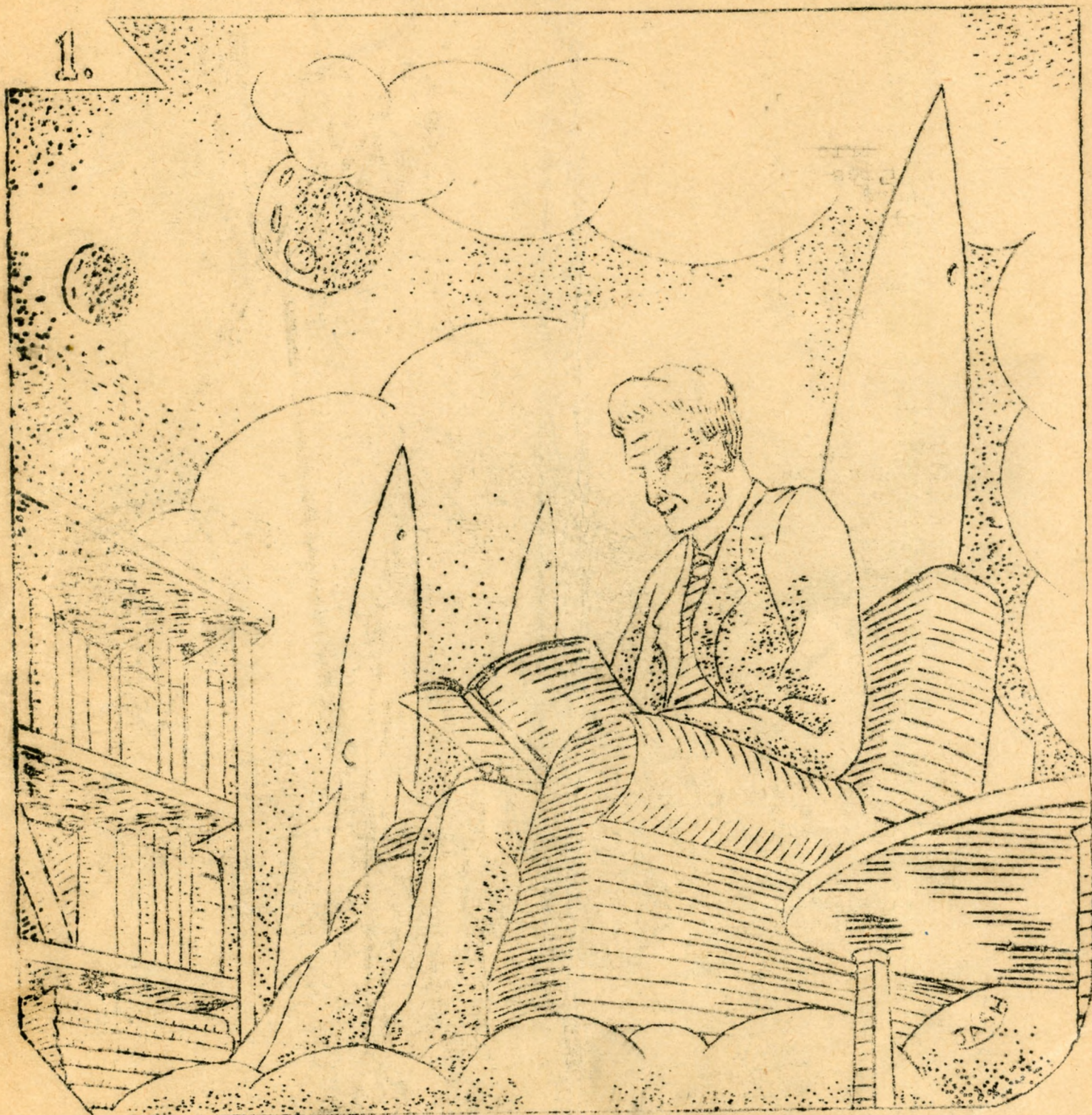


# ARCTURUS

1.





ARCTURUS



H.K. Wright

P. E. Rigby

J. Ashcroft

Issue One

Nov. 1955

Price 9d.

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

.....

(Editors)

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David Lindsay: A Voyage to Arcturus

"Which you have in front of you at this very minute," said Krag, pointing a thick finger towards the brightest star in the south-eastern sky. "There you see Arcturus . . . ."

Editorial

.....

For at least a year, Pete Rigby and myself had dreamed wistfully of becoming amateur editors, even inducing slumber by counting imaginary pages going through imaginary duplicators. A queer chance made this dream materialise.

Keith Wright knows nothing about fandom, but he is keen on good s-f. Once a week I would visit him and chat (usually till after midnight) about Stapledon, Bradbury, and such topics. On Aug. 6th I described the woes of would-be publishers. "Really," I said, "the biggest problem is the duplicator."

"Intriguing machines, aren't they? Dad uses one."

I gasped, then began to Plot and scheme. "At work?"

"No; it belongs to him."

I was trembling delicately. "Where is it, then?"

"In the next room. Like to glance at it?"

I gnawed at my fingernails, clutched his arm, and nodded. He showed it to me. Whimpering softly, I patted the ink-marked thing, thrilled by the stains on my palms. Keith realised that my interest was not merely bored politeness, so he experimented with scraps of paper, becoming more and more fascinated. I saw the dream dawn in his eyes; he whispered, "I wonder if . . . ."

Rasp, rasp, rasp, rasp . . . "Nice shoes you've got, Keith; polish tastes funny, though." Rasp, rasp, rasp, rasp . . .

". . . . we could produce a six-page fanzine?"

"Keith! Why, that's a brilliant idea! Oo, I wish I could think of clever things like that . . . ."

Keith basked. Before he could think rationally I screamed for Pete Rigby. And "Arcturus" was born.

.....

The three of us scribbled and sketched and scrawled. Soon vague Order fused out of Original Chaos. We're not satisfied: Issue One is almost entirely by Wright, Rigby and Ashcroft. We are preparing a more evenly balanced second issue, to appear in early January. The third issue will appear at Easter.

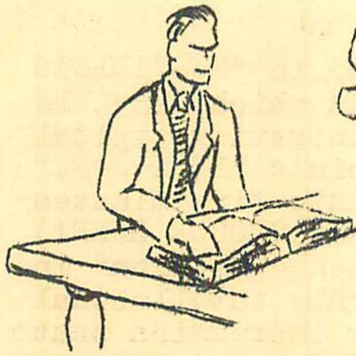
We hope that "Arcturus" suits you; we look forward now to receiving comments, suggestions, and contributions.

And we'll meet you at the next convention . . . . .

Pete

John

Keith



S-F

## CHIT-CHAT

FANZINES: At the time of writing, I couldn't say which of two new fanzines will appear first. One is ours; the other is the long-awaited "BIPED." John Ashcroft and I have a hand in the latter; but the real work is done by Bill Harry, of 69 Parliament Street, Liverpool 8, Lancs., to whom contributions should be sent, and Peter Reaney, of 53 Bromley Street, Sheffield 3, Yorks., who deals with subscriptions and letters. Their first issue will contain 40 pages for 1/- (but three issues cost you only 2/6d.)

"ANDROMEDA" will be discontinued after issue 14.

I'm sorry that Don Allen will be FAFIA for two years. He hopes to produce an occasional issue of his excellent fanzine, "SATELLITE." No. 7 should be out for Christmas. But Don is now preparing another issue of "DIZZY," his all-cartoons fanzine. If you have any GOOD cartoons, post them NOW, to 3 Arkle St, Gateshead 8, County Durham.

FEN: Wish H. Ken Bulmer well: he was chosen to represent British fandom at America's Cleveland Convention in September. We hope he'll persuade the Americans to let London be the site of the next World Convention. Ken's report should have appeared in our next issue, but John Carnoll just managed to outbid us.

FILMS: Recently, I saw "CONQUEST OF SPACE"; later, I enjoyed pointing out technical errors to less particular friends. Mind you, I liked the film, which is one of the best I've seen; but Willy Ley wouldn't have applauded such matters (in space) as a glowing red asteroid, audible rocket exhausts (Hollywood's pet pander to ignorance), and full phases of all planets no matter where the sun was. The corpse swayed gently, connected to the ship by a sagging rope! The usual "dumb" crewman removed his magnetic boots, rose instantly without pushing, and headed the metalwork with much momentum but little injury. That "space-speed indicator" was meaningless. And the swerve to avoid the asteroid should have plastered the unstrapped crewmen over the "ceiling"; those outside should have been flung miles away.

A really dismal disappointment was "THIS ISLAND EARTH": it began well, but became juvenile and unconvincing. The Terrans weren't very amazed by what happened to them. I'll never know what was meant by that "heat barrier" (in space) through which the saucer had to pass; nor why an all-out meteorite attack on a planet should "turn it into a radio-active sun." As for the Mutant . . . ! Respectful pause, while trufen regurgitate.



RADIO: I waited for an s-f book to be included in "MELVILLE'S CHOICE," the series of Light Programme talks in which Melville discussed three books each week, using as illustration typical extracts in dramatized form. Then came Crispin's "BEST S-F." I was let down badly. The talk was squeezed into five minutes (the programme lasted thirty). The "blurb" (see GROUSE HERE!) was virtually quoted. Melville pronounced "Science Fiction" in that superior, sneering manner affected by highly intellectual detractors of s-f. The extract gave a ghastly impression that this excellent anthology is juvenile space-stuff. And not one reference was made to Crispin's thoughtful introduction.

Jet Morgan is now facing a Martian invasion. . . .

BOOKS; Michael Joseph have reprinted Cyril M. Kornbluth's own anthology "THE MINDWORM" at 12/6d. I'm glad to see well-known publishers producing Class-A s-f. (See Editorial, "NEW WORLDS" 33.) Also from Joseph: Wilson Tucker's "WILD TALENT" and Harold Mead's "THE BRIGHT PHOENIX." The sales of "W.I." will be influenced (which way?) by its serialization in "NEW WORLDS." More forthcoming books, from various publishers, include: Poul Anderson's "BRAIN WAVE," de Camp's "LEST DARKNESS FALL," Pohl and Kornbluth's "SPACE MERCHANTS," Simak's "TIME AND AGAIN," and a mighty anthology, Gold's "GALAXY S-F OMNIBUS," 352 pages from the original. Also to appear: Pohl's "STAR S-F"(2), John Wyndham's "THE CHRYSALIDS," and Sheckley's "UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS." "A.D. 2,500" will contain the twenty-one prize-winning stories from the "OBSERVER" competition last Christmas.

POCKETBOOKS: Long overdue, Nova's next pocketbooks, Elish's "JACK OF EGGS" and Sturgeon's "THE DREAMING JEWELS," should be out very soon. Other recent British items are "COLONISTS OF SPACE" by Charles Carr, "WHEEL IN THE SKY" by Rafe Bernard, and "EARTH 2" by Vargo Statten. Herley's "AFTER MANY A SUMMER" and "BRAVE NEW WORLD" are "musts" as 2/6d. Penguins; and "THE KRAKEN WAKES" by Wyndham (he gets about!) is also available in this series, at the same price.

