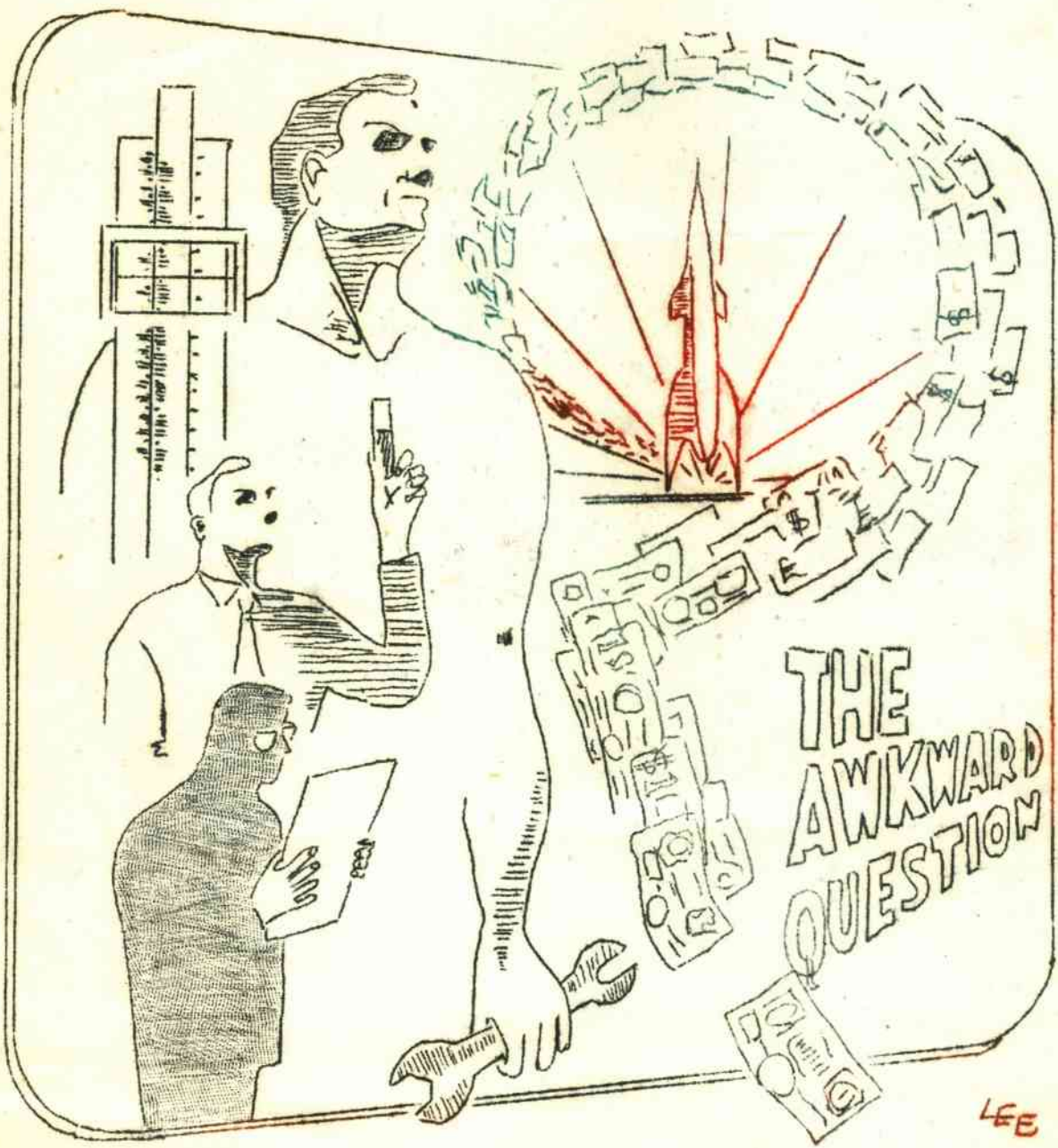


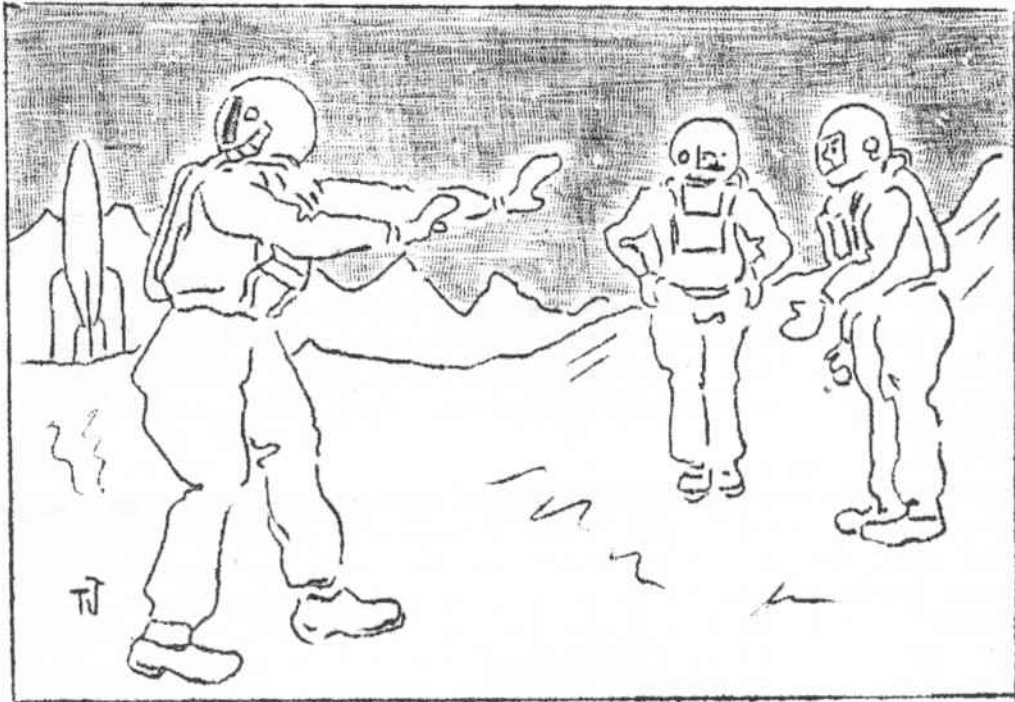
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# SPACE TIMES



vol. 2. no. 8.

AUGUST 1953



Issue 14.

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Note. Two important announcements regarding the life and limb of ST appear on Pages 5 & 8. Please read them!

COVER BY LEE

Interior Illos By Jeeves and Lee.

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AN EDITORIAL ON.....

H U M O U R .

By

Eric Bentcliffe...

Anyone care to join me in a campaign for more humour in science-fiction? In America a few humorous stories do appear, but in the British SF field the only thing we can laugh at are the dubious pen-names adopted by well-known authors; can anyone beat 'Ray Cosmic' ? This type writes for Spencers. The dearth of humour is, in our opinion, due more to neglect than to the difficulty of transposing the theme into SF. Science-Fiction situations very often cry out for the lighter touch.

Before we go any further, it would'nt be a bad idea to define the type of humour most suited in SF in the professional magazines. The fanzines have already got their humourists in several assorted types, the most unbearable of which is the 'punning' character who spends long hours poring through his dictionary in private, but would instantly deny he had a dictionary if charged. (Off the record I have not got one either) (( Brother! Don't I know it! E.J.)) The other main type of Fan humourist is the 'Parodist', who writes somewhat on the style of the '51 Galaxy covers.

It is fairly obvious that neither of these two types of humour are, apart from curiosa, suitable for the pro-mag. One brand of humour that is suitable though is the humour of 'situation', and this we think admirably suited to SF. A good example of this can be found in many of Eric Frank Russell's yarns and in certain of Kendell Foster Crossen's. Instance; the scaly monster in EFR's "MECHANISTRA" which came and sat down beside the space-ship's crew on the river bank, and answered, peaceably, their queries regarding the bodies floating down stream. Instance; the cosmic hitch-hiker in one of Crossen's recent novels, who was out in space just waiting for a suitable vessel to pass by.

