to fans, to other pros, and not least to Ted himself - and also it reads as if he actually means it all. You are to be congratulated on securing it.

Jack Marsh, besides wading straight in knocking the conventions of English to left and right as he does so, also writes about torturing owls - or something equally nasty. Bryn Fortey (d'you know his cousin Mozart?) probably would too if he was writing fiction, but luckily he wan't so I was able to enjoy his piece.

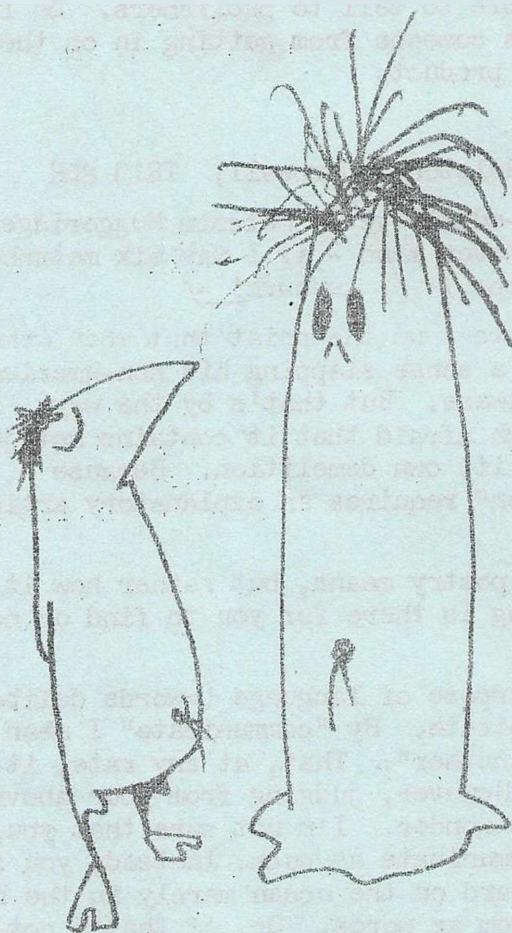
Thank you Gray Boak for the kind words anent my Worm. Trouble is, recently

word got around the states that Worm existed and I had to turn away umpteen resultant applications. As I explain in the Worm I'm on with now, I'm not running more than a hundred of each issue. I only hope Zimrireaders won't have likewise to be disappointed.

Is Jhim Linwood there hiding behind his wife, or is Marion really up and saying something for herself? I seem to recall that she was entirely capable of so doing if she wanted to, but couldn't be bothered or something. And my comments on your chosen artists were entirely straightforward. I don't know Kandinsky from a Vlopdoutski. (And I'm not sure that I want to. He probably draws tortured owls.)

/= Oh, you are owlful, but I like you! =/

Enough. Owls are acceptable company for benqueting panthers perhaps, but the end is quick. Owls are preferably for going to sea with pussy-cats, whom they eventually marry.



DAVE ROWE - 8, Park Drive,
Wickford, Essex. SS12 9DH

"I don't mean to be hard (again) but just give me a direct answer to a direct question, A) Do you Understand the Modern Poetry you Print?

"Please answer now before reading rest of loc."

/= Yes, I do. =/

"b) How come you made such a blow-up of Skel's 42 word peice?"

/= Well, Blow-ups happen... Besides, if you would care to read the poem again you might see that either of the words would make sense, and the fact that I made a mistake and then reprinted the whole poem the way its author

*You might be a fan Graphic to Harry Turner
but to me you're just a hairy Purple nit.*

intended it to be written proves nought else but my respect for poetry...=/

"Your editorial read like a great spiel of psuedo-intelligencia, I'm sorry if you find that hurtful, but thats the way I readit. I think it meant something 'deep' to you, but the whole thing was too 'very-very' to communicate with lesser mortals such as myself." /= Come, come you're being uncharacteristically modest here. =/ "The fact is. the 'Between-word' is usually too self-esoteric for words (literally!) which is why modern poetry. (esp. fan) is usually crud.

"Gerald Lawrence will one day be a tru-fan (mark my words) but to discover why he ponders the lack of love fandom has for Pickersgill, one must go back to

Gray Boak's June kitten meet.

