

Ansible



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From **David Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Brad W. Foster**. Available for SAE or a set of harmoniously grunting peels.

The Wu & Fabricant Guide

Ellen Datlow joined Tor.com as another consulting fiction editor.

Paul Krugman, introducing the Folio Society edition of the Foundation trilogy, has an Atwood Moment: 'Maybe the first thing to say about "Foundation" is that it's not exactly science fiction—not really. Yes, it's set in the future, there's interstellar travel, people shoot each other with blasters instead of pistols and so on. But these are superficial details, playing a fairly minor part in the story.' [KMacL]

David Mitchell, interviewed in the *Cloud Atlas* film's context, is happy that genre conquered the world: '... both fantasy and S.F. have made inroads into literary fiction and influences even those novels whose imprint logo is reassuringly conservative. Murakami's *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* isn't regarded as a fantasy novel, but the plot is propelled by occult magic. Kazuo Ishiguro's masterly *Never Let Me Go* is old-money dystopian S.F., as is Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. Philip K. Dick would recognize both Michael Chabon's *Yiddish Policemen's Union* and Philip Roth's *Plot Against America* as alternate-history S.F. in the grandest, proudest tradition. We imbibe more S.F. and fantasy than we notice. On my last visit to New York, by the by, I had a dinner with a group of literary writers, and the whole main course was spent in earnest and learned discussion of *A Game of Thrones*.' (*New York Times*, 18 October) [ZH]

Mo Yan, the internationally noted Chinese author whose stories of rural China often include fantasy, fairytale and magic-realist elements, won the 2012 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Terry Pratchett reminisced about his schoolboy visits to 'a little shed which was a library run by a very nice old lady in a black dress who served you cups of tea, and who had a collection of eye-watering porn. She would have it all behind a pair of beaded curtains. I would go in there for the fantasy [...] The old lady quite liked me as her "kosher" customer so she'd keep stuff on the side for me. One day I was in there by myself, going through the box of books she'd kept for me, when a plain-clothes policeman walked in. He pointed to me with hostility and said "What is he doing here?" I will never forget her face. She picked up a copy of Robert A Heinlein's "Stranger in a Strange Land" and said "Evil be to him who evil thinks". The man grumbled and went.' (Arifa Akbar interview, *Independent*, 11 October) [MPJ]

N. Lee Wood suspects that although the word has been around since 1757 in another sense, 'fabricant' meaning 'genetically engineered android/clone' may be her very own coinage in *Looking for the Mahdi* (1996)—anticipating *Cloud Atlas* by 8 years. 'So if [that meaning] is ever added as a definition for "fabricant" to the *OED*, I want the damn credit! Not fair if Mitchell gets both a gazillion bucks for the movie rights to his novel AND everyone thinks he coined the term as well.'

Conchiglie

Until 30 Nov • **Uncut** (marking 100 years of UK film censorship), BFI Southbank, London. Several genre selections. See www.bfi.org.uk.

Until 27 Jan • **Hollywood Costume** exhibition, V&A Museum, London. 10am-5:30pm (9:30pm Fri). £14 + fee: see www.vam.ac.uk. Includes Oz, Darth Vader, Terminator, Matrix, Indiana Jones, etc.

2-30 Nov • **Comica**: London International Comics Festival. Many, many events, relentlessly detailed at www.comicafestival.com.

2-3 Nov • **Horror in the East** ('horror-lit'), Aspire Centre, Denes High School, Lowestoft, NR32 4AH. Various guests; admission free.

10 Nov • **Comica Comiket** Independent Comics Fair, The Great Hall, Bishopgate, Institute, 230, Bishopgate, London, EC2M 4QH. 11am-6pm. Admission free. Guests include Bryan Talbot, Alison Bechdel.

9-11 Nov • **Novacon 42**, Park Inn, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. GoH Jaine Fenn. £40 reg. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

9-11 Nov • **Sci-Fi London East** film mini-festival, Stratford Picture House, London. www.sci-fi-london.com; box office 0871 902 5740.

11-18 Nov • **Thought Bubble** (comics), Leeds, including 17-18 November comics convention. See www.thoughtbubblefestival.com.

Weekend pass £20; day pass £12; under-12s free.

16-18 Nov • **Armadacon 24**, Future Inns, Plymouth. *Date change from 9-11 Nov*. £30 (£25 concessions) to 18 Wadham Rd, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3BD. £35 (£30) at the door.

16-18 Nov • **Winter Horrors** (workshop), Dove Valley Centre, Derbyshire. £150 inclusive. Contact alexdavisevents@hotmail.co.uk.

CANCELLED. 23-25 Nov • **WexWorlds** (sf festival), Wexford, Ireland. 'Due to unforeseen circumstances' is all it says at www.wexworlds.net.