MAGAZINES: "BRITISH S-F MAGAZINE" can't be selling when its title has to become the more explosive (and juvenile) "BRITISH SPACE FICTION MAGAZINE." Will the mag. collapse? Australia's edition of "F and S-F" has achieved its third issue. I'm still sorry the BRE of this folded. The surviving BREs are a smaller paged "ASTOUNDING" (wordage only slightly less) at 1/6d; "S-F QUARTERLY" and "FUTURE" at 1/-; then that emaciated "GALAXY," whose recent increase to 2/- seems likely to put it out of its misery. And one very long-kept promise has had to be broken: "AUTHENTIC" now costs 2/-. To compensate, the mag's been enlarged to its former size of 160 pages. H.J. Campbell claims that "AUTHENTIC" still gives more value for money. But the other three major mags, at 128 pages, contain at least as much

## S-F Chit-chat

as this bigger "AUTHENTIC." A recent letter in the magazine described the scientific articles as "padding." I agree; but H.J.C. insists that such articles are what the majority want. I'm pleased that "NEBULA" is on the scene again. I'm waiting now for the new "AMERICAN S-F." "THE CHRYSALIDS," Wyndham's post A-War tale, has appeared in condensed form in two recent issues of "ARGOSY" (September and October).

I hope this news isn't history on publication day, and I will welcome any comments or information that may be useful. Let's hear from you, anyway. . . .

Pete Rigby.

Alan Dodd, editor of "CAMBER," reviews the film

"IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA."

"IT" is a giant, radio-active squid, disturbed from its lair in the Mindinao Deep by hydrogen bomb explosions. First reports of its appearance and entanglement with the latest in atomic-driven submarines are scoffed at --until the survivors from a wrecked ship report its attack on them. The squid is making tracks for San Francisco.

The Army and the Navy are alerted. This is shown by the usual hackneyed library film shots of mine-sweepers at work, planes landing on carriers, depth-charges exploding: in fact, the whole gamut is run. Interspersed with this main theme is the usual Lady Scientist--Big Navy Man--Big Scientist drama.

Not that anyone takes much notice until the squid bursts its way through into San Francisco harbour and begins to tear up the Golden Gate Bridge with its radio-active tentacles.... Further inquiring suckers probing into the city are met with blasts from flame-throwers which drive it back to sink to the bottom of the harbour.

Here the atomic sub drives a remote control torpedo into its head but not until the squid has trapped it at the bottom of the bay with flailing tentacles. It soon releases the sub, however, when Big Navy Man and Big Scientist launch explosive harpoons at it and finally detonate the warhead in the torpedo, blasting the squid to smithereens.

Special effects by Ray Harryhausen (who worked on "THE BEAST FROM TWENTY THOUSAND FATHOMS") are competent but lacking in intelligence. Squids, giant or otherwise, do not travel tentacles first. Comparisons between this film and "THE BEAST. . ." are inevitable as the theme is virtually the same --only the monster is changed to protect the company. Still, the film has its moments. . . .



Lament

of the few who escaped the final war on the  
World, who made their dwelling in another family of  
planets, never to return to Earth

The scythe of God  
Has had its richest harvest.

Even now, Night  
Cups us in her hands,  
Lays, as a mason lays his stones,  
Her silent hours upon us.  
We look up at the stars  
But all in vain;  
The Sun which shone on Nineveh and Rome  
For us is black.  
Oh, where is the Sun who daily stirred  
The motions of our blood and limbs,  
Where is the star which gave us warmth?

Let us mourn for the death of Earth.

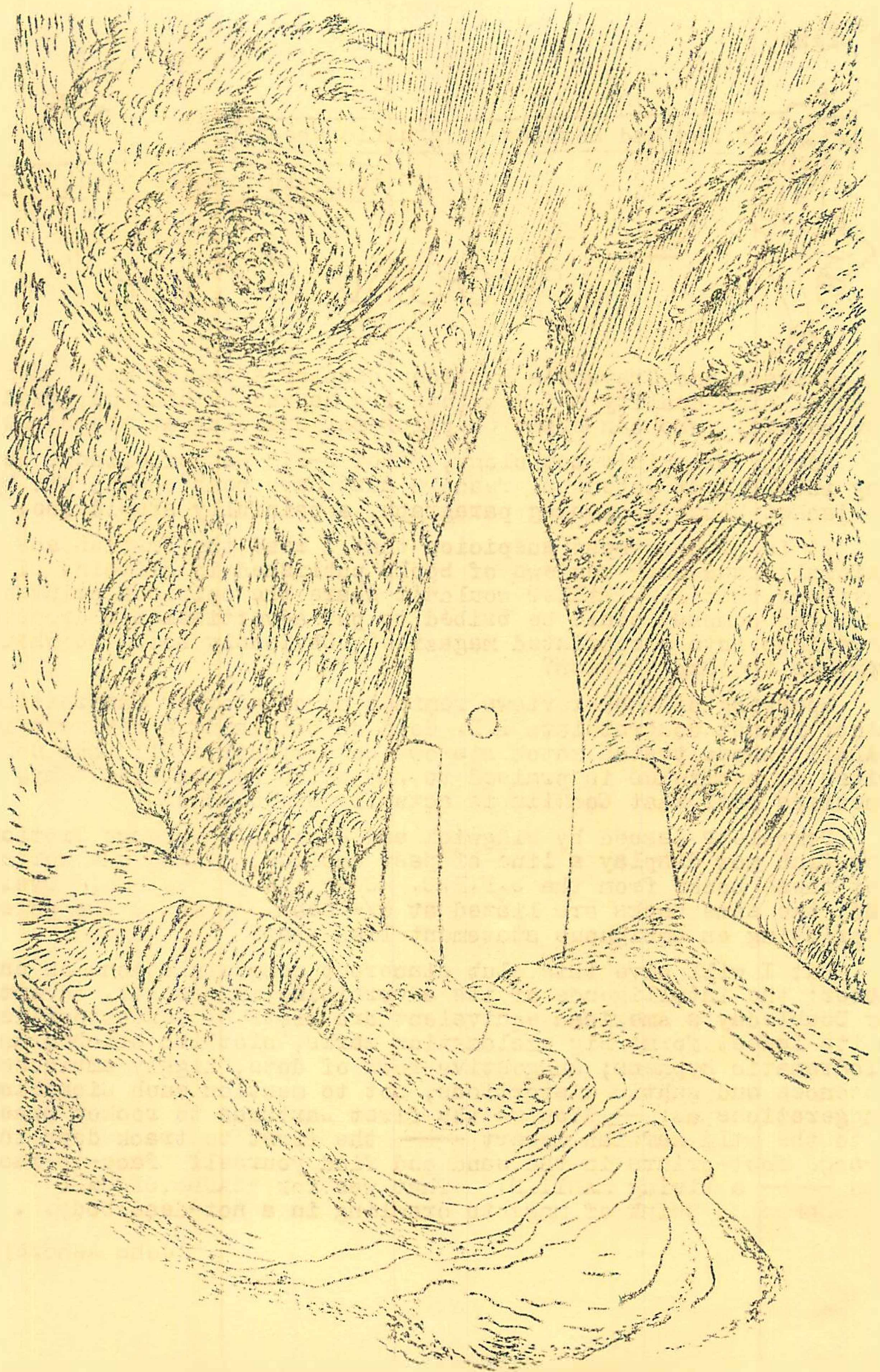
She fed Man with her bread,  
Set many waters  
Falling for his thirst.  
Of dust made him a brother,  
For sister to his blood  
Made leap her sap;  
Made move the rivers  
For his music  
And the wands for his soul.

Let us mourn for the death of Man,  
We, who are the leaves of Earth's last autumn.

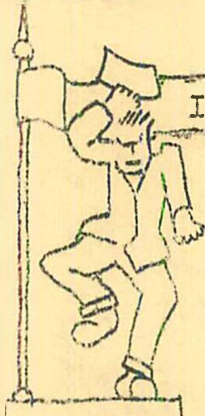
Hector was the flower of Troy,  
Ashes he,  
Christ is nothing now,  
Buddha taught in vain,  
Sweet and sour thoughts of men  
Are lost among the stars.

R.K. Wright.









If Man had nothing to grumble about,

he would grumble about it

So:

Grouse Here!

Grayson and Grayson's Cytricon display appalled me. Most of their high quality s-f reprints are marred by hideous, gaudy dust covers. Who can blame sceptics for sneezing at the books?

Edmund Crispin's anthology, "BEST S-F," was excellent; but many intelligent potential readers must have been scared off by the jacket-blurb's opening paragraph, a painfully stupid one.

It is with darkest suspicion that I read the British sF's uniformly laudatory reviews of books published in Britain. I'm convinced that P.S. Miller wouldn't share the opinions printed. Surely no company could be bribed to put advertisements dressed as reviews into a reprinted magazine? Obviously not. So what, pray, is the explanation?

Speaking of book reviews reminds me of another interesting point: I must congratulate H.L. Gold on obtaining a reviewer in "GALAXY" whose tastes match his own so perfectly: all that Gold writes or publishes is praised to the skies by Conklin. Why, I sometimes feel that Conklin is actually prejudiced!

Pamphlets issued by Sidgwick and Jackson's Science Fiction Book Club now display a line of past choices, beside the words: "Get these books from the S.F.B.C. Only 4/6 per volume." Overleaf, the same books are listed at 6/- each. What's the point of printing an ambiguous statement like that?

But I will give this club sincerest congratulations on one matter: the intelligence of its advertising in general. Adverts for Doubleday's American equivalent are riots of sensationalism in its lowest form: Big exclamation marks, clottish clichés and melodramatic hyphens; suggestive rows of dots, highly ambiguous sentences and subtle distortions, not to mention such sickening exaggerations as: — "You're the first Earthman to rocket crash on to the wild Martian desert — the first to track down the strange foot-prints in the sand and find yourself face-to-face with — a living MARTIAN!" That was for "SANDS OF MARS."

Makes me think of maggots crawling in a not-dead body. . .

John Ashcroft

## Five worlds, bitterness, and three dreams

I walk, beneath hot darkness, cut loose from life and lust;  
 I walk this withered starkness where no green seedlings thrust;  
 fire-scalded chasms shimmer where streams of silver simmer,  
 and glittering starsheens glimmer on banks of burning dust.

And now another barren world beneath my footfall bowed,  
 with ochre breath around me hurled, a thickly roaring cloud;  
 warm wind long battle waging on rock, eroded, aging, rearing  
 through dim pall raging, while fanged crags shriek aloud.

