

Visions—Magazine Of The Future

That's what they told *me*, anyway

Visions is an American magazine of student sf, produced by a raving maniac of a Reaganite capitalist (oops) from Cornell University, USA. They publish (about) three issues a year, with material from 12 US Universities (mostly Ivy League—eg Yale and Harvard—but also including USC, Berkeley and a couple of others) and various ones from England (basically what I can get my filthy little hands on plus UCL, for reasons to be explained later). They sell back to the US universities (several thousand copies an issue, according to the hundred page Visions Business Plan) and occasionally I try and flog a few copies in England to make back some of the money they owe me. They pay for stories, poems and freelance artwork (not much, and at present people in England get paid in copies of the magazine—although that should change sometime (fairly) soon), which is at least a better deal than you'll get from any other student mag I know of, and better than the vast majority of small press mags. The sales figures are also vastly superior (like, an order of magnitude, man) to any other small press/student rag.

So what's the content like, you cry? Well, the artwork's generally fairly good, the poetry's dreadful and the fiction's highly variable (partly due to what I at least regard as the bizarre selection criteria of the editorial team). Sometimes they actually run quite good stories (on average, one per issue is professionally publishable). In any event, it's certainly better than *Trancefer* (this represents my practical test of the state of censorship in modern fandom). Each issue also includes an interview with someone reasonably famous (the current one has Spider Robinson, with the added bonus of his latest short story, previously rejected by *Analog* etc. because it's set in a brothel and deals primarily with male erectile tissue).

Can you get a story in? God knows. However, their selection policy is sufficiently alien to my judgement to let me say that almost anything that isn't ridiculously unoriginal and is written in something reasonably similar to the English language has a chance of some sort. And it doesn't cost you anything to give me a copy of your masterwork to mail off...

Anybody still reading may remember that I promised to explain why Visions has (it thinks, heh heh) campus representatives at Oxford and UCL. Well, folks, it's like this... When the Visions president decided, in his wisdom, to expand overseas he picked on England as the first target (since, as he put it, 'we share a common language'—Russia and France are next on the list, apparently) he wanted the two 'greatest universities in the land'—those being, in case you'd forgotten, Oxford (um, well...) and the University of London (attempts to contact the 'University of London' via international phone calls eventually got him UCL, you see... hmm). This led to me making my first international deal in a scenic Oxford coffee house with two (flown in) Visions representatives who had written instructions saying 'your mission in England is to contact Neal Tringham... I spent the next week expecting a man in a dark coat with a Russian accent to slink round the corner and offer me the secret of George Bush's appeal (answers on a postcard, please, to *Trancefer*, c/o *Warped*, *SF* and *Fantasy Group*, Manchester University Student Union, Oxford Rd. Manchester—the world waits with bated breath). To end with a final quote from the glorious President—'Remember, in England you will be representing not only your country but also your corporation'. Shucks.

NB If you are Greg Manning—I'm sorry, I didn't mean it, I did it in a fit of weakness, honest...

If you are whoever gave this to Greg Manning, I am going to break your legs.

Neal Tringham

Exciting New Orifice!

THE OUSFG NEWSLETTER — LATE TRINITY '89

Would all finalists please return their library books, either in person or by pigeon post to Adrian Cox, St John's. *Thankew.*

Xerox your lunch and file it under "sez offenders!"

OUSFG News

LIBRARY MEETINGS

Do I really have to say all this again? Library meetings are still in Adrian's room, which is 22 Museum Road Room 6, at 8:15 on Sundays, moving to St John's Larkin Room at around 9:00. The latest edition of 'Foundation' (the sf review magazine, not the vast wibbly Asimovian necrosis) is now in the library, but it's apparently not terribly interesting. We'll be moving the library at the end of term to Malcolm Cohen's house in Hurst Street; all help gratefully received, more details nearer the time. Next term the library will be moving to Queens; details in the Freshers' Orifice.

DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Discussions for the rest of this term, which are still in Somerville, Penrose 14, at 8:15 on Wednesdays, are:

- 6th week — Medicine in sf (Stuart Aston)
- 7th week — Stephen King (Penny Heal)
- 8th week — Ivan's farewell talk (Ivan Towlson)

People who are prepared to volunteer to do discussion meetings next term should come and tell Matt, since otherwise he's going to start panicking.