"There we were in Gray's bed-sitter carrying on a very deep, sercon-discussion on faandom. This was Gerald's first fan meet, so he listened with silent intensity, only daring to interrupt when someone used some utterly unfathomable fanetic.

"'Whats a dupper?' he would question, 'Whats a Les Spinge?' or 'Whats a slip sheet?', 'Whats a Gafia?' One might be forgiven for thinking that such questions could hardly add much to general flow of conversation, as they enhanced the evenings 'pièce-de resistance', when Gerald with a rather horrified non-plus look on his face asked 'Whats a Pickersgill???' We had difficulty explaining."

CUYLER WARNELL BROOKS, JR - 713 Paul Street, Newport News, Va.23605

It's comforting to see that I'm not the only one suffering from softening of the headbone... Ever so often some wiseass fan writes me and asks why I sent two copies of my zine, implying that I have achieved senility or something. You can certainly have no such excuse for having sent me a second copy of ZIMRI#5...

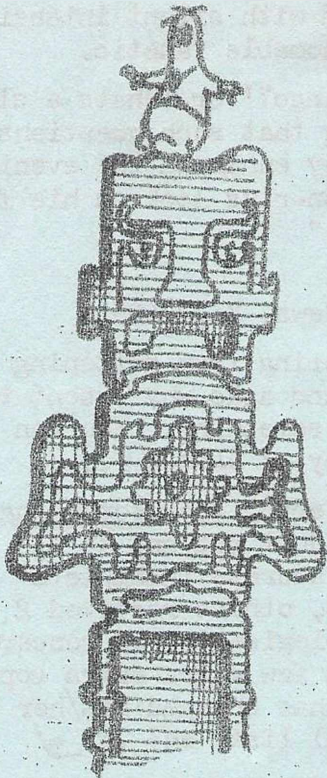
/=Charming of you-to s a y so Ned, but I must be suffering from something, cos I really got mixed up sending Z-5s, some folks didn't get any at all yet my files say otherwise, some I had returned with 'address incomplete' (Jim Allan was such a one) scribbled over the envelope, others received 2 or more copies. Thus I take this opportunity and apologise to all concerned. I have since put my files straight and hope to print a few extra extra copies of Z-6 just in case. And, please, if anyone out there has changed his/her address do let me know if you wish to remain on my mail list, eh? Ta. =/

Your article on Modern Poetry is enlightening, but it doesn't make me like the stuff any better. The quote from Borges is appropriate - but note that Borges (one of my favorite writers) does not, or so it seems to me, write "modern poetry" in the sense you describe. The Borges quote is quite clear, but I would never have gotten out of your poem about the owl the meaning you say you had in mind. This may well be because I am obtuse, /=Anyone who likes Borges, Cordwainer Smith and Aldiss... can't possibly be obtuse; why? Because I like them too.=/but it seems to me that you have introduced a false and needless difficulty into the matter of artistic communication, when you set out with some fairly clear idea such as Borgess expressed in the little bit you quoted, and then try to express it in your poem about the owl. The musical or 'melody' part of the poem I will go along with, tho the melody of that one is not much to my taste. But why camouflage the meaning? If you did not know what you meant - which the poet may not, and I see no reason why he should let that stop him - then something might be communicated by subconscious word associations. But if you knew what you mean, then to invent bizarre images to express it, merely puts an artificial barrier in the way of communication. If the images came from your own experience, they would at least tell the reader something about you, but if they are chosen merely for their perversity, then nothing can be communicated except some notion of your taste for the bizarre. Not that I have any objection to bizarre perversity, but it should go somewhere, not just out at random.

/= "All poetry is experimental poetry. ... The bare image and the image as a symbol are the contrast: the image without meaning and the image as meaning. When the image is used to suggest something else, it is secondary. Poetry as an imaginative thing consists of more than lies on the surface. What we see in the mind is as real to us as what we see by the eye. "
(Wallace Stevens) =/

"The final belief is to believe in a fiction, which you know to be a fiction, there being nothing else. The exquisite truth is to know that it is a fiction and that you believe in it willingly."