28 Nov • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Argyle pub, Leather Lane, London. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Paul Cornell. Free; all welcome.

29 Nov - 1 Dec • **The Dolls of New Albion** ('steampunk opera'), Oval House, 52-54 Kennington Oval, London, SE11 5SW. 8pm. Tickets £5. See www.ovalhouse.com/whatson/booktickets/DollsOfNewAlbion.

22-26 Jan 2013 • **Dodger** (Pratchett novel stage premiere), Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon. 7:30pm; Sat matinee 2:30pm. £8.50: cheque (to STC) + SAE to STC (Dodger), PO Box 1486, Oxford, OX4 9DQ

1-3 Feb 2013 • **Quarter Tone** (filk), Ramada Grantham Hotel. £35 reg; £22 unwaged; under-18s £1/year; under-6 free. Cheques: UK Filk Con, c/o 15 St. Catherine's Cross, Bletchingley, Surrey, RH1 4PX. *Membership rates may rise on 1 December.*

23-24 Feb 2013 • **Microcon 2013**, Exeter University. Guests to be confirmed. £10.00 reg: cheques payable to Exeter University Sci Fi Society, 17 Eldertree Gardens, Exeter, EX4 4DE.

28 Apr 2013 • **Event Horizon**, Derby Conference Centre, London Rd, Derby. 11am-6pm. £5 at door; £10 for early entry (100 tickets only) at 9:30 or 10am. Contact ehmderbyevents@gmail.com.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Coverage of the new *Red Dwarf X* offers a hauntingly nostalgic sense of *déjà revu*: 'The show has an obsessive fan base, which stereotype would suggest is mainly men in their thirties and forties with a penchant for sci-fi and gaming—see how I'm subtly avoiding the provocative words "nerd", "geek" or "unsuccessful with women" here?' (Michael Hogan, *The Telegraph*, 4 October) [MPJ]

Random Penguin will not be the name of the merging publishers Random House and Penguin, but everyone feels it ought to be.

The Weakest Link. *Interlocutor*: 'John Wyndham's 1951 novel, *Day of the What?*' *Contestant*: 'Day of the Locusts?' • *Q*: 'This 1966 film starring Raquel Welch had two men extruded from the body. What happened to the submarine?' *Contestant*: 'What is The Incredible Shrinking Woman?' (US *Jeopardy*, 10 and 17 October) [AIP]

You Read It Everywhere. Disney is buying LucasFilm, including all *Star Wars* rights, for 4 billion dollars. Expect *Star Wars 7* in 2015.

Accuracy Dept. Dorchester Publishing is reverting rights to all authors. Their online list of obscure names they are unable to trace includes: Lovecraft, Howard Phillips; Rice Borroughs, Edgar; Smith, Doc; and Stroker, Bram. You'd think *someone* there would have an inkling that Robert Louis Stevenson is out of copyright... [AIP]

R.I.P. **Bernard Behrens** (1926-2012), London-born Canadian actor with voice roles in *Smurfs* (1981 tv), the radio *Star Wars* trilogy (as Obi-Wan Kenobi) and *Silver Surfer* (1998 tv), died on 19 September aged 85. [AIP] • **Janet Berliner-Gluckman** (1939-2012), South African-born horror/dark fantasy author and anthologist who won a Stoker award for 'Children of the Dusk' (1997) with George Guthridge, died on 24 October; she was 73. [GVG] • **Turhan Bey** (1922-2012), Turkish-Czech actor whose genre credits include *The Mummy's Tomb* (1942), *The Mad Ghoul* (1943), *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (1944), *seaQuest DSV* and *Babylon 5*, died on 30 September; he was 90. [PDF] • **John Clive** (1933-2012), UK actor seen in *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Queen Kong* (1976), and heard as John Lennon's voice in *Yellow Submarine* (1968), died on October 14; he was 79. [SFS] • **Dave Cox** (1944-2012), long-time UK convention-goer and Brum Group member, died from a heart attack on 16 October. He was 68. [RGP] • **Jacques Goimard** (1934-2012), French critic, editor, novelist and anthologist, died on 25 October aged 78. [RL] As acquiring editor at the Paris-based