Apart from the abovementioned authors, we would like to applaud the writings of R. Bretnor, most of which are humorous. One story in particular which is the best burlesque on the secret weapon-spy-professor theme that we have yet read, appears in the collection of new stories in "NEW TALES OF SPACE AND TIME". May we quote from it? .....Little Anton, an 'enfant terrible' possessed of ESP, and Papa Schimmelhorn visit Atlantic City...."Kneeling on the floor, little Anton was unlocking the first of three enormous suitcases." "Where -? exclaimed Papa Schimmelhorn." "Where did you get those?" "Switzerland," said Little Anton placidly, "But - Gott in Himmel -How?" "I wanna be a smuggler. I'm practicing. When I'm real good, I'll sneak Chinks in over the border. But this'll do for now. You're a genius, Pop, you can figger the technique out in no time." He opened the first suitcase. "Watches," he smugly stated, "two hunerd of 'em, duty free." He opened up the second. "French postcards," he announced. "They oughta go like hot cakes." Papa Schimmelhorn took one quick look. "No vunder they exborted you from Schwitzerland," he muttered, turning crimson.....We wish there were more stories like this..Do you?

# FANTASY ARCHIVES

Curator

Jack Doggett...

BEYOND THE RIM. S . Fowler Wright. Jarrolds 1932.

The earth is a sphere of course. Then would you mind proving it please? Ships disappearing below the horizon? A local bump. The shadow during the eclipse of the Moon? Shadows only show cross-sections and a cylinder or a disc could throw the same shadow as a globe.

"Beyond the Rim" opens smack into an argument about the shape of our planet - is it flat or spherical? And let me assure you that while it is simple to show that the earth cannot be flat, it is not so easy to advance positive proof of a spherical shape.

So, having cast some doubt into the minds of four people and given them good reason for an expedition through the ice barrier at the South Pole, Wright craftily makes no further reference to the earth's shape and the reader is left to form his own opinion as to whether the title is a misnomer.

In a motor launch, our characters enter a river which is pouring from a gap in the ice barrier. After a deal of monotonous travel a large cavern appears to one side and they effect a landing, to be attacked by a strange tribe. Unfortunately they get away to continue their journey. Unfortunately, because having followed the river below ground, the launch breaks through a plank barrier at the far end of the tunnel into what was for me, an anticlimax.

We find a land inhabited by people who did a Pilgrim Fathers act some two hundred years before and finished up at the South Pole. They have retained their narrow-minded religion and our adventurers bump into it at every turn. Typically, a good proportion of the God-fearing natives are looking for an excuse to eliminate the newcomers whose presence upsets the belief that the natives are the chosen and the rest of the wicked world destroyed. We also get a glimpse of a third people who almost carry out the wishes of the "real" Christians.

Well-written though it is, this book is not another "WORLD BELOW", but it might have been if only they'd been captured by the cave tribe.....

THE STOLEN MARCH. Damford Yates. Ward Lock & Co. 1926.

Yates has turned out more than twenty books mainly in two series, although the same characters are mentioned or appear in all of them. Although the books cover the period between the two World Wars, these characters are a hangover from an earlier period and fall into sharply divided classes; gentle knights, fair ladies, villains, clowns and servants (who know their places). The Rolls Royce takes the place of the charger, and the knights are true to the point of priggishness. The ladies are, without exception, beautiful, and the rude world seldom intrudes its works and plumbing.

But, in spite of this, Yates is thoroughly enjoyable in not-too-large doses, and this book, the only one which falls into the Fantasy Class, is no exception. One knight (Simon), two ladies (Pat, his wife and Eulalie), and a clown (Pomfret) are gathered together

to go to the Pyrenees to find the lost land of Etchechuria. With the help of two mules it is found and it is fair to say that from then on this tale would earn a place in a British "Unknown Worlds". Wishful-filment, humour and evil are all there and, finally, tragedy.

I feel that the author has made this one detour from orthodox fiction to describe the kind of world he would like to live in. I must warn you however, that Yates leads off with an unintentional fantasy which will stick in your throat. Simon and Pat are facing, in 1926, abject poverty - on £300 a year and only a small car. Get that down and you'll find the rest of the book worth a visit to the public library.

END.