VIDEO MEETINGS

At last, sanity prevails. Video meetings are (at least for the rest of this term) in Queens College Lecture Room A, which is in staircase 4 on the Front Quad. They will be on Mondays, at 8:15, and they are scheduled to be:—

- 6th week — The Shining
- 8th week — The Name Of The Rose

NEWSLETTER

Contributions are still required for the Freshers' issue which will be produced late in 0th week next term. Send your contribution to Matt Bishop at Jesus College, or Adrian Cox at St John's, or (if possible) send it by Email to mbishop@ox.ecs. The freshers' newsletter is especially important, since it's one of the things that influences people into joining the society, and hence one of the things that decides how much money we've got next year, so please contribute.

SFINX / VISIONS

Both of these august and highly-regarded organs are still looking for short stories to publish. Contact Jane McCarthy, St Hilda's, about Sfinx. A plug for Visions is elsewhere in this newsletter.

J Bray
Exeter

MERCHANDISE

OUSFG mugs are about to be ordered. If you haven't placed your order, yesterday would be a very good time to do it. Contact Mark Adams, Lincoln.

FRESHER CORRUPTION

People are going to be needed to stand around at freshers' fair pushing leaflets at freshers - volunteers please talk to a committee person. This is especially true on the Friday, when those who don't have collections (i.e. the current first year) are going to have to do all the work (FX: evil cackling noises). There will probably be a freshers' party on Sunday of 0th week, and since we can't afford to finance it completely we'll be asking OUSFG members to bring bottles, as we did the year before last. More details soon.

SPAWN OF CONINE

The sparkling sequel to last year's convention 'Conine', 'Spawn Of Conine' was going to bid for Unicon 11. Unfortunately, the poly have double booked us, so Unicon 11 will in fact be 'Uniconze', in Cambridge. Those of you who have presupported Spawn Of Conine should be able to get £1.00 off 'Uniconze' membership.

Out Of Oxford

CONVENTIONS

MEXICON III is 26-29 May in Nottingham; some OUSFG people are going.
ICONOCLASM is 16-18 June in Leeds; a few OUSFG people may be going.
U-NICON X is 11-13 August in Belfast; now that Spawn Of Conine is dead there will probably not be that many OUSFG people at this con.
EASTCON 90 is 13-16 April 1990 in Birmingham; lots of us will be going. Definitely worth the effort.
CONFICTION is 23-27 August 1990; I know this is a long way ahead, but rates are rising all the time and most of British fandom will be going to this one. Book now!

These conventions were described in greater detail in the last Orifice; if you want any more information, ask Matt or Adrian for details.

LONDON PUB MEETINGS

Only one left this term, and it's on Thursday of 6th week at the Wellington in Waterloo Road.

SF in Stereo

At last the Orifice is able to bring you these shattering revelations, suppressed by the previous regime...

In a desperate attempt to discuss sf on lp without mentioning J*ff*rs*n St*rsh*p's "Bl*ws Ag**nst Th* Emp*re", here are a few records which have come my way recently... some of them on tape, and not necessarily licit tape at that (sorry).

FIRESIGN THEATRE — HOW CAN YOU BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE WHEN YOU'RE NOT ANYWHERE AT ALL AND EVERYTHING YOU KNOW IS WRONG

The first of these comes in two bits: the first is an OK-ish Sam Spade take-off with a time travel plot of almost Gerroldian deviousness (sneer, sneer), but the second is genuinely strange, being something to do with a teleporting (or alternate world-travelling), time-travelling used car which ends up, through a chain of events too baffling to relate, in an alternate wartime America. I think. "Everything You Know is Wrong" is coherent if deranged; a daredevil's leap to possible doom in the sun at the centre of the Earth, invasion by aliens who travel in giant fried eggs ("The... eggs, General?" "Let's just call them... the... phenomena.") slaves seizing power... "I was right, Seekers! Everything I knew was wrong!" ("Don't Crush That Dwarf, Hand Me The Pliers" is not sf, as far as I can tell, but it is very funny. I could explain its links with the British New Wave of course, but it does seem a trifle pointless, pretentious and serious (in alphabetical order).)

