

## WESTWARD THE COURSE ?

Most worth-while science fiction still comes from America, but the small output of capable writing from Britain seems to be expanding steadily. The number of British authors' books issued in the USA, which we take to be a fair indication of successful SF writing, is on the increase.

This year has seen the successful Atlantic crossing of John Christopher's "The Death of Grass", a disaster novel of a universal cereal-crop blight; renamed (a mystic procedure often adopted) "No Blade of Grass" it has appeared as a book, run serially in the mass-circulation Saturday Evening Post and is to be filmed by MGM.

Other emigrants of 1957 so far are "The Twenty-seventh Day" by John Mantley; "Alien Dust" by E. C. Tubbs; "The Isotope Men" by Charles Eric Maine; "Shadow Over the Earth" by Philip Wilding; "No Man Friday", renamed "First on Mars" by Rex Gordon. Three New Worlds serials have appeared in Ace pocket-books: "Who Speaks of Conquest" by Ian Wright; "Tourist Planet" (now "The Secret Visitors") by James White; and "Star Ship" (now "The Space-Born") by E. C. Tubbs.

Of course, the trail has been blazed for them long before. Eric Frank Russell, Arthur C. Clarke, John Wyndham and J. T. McIntosh have long since established themselves firmly enough to be as much American as British writers. Now we may be entering the time when the wagon trains follow the scouts.

Will we see the day when American SF readers will scan the newsstands eagerly for new British magazines, afterwards grudgingly turning to second-rate American imitations?

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### NEW WORLDS -SCIENCE FICTION-



### Science Fantasy



## Preview

NEW WORLDS No. 61 — July 1957

- Defiance - Kenneth Bulmer  
 For Men Must Work - Frank H. Bryning  
 Fresh Start - Arthur Sellings  
 Gesture of Farewell - Brian W. Aldiss  
 QM - Richard Wilson  
 False Alarm - James White  
 Nuclear Navy - Kenneth Johns  
 (article - part 2)

SCIENCE-FANTASY No. 24 (see p. 2)

Preview (contd.)

SCIENCE FANTASY No. 24

Plague - Robert Presslie  
Blind Chance - Margaret Love  
Flowers of the Forest - Brian W. Aldiss  
Peter Preserved - Jonathan Burke  
The Ubiquitous You - Richard Wilson  
The Trouble with Them - Bertram Chandler  
The Man with Talent - Robert Silverberg

## on the SCREEN

It really came from out of space last night, from 20 Million Miles to Earth. In the company of Ray Harryhausen, its technical effects star, and Ray Bradbury and Charles Hergis, I saw the preview of the shot-in-Sicily scientific film previously known as The Giant Ymir. The ymir, now unnamed in the picture, is a non-human inhabitant of the planet Venus. It is brought back as a zoological specimen by the first USAP expedition; something about Earth's atmosphere phenomenally increases its rate of growth so it grows to Kong-like stature and wreaks the expected ruination.

Doesn't matter whether these creatures come from beneath the sea, out of the sky or space or the prehistoric past, they have their work blueprinted for them: insensate destruction, and the ymir from Venus does not depart from tradition.\*

According to my wife I must be half-deaf, because I revel in drums and booms and rocket roars and can absorb a lot of decibels. But I emerged from the preview of 20 Million Miles to Earth with my ears ringing and the distinct impression that I had been transported back in time to spend a day recording the howlings of roughhousing dinosaurs. Someone with an agency for earplugs could make a monetary killing during this picture's run, because unwarned patrons are going to rush out for something to stuff in their ears.

Pat Frank's "Mr. Adam" is the first SF title in the Panther series for more than two years. The firm used to publish mainly science fiction, pretty bad science fiction at that, in their series of books, in cloth and paper simultaneously, usually first editions. Their sweeping change of policy to paper-covered editions of successful books eliminated SF while rapidly raising the level of literacy. A return to SF now would be a worth while move.

Sound aside, viewed as a monster picture this was excellent of its genre, only shade removed from King Kong for its scope and its thrills. The animation is great, and models integrated with reality almost indetectably. The battle between the ymir and the elephant is Harryhausen's masterpiece to date. The creature from Venus itself has somewhat the appearance of an upright alligator, with elongated tail and jawed reptilian head with cock's comb.