Exhausted cool air sleeping beneath dark heaven's hosts  
 where parched brown mosses creeping are all that red dust boasts;  
 no lakes or rivers lying in crimson desert dying, no sound  
 save icy sighing of yesteryears and ghosts . . . .

Dark sulphur tempest grinding black rock in canyons bare;  
 then flame-clouds burst forth blinding above red lava's glare;  
 night split by lightning flashing, skies rent by thunder crashing,  
 and fire in fury smashing pale cliffs of frozen air.

Brief glints of red raise rivets of warmth on cold plains  
 white; far distant thunder shivers beyond the ice-numbered night;  
 storms through a dark sky wailing, shrill wind green vapours  
 flailing, and moons in silence sailing beneath an arch of light.

No rustling leaves, no verdured land where living creatures  
 run: five sister planets barren stand beneath a sterile sun:  
 death dark dominions reigning, the frigid moonlight waning,  
 and Earth alone remaining where life has yet begun.

Not lost in chasms soundless men live, men sing and sigh:  
 somewhere, in regions boundless, strange others live and die;  
 time dwindles, swift-depleting, yet stars call joyous greeting  
 and men move to their meeting beyond the unknown sky.

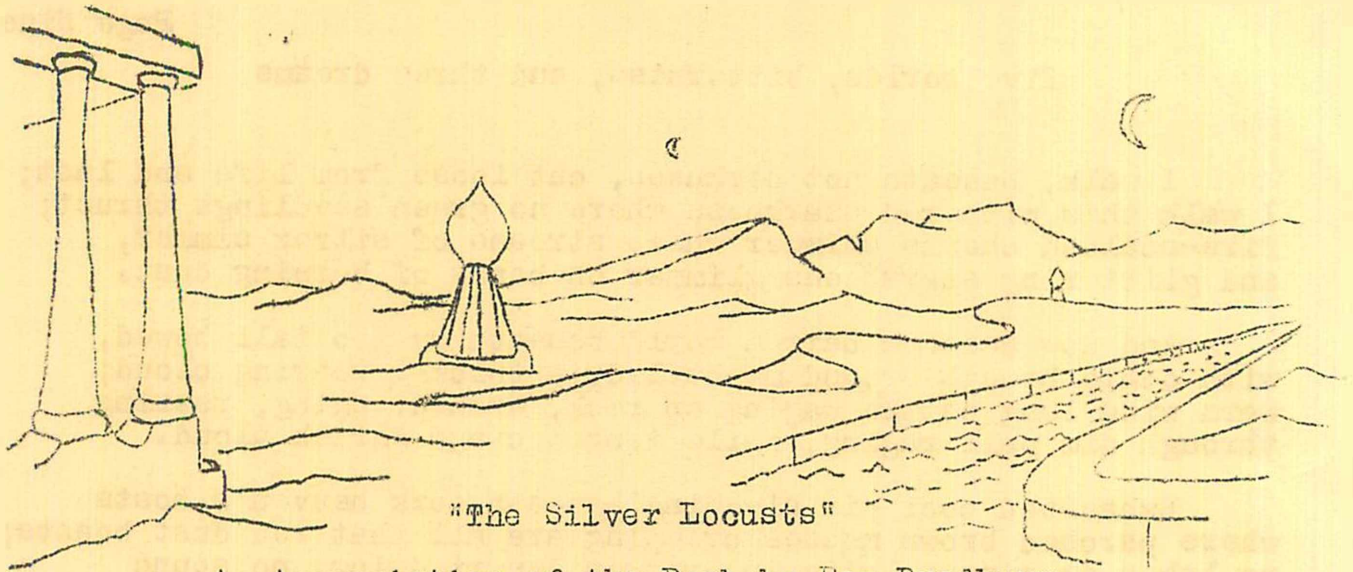
Age gathers, never pities; streams chill in flowing spate;  
 dust sifts in crumbling cities; stars freeze in ashen fate; Man  
 searches; hope is sinking; Man cries for creatures thinking —  
 but suns are redly shrinking, and Earth is old, too late —

Or worlds beyond all number spin hidden from our eyes:  
 Earths of tomorrow slumber in hushed and waiting skies:  
 raw oceans new life spawning throughout the cosmos yawning,  
 and this, Creation dawning —

and Man, the first to rise!

John Ashcroft





"The Silver Locusts"

An Appreciation of the Book by Ray Bradbury

.....

Artificiality and lack of restraint are the noticeable features of Bradbury's style. His nouns are choked by an excess of adjectives that tends to satiate the reader. Consider ". . . the soiled snow of an evil winter, and it is gone like the sexual flowers of a red-and-yellow spring, and it is gone like the panting nights of hottest summer . . . ." (1) When the quality assumes priority, rather than the object to which it pertains, then the colours of the myopic artist are shown. A mature writer controls profusion: the euphuistic Shakespeare gives way to the wielder of stark utterance.

Bradbury uses the recurrent symbolic word, such as "dark" — perhaps the most powerful of adjectives — and "ancient," "cool," "crystal," "silver," "hot," "golden." As a conscious device (the "blanc" of Gautier's "Symphonie en Blanc Majeur," etc.) the maintenance of a rigid thread of association is excellent. But Bradbury's too conspicuous use of these words, especially "ancient," interrupts the story: the words protrude from the back-cloth, as it were.

He delights in employing primary colours. While helping to bind the action, they create a "Martian" atmosphere: clear, like a simple kaleidoscope, and freed from all Earthly sombreness. He sprinkles them far too indiscriminately, however. "She came back, red, steamy-faced. Her eyes were sharp yellow, her skin was soft brown." (2) ". . . windows made of blue and pink and yellow and green coloured glass." (3) Even allowing for the foil of context, these are crude, and daubed on the story in too blatant and arresting a manner. Note, however, his success when there is meaning behind the colours: the yellow of the insane Martians' eyes and then the swift glances of the fearful Earth Men — "There was only a soft white move of eyes in the close room." (2)

The descriptions are often over-elaborate, and they exist as



## "The Silver Locusts": An Appreciation

end-products, apparently. Consider the description of Mr. Ylla's flame birds. Again Bradbury strives for effect in too obvious a manner. Spender's descent on the ignominy of the Martians' decrease.(4) The flowery "The canals are full of lavender wine!"(5) The excessive "The Martian desert lay broiling like a prehistoric mud-pot."(2) These are examples.

He uses the "Cheyney technique" of capturing the different facets of a mood with a succession of short sentences: this jars by too marked a contrast with his usual style. Allied to this is his use of the "snap" line — the stock-in-trade of many contemporary writers. This irritates by its manifold intent.

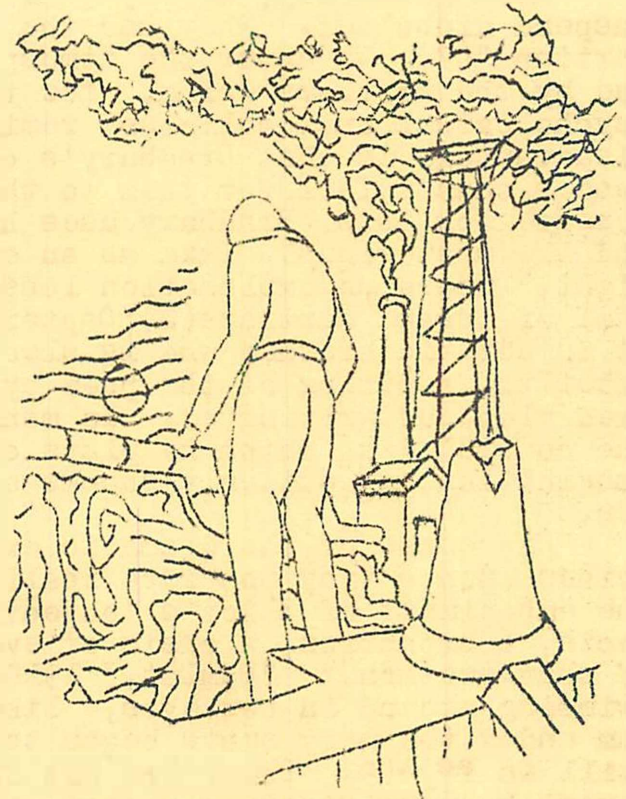
"Captain John Black broke and ran across the room. He screamed. He screamed twice.

He never reached the door."(3)

— a line Spillane might

be proud to own.

The rhythm of his style is conspicuous by its monotony. On the whole, it is of a plodding variety conditioned by a recurring, adjectival beat, and only in places are there flashes of worth. The speeches of the Old Ones, marred as they are by the gaudy heap of similes, and the memories of Father Peregrine(1) hold notable instances of where Ray Bradbury essays the "grand" style with commendable success. Consider, as an example of his simpler rhythm, "Everything in me denies this. My heart beats, my stomach hungers, my mouth thirsts. No, no, not dead, not alive, either of us. More alive than anything else."(5) Control of speed of minor rhetoric, and ejaculations, and the contrasts in this passage reveal his talents to the full.



The alliteration and assonance in "The Silver Locusts" merit praise. "A sudden odour of water."(5) "Ribs, like spider legs, plangent as a dull harp."(5) ". . . . he choked, shut his eyes, bent, and a thick rush of fluid filled his mouth, spilled out, fell to splash on the tiles." "A sharp winy stench filled the cool air."(4) In the second example, the contrast between visual and auditory simile is skilfully contrived by the labials in "plangent" and "dull." The high and low pitches of olfactory and tactile impressions demonstrate Bradbury's verbal subtlety.



## "The Silver Locusts": An Appreciation.

He is an artist of mainly visual impressions. Scent plays the least part in his writings. This, perhaps, partly explains the dream-like quality that is so much a feature of the stories. He uses this sense to strike discordant notes, eg. "There was a smell of reptiles and animals."<sup>(2)</sup> Sound is more marked in use; but, on the whole, visual and tactile connotations constitute the Bradbury palette.

Personification in this book is most marked. Indeed, one story, "There Will Come Soft Rains," is one long, extended personification, that of a living house. The rockets are locusts; the sky, sands, and very buildings of Mars are alive. Bradbury makes customarily inanimate things live: these have their parts, as have the characters.

More generally, we may praise the author for inducing us to suspend disbelief. "They had the fair, brownish skin of the true Martian."<sup>(7)</sup> We enter the atmosphere of the fairy tale; perhaps one by the Brothers Grimm, for there is a mixture of terror and psychological uncloakness, reminiscent of those writers. The disadvantage is that Bradbury's characters move in a mirage: the reader cannot feel for them to the depths of his being. To compensate for this, Bradbury uses his strong sense of the dramatic and the mysterious. Take as an example his skill in "The Summer Night," where no explanation lessens the atmosphere created. The hall of insane Martians<sup>(2)</sup>; Captain John Black's realization that it is not his brother who is sleeping by him<sup>(3)</sup>; Biggs, vomiting after the reciting of the poem by Byron — a most carefully climaxed piece of writing<sup>(4)</sup>. In many such examples, Bradbury shows the control with which he plays on the bared nerve-ends of human imagination, or suddenly shocks one into an instant of realization.