Pocket paperback imprint, he published some 800 works of sf/fantasy. ● *Alan Hunter* (1923-2012), UK artist whose work included covers for *Nebula SF* in 1952-1953 and much interior art for *Nebula* and *New Worlds* through the 1950s, died on 31 August aged 89. [NB] He was unfailingly generous with artwork for semiprozines and fanzines including *Algol/Starship*, *Ansible*, *Banana Wings*, *Ghosts and Scholars*, *SF Chronicle*, *SFinx*, *Vector*, *Whispers* and many more. ● *Paul Kurtz* (1925-2012), humanist/sceptical author and founder of Prometheus Books in 1969, died on 20 October aged 86. [PDF] Prometheus published a number of genre works (including Martin Gardner's *No-Sided Professor*) before launching its sf/fantasy imprint Pyr in 2005. ● *Danny Lieberman* (1959-2012) New York fan, convention-goer and Worldcon gopher, died from leukaemia on 19 October; he was 52. [TM] ● *Dave Locke* (1944-2012), noted US fan whose fanzines and related publications included *Awry* (1972-1976), *The Really Incomplete Bob Tucker* (1974), *Gallimaufry* (1983-1985 with Joni Stopa) and *Time and Again* (1985-1986; 2005-2011), died on 26 October. Dave was long active in APAs and a valued member of several current fannish email lists. [BL/NB] ● *Marcus Swayze* (1913-2012), US comics artist and writer with Fawcett Comics from 1941 to 1953—when he worked on Captain Marvel and co-created the Mary Marvel character—died on October 14. [PDF]

As Others Regulate Us. The UK government plans tax breaks for computer games using British characters and locations: 'After lobbying from the producers of science fiction and fantasy games, which are often set on alien planets, the Government has proposed that stories which are "set in a location/world that cannot be determined" can be called culturally British. / Alien life forms will also be assimilated into British society. The proposed test says points will be awarded for lead characters "who are British citizens or residents or of a nationality/species that cannot be determined." The games could be based around a UK "historical event", showcase "British technical or creative innovations such as Artificial Intelligence" and embrace cultural diversity, including representations of disability.' (*Independent*, 4 October) [MPJ] So there'll be a strong incentive to design, say, a first-person shooter whose players must gun down wave after wave of racially diverse and variously gendered wheelchair users during the Chartist Riots.

Court Circular. Warner Bros won its case against the heirs of Superman's co-creator Joe Shuster, and still owns all rights to the superhero character. The ruling was that 'Shuster's sister's decision to accept higher annual payments [a pension from DC Comics] created a new agreement which cancelled any previous contract.' (BBC) [AW]

Outraged Letters. *Simon R. Green* had his ear to the ground at Fantasycon: 'Apparently, the next big thing is going to be hot sweaty elf porn. So I have decided to write *Fifty Shades of Fae*.' ● *Chip Hitchcock* on A303 obituaries: 'I suspect more people our age or younger would know Herbert Lom not from *The Ladykillers* but as the increasingly-deranged Commissioner Dreyfus in the "Pink Panther" movies. At least one of these, *The Pink Panther Strikes Again*, is genre: after threatening global destruction if Clouseau isn't killed, Dreyfus ends up erasing himself with his own doomsday device—while playing an organ, as if in reference to his title role in the 1962 *Phantom of the Opera*.' ● *Claire M. Jordan*: 'You may have noticed that in interviews, talking about the rather racy nature of *The Casual Vacancy*, J.K. Rowling has said that it would be unthinkable to write about sex in a fantasy context or anywhere near a unicorn, that that sort of thing Just Isn't Done. If I knew her address I'd send her a copy of *The Particolored Unicorn* by Jon DeCles, which includes an extended group sex scene....' Thog want! Thog want! On mature consideration, maybe Thog not want after all.

Critical Masterclass. Learn, from the professionals, which end of a book to start with: 'Once you come to terms with reading "to be continued" on the last page, it's easy to settle in and enjoy the sci-fi smorgasbord served up by Gregory Benford and Larry Niven.' (Rob Merrill on *Bowl of Heaven*, Associated Press, 26 October) [MMW] ● *As We See Us*: '... science fiction is the one lasting American contribution to prose literature ...' (Orson Scott Card, *Maps In A Mirror*, 1990) [BA]

Magazine Scene. *James Gunn's Ad Astra* is a new online journal of fiction, nonfiction and poetry with a sedate schedule of one themed issue per year plus 'ongoing content'. See <http://adastra.ku.edu/>.

As Others See Us II. Arthur Krystal of *The New Yorker* witters on about how genre fiction can be OK but never literature. 'Commercial novels, in general, whether they're thrillers or romance or science fiction, employ language that is at best undistinguished and at worst characterized by a jejune mentality and a tendency to state the obvious.' Good genre writers are simply not writing genre: 'It seems to me that Chabon, Egan, and Ishiguro don't so much work in genre as with genre.

'All the Pretty Horses' is no more a western than "1984" is science fiction.' (24 October) [MW] So much for all those lowbrows like John Clute who thought the hugely commercial 1984 was indeed sf.