Fans with long memories — or files of SF magazines dating back far enough — can get a preview of the appearance of the little green men of Invasion of the Saucer-Men by referring mentally or physically to the cover of the first Thrilling Wonder Stories, August 1936. Depicted there to illustrate Arthur Leo Zagat's "The Land where Time Stood Still" is practically what you see on the screen in the picture adapted from Paul W. Fairman's "The Cosmic Frame". As an agent, I sold this story to Malibu Productions; as a critic, I breathe a sigh of relief that I don't have to pan the completed product.

In its original form, "The Cosmic Frame" would have made a good off-downbeat Hitchcock half hour telefilm. It was told as a tragedy; but the picture is played as much for humor as for horror, and both elements come off very well. Paul Blaisdell sets the mood for fun at the opening of the film with his clever cartoons that accompany the credits, and gets a credit for the technical effects — which include the creation and destruction of a Clay Pidgeon and its bulb-brained inhabitants.

Curse of Frankenstein, produced in color in England, is not a new adventure of the invulnerable monster, but the original story again... also in England, Amelia Reynolds long's "The Thought-Monster" is to be produced as A Fiend without a Face; James Nicholson has made Cat-Girl; John Wyndham's "The Day of the Triffids" and Frank Robinson's "The Tower" are announced.

— FORREST J. ACKERMAN

Memo from  
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EDITORIAL  ADVERTISING  
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\* This sounds very much like Henry Kuttner's story, "Beauty and the Beast" in a 1910 Thrilling Wonder Stories. - Ed.

# Bloomington

## News Letter

About a century ago, in Bloomington, Abe Lincoln made a hell-raising speech against slavery which was lost to posterity because no one was able (or bothered) to write it down, and inasmuch as Abe spoke from cuff-notes he was not afterward able to reconstruct it. So local history is noted for a now-famous Lost Speech. That seemed a fertile field for a science fiction novel, and after much research I gave it my all. The gist of the book is simple: a museum of the far future learns of the speech, and hires a research firm to get it. A group of men are despatched to 1856 with pocket wire recorders to locate the hall, sneak in and record the speech, and sneak out again. The complications of the job make up the story. Well, sir, my all was not good enough. My publisher bounced it, and a dozen magazines have sent their regrets. And my fine comic mind fails to give me the answer to what happens next to "The Lincoln Hunters".

Both of "my pictures" are gathering dust and it may be a very long time before you see them on the silver (or aluminized) screen. "Long loud Silence" has been postponed because of star-trouble. The purchaser has lined up a studio (United Artists) and a director (Richard Sale), but each actor who was approached backed away in horror. Seems the story was a bit too strong, or some fool reason. Anyway, plans have been shelved until autumn. And I don't know what happened to "Wild Talent". My end of the contract was wrapped up and sealed almost a year ago, and I was told the shooting script was finished last summer. Since that time dead silence. I suspect that Security Agents have stepped in and silenced them, lest another National Secret should leak out. After all, if Cartmill and Campbell can do it with the atom bomb trigger, I can do it with telepathy.

Which reminds me... I think my greatest peeve is the snafu and loose manner in which some writers play around with security agents and their operating practices. Consciously or otherwise, these writers repeat the dumb tricks they have seen in the movies, without ever thinking the matter through. Like the perfect crime, the perfect secret agent goes forever undetected. The less-than-perfect agent makes one slip and is caught. This is the fellow we read about in the newspapers. (American agents caught in foreign countries are "intelligence agents" while foreigners caught here are "spies". The label is changed to alter the emotional impact on the American public.) The dumb agent never gets off the ground — his inability is discovered in the training school and he is washed out.

Fred Pohl, in his "Slave Ship", commits some funny stuff with his secret agents. Two men from a secret project get drunk and blab about their work — which isn't too surprising, considering. They aren't kept on a reservation (such as Los Alamos, for instance) but are allowed to wander into town and frequent saloons. No damage is done in this instance because they are unwittingly talking to a government security agent. Does the agent report this breach of security? Are our heroes arrested and shot? Nope. Well, why not? Because the agent doesn't bother to report it, and everybody goes on about his business.