Wallace Stevens



BOAK IS a twit..moreover, an error-prone twit. May I review his ERG review? /-By all means, Terry, you're in your corner; proceed!-/ He says I complain about 15 unrecognised years. Nowhere in ERG do I do any such thing. The nearest is the heading which (proudly) claims, 'Now in its 15th year'.. Boak sounds as if he is likewise. He says if you can stand 'Terry's intolerances'...I'd like him to find any intolerant item other than one brief paragraph which says I got more letters for slamming drugs than at any other time. Then he goes on to say that ERG consists of three pages of elementary cine instructions, a set of short reviews of books on your bookstand, Empaviews. How idiotic (or intolerant) can you get. He completely missed the following items. Alan Burns piece on Red Queen Mate, Alan Burns illustrated poem Radio Telescope, my own 5 page cartoon strip, Supersoggy and a lettercol. Get him a new pair of glasses will you? Apparently he also missed all the two colour work..and as for the reviews...how can you review books before the publishers send 'em to you. As for the cine....it is meant to be elementary..if he had looked more closely, he might have noticed the title... but then if he missed so much else, how can you expect him to notice that?

Dawn of Nothing powerful writing, better than a great deal of fan fiction. Not too verbose, and just the right length. A vignette rather than a story.

I didn't really like it but it was good just the same.

CONREP... I'm afraid that this was a bit too rambling for me. Nowadays conreps have become highly personalised accounts of who the writer met, what he drank, and where he ate. This one is along those lines, and while this is perfectly valid, it would be nice to hear comments on the actual programme and con organisation, especially so in this case, as while not doing anywhere near as much work as Fred Hemmings, I did have some small part in the goings on...organisationwise. (Horrid word) Fanzine reviews...highly inaccurate and biased. Boak lack tolerance.... but then what else do you expect from a pseudofan who isn't really there.

ANDREW M. STEPHENSON - 19, Du Pre Walk, WOOBURN Green, Buckinghamshire, HP10 0QJ

Jim England asks, apparently in all seriousness, what is involved in editing an anthology. Well, someone like Brian Aldiss could certainly explain it better than I, but here goes:

The editor does, as he says, 'set in order for publication'; it's what that implies that makes him earn his cut. Sometimes it's damned hard work, differing in details according to the kind of anthology.

a) A small-choice anthology (eg 'Nebula Award Winners'): The editor must: secure the right to print the stories; obtain accurate copies (usually pretty easy, but not always); set them out in the right order; write his blurbs and editorial; sort out the money side of it (which can be a real headache, especially if the various authors are not getting the same rate per word. Some can be stropky, though with the Nebula anthology most are quite agreeable; it's their original publishers who occasionally turn nasty. Enough said.) All this often has to be done yesterday, if not the day before. Ie: fast.

b) A wide-choice reprint anthology (ie: most of the older ones): The editor must: read through a pile of stories yea-high, picking out those he might want, then whittle the resulting heap down to however many thousand words he has contracted for with his publishers; then he tracks down the rights, which can be a headache if the story hasn't been reprinted for a decade or two and the author has died in the

meantime; then he chucks away those stories he finds he can't use after all, and reshuffles his collection; then he thinks about sending it to the publisher. Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison have just recently brought out just such an anthology, THE ASTOUNDING--ANALOG READER, Vols 1 & 2, so they're your men for full details: they go back to 1937.

c) An all-new anthology (ie: most of the new ones): Whew! Here's where the fun starts! By the looks of it, the editor not only has the work of a prozine editor, such as wading through mounds of submitted mass, most of them unusable, plus writing innumerable letters to contributors and possible contributors, but he also has the financial headaches. Some guys seem to thrive on it, but have you noticed how many seem to be co-edited?

Jim, it ain't no picnic.

SAM LONG - Det 11, 66 WW9, Patrick AFB Florida, 32925 U. S. A.

