

probability of becoming facts. It is far more realistic, far more concerned with the world-as-it-is, than—for example—tales of Restoration wenches or satyriastic Private Eyes.

"Perhaps that is one reason for its increasing popularity. Science—which is merely commonsense applied with uncommon persistence—is the most important single factor in our modern age: without it we can achieve nothing, either for good or evil. It will be only natural, therefore, if the force which now shapes our world also shapes our literature and gives it a new meaning—even a new hope. For though prophetic fiction has often been concerned with cataclysm and disaster, it can also provide inspiration by showing us the future which lies within our grasp.

"It is the true literature of the Second Elizabethan Age, the age which is already waiting for a new Columbus to take his rocket-driven caravel across the deeps of space."

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Walter Gillings, who comments on the current Club choice, *I, Robot*, is a new contributor to *SF News* but his name will be familiar to many members who have read his work in s.f. magazines. As the study of cybernetics grows the conception of a robot seems less fantastic, and quite recently the *Daily Express* printed a story of a mechanical device that could find its way out of a maze. One morning we shall wake to be told that machines have brains.

I, ROBOT

By ISAAC ASIMOV

(Grayson & Grayson 8/6; SFBC 6/-)

WALTER GILLINGS writes:

When Karel Capek wrote his famous play about Rossum's Universal Robots, in 1921, he took a gloomy view of the result of man's making super-efficient machines to serve him—because they would have no soul. The notion that a mechanical man must be a destructive monster has been

IT WILL HAPPEN IN—AND PERHAPS TO—MANCHESTER THIS YEAR!

On June 5th and 6th, 1954, at the Grosvenor Hotel, Manchester, England, under the auspices of the Nor-west Science Fantasy Club—the 2nd Manchester Science Fiction Convention. Details from the Convention treasurer, BRIAN H. VARLEY, Balmoral Hotel, Princes Square, LONDON, W.2.



"Oh, for heaven's sake! We've only just got here, and you're worried about getting back already."

from the *New Yorker*