For a really clever and honest handling of security and secret agents, read Frank Herbert's "Under Pressure". I have scant sympathy for an imaginative writer who can dream up chapters upon chapters of intricate spaceship and future world stuff, and then allow his secret agents to act like ten-year old boys playing Spy in the back yard.

— BOB TUCHER

NEBULA SCIENCE FICTION went on a monthly schedule from issue No. 21 (May). A welcome forward step. Now all but one of the six magazines currently published in Britain are monthlies.

In the USA, Standard Magazines, under their new imprint Pine Publications, revived the title WONDER STORIES after just over twenty years with a conventional digest size magazine dated simply 1957, released in May. When the firm acquired WONDER STORIES from Hugo Gernsback in 1936, they added the word THRILLING to the title to conform with numerous other pulps they then produced. The new magazine is numbered Vol. XLV, No. 1, continuing from the last TWS of 1955.

# LONDON

## 1957 WORLD CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER 6-7-8-9

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# BOOKS

IN SEARCH OF WONDER: essays on modern science fiction

by Damon Knight (Advent: Publishers,

3508 Nth. Sheffield Ave., Chicago 13, Ill.

1956, xii, 180 pp. \$4.00)

An important book, for two reasons. In the first place, it is the first substantial book about science fiction to assume that the reader has some knowledge of the field, and concentrate on examining some of the work done in it. In the second place, the examination is made by someone qualified to make it adequately. Knight is one of our most capable analysts, and the book is an illuminating survey of a considerable part of science fiction.

From his book reviews in numerous periodicals, Knight has selected 81 books issued from 1950 to 1955; most of the best books and a fair number of books outstanding for other reasons. Regrouped into chapters on authors and trends, what he has to say about them gives a coherent picture of that part of science fiction represented in book form — or at least, in books published in America. A few of the books discussed have not yet appeared in England, and we suppose probably will not; on the other hand, there is no space wasted on the wilderness of bad writing and worse thinking that is the bulk of alleged science fiction in British books. Clarke, Wyndham, McIntosh, Maine, Margot Bennett and even Castle are covered, though.

"A bad book", Knight says, "hurts science fiction more than ten bad notices." He therefore sees it as an important part of a critic's work to look carefully at defective books as well as the more successful. Even so, most of the 81 have at least some merit. The importance of Heinlein, Campbell, Sturgeon, the Kuttners, Blish, Kornbluth, Pratt, Asimov and (to change the subject) van Vogt and (to change it again) Bradbury is evaluated in the first half of the book, as well as some works of Francis Stevens, Stanton A. Coblenz, Karel Capek and John Collier, and a rogues' gallery of "Half-Bad Writers" and "Chuckleheads".

"A totally bad book is a kind of joy in itself, like a completely ugly dog." Knight says: "But these in-betweeners, in which the author seems on alternate pages a genius and an idiot, are almost unbearable." He exposes Matheson's absurd attempts to explain vampirism in scientific terms in "[an legend]"; McIntosh's "painful collection of avoidable mistakes" in "Horn Leader" and "One in Three Hundred"; Jack Finney's "skilful Hollywood parody of science fiction" in "The Body Snatchers"; David Karp's failure in "One", of which Knight says: "The real enemy, the State, cannot be judged, cannot be compared, and cannot frighten because it does not exist: it not only has no name, but no history, no philosophy, no doctrine of its own, no

alogans, no catchphrases; it displaces no air and leaves no footprints. A villain without a motive might as well wear handlebar moustaches and snarl "Ah, me proud beauty!" The audience would at least know it was expected to hiss."

Some of the Chuckleheads are Kendall F. Crossen ("Honest conviction embodied in dishonest writing"); Charles Eric Maine ("Time-liner" is that sort of amateur flight of fancy that takes leave of its premises, and its senses, in the second chapter."); Austin Hall and Homer Von Flint, authors of "The Blind Spot" ("an acknowledged classic of fantasy, first published in 1921; much praised since then, several times reprinted, venerated by connoisseurs — all despite the fact that the book has no recognizable vestige of merit").

"Why should anybody rip a bad work of art to shreds? Why, to find out how it is made. The critical method is to take things apart. The critic uses the same sharp-edged tools on all stories, but good stories resist; bad ones come to pieces. One of these tools happens to be laughter," says Knight as he prepares to explore "The Blind Spot". True: unintentional humor is the sure mark of the bad writer.