SF-Lovers Digest

The sf-lovers digest is an American bulletin board that collects comments about sf and fantasy for general discussion; some of these are vaguely interesting and worth passing on. Those of you with access to the Suns can read the whole thing on Matt's public directory (mbishop/public); those of you on the Vax can get them from Ken Zetie (mmac@ox.vax). A typical extract:—

Re: "The Tides Of God" by Ted Reynolds

The final book of the New Ace Science Fiction Special series has appeared. It was accepted for the line by Terry Carr, and edited by Damon Knight after Carr's untimely death. It is entitled "The Tides Of God" and it is an excellent, disturbing book.

The premise is that about 100 light years from Earth lies a being capable of telepathically inducing mystical and religious experiences. The two known times that it came close to Earth corresponded to the two Dark Ages (400-1400 and 2100-2800 C.E.). Now it is approaching Earth again. An expedition goes into deep space to destroy it, but to do so they must approach close enough to be affected.

This is a book that aspires to greatness, and comes close. It is held back by flaws in the writing. The prose is quite good, but some of the characterisations are a little shallow (at least, by the standards of literature; it's still much better than a great deal of sf). But the shallowness of character is, rare thing, made up for by depth of concept.

Caveat lector: this is a profoundly anti-religious book, and anyone who takes a theistic religion seriously will probably find it infuriating. But I feel that there are times when one ought to be infuriated. For anyone interested in sf, religion, or both, this is one of the "must read" novels of 1989.

(This opinion was differed from quite vehemently by several other contributors, as I recall — Ed.)

Context

Jason Yow yeow yippy eow heigh, and you can quote me on that.

Penny Why am I sober?

Jen (to Ivan) You go FOOM! bedraggle.

Marina Being James Wallace-Dunlop, I can believe this.

Colin You don't actually see hallucinations. You just think you see hallucinations.

George Pull it out... quick, quick... no, no, no, now push it in again... no, pull it out... oh, I'm getting terribly excited...

Becca Heddle We just don't have strong enough thighs, you see.

Jason I went to school with it clean and came back with it stained — I still don't know what I did.

Adrian I'm sorry, but I just can't resist women who bite me.

Jen What's wrong with Welshmen?

John Well, they're fine for holidays, but you wouldn't want to live with one.

Jen You're probably going to jump on me because I don't have any clothes.

Ivan Oh yes, almost certainly.

Classified Advert

Richard Lucock has two spare OUSFG T-shirts (XL, pale blue, one each of the old and new designs). Anyone who wants to buy one, or swap them for smaller ones, should talk to a committee member, or to Tim Adye, who'll talk to Richard.

Credits

Matt Bishop typed the whole newsletter in, and Adrian Cox did all the TeXnical stuff. If you want to talk to Adrian about the TeXnical stuff, you'd better buy him a drink, as it's really very boring.

Reviews

CLIVE BARKER — CABAL

I make no apologies for reviewing a piece of horror fiction because if anyone is writing speculative fiction Clive Barker is. 'Cabal' is his latest novel, the first in his 'Nightbreed' series. The story involves two main characters: Boone, a man convinced that he has committed a series of brutal murders and Decker, Boone's psychiatrist, who confronts him with the evidence of his crimes. Boone decides to flee to a place called Midian, a semi-mythical place where only the truly monstrous can find a home. The book is about Midian and its society of human monsters and explores the nature of evil and the forms it can take.

As always the writing is sharp, graphic and disturbing; Barker's talent for visceral horror writing is, I believe, unsurpassed by any other author. Thankfully, the book also marks a return to the sparser style of his 'Books Of Blood' stories. The plot moves quickly and avoids the padding that so diminished his attempt at a dark fantasy, the flawed 'Weaveworld'. Scenes from 'Cabal' linger in the mind, the sign of good writing, especially the scene where Boone encounters the Midianites.

The only possible criticism I could have of 'Cabal' is that it is too short, but after 'Weaveworld' being overlong, it is only a trivial complaint. 'Cabal' is now out in paperback, liberally decorated with Barker's artwork and published by Futura (I think). If you've never read any Clive Barker try the 'Books Of Blood' and if you've read them then 'Cabal' is the next best thing. Clive Barker is even now directing the film of 'Cabal'; called 'Nightbreed', it includes David Cronenberg in the cast as Decker and is slated for release in late autumn. If you can't wait that long then 'Hellraiser II: The Hell-Bound Heart' is due to open in this country in June (hopefully).