His sense of the dramatic extends in other directions — he seizes upon a tiny concrete reality which illuminates the whole; the embodiment of Eliot's 'objective correlative' ("A set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that emotion." "Hamlet," 1919.) "You could see her thoughts swimming around in her eyes, like fish."<sup>(8)</sup> "In dark theatres gum under the many seats began to harden with tooth impressions still in it."<sup>(9)</sup> These are not entities, but rather lenses that reveal by magnification a state of sensitivity.

A further extension of his dramatic sense is related to the above: namely, his power of terse, vivid summary. The description in "Way in the Middle of the Air" of the flood of emigrating Negroes with their valueless chattels is a condensation of a departed way of life. "The Shore" and "The Locusts" are both hardly more than paragraphs in which the essence of many years, and the labours of many people, are distilled.

His invention, that quality so praised by Pope, is one of



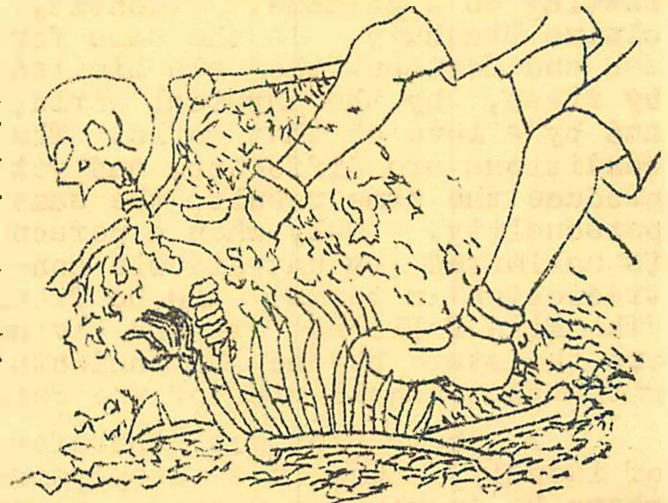
## "The Silver Locusts": An Appreciation

his most marked powers. It pervades the book: the range of reference unexpectedly contracted, the juxtaposition of dissociate elements, and the logical extension of modern data are apparent on every page. Consider the technical miracle "There Will Come Soft Rains," or the parable "The Fire Balloons." Perhaps Bradbury's main fault of excess does lead him astray here and there; heterogeneous elements are often too violently yoked - yet often he startles us into a new awareness, or a new reality manifested from our accustomed one.

He uses a mixture of simplicity and naïveté that, again, is the child of his strong dramatic sense. "The sun was in the sky, the wind blew, the grass was green, the screen door stood wide." (3) "In a moment shall I die? I am afraid that I love living too much. But I love things more." (1) These show the skilled artist at work; they are akin to the "Do not laugh at me. . . ." of "Lear." We might include here the sudden flashes of humour which have the same desired end as his naïveté.

"The Silver Locusts" is a book of modern symbols: thus the characters partake of this quality. For the most part they are stock. The husband and wife of the first story are conspicuous as old wine in new bottles: for they have a Maughamish flavour--perhaps of "The Colonel's Lady." The only two stories where any depth of insight into the human mind is found are "And the Moon be still as Bright" and "The Fire Balloons." In the former, Wilder is a more free-reined Everyman; Spender shows wavering, fanatical though his idealism is to us. Yet, even here, the mortal clay must be moulded to the vessels of meaning. In the latter story, Father Peregrine is perhaps the most fully developed character in the book -- a subtly interwoven mesh of simplicity and complex metaphysics. It is a pity that he so closely resembles Chesterton's Father Brown.

On surface, the book would seem to be a series of stories which have little connection of ideas. Nothing could be farther from the truth. "The Silver Locusts" is made up of allegories concerned with the most crucial of contemporary problems, that of identity. As an exploration of the motive-springs of society it can rank with Bronowski's "The Face of Violence."



The second and third allegories state the author's initial postulate: Individuality is a myth. This, he states, by implication, is the real tragedy of life: too often the veil of difference is stripped away: we see ourselves in others, with tragic results. In the next allegory the problem is developed: Identity



## "The Silver Locusts": An Appreciation

must become its environment. Biggs sees the shanties behind the crystal towers: this, says Bradbury, is his way of life. Spender seeks a phantom of another identity, a desiderium of dignity and peace, but shoots and kills, never escaping himself. The Martians are fundamentally ourselves. Of what, then, is the purpose of life?

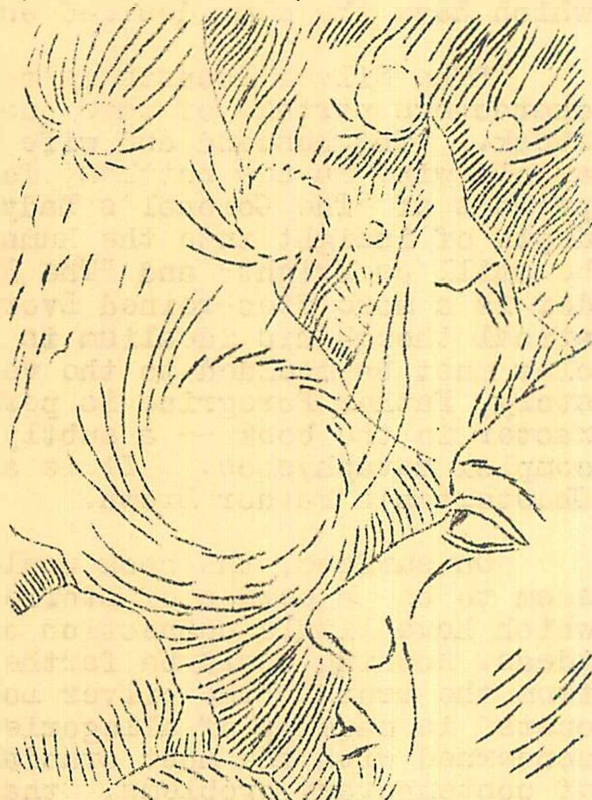
Bradbury offers a solution in the allegory "Night Meeting." "Good Lord, what a dream that was," sighed Tomás. And for many people, says Bradbury, this is the best solution -- hold fast to the qualities which distinguish the different facets of the fundamentally similar identity. Hold fast to "the raw whisky, the Virginia reels, the party," to "the canals, the boats, the women with golden eyes, and the songs."

In such pieces as "The Green Morning" and "The Locusts," he sketches in the details of his beliefs, as expounded in "And the Moon be still as Bright." We must, of necessity, live with our environment.

He develops his thesis on a higher plane, relating it to religion, and by treating it from a new angle. Let us admit, he says, that Man and Martian are the same person; then it follows that they commit the same sins, are subject to the same God. He makes one of his characters, Father Peregrine, realize this -- the first in the book to do so. The conclusion he gives was first enunciated by Plato, but it loses nothing by its setting as a parable. Identity, claims Bradbury, is the same for Man and Martian: they are limited by flesh, by the physical world, and by a love of that world. The conditions are different, and yet produce the same result, the same personality. Only when a person is unlimited (an unavoidable contradiction in terms) is he free.

"The Fire Balloons" are the Divine Substance of Swedeborg; they are the stage beyond the Ancients of Shaw's "Back to Methuselah" with the tranquil mind of the Perfect Sage in Bhagavadgītā.

Bradbury proposes, therefore, two solutions to his problem of identity. One on a metaphysical level; one on a lower level, where he suggests a grateful acceptance of qualities alone. Now, in "The Martian," he shows yet another attempt at solution, only to demonstrate its impossibility. We cannot accept the fact of identity and try to graft our qualities on to it. We must live





## "The Silver Locusts": An Appreciation

with our environment. The Martian is taken to the city, and he dies.

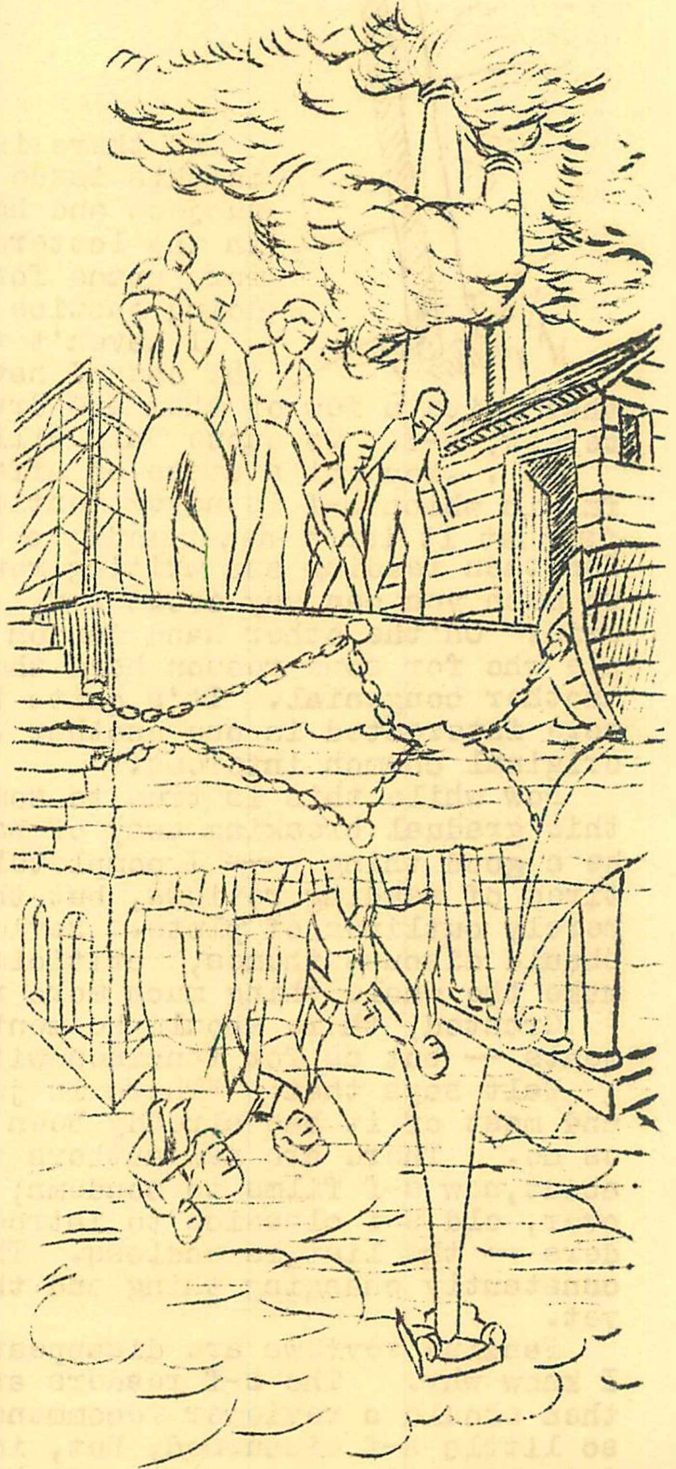
The remainder of the allegories in the book, up to the final one, illustrate and expound Bradbury's convictions, especially his postulate about environment. "He wired the entire dead American town below with sound speakers." (10)

Then the last allegory presents Bradbury's personal solution, for a phoenix arises from the ashes of Earth and Mars. We must recognize this basic similarity, and we must build on that. We must recognize the limitations of a new environment; must live within them, never trying to impose ours (one of advanced technology) upon it. The family bypasses the newer American ruins, and chooses a Martian city. (8) This last allegory is a direct reverse of the one shown in "Night Meeting." In his final paragraph, the author forcefully demonstrates this thesis of accepting the similarity of identity:

"The Martians were there—in the canal—reflected in the water. Timothy and Michael and Robert and Mom and Dad."