The chapter on van Vogt, titled "Cosmic Jerrybuilder", dwells mainly on the incoherent "Null-A" stories, (Knight actually manages to describe an apparent chronological sequence of events.) but proceeds to a thorough analysis of the way van Vogt wrote badly and got away with it.

Later chapters look at the way science fiction seems to be going — and where it had better not go too far.

Anthony Boucher contributes an introduction in which he has something to say on the whole question of reviewing and (not the same thing) criticism as well as saying this of the book: "It is addressed — though the wit and clarity of the writing should make it readable to anyone — specifically to the regular reader of science fiction...a marked advantage in that the writer of critiques for the general literary public must spend much of his time in uncomfortable defensive or evangelistic postures. And, too, among ourselves one can attack faults in science fiction without being misinterpreted as attacking the genre itself. And it provides conclusive proof that, to quote Knight's introductory credo, 'Science fiction is a field of literature worth taking seriously, and that ordinary critical standards can be meaningfully applied to it.'"

The book, first issued under a new imprint, is a fine piece of production apart from numerous typographical errors and several muddy cartoons by J. I. Patterson.

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON  
by H. G. Wells (Corgi PB)

There was always a considerable school given to proclaiming that what was good enough for its fathers was good enough for it. But to utter such a sentiment during the last three generations has been heretical, save perhaps in the narrow and perverse field of antique collecting. The modern world has been conditioned to regard itself as in all ways superior to the past, and particularly to the recent past; so it is almost automatic to look for evidence of "dating" over which we may feel a glow of self-satisfaction, in a work sixty years old.

The republication of "The First Men in the Moon" gives us little opportunity to satisfy this desire: for apart from minor references to dress and a team of heavy draught horses, the content of the story could as well be ten years old. Style, however, is a different matter. There we find "dating" enough to set a modern editor blanching, and even to be noticeable to the ordinary reader. Here is a simple story simply told, with an art which conceals art. Not good enough, nowadays. If you've got art, who's to know if you don't show it? And the construction! Where in the opening chapters is the zip, pep and dynamic action necessary to capture the reader's attention?

Frankly, it isn't there — so, as any experienced editor will tell you, nobody will read it. This man Wells doesn't apply journalistic principles. In the whole book he shows no glimmering appreciation of the scientific fact that it's love makes the world go round. Pity a present-day magazine illustrator put onto this job: no bulging brassieres, no provoking panties! And the characters! How can a reader be expected to identify his suppressed will to power with a couple of ordinary fellows who are not even propagandists for any kind of terrestrial superiority save that conferred by gravitation?

On top of these crimes, there is the title...And yet it has been republished repeatedly, dear editors. To me, at least, the re-reading has come as a good meal after a course of synthetic vitamins. Here is real science fiction. Not science black-mask, not science adventure-story (though it does not lack adventure), not science Munchhausen, nor science haysire, nor science confession, but solid, basic science fiction. Instead of a montage of this, that or the other careful angle or slant, there is just a story, full of invention, yet so subtly smoothed that much of the thought which has gone into it appears only on examination. Written, moreover, in excellent prose: Chapter Seven, in which Wells describes the lunar dawn, offers comparison with any passage you may find describing any other extra-terrestrial dawn.

A result of this re-reading has been to make me consider once more what has happened to science fiction since its early and promising youth, and to arrive at some not very happy conclusions.

Sixty years ago the world was freer. An author might tilt at a number of targets;

he might get himself labelled with an "ism" but he was not damned with it. To a great many people it seemed right that minds of all types should examine the possibilities which science was exposing.

The mind of H. G. Wells, taking a thesis and logically exploring it in the light of known facts and possibilities, stimulated a whole generation. It was not, perhaps, a profound mind, but its effect was profound and has yet to be appraised. We could do well with another such stimulator — if he could keep out of gaol in these days. Meanwhile, the effect of re-reading one of the slightest of Wells' books has been to determine me to re-read others, if only for the pleasurable sensation of having no box-office at the helm.

