

LATE MICHAELMAS, 1986

Greetings programs! This is the time of year when we stop being quite so pleased to see all the new people turning up and start demanding membership fees! Dave Bate (Treasurer) has just had lots of lovely, fresh, membership cards printed and would like to exchange them for pictures of the Queen. The same applies to people with crosses by their names on this newsletter.

So, the main highlight of this term seems to have been cancelled due to Alan Garner having been taken ill. Apologies to all who were looking forward to meeting him. Needless to say, OUSFG has sent collective best wishes for his recovery via wife, Griselda.

We will just have to make do with the Christmas Party then, I guess. (See Society News for details).

News of the Hugos, in case you haven't already heard:

Best Novel: *Ender's Game* - Orson Scott Card.

Best Novella: *24 Views of Mt. Fuji*, by Hokusai - Roger Zelazny.

Best Novelette: *Paladin of the Lost Hour* - Harlan Ellison.

Best Short: *Ferni and Frost* - Fred Pohl.

Dramatic: *Back To The Future*. Presumably, for "bringing science fiction to the people," because, frankly, there's no other possible excuse for passing over Brazil.

Book News

-Gene Wolfe; *Free Live Free*.

I was (a) slightly disappointed by this, latest work of the author with the most (a) skill of all currently writing sf authors
(b) impressed (b) street cred
(c) moderately amused (c) artistic genius.

Despite (a) high character turnover and (a) disappointing ending,
(b) unfortunate over-plotting in the middle (b) a time travel plot to baffle those who have read them all,
(c) meandering narrative (c) twenty pages of whirlwind explanation at the end,

the (a) semi-mainstream main text was excellent and the (a) characterization at least subtle.
(b) characterization (b) anti-authoritarian propaganda
(c) all of the above (c) sensitivity towards society's failures

Read it. (a) No, read 'Peace' instead
(b) Drool
(c) Where's my fee?

[(a) IFT; (b) NRT; (c) PJCVR]

-Piers Anthony; *Of Man and Manta*

"Originally published as the trilogy 'Omnivore', 'Orn' and 'Ox', this is probably one of Anthony's best three efforts (along with 'Macroscopic' and 'Chthon' / 'Phthor' / 'Garghxy'). Interesting characters, vivid and different alien world and alternate time streams, and reasonably good plotting as a bonus." (Neal T.)

-Joe Haldeman; *Dealing in Futures* (Futura, £2.50)

"A collection of fourteen items, including three poems, a novella, and a novel segment, with informative and chatty bits from the author in between. The stories are quite wide ranging in subject matter and style. There is a fantasy story, two humorous sf tales and two supernatural stories, one of which ('Lindsay and the Red City Blues') is rather effective.

"The poems are quite engaging as is the story 'The Pilot'. Of particular interest is the item 'You Can Never Go Back' which was originally intended to be part of the novel 'The Forever War'. It covers the second military action (they land and fight again this time) and the subsequent temporary return home of Mandella and Potter which features an alternative, more violent (though less mundane) future Earth than that portrayed in the published version of the novel.

"Seasons' demonstrates that a successful novella does not result when a short story-length plot is conveyed at half the usual pace. 'More Than The Sum Of His Parts' analyses the possible megalomania resulting from the creation of cyborgs but contains one of the most revolting pieces of sexual violence that I have ever read in mainstream fiction. This leads on to a general criticism of the collection, though it may well be a personal one. I admired Haldeman's ability in his early work to describe violence in a fluent, plausible way since the casual nature of the portrayal seemed to heighten the horror without revelling in it. However, it is difficult to read phrases like '...the crunch of bone, the chewy liver and long suck of intestinal contents, the warm mush of brains' without feeling that he has begun to indulge this ability to rather dubious ends. This is a common trait in the collection.

"The general impression of this book is one of a lack of inventiveness. Most of the items are of little real substance and contain few new speculations. This is very sad from an author whose first offerings were exciting and well worth re-reading. In his notes, Haldeman tries to answer the perennial question Where do you get your ideas from? My feeling was that I did not especially care where he got them from, but I just wished that he had been back there recently to get some new ones." (David Lane).

-Phil Raines; *Review of Le Guin's 'Always Coming Home.'*

"This, his latest work, is out in newsletter form only so far, but will prove interesting to fans of his classic sf novel reviews. This latest work is very different from his old glories. It's not a straight review; he uses the word 'culture' four times. It is the study of pretended civility (what else, from a man who was once in North-East USA), pieced together from a collection of stories and legends about his sensitivity. The work rests largely on his cultivated culture and that culture remains a personal one. Clearly it's no Utopia reading Raines; it's reminiscent of standard naive culture and I found it unoriginal. Too much seems to have been lifted from existing American and Scottish cultures as if too much of the work is superfluous. In the end, I didn't believe it for it is a review where thinking's harmful effects have been neutralised, and empty comment has no social impact whatsoever. If reviews can be described as an individual's genuine response to literature then this work is unconsciously not a review. Beneath the self-indulgence of his personal fantasy there is not a fascinating set of key ideas and themes in his work as a whole. Try to avoid him in your local library but if cornered, try to break into his flow to ask him the key questions: Mr. Raines, are you a fake?" (David Lane).