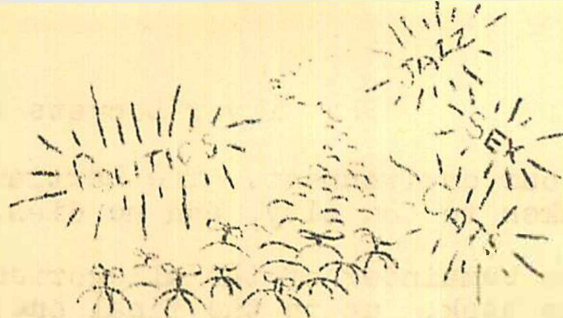
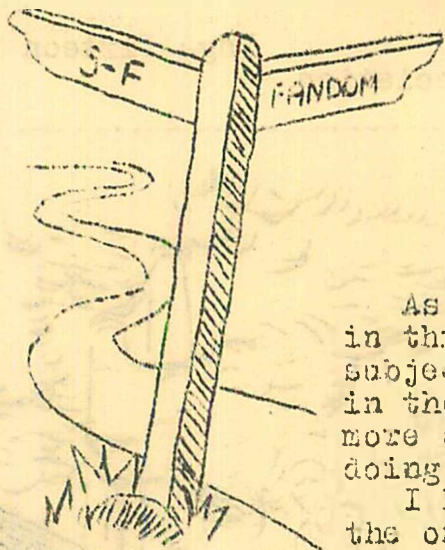
It is an excellent way to close his quest into the sources of society.

Notes: 1 "The Fire Balloons"; 2 "The Earth Men"; 3 "The Third Expedition"; 4 "— And the Moon be still as Bright"; 5 "Night Meeting"; 6 "The Musicians"; 7 "Ylla"; 8 "The Million Year Picnic"; 9 "The Silent Towns"; 10 "The Long Years."



R.K. Wright





As there is such short space available to me in this issue I will just skip lightly over the subject and hope it will be discussed at length in the lettercol. I hope too that I will have more space for a longer article next time, thus doing justice to the subject. (Certainly! Ed.)

I haven't read very many fanzines, but, from the ones I have read, I seem to get the feeling that quite a few of them are drawing away from their original interest, s-f. To quote Walt Willis:

"... You get a state of affairs as in America where there are fmz in which s-f is never mentioned. The only thing I would say is that it isn't necessarily a bad thing. It can be fun — more fun than reading and writing reviews all the time. There is just so much you can say about s-f, and most of it has already been said. On the other hand fandom does bring together a lot of people who for some reason have the same types of mind and find one another congenial. It's quite inevitable that they should become more interested in one another . . . . to the neglect of their original common interest."

Now while this is true to some extent, the main theme — that this gradual breaking away of bonds between fandom and s-f might be a good thing — I completely disagree with. Sure, one gets tired of reading reviews, but that is because the reviews are merely outlines of plots. Reviews should be something more, they should discuss themes, criticise or praise writing ability, and make the whole thing much more interesting.

Granted, there should be mention of fandom — say 50% of contents — but as for fanzines without mention of s-f — I shudder!

Walt says that:— "There is just so much you can say about s-f, and most of it has already been said." Now this statement amazes me. There are new authors to discuss, new magazines to talk about, new s-f films to condemn; there are dying promags to grieve over, old s-f classics to introduce to the new generation of readers — the list is endless. There are topics galore. S-F is a constantly changing thing and there is a lot more to say about it yet.

Fanzine reviews are disappearing from the promags, and I think I know why. The s-f readers are not familiar with fandom — why then should a reviewer recommend a fanzine to a reader if there's so little s-f discussed, but, instead — puns he finds puzzling, interlineations he can't understand and mention of various people he's never heard of?

Sure, fans should write about themselves and friends, spreading the egoboo — but remember the newcomer. Let's have more about s-f in fanzines; let's have more features like "Our Contributors" ("PLOY"); and let's have less interlineations like:

"What has s-f to do with fandom?"

Bill Harry

In our first Guest Article by a professional author, Alan Barclay, a popular contributor to "NEW WORLDS," grinds one or two axes. Following an official decision to exempt intending science teachers from military service, this article may rouse several interesting arguments — on more subjects than that of science fiction's merits.

.....

"CRITICS? BAH!!"

.....

Since it is known to the editors of this magazine that I earn my living by teaching in a technical college and that I have some connection with a technical branch of the Royal Air Force, and that in addition I have had a considerable acquaintance with engineers and engineering practice, they have, rather naturally, suggested that I might provide an article dealing with the extent to which science fiction is read among technical college students and engineers in general.

This is an attractive idea, with which I have been tinkering for the last few days. Finally however I find myself obliged to drop it, and to confess that I cannot deal adequately with it due to insufficiency of data.

You see, the s-f addicts in my line of business, if there are any, keep the secret dark. They fear that their taste in reading may be laughed at as being adolescent. They think there is some danger of the uninformed listener suspecting them of wallowing in erotic literature — though heaven knows there is no form of literature with a smaller percentage of eroticism than good standard s-f. Or, more generally, they think their taste for the stuff is just bad taste judged by approved standards.

Of course, I have my suspicions. Questions asked by students during my lectures on astronomy suggest that they are often well-informed on space and gravitational problems. I discovered an s-f magazine in the desk-drawer of a test-pilot at Boscombe Down some years ago, and only yesterday a very eminent and high-brow structural engineer of my acquaintance who plays a violin in his spare time let slip the remark: — "What we want here is a medium-sized chunk of contra-terrene matter."

But few of the addicts will own up frankly. Why?

Well, I think there is one very good reason, or rather a pair of reasons combined, for this.



The first part of the reason arises from the fact that from the age of sixteen to twenty-five engineering students are very busy — very much busier than, for example, classics students. This fact is beyond dispute, it is a matter of simple arithmetic. While university arts students have on an average six hours of lectures per week, engineering students put in about twenty-four, in labs, class-rooms, and design studios. Not only that, but after graduation the engineering student is generally committed to a further two years of hard work to get a professional degree, such as the A.M.I. Mech.E. or the A.M.I.C.E.

Thus during five important years of his life the young engineer has his nose kept pretty firmly against the grindstone of technology so that although he is ground into the shape of a competent engineer his education probably lacks balance due to the fact that he has had no time to get a sufficient acquaintance with literature. Being an honest man — engineering tends to make a man honest, for it is concerned with control of the forces of nature, which exact a swift punishment for sloppy thinking — he is aware of this hiatus in his education and probably has a bit of an inferiority complex about it. Even when he has managed to do a considerable amount of general reading, he still tends to be extremely diffident about the extent of his knowledge.

And if by any chance he has not got an inferiority complex of this sort, the non-technical world — the classics student, the musician, the writer, the journalist, even the sales manager and the insurance agent who may have read a couple of books at one time or another — proceed to do their best to give him one. For they remember that the technician was once the village black-smith, or the chauffeur, to whom the gentleman would say, as he leaned forward in his car, "I suggest, James, that you select a lower gear, in view of the fact that we are approaching a hill." They think the situation has not changed much in the last hundred years. They believe that mathematics, including calculus and the theory of tensors, is a kind of arithmetic. They think that the whole of engineering consists of boring holes in bits of steel, and tightening up the nuts and bolts that are inserted into them . . . .

The engineer is a relatively honest, modest person, conscious, as I have said, of the gaps in his education, and he will therefore usually accept an opinion that he is incompetent to judge of matters outside the field of technology.

This brings me to the second part of my argument. Why does the non-technical man — the critic, and especially the amateur, self-appointed critic — dislike and disapprove of science fiction?

## "CRITICS? BAH!!"

Simply because he does not understand it.

And why does he not understand it?

Because it is he, not the technician, who is by modern standards the uneducated man. How can anyone whose education is restricted to classical literature, plus one or two languages (probably dead ones), and who knows nothing about the immense field of science and technology, nothing about the structure of the universe, nor about the nature of the atom, nothing about building, heating or drainage, nothing about water supply or biology or medicine, nothing about heat, light or sound, nothing about statistics or telecommunications, agricultural science or the operation of the common or garden motor car — how can such a man really claim to be educated? And what right has he to dismiss so contemptuously a subject he is incapable of understanding?

Henry James has stated that the literary critic may not on any account condemn a writer on the grounds of subject matter. He asserts that the writer may choose to treat of any subject — manners, religion, society, marriage, politics, war, murder, or sudden death — no subject is barred. He must be judged solely on the effectiveness of his treatment of his subject. Therefore, the enthusiast for science fiction may cheerfully disregard the jibes of the critics — at least until they begin to learn to do their job properly, that is to say to discuss science fiction solely in terms of good and bad, effectiveness or the reverse.

They will, you know, in time. Critics — all except the first-class men — do not make fashions in literature. They follow them. They have been obliged some years ago to accept the cinema as art and now they talk about the genius of a fellow called Charlie Chaplin, a man who ceased to amuse me after I passed the age of fifteen. They have agreed to tolerate detective stories, and you know there are only five possible detective stories, all of them variants of the five original themes.

In time they will be discussing the literary merits of science fiction.

.....

Alan Barclay

Editorial note: Keith is studying literature.  
John is studying art.  
Pete is studying science.  
Hence our opinion is divided!  
Let us have your views on this article. . . .



"Brave New World"

A Review

.....

This book is the fore-runner of the standard science fiction theme concerning the future of our civilization. Needless to say, most of the imitators have failed to achieve what Huxley did, although Orwell's "1984" must surely be considered as of equal, if not greater, merit.

Unlike Orwell's, the picture Huxley paints is not harsh and crude, nor are politics blamed as the main reason for the change-over from our present way of life to that of the future. A sort of pseudo-religion takes care of that. But the method of change is not what Huxley wants to draw our attention to; he aims at the intellectual when he shows what our modern civilization could be heading for. In his world of the future, all learning, culture and science for their own sakes do not exist. Reading for pleasure is just not done, and the technical knowledge the citizens have is concerned only with their particular job; and as for art, in any of its forms, they know nothing of it.