Andrew Walley

LARRY NIVEN — THE SMOKE RING

So-called 'long awaited' sequel to 'The Integral Trees', the contents of 'The Smoke Ring' can be gathered from a simple comparison between the covers of the two books — they're virtually the same (a large red sun). For those out of the know, both books are set in a far-flung corner of some galaxy or other where an unstable gas giant orbiting a neutron star has laid down a gas torus (doughnut-shape to you and me) at the heart of which is a gravity-gathered accretion of oxygen, water, minerals, etc. : in short, a living, breathing, free-fall environment called, surprise surprise, the Smoke Ring. Mankind was originally dumped here about 500 years ago (book time), abandoning their seeder ramship 'Discipline' and getting down to the serious business of breeding and reverting to savages. The book begins 14 years after a band of heroes have escaped the destruction of their home, been enslaved, worked their way free by stealing some 'old technology' (namely a Cargo and Repair Module or carm), had a brief encounter with Sharls Davis Kendy, the computer-recorded personality who runs 'Discipline', and settled in a new home (see 'The Integral Trees').

The plot is essentially similar to the previous book : the heroes leave their integral tree, make their way to a more advanced community (interacting with weird flora/fauna and people on the way), arrive and marvel at 'civilisation', have a few scrapes and return to their tree. This time, however, there is the added complication that Kendy has decided to take a direct interest in our heroes' fates and via the carm persuades them to do various actions which are ultimately for his own ends.

The book relies on the strangeness of its setting for all of its interest. As it's Niven one can't expect too much characterisation, but even so the principal players are little more than plot-guidance vehicles. Peripheral characters (that is, everyone except the main hero) are as two-dimensional as playing cards — and don't quote Abbot's 'Flatland' at me, this is not a compliment. Behavioural patterns and vocabulary are meant to reflect 500 years of degeneration in technological comprehension, but this was immeasurably better handled in the previous book: here, all it seems to involve is saying 'stet' instead of 'OK' (which got on my nerves very quickly), and 'making babies' with as many people as possible to facilitate 'gene drift'. There is meant to be considerable fascination with Kendy, who is described in the Dramatis Personae as 'the evolving personality in the master computer of the seeder ramship "Discipline" and its service spacecraft', but frankly I've got things in the bottom of my fridge evolving faster. Whether Niven knows it or not, Kendy is a tired reworking of good ol' HAL9000 (who is even mentioned in the book) but generates nothing like as much interest. The book is very readable if you don't mind skipping over the technical gibberish about Roche Limits and so on: Niven has

always prided himself on writing 'real' sf, but here its sole purpose seems to be to justify special effects and announce to the reader, 'Look, I've done my astrophysics homework'. The ending is an unsatisfactory let-down after the careful build-up of tension beforehand, and left me feeling 'so what?'.

Overall, 'The Smoke Ring' offers what one might expect from a money-spinning sequel: more of the same, but simply less well done. Niven's style is a constant in an ever-changing universe but even if (like me) you find it page-turningly pleasant, you'll be disappointed this time. The back page blurb promises that 'a bitter lies ahead' (Eh? - typist) but don't be fooled — this book is bland. If you want a relaxing adventure from Niven, buy 'The Integral Trees'; if you've read that, quit while you're ahead.

Not recommended.

Andy Elliot

MARJORIE BRADLEY KELLOGG & WILLIAM B. RUSSOW — LEAR'S DAUGHTERS

Although issued as two books, presumably to make more money, this has to be read in one go. The first book 'The Wave And The Flame' fails to reach a dramatic climax so you really need to go on to the second, 'Reign Of Fire', if you are not to be disappointed. The basic plot goes something like this; an expedition from Earth has landed on the planet Fiix to make contact with the natives, the Sawls, and to map the planet's mineral resources for the mining corporation that is paying for the trip. Unfortunately, the weather on Fiix is highly unpredictable and the crew soon find themselves trapped on Fiix, reliant on the Sawls to provide food and shelter. The weather is the most important thing in a Sawl's life and it is the mystery of the strange weather that is the major plot device in the book.