Random Fandom. *Doug Faunt* and crewmates on a replica of HMS *Bounty* (built for the 1962 film) were early victims of Hurricane Sandy: 'The ship sank beneath us, but we swam free and mostly got into two rafts,' Doug said on Facebook. [GS] Fourteen of the sixteen aboard were rescued; one is dead, alas, and the captain still missing.

The Dead Past. *30 Years Ago*, sordid commerce afflicted *The White Hotel*: "'When you write the book, it's a virgin," explained D.M. Thomas to *Esquire*. "Then when it sells, it loses its virginity. It's the off-white hotel now ..."' (*Ansible* 30, November 1982) ● *40 Years Ago*, Peter Roberts on the Novacon 2 fancy dress: 'An honourable mention should go to Fred Hemmings, brightly dressed in orange with a massive clock-work key protruding from his chest. Damn punster ...' (*Checkpoint* 26, November 1972) ● *50 Years Ago*, an announcement of the next Eastercon GoH: 'BSFA Member Bruce Montgomery, better known to the world of literature by his pseudonym Edmund Crispin. Crispin is known to the sf world for his Faber published anthologies (Best SF) and for his thoughtful analytical essays on sf. He is the second Gentleman of Letters to turn to criticising sf and become a Convention Guest of Honour, following the invitation to Kingsley Amis two years ago.' (*Skyrack* 47, November 1962) ● *60 Years Ago*, Roger Dard complained about Australia's 'new Minister for Customs, a fantasy-hating character named Senator O'Sullivan' who 'has unleashed a veritable Reign of Terror. *Operation Fantast* [UK fanzine] has been banned, and as *O.F.*'s Australian representative I was raided by the police, on Customs orders, and subjected to a thorough interrogation. / In fact, as a result of the pressure which was brought to bear on me, I have been literally forced out of the field. I have resigned from *O.F.*, cancelled all my book orders from Ken Chapman, and will take no further part in fanactivity until Australia becomes a civilised nation again. [...] Genial, lovable Senator O'Sullivan meanwhile is joyously banning books which were never banned before in our history—and none of our previous Customs Ministers could be said to be very liberal in their outlook. *Alice in Wonderland*, Campbell's *Who Goes There?* [...] and all of A Merritt's books have already had the axe fall on them. We expect *Grimm's Fairy Tales* to go at any time. / So you see, if any of you oppressed fans over there in the UK wanna know the joys of living in a really free country, why, just come to Australia.' (*Science Fantasy News*, Winter 1952)

C.o.A. *Doreen Rogers* has moved into residential care: Room 34, Briarfields, Raby Crescent, Belle Vue, Shrewsbury, SY3 7JN.

Fanfundery. *GUFF 2013*: the southbound race to Australasia is on, with candidates Julie McMurray and Mihaela Marija Perković. £5/€6/\$A8 to vote; deadline 7 January 2013. You can read the platforms and vote online using PayPal at <http://guff.lostcarpark.com/vote>; downloadable ballot forms (PDF and Word) at taff.org.uk/guff.html.

Editorial. Greg Pickersgill and I have a publishing project, soon to be revealed. Fans of Algis Budrys's *F&SF* reviews should stay tuned.

Thog's Masterclass. *Sharing Dept.* 'Leaks were something Emma didn't want to share.' (Elizabeth Lowell, *Death Echo*, 2010) [PB] ● *The Legacy of Ralph 124C41+*. "'The reason is a girl. I'm a poor man, and she's heiress to fabulous—Well, frankly, she's the daughter of 3W28W12 himself!" / The executive started at mention of that universally known number.' (Paul Ernst, 'The Planetoid of Peril', *Astounding*, November 1931) [DL] ● *Neat Tricks Dept.* '... while tonguing her love button, Carol began to moan in ecstasy.' (Richard J. Lukenda, *A World Gone Crazy*, 2009) [PGA] ● *Dept of Girly Superlatives.* "'Good girl," said Dex, patting her satiny bare shoulder as he stood free again. "You're a sport and a gentleman. You don't understand the terms? They're earth words, Greca, that carry the highest praise a man can give a woman.'" (Paul Ernst, 'The Red Hell of Jupiter', *Astounding*, October 1931) [DL] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky: Centre of Gravity.* 'Her eyes rolled into the back of her head and she almost took a step backward.' (Percival Everett, *Assumption*, 2011) [PB] ● *Acid Reflux Dept.* 'Fegan cursed, bitter anger at the waste rising in him.' (Stuart Neville, *The Ghosts of Belfast*, 2009) [SG] ● 'His own breakfast came up promptly, and he lost himself in it for a few bites.' (Patricia McKillip, *The Bards of Bone Plain*, 2010) [NR]

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