...Poems are meant to be read/listened to. Without punctuation other than word spaces and lines it is impossible to know how to read the composition. 'Red smoke' and 'ignoring' /Sam's considering my first poem here.../ are superfluous words; they lead nowhere and ought to be eliminated. Besides owls don't emit red smoke (Tho a large owl image--that you could get inside to rub the eyes with your hair--might), however in winter they may breathe white smoke like we do. 'Afforestry' should be 'afforestation': not only is it rhythmically better, but it is an existing word. The Goddess wears one crescent moon on her brow; I mean Artemis the virgin huntress to whom the chastity of nuns would be pleasing. Nuns may jump in surprise, but 'explode' is too strong a word and implies destruction, not growth and a straightening and standing up. Why stone pines? /Becasue they are the kind with branches at top spreading like umbrella or a mushroom, they reminded me of exploding habits....=/ Too the Goddess is traditionally blonde, and her realm, this living world, a queendom, As I read your verse I thought of white-dressed nuns and a horse (Boreas, the north wind) and a formation known as pentent snow.

I like the idea of your compositin, but that composition fails as a poem because it was not well-thought-out and betrays poor choice of words and rhythm, Perhaps it's because you take your poetry too seriously. A real poem will almost write itself--not quite, but almost. Relax. It's no disgrace not to be a poet. I am a versifier. I make aprodies, ditties, epigrams....I know I'm not a poet, a real poet, that is, just as I know that I've never been in love, and that's part of the problem: one can't write love-poetry (is there really any other kind? /Yes.=/ without being in love. Perhaps your compositions are not poetry because you're not in love either. Have you ever been really in love? /Yes.=/

Relax, I say again. The people who take their poetry too seriously are the worst poets: for example, Vergil and Milton and Wordsworth. Study Graves, or Burns (when he's not trying to be artsy) folk ballads, Chaucer, the better Keats and Coleridge, Donne and the better Elizabethan poets. Study Aldiss. /Will do.=/

steve sneyd - 4, nowell place almondbury huddersfield hd5 8pb

Aldiss' poem, the bit about clothes strewn across the floor like childrens' paintings... a beuuuutiful image..in between becoming rich and famous and a great SF writer and things the bastard still writes poems like that in his spare time ?I'?'@&'&'X etc (expressing extreme feeling).

The Ted Tubb article...never having been nearer anyone famous than once shaking hands with Jimmy Hofca during one of his many wiretap trials when a mate of mine's dad was the defense lawer of the one of his fello defendants (another long and boring story) /On the contrary, it sounds fascinating; I'll have to get you to write it for me one of these days..=/ I have a clear conscience about not being one of the kind of guys who go and haunt well-known persons and drop their names during boring parties & go on about 'X said to me as I helped him into the taxi while he was being sick after making a pass at Y who'd already told me to tell him she was a Lesbian anyway but he wouldn't believe me' etc...nevertheless, pissed off as Mr Tubb obviously is with hangers on, don't you think his article will succeed in putting off, not the type of person its aimed at, who have enough chutzpah

(or 'radical cheek' I believe the translation is) for owt, but the odd poor sincere sod who really does want to ask his favorite author what he really did mean by so and so surprise ending, and who after reading that article will curl up with premonitory shame and continue to drink in a dark corner and never be any wiser and so turn into the kind of inaccurate writer of critical articles that give everyone the heaves, thus compounding the felony?

The Jack Marsh poem: yeah, this is a likely picture of what we all really are, and like the guy said about Clockwork Orange..is the reality the flew of the reporter who reports it (as Mary Whitehead would presumably have it) or in ot her words putting sugar on a dungheap don't turn flies into butterflies. Whereas photographing flies on a dungheap don't increase the number of flies, but it does tell you where the dungheap is....

Yr poem in the intro that you say 'at first glance seems meaningless' in fact seems remarkably meaningful.

JOHN BALL - 35, Filey Avenue, London N, 16

Many people, including his professional colleagues, have observed Ted Tubb's decline into cynicism and circular arguments of pent up frustration. His thing was just like that, dragging out his old warhorses of bitterness for the edification, albeit unwilling, of a world that passes further from his grasp with every passing minute spent at his typewriter. His story, while readable and instructive is pure Tubb at his most bitter, for why? Maybe cos he is getting older, & the world of SF that he once knew has changed more than somewhat, and Fandom, no doubt once a well frequented playground, has moved on also to the point where he and he alone can write a LoC and criticise me for using a four letter word. He does not observe the use of other one-time taboos throughout Z-A, and in my article in particular, or if he does he makes no comment. He stops at one word used in my LoC. I suppose it was this one: Fuckin'.