As you might expect, the villain of the story is the representative of the mining company, Miles Clausen, out to exploit Fiix for all it's worth and who gives a damn about the natives. However, he's not as clichéd a character as that bald summary suggests and it is here that the book succeeds where others have failed. Clausen is wholly human in his greed, seeing the Sawls as little more than obstacles in the way of increasing his wealth. Yet Clausen is also the wit of the crew, the gourmet cook, and not just a well-trained puppet of the company. Equally, the character development of the ship's linguist, who is the first to 'go native', is well thought out and interesting. This book is reminiscent of 'Golden Witchbreed' by Mary Gentle, yet I think that novel has the edge as I eventually found myself disappointed by the ending of 'Lear's Daughters'. Anyway, an engrossing exploration of an alien society well worth a few evenings in. Both volumes are available in paperback.

Andrew Walley

JAMES MORROW — THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS

The year is 1995, and the cold war is icy. George Paxton, a New England tombstone engraver, wants to buy his daughter a scopas suit, guaranteed to protect and preserve life at a hundred yards from the ground zero of a nuclear strike. But his wife has just been fired from her job at a pet shop, for breaking a tarantula, and \$6595 plus tax is a lot of money. George is promised a free scopas suit by Professor Theophilus Carter, the Tailor of Thermonuclear Terror and Sartor of the Second Strike, but in return he must sign a statement admitting complicity in the nuclear arms race.

As George is driving home, his town is evaporated by an ICBM, together with the rest of the populated world. George is rescued from the apocalypse by the rogue submarine USS Iowa (where JFK came from), which has orange trees growing hydroponically in its torpedo tubes and is crewed by 'the unadmitted' - potential future inhabitants of the Earth, temporarily brought into being ahead of their time by a rather unlikely quantum event. The unadmitted take George to their base in Antarctica where, together with an Air Force general, a TV evangelist, a weapons scientist, an arms reduction negotiator and the Assistant Secretary for Defense, he is tried for conniving at the extinction of the human race and the denial of life to its progeny.

Well, this all sounds very much like Vonnegut, and actually it reads rather like him too. Morrow has a horrified moral hat on, with wacky dayglo badges marked 'Acid Humour', 'Gentle Pathos' and 'Surreal Touches'. So; can he match up to the obvious comparison? A definite yes, I think, and I feel he even scores over the great Kurt in some ways. For a start, George Paxton, his Everyman figure, is a lot more human and believable than any Vonnegut protagonist. It's impossible to sympathise with Billy Pilgrim, or the narrator of 'Cat's Cradle' — these guys are just too weird — but George is a real person who gets realer throughout. He

makes up stories about elves and bunnies to tell his daughter, he is shy of his illustrious co-defendants, and he has a morbid fear of vultures. Another thing that leaps out is that Morrow is a lot better with visual images; Vonnegut relies mainly on mind games for his special effects, but 'This Is The Way The World Ends' pokes you firmly in the eye with a wicked finger. And it has a lot less of the self-indulgent silliness to which Vonnegut's work is sometimes victim.

In general, this is a good book that ought to be read. On a heavy message level, it mercilessly exposes the insane, forehead-slapping logic of detente (such as the Principle of Mutually Assured Destruction, which requires of each participant the simultaneous holding of two absolutely contradictory intentions). If you find nuclear moralising a complete turn-off, though, the book is still an entertainingly bizarre vision of US society, a subject always good for a laugh or two. And of course, there's the possibility that it's just one of Nostradamus' prophetic dreams, painted onto magic lantern slides by Leonardo da Vinci...

Mo Holkar

JASON STEVENS — COCKTAIL STICK UP YOUR EARS

The compilation of Jason's diaries form a catalogue of perversion; real, imagined and Simon Hunt inspired. The early days are comprised of a cacophony of alcohol abuse and demented filk, cumulating in a night of debauchery, vomiting, acute embarrassment and his re-birth as a caffend and guru to the Maxwell House generation.

At this point the diaries take a contemplative turn: no longer Phil, he starts being frank. His (obviously Coke inspired) writings become as explicit as his lifestyle, though unlike Orton he writes about the acts he *hasn't* performed on a given day. There are, however, several fascinating passages on mouth damage, with causes ranging from cocktail sticks to the Oxford Union Society Consultative Committee.