## BOOK REVIEW

By

KENNETH . F . SLATER

THE CRUCIBLE OF POWER a selection by Martin Greenberg.  
(John Lane The Bodley Head, Cr8vo, 240pp, 8/6)

The three yarns in this offering to the British public come from FIVE SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS, which Gnome Press offered to the American public in 1952 - 382 pp at a price of \$3.50. I honestly feel that we in Britain are getting the better bargain, the two yarns omitted being one of Van Vogt's poorer tales, THE CHRONICLER, and Fritz Leiber's DESTINY TIMES THREE which, although a very good yarn, is a somewhat over-complex yarn for current British taste.

The title story of the British version is by Jack Williamson, and comes from a pre-war ASF. Feb '39 to be exact. Space opera, certainly. Space opera of a drastic type, at that, for in the first few paragraphs wipes out one third of earth's population, and then cripples another third! But this is just for background and then he rapidly moves a century forward to tell the story of Garth Hammond, a hard and brutal man who is not exactly clean in his business dealing.

After a number of unsavoury bits of exploitation Hammond and his associates construct a ship to take them to Mars. The reason - power! Earth is power-starved, and a source of good cheap power would make the man possessing it all-powerful. (No pun intended)

The ship is sabotaged, and crashes on Mars with only Hammond and one other survivor. They are captured by the insectoid Martians, and (by a system rather reminiscent of Burroughs' Mars) Hammond comes to be a leader among the Martians. That is quite a bit of story, but it is hardly the start of this one. There is a religious war when Hammond steals the secret of the "sun power", there is the spread of a plague from Earth on Mars, the Martians and a renegade Earthman turn pirate and raid the Terran ships which are obtaining the sunpower. In fact, it is quite a tale, in the action style, and quite a sound yarn all round.

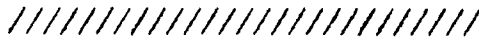
For my money, however, the best story is that of Norvell Page, from UNKNOWN - BUT WITHOUT HORNS. You'll recall this tale of Walter Kilderling and his battle with superman John Miller. The Blue Plague,

the "harem" from which Miller intends to spread his breed, and that really shattering climax in the last twenty lines of the story ! This tale I recall as one of the first really great stories in s-f to include a "Detective" theme, and play up the "suspense" angle. And it is just as good reading today as it was in 1940 - a thing it has in common with the other two yarns in the book. It is, by the way, the first story in the book, CRUCIBLE OF POWER being the last.

In the middle you'll find CRISIS IN UTOPIA, by Norman L. Knight - in the middle advisedly, for whereas CRUCIBLE is space-opera on the fast action plane, and BUT WITHOUT HORNS is s-f only in the development of its "superman" theme, CRISIS IN UTOPIA is the happy medium. Sociological, and super-scientific. The World Government is secretly developing a race of Tritons, human sea-dwellers. Slowly the World is being educated to acceptance of these people - when the head of the experiment goes insane and tries to take over for his own benefit! Nice setting for a crisis, that, and Norman Knight made the most of it.

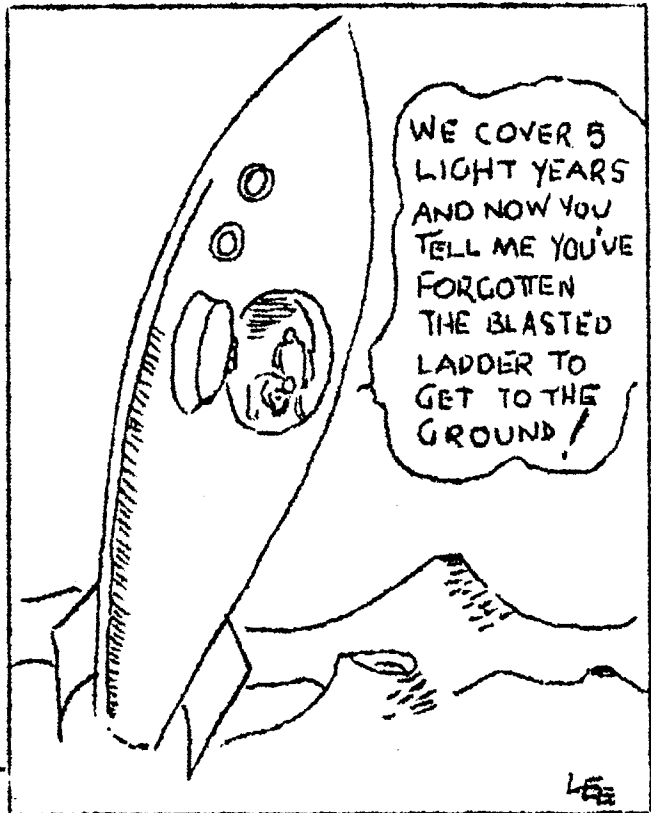
Three very good tales - too long for the average anthology, - are presented here. Well worth buying for your collection even if you have already read them in the magazines. A 'must' if you haven't.