The lower type of present-day man would probably find the new civilization most enjoyable. Anyone who wishes to sleep alone is a deviationist — although Huxley himself does not use that term — and everyone has a different bedfellow every night. This is quite safe as most of the women are sterile (Huxley uses the term "free martin") and the others always carry with them a supply of contra-ceptives. Most juvenile-minded men, were they to read this book, would think this a very enjoyable state of affairs; and Huxley dwells on the matter very much as the aspect of civilization most greatly changed from our own.

As I have said, Huxley aims solely at the intellectual reader, and hopes to make him feel that the prophecies contained in this book must never be allowed to come true.

Huxley spends much time describing the life of the children after decantation (birth). They are taught by "sleep teaching" (hypnopaedia) to accept their station in life with complete satisfaction and are indoctrinated into complete conformity with the rest of humanity. All individuality is bred out of them.

This book was written in 1932, before the full flowering of the Nazi régime in Germany, so one can well see how good some of Huxley's prophecies were when one remembers Hitler's propaganda-crazed youths in the last war; although the circumstances are not the same, a similarity is undoubtedly there.

Huxley also tries to present the other side of the picture, in that all the people are genuinely happy with their lot. They have eight hours of work, eight hours of sleep and eight hours of entertainment. Disease, hunger and poverty have been eliminated; ~~nor do people degenerate slowly in health, from the age of thirty~~

onwards, as now: everyone is as healthy as a present-day man in his prime might be; then, at the age of sixty, "Crack! The end." Huxley also invents a wonderful drug without cumulative effects and a kind of cinema entertainment whose impressions are communicated on every sense-level. The whole world is devoted to depthless pleasure.

Huxley writes with no particular style: instead, he uses good, straight-forward English, which is quite suitable for his purposes.

This book may not be as powerful as "1984," perhaps because of Huxley's presentation of the other side of the problem. The social conditions of "Brave New World" are more attractive and more easily defended than those of "1984," to say the least. But, all the same, I wish more "future civilization" books were as intelligent.

\*\*\*\*\*

Aldous Leonard Huxley, younger brother of Julian, was born at Godalming, Surrey, on July 26th, 1894. He went to Eton in 1908 and began studying biology, in order to become a doctor. He contacted keratitis, however, and in a few months he became almost completely blind so he immediately learned to read books and music in Braille; he also learned to type by touch, and at the age of eighteen wrote a novel which he was never able to read, as when his sight had been partly regained the manuscript had been lost.

About two years later, one eye had recovered sufficiently well for him to read with the aid of a powerful magnifying glass, and he then went to Oxford to read English Literature and Philology, taking his degree in 1915. He spent the remaining years of the First World War doing various odd jobs including cutting down trees, working in a government office, and teaching. In 1919, he married Maria Nys, who died this year. He also joined the staff of a London literary journal. From 1923 to 1930, he was in Italy; then he moved to the south of France. During 1934 and 1935 he spent most of his time in the U.S.A. He returned there in 1938, and discovered, by a lucky accident, the method of sight training devised by the late Dr. W.H. Bates of New York. In 1942 Huxley went to Southern California where conditions are particularly suitable for such eye exercises.

His work ranges from sharply satirical fiction to travel books and essays and plays.

Pete Rigby

To Mr. and Mrs. Wright  
For letting us use Keith's room in his absence

Work has slackened off its pace; we're in poetic mood;  
We'll use this handy little space to express our gratitude;  
You let us prowl and caper, although Keith is far away;  
His room's neck deep in paper yet you never show dismay;  
We toil until eleven and you seldom seem to think  
Of a house that looked like Heaven till the coming of the Ink;  
And then you never-faillingly serve generous suppers too:  
ARCTURUS and its editors present their thanks to you!





"The Weird Shadow over Southport"

An Essay on Human Foibles, Scepticism, and Mass Psychology

.....

"Here he is! Spaceman Ashcroft! Seen any Martians lately? Haw haw haw!" Thus guffawed the common rabble.

I complained of this attitude to a newspaper reporter.

"Begone!" he cried. "Science fiction's drivel; space-flight is crackpot idiocy. Prove to me that Martians exist, and -- why, our entire staff will drop their pencils, note-pads, typewriters, cameras and Spillane novels, and sing hymns! Haw haw haw!"

It would take more than Martians, I thought.

At midnight (as is the custom) I phoned Keith Wright, and he commented sourly that the town deserved an alien onslaught.

"Keith!" I said. I considered the remark.

"Hello? John?"

"Oh, sorry. Thinking. Look: couldn't we . . . er . . . ?"

"Hey, yes. If only --"

"We'll do it," I hissed. "Say nothing now: the Grimp may be tapping the phone."

"We ought to do something about the Grimp," declared Keith.

"Later. This is more important. Meet you in one hour, with UNOHU."

"Right!"

"That's your name," I told him.

"Shut up. I've a page to duplicate. Be seeing you."

"Fine." I replaced the receiver, grabbed my cycle and lamps and reached Pete Rigby's house at 12-30. Knowing that his mother would have tucked him into bed I crept round to the back yard and threw handfuls of staples at his window. Rusty began to bark. (1) Pete peered out blearily, after hiding the "British Space Fiction Magazine" that he'd been reading under the bed-clothes.

I explained the situation; Pete dressed and shinned down the drainpipe, then hauled Bone-shaker up from the gloomy cellar. We made vague plans, riding through darkness. At Keith's, we kicked a couple of buckets down the cellar steps (as is the custom) just to terrify the ground-floor occupants and then padded up the fire escape; at the top we paused to peel from our flesh the wet stencils that had been hung over the handrail to dry. The great door swung back with a heart-freezing creak like the opening of an American pocket-book; Keith let us in; we crept through the kitchen



and along the landing to his bed-room, avoiding, with skill born of bitter experience, the neat rows of pages lying on the floor.

Can't afford beds for the servants, y'know. . .

We bowed before the Duplicator, crouched in the Triangle (around the candle) and lit our pipes.

"Regard," sighed Keith sadly; he pointed, and we looked up. Pete gasped, "What —?"

"The Grimp. I tried to stop It, but —" Keith shrugged — "It paddled in the inking tray and ran across the ceiling; I hurled the roller at it; It carved **BLOGNOR REGIS IN '57!** on the surface and rolled all round the walls — and forgot it printed with the lettering reversed. . . ." He wiped tears from his cheeks.

"We ought to do something about the Grimp," declared Pete.

"Later," I said. "This invasion is more important."

"Three o'clock; Sunday afternoon; Lord Street," said Keith.

"Thus we'll capture the biggest audience."

"We'll set off a firework," vowed Pete grimly.

"No," I said. "Use plastic spinners; you pull a cord, and up they go. Launch some from the Art Gallery —"

"Rubbish!" snapped Keith.

"Eh?"

He leaned forward through a cloud of acrid smoke, with flame reflections glittering in his glasses. "This is an invasion; we want it big — big — **BIG!** Detonate the firework factory; explode the gasometer —"

"No!" I cried, shocked. "There's a good book-shop by the gasworks."

"I've got it!" yelled Pete.

I told him that he'd had it for a long time.

"Listen," he pleaded. "The wind blows off the sea. Right?"

"That's my name," said Keith.

I wrenched at my hair.

Pete continued: "John will be on the bank roof —"

"Like hock he will! What if the police see me?"

"They never saw you when you swiped the money for the first stencils, did they? Now, as I said. . ." And, coughing in the bitter smoke from our pipes, he outlined his Three O'Clock Plan. Even Keith flinched.

"Why not call it a Five Year Plan?" he demanded sourly.

"It won't take five years!" growled Pete.

"I know; but we'll get that if we do it."

still, the Plan was accepted.

Keith eased into bed, trying not to dislodge any Christmas issue covers. Pete and I descended, kicked the buckets back up the steps, and separated. While cycling among shrouded farms(1) the steps, and separated. While cycling among shrouded farms(1)

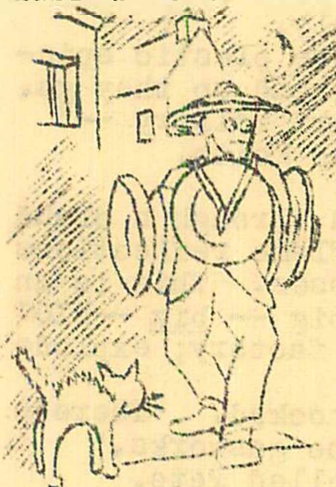


## "The Weird Shadow over Southport"

towards Halsall and home, I realized that we had each smoked three issues of "HYPIEN," instead of the usual two.

On Saturday morning I used my share of the advanced subscriptions money to buy thirty-six plastic spinners. At home, later in the day, I experimented with our dust-bin lid: when hurled against the wind, it curved up, rose vertically, and sailed a considerable distance downwind. In fact, I lost it. I think it fell in a field before the harvesting machine. I'd appreciate the early return of the lid if it should be found by the Belfast corn-merchant to whom local produce is exported.

Pete, Keith and I met again with our individual weapons, then at midnight we cycled among dark streets and darker buildings to a hushed Lord Street.



We hoisted our bicycles, equipment and Bone-shaker into the band enclosure for safety, then separated to collect bin lids from various parts of town. Some stupid scaremongers spread a tale that a Chinese Communist coolie spy clad in Ming Dynasty armour was loose in the town that night. Lies! I walked the whole length of Scarisbrick New Rd. with a bin lid strapped on my chest, one strapped to my back, two under each arm, and one on my head, and I never met him.

I crept back to the Lord St. band enclosure and unloaded my loot. Then, from the distance, echoed fifteen loud gun-shots. There was a long and awful silence. Pete arrived, sweating, with several lids. We waited in misery and dread.

"By 'ARCTURUS'!" swore Pete.

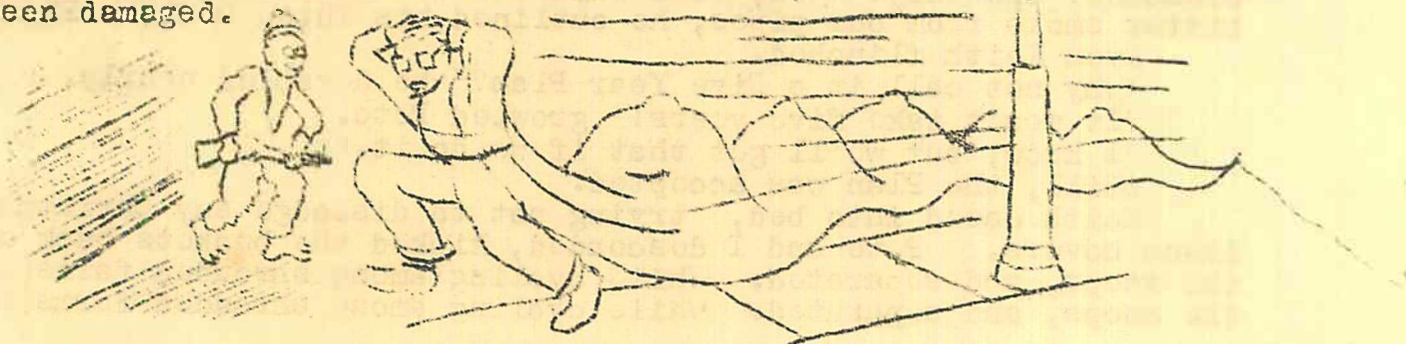
"How much does it cost?" I asked.