Soon to be filmed with Gareth Hunt and Imelda Marcos in the starring roles, the original form is well worth reading. There is a copy in the OUSFG library whenever Jason is there. Its just a matter of slipping it out of his bag when he's not looking.

Smoky Bear

KATE WILHELM — WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG

This novel must be one of the least read of recent Hugo winners (it triumphed in 1977), and it's not too hard to work out why. Wilhelm does not write gadgety man's-world space opera about dolphins and chimpanzees, or bombastic, wordy pseudo-philosophical mish-mash with silly-named aliens, or even designer-dirty posturings around hastily conceived metaphysics. What she does write is intelligent and questioning sf, keeping her social and scientific speculation tied down with a mesh of human detail rather than allowing it to rear up and bash the reader over the head. In fact, you might wonder why the usually imbecilic Worldcon members voted for this novel at all. (Hugo quiz: In which year did the fans give the award to one of Adolf Hitler's novels?)

So: the book describes an isolated community that chooses to continue itself through cloning, as its members (and the rest of the world) have been afflicted by a plague causing sterility. In a series of jumps forward in time it examines the responses of the community to various developments, such as the realisation that their offspring are telepathic and incestuous (masturbatory?) within a clone, and do not consider themselves as human. As the clones try to increase their numbers by further cloning, they find each generation has less initiative and imagination than the one before, until eventually Nature's unpredictability wipes them out; the only survivors are a small group who revert to sexuality and barbarianism. The narrative is straightforward and unornamented, but it doesn't take too much digging to unearth a variety of subtle observations on society as a whole and the more erroneously sincere of its members in particular.

If I have a criticism of Wilhelm in this book, it is that although her writing is always attractive and engrossing, it never really commits itself enough to achieve the LeGuin-style star quality it approaches. This flaw is corrected in later books, like the excellent (but very depressing) 'The Clewiston Test', but these are moving towards the edges of the genre. The strength of 'Where Late The Sweet Birds Sang' is that it tries to tread fresh paths inside the old boundaries. Read this book: it won't change your life (unless you're a very sensitive geneticist), but it might make you think twice about becoming a sperm or ovum donor.

Mo Holkar

BLUE OYSTER CULT — IMAGINOS

Now this is pretentious. Imagine an H.P. Lovecraft story, rugosely twisted into a polypous perversion of necrotic, unspeakable hard rock, with a blasphemously 1988ish production sheen, and you have some idea of what "Imaginos" is like. It appears to be a concept album about the Devil (or something similar), variously known as Imaginos, Del Rio or Desdinova, though I'd never have worked it out without the sleeve notes ("Ultimately, rhythm is image and image is rhythm. ultimately, this myth is random access." Quite.). The saga begins with the Spanish discovery of the New World, then jumps to the beginning of the 19th century for the birth of Imaginos before ending with an intriguingly unorthodox explanation of why World War I happened (it wasn't the assassination of Ferdinand at Sarajevo, of course; it was an obsidian mirror beaming voices into people's minds from a Cornish farmhouse. One wonders how conventional history could conceivably have missed such an obvious explanation...). In the process we get a rather heavy-handed remake of "Astronomy" (the rather delicate original from "Secret Treaties" jazzed up with the omnipresent overproduction and a distressing number of guitar solos), an entertainingly silly theme song ("Blue Oyster Cult"), an awesomely overblown and refreshingly incomprehensible anthem called "The Seige And Investiture Of Baron Von Frankenstein's Castle At Weissaria", and the ultimate musical distillation of Lovecraft, "Magna Of Illusion", an appropriately threatening end to the story (if a little over the top in places).

Loads of words, loads of twiddly guitar parts and loads of strangeness — in short, another Blue Oyster Cult album, but one which approaches the standards set by their best.