END



THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT REQUEST!!

For over a year I have printed Space Times. Now, owing to circumstances beyond my own control, I may be forced to hand over this task to someone who can devote more time than I may have at my disposal. Should the case arise that I find it impossible to continue, I would like to feel that ST will continue regardless and therefore, if there is anyone who has: a typer, a heck of a lot of patience, some slight knowledge of duplicating/duplicators, and, WILL ALWAYS HAVE PLENTY OF TIME AT HIS DISPOSAL, would he/she please contact me at the earliest date possible after receipt of this ST. You may not be required to take over should I find it possible to continue, but to act as a standby in case of emergency.  
Eric Jones, 44, Barbridge Rd, Arle, Cheltenham, Glos.



A N I M A L , V E G E T A B L E , O R A L I E N ?

By

Eric Bentcliffe.

AUTHENTIC has, for the August issue, gone all original! This we are pleased to see and would beg Bert Campbell to keep it this way.....The yarns featured are not of a very high standard but are still preferred by this writer to second-hand reprints..... Bert, by the way, is now en route for America to attend the 11th World Science-Fiction Convention, to be held in Philadelphia over Labor Day weekend (Sept 5th, 6th, 7th), this promises to be the biggest SF Convention yet held, and the Philadelphia fans are going all out to beat Chicago's record attendance of nearly 2000 at last years 'big' U.S. Convention.....Pan Books, like so many British publishers, are showing an increasing interest in SF; recent titles from them are, H.G. Wells TIME MACHINE & THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES in one volume, and the first two stories in the C. S. Lewis trilogy, OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET & PERELANDRA..note that the latter item has been retitled VOYAGE TO VENUS.. As the Pan Books are very well produced (the cover for TIME MACHINE is exceptionally good) we hope to see more titles from them....Also from Pan, recently, is ALICE IN WONDERLAND plus THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS. Now some of you may not class the works of Carroll as adult fantasy, if so, we advise you to get this item and re-read the two stories; this edition at 2/6 has the original illustrations by Sir John Tenniel. Note the similarity of the 'toves' and the TRIFFIDS.....WE ARE SORRY TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE NEXT ISSUE OF VINCE CLARKE'S "SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS" WILL BE THE LAST.The 1953 Australian Convention went off, we hear, with quite a bang, attendees totalling over eighty came from every state in the Commonwealth and started things off by holding a cocktail party on the eve of the convention..regular meetings of fans are now held in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide....John Spencer & Co have now adopted the "Standard" SF magazine cover logo; this has improved the appearance of their publications (TALES OF TOMORROW, FUTURISTIC SCIENCE STORIES etc) but we wish they would do something (Yes, even that) about the contents of their publications..." Beside the altar stood a tall, one-eyed thing dressed in a white robe of coarse material. It was Vrxx; his one eye was fixed on the girl. there was a cruel light in it"...this is a typical extract from a Spencer publication. Enter, of course, the gallant here.... The August issue of Del Rey's FANTASY FICTION carries a little gem by John Wyndham, "STRAY FROM CATHAY", concerning a couple of dragons one Chinese, one Welsh. If you liked UNKNOWN, this is your meat...JOURNEY TO MISENUM is another story we can recommend from the August issue of STARTLING; this is a sequel to HOUSE OF MANY WORLDS, Merwin's rollicking novel of parallel time tracks..and just as good.....Are you a POGO fan? For some reason this American cartoon character has a tight hold on fandom, reason could be that it is the only 'comic' that is comic...The Mag of F&SF reprints a cartoon and short story from PUNCH in their August issue. We wonder how this type of humour will go down with our American friends...Charles Lee Riddle in the May ish of PEON details cost & frequency of U.S. SF mags in '52.If you purchased all U.S SF 'zines,plus those still appearing you would spend 62 dollars per ann. Add British 'zines and the total outlay would be around £50 !!!!!!!!!!!!!