Further, if my surmise regarding Ted Tubb's bitter feeling towards his fellow authors and fans is correct, and he really hasn't adjusted to the changing times, it is all the more disappointing in a Science Fiction author, a man who has long thought and dreamt of the possibilities of vast and sweeping alterations in style on every level; technological, sociological etc, for a major portion of his life. And now that many of those changes have come to pass, many of them no doubt twice as dreadful as he ever conceived, he can find sanctuary only in the traditional attitudes of the ageing: Thing were better once, I know, because I am older than you are. The potrayal of Bym is a very bitter old reprobates idealised view of the young intellectual. If you can think no further than this, Mr Tubb, then stop trying to create now.

Einstein disguised as Robin Hood
With his memories in a trunk,
Passed this way an hour ago
with his friend a jealous monk,
He looked so immaculately frightful
As he burmed a cigarette
Then he went off sniffing drainpipes
And reciting the alphabet.....

A man far younger wrote that Ted, the rest of it goes in part:
You would not think to look at him,
But he was famous long ago.....

and that is in some ways all about you, or at least you when you write an article like the one in Z5.

I would also like to quote a couple of lines by the same person for the benefit of those who in my more paranoid moments I imagine will jump down my throat for daring to criticise the great Ted Tubb. That is:

Don't follow leaders,
Watch the parking meters.

Yessir, Mr Dylan, time and again you are proved right all over everywhere but

still no one listens, least of all the leaders themselves.

End of diatribe.

...I don't suppose you'll run this Lisa.

/= And why not pray? I'd like to make it clear here and now that just because I like and/or admire someone it does not mean that I won't hear a word against them. In this particular case I'm sure that Ted Tubb doesn't need or want my protection being well able to defend himself if needs be. OK? OK. =/

AND THIS IS THE END OF THE LETTER COLUMN. I'D LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO RESPONDED TO ZIMRI-5 - IF I HAVEN'T INCLUDED YOUR LETTER OF COMMENT IT DOES NOT MEAN I HAVEN'T READ AND APPRECIATED IT, NO INDEED, IT SIMPLY MEANS THAT SOMEONE ELSE BEFORE HAD WRITTEN MORE OR LESS THE SAME THING WHICH IN TURN MUST MEAN THAT YOU'RE A GENIUS OR SOMETHING... AS PER USUAL I THANK MY CONTRIBUTORS AND ARTISTS AND ASK THEM TO PLEASE DON'T STOP IT IS YOU WHO HAVE MADE ZIMRI THE BEST FANZINE IN BRITAIN (ACCORDING TO CHECKPOINT POLL AT LEAST!) A N Y W A Y . . .

I WON'T BE GIVING A DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE - FOR OBVIOUS REASONS - but the sooner I get your contribs, locs and illoes the better.

I HOPE ZIMRI-7 WILL SLIP THROUGH YOUR LETTER BOX THREE MONTHS AFTER YOU'VE PUT THIS ONE AWAY HAVING READ IT FROM COVER TO COVER.

T H E W I L D P L A N E T

As I've got some space left here I'd like to tell you about a film which might be worth looking out for: THE WILD PLANET. This is a full length animated feature film - in a sort of anti-Disney style.

The artist is Roland Topor the well know surrealist of Polish birth and who lives in Paris (France); The Wild Planet is the first animated feature film to be entered in the Cannes Festival.

The Draags, inhabitants of the Planet Ygam, are androids 40ft tall with blue skin and red eyes. Their favorite pastime is meditation. Their pets are Oms, smaller creatures rather like human beings. The Draags begin to kill the wild Oms, but Terr, a young Om who is kept as a pet, learns some of their lore and succeeds in building a rocket and escaping the Wild Planet. Here he discovers the secret of the Draags and is finally able to make peace with them.