He cursed bitterly. "If the un-fen have got Keith . . . ."

The very thought filled me with a sickly horror. Where would we find another duplicator?

A slithering sound approached. At first we didn't recognize what was advancing. Then we uttered cries of admiration.

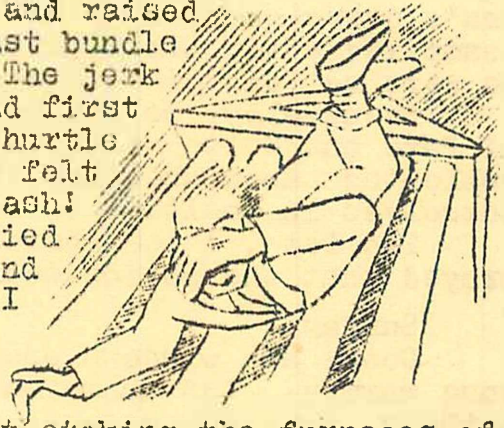
Keith had stolen twenty-five bin lids; he had made a train of five doormats, had heaped five lids on each, sheeted the whole lot with a tarpaulin, and hauled it along. Unfortunately, someone had heard him, seen him, mistaken him for a sea monster, and shot him. It was rather funny when you thought about it. Keith had several bullets in each arm and three in his back, but luckily no lids had been damaged.





## "The Weird Shadow over Southport"

As the waning moon peered through a cloud-break, we dragged our equipment across Lord Street to the bank. Decorated ledges and similar architectural features were readily accessible, so I clambered up, unreeled a ball of twine and raised the lids, one bundle at a time. The last bundle caught under some projecting masonry. The jerk made me lose balance, and I toppled head first from the roof. The pavement seemed to hurtle upwards at me; I couldn't shriek — I felt grisly horror, wind rushed past — crash! Impact! — and a sensation of disembodied floating. At last, I opened my eyes and saw a silvery face looking into mine. I was filled with relief. This, surely, was Bob Shaw, welcoming me through the pearlstream portals of Oblique House.



"Thank Willis," I thought, "that I'm not stoking the furnaces of the great black engines in Tubb's fiction factory down below."

Beauteous peace filled my singing soul with poetry.

"Drratted cretin! Look at the dents in those bin lids!"

Alas, it was Pete's face, lined in moonlight. He and Keith had seen the accident, and had spread the tarpaulin to catch the lids: by odd chance I had fallen into the tarpaulin and the lids had missed. The clang of their collision with the pavement was still flaking dust from the buildings all around us.

"What the numerous unprintable Anglo-Saxon epithets connected with biological processes and the infernal regions are YOU playing at?" demanded a hoarse and horrible voice.

We turned and saw a massive brute of a night watchman.

"Er, well, we're practising for a job in the Fire Brigade in the holidays," I said.

He snarled and rolled up his sleeves(1).

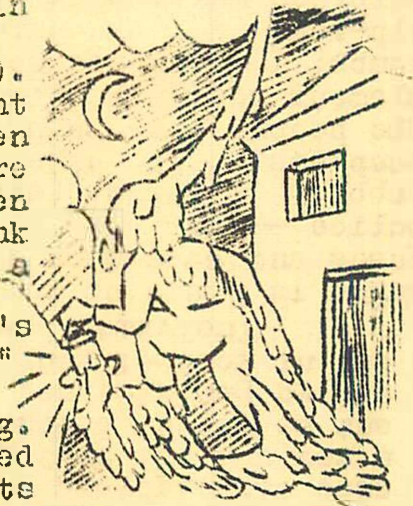
With true fannish icy dignity R.K.Wright said, "Shut up! Anything you say may be taken down and used as an interlineation. Is there any law against the exalted ranks of the fen projecting themselves and bin lids from bank roofs on to doormats and tarpaulins beneath a waning moon?"

"Yuss," retorted the watchman. "That's the chief note in our Emergency Rules Book."

I thought our game was up.

Then it began to rain thick, black Blog.

Startled, we fell flat: the bully bawled numerous unprintable Anglo-Saxon epithets connected with biological processes and the infernal regions, and he became covered in sticky, putrid, indescribable, sloppy goo.



(1) Strangely difficult feat of sorcery which results in the jacket being turned inside out with the performer sitting with his own inside pocket. I can never manage more than one sleeve.







## "The Weird Shadow over Southport"

fire-works cascaded above the grovelling multitude. Down fluttered Keith's ten thousand duplicated leaflets saying: "Repent, ye Earthlings!" Savagely, I pulled the string to the first multiple launcher. Nine plastic saucers went soaring up to hover above the mob. Chaos multiplied by chaos! Pete threw out the second collection of pamphlets: "We come from the Red Planet!" A burly man grabbed one and waved it aloft as he clambered on to the bandstand. "Comrades!" he bawled; "The day of the Glorious Revolution has dawned! Workers, arise! In the sky —" (I hurled more dust-bin lids) "—you see the symbols of Capitalist decay!" Then the snarling horde dragged him down. The timid Town Council chose that instant to unroll the red carpet, and were lynched. And the Southport Interplanetary Society members, who had been standing on a bus, brandishing the "WELCOME!" mats, were scragged and stepped to the tree-tops. Seven insurance agents, holidaying together, climbed the Monument, held hands, then jumped into the ornamental goldfish pond. Police whistles shrilled; the gas-works siren yowled (she thought a Martian was after her); a fire-engine rushed to a tender (pun); others sprayed chemical foam in all directions. Up soared the last spinners; out went the final bin lids; down plunged the last fire-works.

The screaming ebbed.

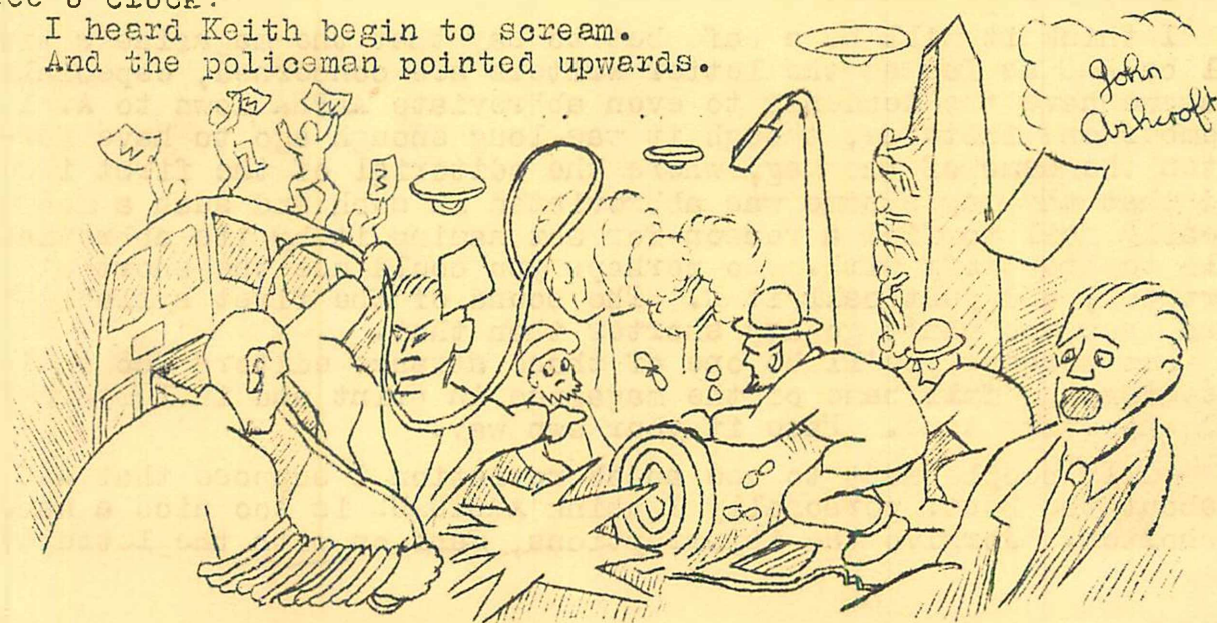
Smoke dispersed. The mob skulked in shops and sewers. Before the church was a litter of note-pads, pencils, typewriters, cameras and Spillane novels, and from within arose solemn singing. Keith, Pete and I stood up, doffing our hats, in that splendid desolation. Never again would the un-fen scoff — never would they forget the weird shadow over Southport: fandom had been vindicated! Together, in perfect unison, we cried, "Haw haw haw!" Then a trap-door rose beside me and out peered a scared but infuriated fat policeman; his face was hideously green. "Hide!" he bellowed. "Flying saucers or something, thousands of 'em!"

We hugged our ribs and howled.

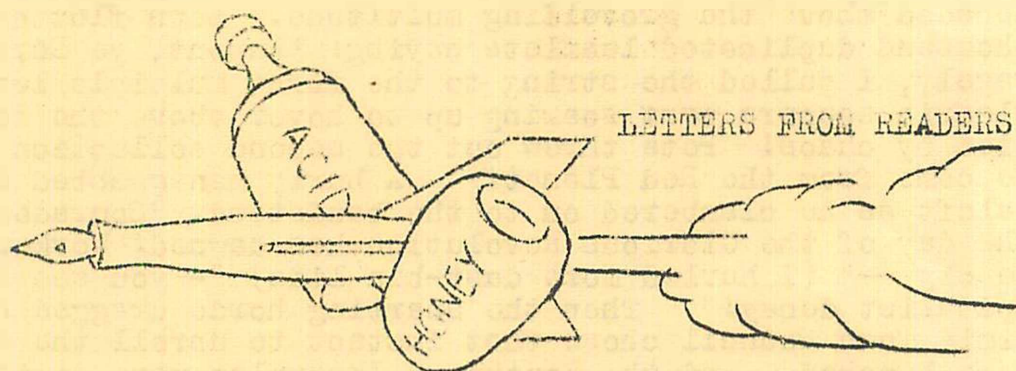
"Drat it!" he spluttered. "I'm not talking about your stupid game with bin lids and bengers! Haven't you looked at the sky since three o'clock?"

I heard Keith begin to scream.

And the policeman pointed upwards.







Answered by Pete . . .

Jan Jansen, 229 Berchemlei, Borgerhout, Antwerp, Belgium.