(Who said this wasn't a back-stabbing society? - eds.)

REPRODUCED IN 6TH WEEK OF EARLIER BEFORE THE VACATION OR WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL WHAT IN HIS CRAFT.

Film News

1. The Phoenix (Walton Street)

Dreamchild - 80 year old Alice visits the New World for the first time and is revisited by disturbing and enlightening memories of Oxford and her girlhood relationship with the shy, stammering Charles Dodgson. Jim Henson's Creatures are the bizarre and terrifying Wonderland inhabitants. - Saturday 29 Nov., 11:00pm. **PLUS - FRI DEC 5 - LATE SHOW (11pm) BLADE RUNNER & STARMAN!! (CPH. 1)**

2. P.P.P. (Jeune Street).

Repo Man - Punk comedy about car repossession who thrives on tense situations. - Sunday 23 - Saturday 29 Nov.

3. ABC (Magdalen St.)

Nightmare on Elm Street 2 - Freddy's Revenge - You were warned...

4. Coming Soon...

John Carpenter's Big Trouble In Little China - Kurt Russell stars as an Indiana Jones clone in this adventure tale of the underworld.

Labyrinth - David Bowie and Jim Henson's puppets. And that's all we know...

Society News

1. The Great OUSFG Party: Saturday 29 November (7th week) Christ Church, Undercroft Room, 8 - 11:30pm. Drinks and snacks will be provided...we unwisely turned up late last year. Fancy dress is optional but quite a few people do dress up and you may want to kick yourself for turning up in the usual boring attire. We always do.

Fully equipped with disco (hopefully including a DJ) this annual event culminates in whirling, drunken OUSFG members wearing sheets and/or dustbin bags. Negatives can be purchased from Mark Grant. For the right price, that is.

Now we come to the bottom line. Money. Tickets are £3.00 to members, £3.50 to non-members and there is a £1.00 discount if you promise to go teetotal. Miss it at your risk. We always do. (!).

2. Library Meetings: Every Sunday, at 8:15pm, in New College, New Building, St12 Rm3. On Sunday of 8th week there's going to be an auction of 'surplus' books at 10:00pm in the library, so come along and get that title you've always been looking for. Anyway, here's Ivan with some more info on library matters...

Suggestions boxes: On my (Ivan's) door. The book and speaker suggestions boxes have been well-supported, and we have acted on the former and we are in the process of doing something about the latter. The video suggestions box, however is being widely ignored. Please support this box - we want suggestions now!

Also on Ivan's door: A piece of bumf sent in to us by BECCON, the 1987 Eastercon. Anyone interested should read this sometime.

Stacks: Some of our less popular and, shall we say, less well received books now live in cardboard boxes. They are still accessible, but beware tortoises...

New Acquisitions:

-Adams; *Hitch-Hiker's Radio Scripts*. Invaluable for punt parties, and generally interesting as well.

-Aldiss; *Trillion Year Spree*. A history of sf from Frankenstein to the present day.

-Asimov; *Bicentennial Man*. A robot who wants to be a human (at least according to the blurb).

-Barker; *Books of Blood*, Vol.2. (I couldn't find Vol.1) - Inspired horror shorts. Includes perhaps Barker's most intense story, *Dread*.

-Hughart; *Bridge of Birds*. Humorous and well-written Chinese fantasy. Received rave reviews from that highly critical bible, *The OUSFG Newsletter*.

-Moorcock; *The War Hound And The World's Pain*. (I couldn't find *Gloriana*). Mediaeval clash of Good and Evil. The best fantasy novel of the year - IASFM, 1981.

-Wolfe; *Free Live Free*. See this issue for in-depth survey of this work.

3. Discussion Meetings

Wednesdays, 8:15pm Christ Church, Meadow Buildings, 6:12. Listen to all your favourite people sharing in their wisdom of those things we enjoy. (See Daily Information for details). Join the queue for free coffee/tea and (occasionally) biscuits too.

4. Games Meetings.

If anyone has any games/quizzes etc they'd like to share, please see a committee member.

5. SFinx

Interested in writing for SFinx or helping to bring out an issue? See Maria/Ivan/Neal Tringham (Exeter). SFinx, for those who don't know, is the society's fiction zine and compulsory reading (or we'll send the girls round (ie. Maria)!!).

That's about it for another term. We're still dying to include your review or news offerings in the newsletter, so please let us have them. Enjoy the Party - you will go won't you? - and have a great vac (ie. don't do lots of work like we've left ourselves to do).

MORE NEXT TERM!

David & Pita

Written, produced and edited by David Harris & Pita Enriquez (Catz)
Distributed by Rebecca Heddle (St. Anne's)
Boycotted by Phil Raines (Balliol)

* 2 LIBRARY STOP-PRESSES - ① BOOKS SALE - SUN 30TH NOV - 10am in LIBRARY

② VAC. BORROWING - UP TO 8 BOOKS - BUT PLEASE RETURN MY BOOKS

* MONDAY 8TH WK - VIDEO MEETING - NEW COLLEGE ~ 8pm - MAX HEADROOM & DR WHO (TOM BAKER, PROBABLY 'GENESIS OF THE DALEKS' !!)