The film is based on a novel by Stefan Wul published in 1957. Topor and the producer Rene Laoux (who is also a cartoonist in his own right) took six years to complete The Wild Planet.

And Stefan Wul the literary pseudonym of a certain dentist, is ofcourse France's foremost science fiction writer who produced eleven super novels between 1956 and 1959 then returned to his profession which he practices in the town of Evreux.

I very much doubt the THE WILD PLANET will be shown on general release in this country, but it might get a look in at some local club cinemas, we'll see...perhaps.

BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

EARTH ABIDES by George R. Stewart, published by Corgi Books @ 35p
DEATHWORLD - 2 & DEATHWORLD - 3 both by Harry Harrison; published by Sphere Books @ 30p each
THE MENACE FROM EARTH by Robert A Heinlein; pub by Corgi @ 35p
THE BEST OF ROBERT HEINLEIN; Sphere @ 40p
FARENHEIT 451 by Ray Bradbury pub. by Corgi @ 35p
FANTASTIC VOYAGE by Isaac Asimov; pub. by Corgi @ 35p
REPORT ON PLANET THREE by Arthur C. Clarke pub. by Corgi @ 35p
THE CLOUD WALKER by Edmund Cooper pub. by Ballantine @ \$0.95 (and in UK hardcover, publisher Hodder)
PROFILES OF THE FUTURE by Arthur C. Clarke; pub. by Pan Books @ 40p
ZARDOZ by John Boorman; pub. by Pan Books @ 40p
ORLANDO FURIOSO by Richard Hodgens pub. by Pan Books @ 40p
THE LOST CONTINENT by C.J. Outcliffe Hyne; pub. by Pan Books @ 40p
KALIN by E.C. Tubb; published by Arrow Books @ 35p
THE COMMITTED MEN by M. John Harrison; pub. by Panther @ 35p
THE MOMENT OF ECLIPSE by Brian Aldiss; pub. by Panther @ 35p
THE EARLY ASIMOV published by Panther @ 35p
THE EARLY ASIMOV Volume 2 published by Panther @ 35p
PROSTHO PLUS by Piers Anthony; published by Sphere @ 35p
OTHER DAYS, OTHER EYES by Bob Shaw; published by Pan @ 40p

FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND by Brian Aldiss - Jonathan Cape - £2. 25
NEW WRITINGS IN SF 23 edited by Kenneth Bulmer - Sidgwick & Jackson - £1. 95
THE ETERNAL FRONTIERS by James H. Schmitz - Sidgwick & Jackson - £2. 25
THE DARKNESS ON DIAMONDIA by A.E. Van Vogt - Sidgwick & Jackson - £2. 25
DYING INSIDE by Robert Silverberg - Sidgwick & Jackson - £2. 25

Some of these books (and others which I've sent to various reviewers and forgotten to make a note of titles etc) will be reviewed in the next issue of Zimri.

In his Fanzine Reviews Greg Pickersgill questioned the use and popularity of book reviews in fanzines such as Zimri. There are days/moments when I'm inclined to agree with him; other times I don't... So, perhaps when, or should I say IF you're writing a loc to Zimri, YOU the readers would like to express your opinion, please? Although I include in Z all the things that please ME (it being an extension of my personailty, as is every fanzine, an extension of the editors personality) I would like to know what pleases YOU lot - just in case...

TIME FOR APOLOGIES:

My apologies to Chris Morgan who hurried up to send me the reviews I asked for and in the end I wasn't able to use them in this issue 'cos of the lack of space - as you see Chris this issue is much fatter than usual. Thanks tho I'll be using them in the nextish. By the way, Christopher, congrats on being on the short-short list for that Golancz award - nextime for sure eh?!

Apologies also to Bryn Fortey, your Scoop for Zimri was super but as Zimri-6 is very, very late the article is by now history as I'm sure you'll agree. This of course is the problem in writing for fanzines, especially concering current affairs and things that need to be published NOW!

And last but not least my apologies to Terry Jeeves for ommiting to list his illoe on page 65 as Jeeves' illoe - blush... I must need glasses, fancy me thinking it was Atom's... shame on me. Please forgive, both.