FRANK ZAPPA — JOE'S GARAGE

This is the Central Scrutiniser... It is my responsibility to enforce all the laws that haven't been passed yet... This triple album from 1979 is set in a future world in which the Government is trying to ban the corrupting and evil influence of Music... Joe is a member of a garage band, whose girlfriend leaves him to become a groupie for big rock band Toad-O, whereupon he contrives to catch an unpronounceable disease and tries to get help from L. Ron Hoover at the Church Of Appliantology... He meets a gleaming model XQJ-37 nuclear powered Pan-Sexual Roto-Plooker named Sy Borg but destroys it and is imprisoned with all the other degenerate criminals driven to crime by Music... As you can see, Music can get you pretty fucked up... So take a tip from Joe, do like he does in the end, hock your imaginary guitar and get a good job, say at the Utility Muffin Research Kitchen... "The White Zone is for loading and unloading only... if you have to load or unload, go to the White Zone... you'll love it... it's a way of life..."

"Joe's Garage is a stupid story about how the government is going to try to do away with music (a prime cause of unwanted mass behaviour)... If the plot of the story seems just a little bit preposterous, and the idea of the Central Scrutiniser enforcing laws that haven't been passed yet makes you giggle, just be glad you don't live in one of the cheerful little countries where, at this moment, music is severely restricted... or, as it is in Iran, totally illegal." (Point of interest: John claims that this isn't sf. Does he know something about the British music industry that I don't?)

This is the Off-Centre Scrutiniser... "Joe's Garage", like most late-period Zappa, sees the "cautiously rational humanist" speaking his mind at the expense of the avant-garde mad genius... As one expects from him, the vision of the album is frightening and thoughtful (apart from such gross aesthetic crimes as "Catholic Girls"), especially its Burroughsian images of dehumanisation and power relationships, but it lacks the tight, sharp wit of earlier classics like "Freak Out!", which communicate similar messages in less than four minutes (see "Hungry Freaks, Daddy" or "You're Probably Wondering Why I'm Here")... As you see, megalomania can get you pretty fucked up... I did like L. Ron Hoover, though... in a way... and besides, any sf record which doesn't consist of mind-numbing heavy metal has got to have something going for it (eat death, Rush and Iron Maiden)...

"Total Criminalisation was the greatest idea of its time and was vastly popular except with those people who didn't want to be crooks or outlaws. So of course they had to be Tricked Into It... which is one of the reasons why Music was eventually made Illegal."

Zetta...

Ivan Towlson

OUSFG PRESENTS...

The Supplementary Orifice! Special Michael Moorcock Issue!!

Michael Moorcock

At last, the *Michael Moorcock* speaker meeting, held jointly with the William Morris society. This will take place on Friday of 8th week (16th June), in the Saskatchewan room, Exeter at 20:30. We're charging 50p admission to non-members, so bring your membership card to get in for free. We've been trying to get Michael Moorcock as a speaker for some time now, and this should be well worth attending.

Library Books

As librarian I am privileged to bring you the all new vacation borrowing arrangements. These are really quite simple — you must be a life member and you must expect to be in Oxford next year. Everybody else should return their library books by the end of term; I've already sent reminders to the worst offenders, and at the bottom of this page you'll find a list of any books you've had out for too long. For those who don't know, the librarian is Adrian Cox, St. John's.

Library meetings are still at 20:15 on Sundays in 22 Museum Road, Room 6, moving to St. John's Larkin room at 20:45, and will be until we move the library in 9th week. *Volunteer! You know it's good for the soul!* Next week the biscuits will be Fruit Rustics, by popular demand. The library is moving to 78 St. Mary's Road for the summer (not 78 Hurst Street as previously stated) (thanks to Malcolm for giving a place to stay to a homeless library) and next year's ~~my~~ librarian is Chris Williamson, Queen's.

AUCTION

On Sunday of 8th week (11th June) we will have a last book auction of the year to clear duplicates. This is *your* chance to get some real crap for your bookshelves, or if you're really, really lucky, we might just sell a good book...

Credits

This has been an OUSFG newsletter production, by Adrian Cox. Any contributions for the next one should be sent to Matt Bishop, Jesus, or e-mailed to mbishop@ox.ecs. Anything at all will do — articles, quotes, reviews, incriminating pictures, large sums of money.

Don't you realize that the end of the "Wash Cycle" is a treasured moment for most people?!

And that's all for this term. — Ad

Overdue books (if any):

TIPTREE — "SEX SCENES WITH
YOGHURT" — ?!

LYMINGTON — THE GREY ONES ---