— JOHN WYNDAHAM

(reprinted from Science-Fantasy Review, ed. Walter Gillings, 1949)

UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS

by Robert Sheckley (Michael Joseph, 1956)

There is probably a word that just sums up Sheckley's work at its best. It's not exactly "quaint", or "cute", and it's not exactly "funny", for often it is so laughing matter but cause for thoughtful dismay. It's not even "satiric" though that comes fairly close. Whatever you choose to call it, there is something distinctly Sheckley, a touch of something uniquely his own, about many of his stories. Sometimes there is something rather suggestive of that much overrated writer, Ray Bradbury, in the approach. But Sheckley can also tell a story that stands examination. (Bradbury can too, but rarely tries.)

For instance, there is the title story of this collection of shorts which the publishers have included in a series called "Novels of Tomorrow", probably on the theory that SF readers don't know the difference. This story, which you may have read in Galaxy as "One Man's Poison", is a flippant — not the word either — tale about two interstellar voyagers trying to find something useful, particularly something edible, in an abandoned alien warehouse. Their situation is really quite desperate and horrible, but there is no desperation or horror in the story. Here we have these two characters faced with starvation on an unknown and uninhabited planet where every move seems to make matters worse. Yet it's funny. As for how the situation came up, there is no attempt to show it in realistic terms. For the sake of the story we are to suppose that in a foreseeable future interstellar travel is going to be so free and easy that morons can get themselves lost and stranded. Nobody bothers with such minor matters as navigation, orbits, takeoffs, landings — any more than with atmosphere, temperature or gravitation. It's quite like Bradbury's fairy-tale "Wars", in fact. It reads quite well as

## UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS (contd.)

long as you don't stop to think. But it is not typical of Sheekley at his best, and it seems a pity to give it the dignity of book publication so prominently.

"Cost of Living" is what someone has called a one-cylinder extrapolation: a story in which one present trend is shown continuing into an otherwise vague future where it is a dominant element. In this case we have a near future in which everyone consistently lives beyond his means, buying more than he can pay for on the never-never system. So posterity has to pay for it. We see a typical solid citizen, his house cluttered with more and more superfluous gadgets; what amount to a large staff of robot servants, from the Automatic Bartender to the Reminder that remembers things for him; seventeen-hour record-changer ("He hadn't had a chance to try out the phone, but it was a beautiful piece of furniture."); solido-projector ("He had watched a program just last month."); and a mere two hundred and three thousand dollars and twenty-nine cents to pay on it all. True, if he wants to buy a new robot housekeeper ("Instead of running around all day pushing half a dozen buttons, all you have to do is push one!") he has to arrange some more credit, but that's just a matter of signing over his son's earnings for the first thirty years of his adult life. (The youngster is already planning his own solution to the problem, which is to stow away on a rocket to Mars; maybe not a very exciting place, but at least out of reach.) And so, off to work. One shift a month doing nothing in particular in a fully automatic factory. The only thing to disturb his peace of mind is that suicide next door: "Every modern convenience in his house, and he hung himself with a piece of rope."

"Ritual" reminds one of the old story about the shipload of various nationalities wrecked on a remote island: the Greeks started a restaurant, and the Australians a race-course, and so on; and after six months the two Englishmen were still waiting to be introduced. In this story there's a planet where standing on ceremony is the main occupation, and if a space castaway dies of starvation before the official ceremony of welcome is finished it's just his bad luck.

"Hands Off" is a new version of an old theme, space piracy. Not so many years ago, no SF magazine was complete without a Spanish Main story rebashed in futuristic terms, with energy weapons substituted for cutlasses, the airlock for the Plank, uranium for gold bullion, credits for pieces of eight; and the most interesting characters bearded and black-hearted ruffians who might at any moment forget themselves and roar "Shiver me Timbers!" from force of habit. The fashion has changed, alas, and we rarely see these brave fellows now. But there will be openings in space for villainy, and future ages will undoubtedly have interstellar ships engaged in it in one way or another, even if they don't go around challenging other vessels with a shot across the bows. "Hands Off" is about such a ship, a "trader" whose

cargo is safecracking equipment and atomic bombs. On an out-of-the-way world there comes an opportunity to trade in the ship for a better one which an unsuspecting alien has landed there. But it turns out not to be as easy as it looks.