\*\*\*\*\*So we're to be afflicted with yet another *z*azine? *Arcturus*. Nice name, but so long that you'll be looking for a contraction once the issue is out, if you haven't indeed picked one before you started. Pity I am not an astronomer, so that I could do a factual article on *Arcturus*, but the only astronomy books I have read were the *Jeans* (if I remember correctly) popular books, and the only article I thoroughly enjoyed was the recent article in *NEW WORLDS*. I might have known a bit more from corresponding with Andy Young, but as I am already so tangled with him and Joan in moraines, looped or not, as well as being sorely puzzled over the adventures of inertia, I really am glad Andy hasn't brought in astronomy yet. He will sooner or later, I'm sure, for he has already started by sending me a snapshot of a telescope . . . Perhaps I could search through the encyclopaedia, check on Noah, and produce an amateur fiction piece about how the ark was really an old-fashioned flying saucer. But perhaps you don't run fiction in your mag, and I can't write it anyway. . .

(© This is a thorny point among the editors: John says that if we got any GOOD fiction we should use it; I say that if people want to read serious s-f they should stick to *pro*zines. How about a few opinions, pro or con?©)

I think it will be a safe bet to say that the magazine's title will be *ARC* as far as the letter writers are concerned, especially so as we have the tendency to even abbreviate *ALPHA* down to *A*. I remember one instance, though it was long enough ago to have forgotten the name of the mag, where the editorial of the first issue said that the mag's name was abbreviated in such and such a manner. I really fail to find a reason for not naming it by its abbreviated title to start off with. So perhaps you could use the shortest short out, and just call it *R*. The sound of the first syllable is there, and you can't go any shorter than that.

But perhaps you'll be one of those strange editors who insist on seeing the full name of the magazine in print and in letters each and every time. Have it your own way.

(© If people want to use an abbreviation I suppose that *ARC* is about the best: personally I think *ARCTURUS* is too nice a name to shorten. Forgive the interruptions, Jan: on with the letters!©)

A lot of space has been devoted in more than one fanzine recently about the number of fanzines that are being published, and that something should/should not/ be done about it. Depending on who's writing, of course..... Personally, I rather believe that there are too many; compared to the time I entered fandom two years ago the number has easily doubled, but as there's nothing I can do about it, and I seem to like practically every zine that comes along, I am not unduly worried about it. Most of them turn up here sooner or later as trade copies, and it is here that the grumbles start arising when it is found that some fanzines start appearing erratically whilst the faneds of slightly more regular mags keep sending on their issues, sometimes three or more to one of the other. One reason why the editors have grumbled — though this could be countered with the mention that they needn't trade if they don't want to.

Personally, I have had trouble of this sort often enough, with some faneds sending me one or two copies of their mag, receiving copies of A in exchange and then never sending any more copies of their own zine, without any explanation. Even though reviews appear in other magazines stating that such and such a number has been received. In England, I'm glad to say I have only had one of these unpleasant editors, the main source of trouble being the US. I don't think most fan editors object to trading, as long as there's some quality in the mag. As to there not being enough subscribing readers to support fanzines, that is the faned's own worry, he's paying for the thing — and whilst on the other hand the possible subscriber might object to not being able to afford every fanzine being published, I can but mention the fact that they couldn't afford every prozine being published last year, and they didn't raise that much of a row about it.

Conclusion? None. I'd like to receive every fanzine that sees print, and if I don't like it I can always tell the editor, as I have done once or twice. But I do send them a trade copy nevertheless; I'll let everybody rage, and continue the policy. Some may have disappointed me in halting exchange without prior notification, but there are so many more that keep their promise, and these far out-weigh the rest. Perhaps I should stop publishing, and join the subscribers and find out their side of the business.

I can but wish you the best with your new venture, and if one day I am inspired by someone or something, I'll think kindly of you, unless the others pull their guns first. Don't worry too much over the ruckus (?), it'll blow over, and as long as you don't publish too much crud (a definition of which will vary very much from person to person) welcome to the crowd.

(. Thanks very much, Jan. I hope ANCTURUS pleases you, and that crud stays at a minimum ☺)

Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, N. Ireland.

\*\*\*\*I expect it may be too late to make the letter column of



your first issue but I'm writing to wish you the best of luck anyway. If you care to send me the fare I'd be happy to travel to Southport and break a bottle of champagne (left over from Brian Varley's wedding deception) over your duplicator.

All good wishes, and may your bacover never fall off.

Con Turner (a Gestalter), 14 Line St., Waldrige Fell, Co. Durham.

\*\*\*\*I hope you do not have any feuds running in the mag at any time. This sort of thing is not the kind of stuff I like to see in any mag. By the way, do you intend to run any fan fiction? I hope so. Contrary to most fans I do like to see fiction in a zine, provided it is not too hammy. I think that with reasonably careful vetting you could obtain stories which aren't too ghastly.

(© See reply to Jan re fan fiction, Con. . . .©)

Alan Burns (another of 'em), Goldspink House, 6 Goldspink Lane, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2.

\*\*\*\*\*Hah! So another two mugs are entering the fold, little do they know what lies ahead, the trials, the times when it all seems so in vain, so utterly foolish and futile, but there is spirit there, oh yes, there is spirit, demanding money from me, Alan Burns, one of the Gestalters, o god, think you I am Croesus? Why you should pay me ninepence to read the ----- thing! However toilet rolls are dearer than of yore so I enclose -- reluctantly -- ninepence in newly forged stamps which by the grace of God a post office with a reasonably blind postmistress or master, will accept. I will give no advice to you excepting that of Mr. Punch to those about to marry, don't, you will find fan pubbing the most thankless, hopeless and horrible task which man in his foolishness embarked upon. So we are to have serious features in ARCTURUS are we? I'll bet they're serious, so ----- serious that they won't be worth reading, news of s-f and fandom, s; if anyone cared! I'll go far back with the news that it took a Yank Fanzine to tell me that Don Allen of Gateshead and Set-ellite, had been taken away into the Air Force, but do I worry? Not I! And poetry, some of Ken Potter's will writing without doubt. Yet here's something, axe-grinding department, that is interesting, I myself have no end of trouble grinding my axes, although in Gestalt we use powersaws for chopping down deadwood, nevertheless if I have any axes to grind I shall condescend to favour you with my patronage. And a Guest Editorial, who? Arthur C. Clarke? Not on your life, no, Ted Tubb perhaps, Archie Mercer more than likely and probably one of the Fox girls. Well I shall wait patiently and hope. Meanwhile the best of luck, you'll need it!

(© I'm sorry, Alan, but I've lost my copy of "Grammar and Sentence Construction for Beginners." Try Milcross Book Service or Medway. Still, thank you for those kind words. John lives near the canal and wants you to drop in as soon as possible.©)

Sid Birchby, 1 Gloucester Ave., Levenshulme, Manchester 19.

\*\*\*\*\*Delighted to hear you propose issuing a fanzine, and I most willingly will give it a trial. I don't quite know what the drill is in these cases. Always before, I've only seen fanzines after publication. This is the first time I've been privileged to get a pre-publication notice. Maybe I'd better just say "Good Luck" and wish you plenty of fun and a reasonable return for your labours, if not in cash (@hah!@) then in egoboo.

Archie Mercer (the carafan himself), 434/4 Newark Rd., N. Hykeham, Lincoln.

\*\*\*\*\*. . . when I get the thing, one thing you can probably count on is me writing to tell you just WHY it was so lousy as it undoubtedly will be. (I like telling people how lousy their zines are. Besides, it's such a delightful change to be able to tell them how good they've become two or three or half a dozen years later.)

. . . I hope (really) that ARCTURUS'll break the rule by putting out a good firstish for once — even though the second one stinks.

Don Allen, 3 Arkle St., Gateshead 8, Co. Durham.

\*\*\*\*\*Thanks for your letter and for telling me all about your forthcoming fanzine. This indeed is a surprise and I hope it proves to be a pleasant surprise. Here's wishing you all the best of everything, hope you have a real solid zine.

Alf Hind, Oxford House, 261 Clifton Drive South, St. Annes-on-Sea, Lancs.

\*\*\*\*\*Your magazine ARCTURUS should fill a gap in northern fanzines. Between Lancaster and Liverpool there seems to be a horrible blank space (@that's us, all right@) as far as fandom is concerned. Yet every day I see people -- in trains and buses, or at work and other places — reading s-f mags of all shades and character. Get crack-ing, boys — ARCTURUS is more than just a pleasant ambition in your two minds — it's needed.

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Where is BIPED?

And how about a letter from the ungrateful Liverpolitan, Bill Harry? He hasn't written to us since the day three months ago when we heard that he couldn't find a duplicator and we sent him a brand-new John Bull printing set.

\*\*\*\*\*





Last Gasp  
\*\*\*\*\*

As you may have gathered from John's editorial, "ARCTURUS" was originally planned last August, and we've been working at it nearly every week-end since then. Those of you who are familiar with the "flat-bed" type duplicator will well appreciate just how slow this method is. Our maximum production rate has been six pages in one week-end (John is a strictly two-finger typist); nor has it simply been a question of time. As a matter of fact we had about a dozen pages duplicated on white paper, but we discovered that it couldn't take printing on both sides — indeed, it wasn't proper duplicating paper at all, and the whole lot had to be scrapped. Naturally, most of the wet stencils had been thrown away, and the remainder defied resurrection, so we had to start again, right from scratch. With admirable fore-sight, Keith saw just what kind of a mess we looked like getting ourselves into, so on October 1st. he up and left us for Oxford University (ahem!) which meant that John and I were left holding the baby.

We've been having quite a time scouting around after a better duplicator. We were offered a second-hand one at £2, but it was in far too bad a condition to do anything with. However, we finally got hold of an unused emphes duplicator, which is a lot faster and better than a "flat-bed." We shall commence using it next issue.

Naturally your comments on "ARCTURUS" are welcome, particularly at this early stage. I should also like to remind all subscribers that their subs have expired. Nobody subscribed for more than one issue. I hope you can trust us now? We also badly need material for the second issue (but not so badly that we'll accept stuff that other 'zines wouldn't have), so if you have anything, please send it off to John.

I've already decided to discontinue "S-F Chit-chat" as from the next issue. It's patently obvious that a column of this nature is out of place in a fanzine as irregular as this will probably be. I will still have some sort of a comment column, but news for its own sake is out. John will be doing fanzine reviews and ~~SCIENCE & HISTORY~~ is open to anyone with a concisely expressed grumble.

I'd like to make it clear that "ARCTURUS" has three editors. Judging from letters, some of you seem to have got a different impression. Keith is (to you) a mysterious figure lurking in the background, but as he is paying a third of the expenses, he is entitled to his share of egohoo.

And that just about ties up everything. We'll be with you all again with a more fannish issue early in 1956. *Pete*

You receive this issue *in exchange for Play with John.....*