"The Monsters" are a disgusting lot of horrors: flabby tailless bipeds, poking about on a more civilized planet. They seem to be impervious to culture — even kick up no end of a fuss at one of them being killed in accordance with civilized practice. Now they seem to be clearing out. Good riddance! — An original oblique look at the human race as others might see it.

"Hatchbird" takes an apparently reasonable idea: a robot policeforce. Who is going to commit crimes with police robots cruising invisibly overhead at random, watching what people are up to with untiring, unflinching vision? The only trouble is — well, that's the story.

"The Impacted Man" uses the old device, now rare but once too common in SF, of telling the story in correspondence form. The correspondence is between a Government official and a building contractor over some details of a metagalaxy just built: details like "This red-shift...I've read your explanation and I still don't understand it."; the presence of a lot of unstable atoms ("Are you trying to get away with inferior materials?"); and a man caught in a time flow, whose predicament is the actual plot.

The other stories included are "The Star"; "Keep Your Shape"; "Warm"; "Specialist"; "Seventh Victim"; and "Beside Still Waters". A good selection of Sheekley, and not to be missed.

## NO MAN FRIDAY

by Rex Gordon (Heinemann, 1956)

(In America as "First on Mars" Ace PB, 1957)

Rex Gordon is a fairly new writer, having taken up writing at a mature age in the last few years. He has written under his own name, Stanley Bennett Hough, and as Bennett Stanley, eight novels including at least one ("Extinction Number") that is really science fiction without making a point of it — and two straight science fiction novels as Gordon. We missed "Utopia 239" among 1955's fine crop of unprepossessing offerings from newcomers, but now suspect that we may have missed something good; for "No Man Friday" is very good indeed.

One of the reasons for reading science fiction at all is that, like all writing worth anyone's attention, it has a strong element of surprise: but for anyone who has

NO MAN FRIDAY (contd.)

read much in the field, the feeling of revelation must be diminished by familiarity with the world-view and aspirations of the future commonly accepted and usually figuring in science fiction stories. Well, in "No Man Friday" the surprise is there for the most hardened veteran.

First of all, we have something that is increasingly rare as reality sneaks upon us, an unusual view of the work leading to space flight — and a sharply detailed picture, at that. His suggestion as to just how the initial voyage could be made is brilliant. At the risk of anticipating a few surprises for you, this is how it goes.

When we consider the preposterous fog of secrecy that red tape has woven around it we may suspect that the actual work done towards getting off the Earth is a long way ahead of the reports the public is allowed to see. Here it is suggested that it is several years ahead: a secret American project placed its first artificial satellite in orbit in 1954, and a Russian one followed in 1955. But the first flight to Mars was not the work of any major power: it was planned and executed by a conspiracy of rocket engineers, fed up with useless work on a fumbling, unrealistic guided missile scheme for a pinchpenny government, who determined to do something constructive instead.

First they sent a photo-reconnaissance rocket around the Moon — built as a "foreign order" with the firm's time, equipment and supplies, under the noses of authority. ("We were held up for a year because no one could think of any reason to invest for the astronomical photographic equipment which would enable us to take the short-range pictures of the Moon as we swung around it.") Then they started on the Mars rocket. The hardest part was not any design problem, and not even cooking the books to account for everything they used in building it, but concealing a rocket two hundred feet tall and fifty-six around the base...how would you hide it?

But that's just preliminary. There's a grim view of the difficulties inherent in space flight, but that's just preliminary, too. Most of the book is a brilliant exploration of the chances for life on Mars — the astronomical Mars, the planet we can expect to deal with — and the problems of the stranded explorer in staying alive. And the nature of Man and of intelligence. The title? It's not just grafted on, for the theme of the similarity and difference of the interplanetary castaway's situation and Crusoe's recurs constantly through the book.

But don't take our word for it — read "No Man Friday" and be surprised yourself.

## Obituary

### J. Allen St. John

(Chicago, May 23rd.)

J. Allen St. John was perhaps best known to us as the principal illustrator of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Both in magazine and book appearances he provided ideal pictorial interpretations for most of the Mars, Venus and Earth's Core novels, of which Burroughs is reported to have said that he felt they were responsible for half his sales.

St. John studied in New York, Paris, Belgium and Holland, spent most of the rest of his life in Chicago. He served as designer and illustrator for various newspapers, magazines — from Harper's Bazaar and Red Book to Amazing Stories, Fantastic Adventures, Weird Tales, Oriental Stories, Blue Book — and book publishers. He also taught art for some thirty years at the Chicago Art Institute and American Academy of Art.

His work for Burroughs and others who wrote in the tradition of fantastic adventure was an essential part of an early phase of science fiction. "His wonderful drawings gave a third dimension to the old sense of wonder," writes Forrest J. Ackerman.

### James Whale

(Los Angeles, May 29th)

British-born James Whale, the director of the original Frankenstein films, was in his sixty-first year when he was accidentally killed in the grounds of his home.

Whale's career as an artist — he drew cartoons for The Bytander before he was 20 — was interrupted by World War I. Drawn to the stage, he became a successful actor and theatre producer in London, left for Hollywood in 1920.

Among his many outstanding films were Journey's End, Waterloo Bridge and Hell's Angels. He directed Charles Laughton, Boris Karloff, Ernest Thesiger and Raymond Massey in the weird The Old Dark House; and the original Invisible Man, featuring Claude Rains and some notable special effects. A pioneer whose creative imagination has a place in screen history of particular interest for science fiction.

# Books at a Glance

Book	Content	Remarks
<b>BLAST OFF AT BOOMERA</b> by Hugh Walters Faber & Faber 202 pp	Manned rocket to photograph Moon from space, the pilot a precocious teenager. Detailed account of the project.	Very good juvenile with authentic background.
<b>EARTHLIGHT</b> by Arthur C. Clarke Pan Bks. (paper)	Spy novel set on the Moon in the 22nd Century. Full consideration of probable conditions there. Modern view of interplanetary colonization and warfare.	Perhaps the clearest picture of a Moon colony yet written. Action subordinated somewhat to the setting, but this is of enough interest itself. Read this if you can't get the hard cover edition.
<b>THE LONG WAY BACK</b> Margot Bennett Science Fiction Book Club 206 pp	Indefinite future. Present world order long forgotten; Africa the main cultural center, a static caste system operating. Expedition to England to study primitives.	Interesting personal conflicts arising from the rigidity of the social pattern. Rather slight plot otherwise. Well written and readable if not too original. A bargain on SFBC terms.
<b>MEN, MARTIANS AND MACHINES</b> by Eric Frank Russell Corgi Bks. (paper) 190 pp	Four episodes: "Jay Score", "Mechanistria" and "Symbiotica" from wartime Astounding; "Memmerica" previously unpublished. Exploration of odd planets, mostly.	Not unlike van Vogt's "Voyage of the Space Beagle" in plan, but a complete contrast in execution. Deceptively simple style, carefully reasoned alien life forms. Recommended.
<b>PLUTONIA: An Adventure through Prehistory</b> by V. A. Obruchev translated from the Russian by Brian Pearce. Ill. E. J. Pagan Lawrence & Wishart 319 pp	Hollow Earth with polar openings found by pre-revolutionary Russian explorers. Extinct fauna from dinosaurs to cave men.	Russian idea of a high grade educational juvenile, with plenty of palaeontology without tears. An excellent "lost world" novel. First published 1924; this is the first English edition, and a good readable translation.
<b>RETURN TO TOMORROW</b> by L. Ron Hubbard Panther Bks. (paper) 144 pp	Interstellar travel. Retarded subjective time at near-light speeds makes it feasible but since decades pass in weeks for voyagers they form an isolated caste — virtually immortal from planets' viewpoint.	Fate of young man shanghaied into exile. Grim, melodramatic, often moving. Read it. But why not in hard covers?
<b>SPACE, TIME AND NATHANIEL</b> by Brian V. Aldiss Faber & Faber 208 pp	14 shorts: "Conviction"; "Criminal Record"; "Dumb Show"; "The Failed Man"; "Not for an Age"; "Our Kind of Knowledge"; "Outside"; "Panel Game"; "Pag-smith"; "Psychops"; "The Shubahub Race"; "Super-city"; "T"; "There Is A Tide".	An odd collection of various moods, mainly light, unusual and original.
<b>WHITE AUGUST</b> by John Boland Digit Bks. (paper) 189	Undeclared warfare by means of weather control.	Boland's first novel now in a pocket edition. Recommended.