BRING ON THE PSYCHES ! ! !

or TO HELL WITH ACTION !!!

By  
Ken Potter.

So you're a science-fiction fan? Yes, sure you like futuristic stories, but is the main reason for you liking them because they're futuristic?

Consider carefully, and if you can honestly answer 'yes' then leave me. I am not a fan of the same type of literature. One of us brother, you or me, is an outcast. And to be egotistical for a moment, I hope it's you, because if it isn't fan's are 'nt so appreciative of literature

You see, looking at the entire field of fiction, we can take any story and place it into one of two categories. It's either psychological (which embodies sociological) or it's action. There are certain exceptions, but they are so few and far between as to matter but little.

Science Fiction, Western, Detective, Fantasy etc, are merely subdivisions of these two major fields - psycho and action. They are placed in these sub-divisions on the strength of their background, while the characters, which are, after all, the main ingredients of any story, indicate to which of the two major divisions the story belongs. In the psycho story they seem real, in the action they are simply puppets going through the events which mainly make the tale.

Let's look at some classes in SF: George R Stewart's "EARTH ABIDES" is a psychological story of one man faced with the task of building a new society from the few survivors of a disease. It is also a sociological study of the new society and the story is outstandingly well-written and has all the earmarks (yes, and characteristics) of a great novel. George Orwell's "1984" is a psycho study of one man with convictions in opposition to the all-powerful party, and a sociological tale of a society entirely governed by a group of power-drunk sadists. I'm still looking for a reason why it's impossible, and until I find one "1984" frightens me...Another great novel.

Then there is Philip Wylie's "THE DISAPPEARANCE", in which the social impact of the sexes disappearing from each other is considered, and also the psychology of a certain philosopher, or on the other side of the coin, his wife.

I have chosen books which I believe I can call ' amongst the very best in SF', without fear of contradiction from any true lover of SF. They're good. They are also in the psychological field. "But," says my opponent, "they are just three", three from the wealth of good books. That they happen to be psychological is sheer coincidence."

To which I reply "NUTS!" I hope my opponent is absolutely hypothetical, any real fan coming up with such arguments should be taken aside and educated forthwith.

In the action field there are puppets rushing about, going through stupid actions, just doing things to make a pointless sequence of events which is put down on paper. If the sequence of events isn't pointless then the story might be slightly entertaining to the adult mind, no more. Can this possibly compare with a study of what goes on in a man's



mind, owing to certain events, or how a society lives and what it does in certain circumstances ? People, intelligent ones at any rate, are interested in people.

Here I had better define the action field. That is my name for stories in which the characters are puppets, for I claim that it is impossible to write a story in that field if the characters seem alive. You can have action in a psycho story (though it must be secondary to the characters) but not vice-versa.

About these characters. We are told there is something which never changes - called 'human nature', and we might as well work on that assumption. We keep therefore things like the self preservation instinct, ambition, desire for practically anything, sex ( but if a story depends on this last for its appeal, I hate it) all these things are emotional.

The things which the author should change are intellectual. We're more likely, in the future, to see an opposite point of view to our own, class distinction depends, to some extent, on intellect, and that will weaken ; we will become less sadistic.

As long as the author is dealing with humans only, let him never change the emotional human traits, but let him change the intellectual ones as much as he considers necessary -for the better.

Go on, scoff, you cynics. But haven't we been improving throughout history in these respects, and is there any reason why it should stop now ? As for war, well, as one crank to another I'll tell you what causes that, a facet of human nature called greed...

You can get crud in the psycho field though. The obnoxious routine of crumbling Galactic Empires, the blokes who drip sweat all over the place, the stories where sex is accentuated to the exclusion of all else, the psycho-studies of an all-but-impossible creed who wants to own the universe, are all good examples. BUT IN THE ACTION FIELD YOU ONLY GET CRUD.

You know, you can get good literature which is psychological only, but great literature must have a little sociology too. That is except in the field of fantasy where great literature can be written about one person.

The psychological field is the one in which good fiction is written, which is why I say let's be thankful for Bradbury, Sturgeon, Matheson, Tubb, Heinlein, Boucher and all the other real literary men of SF.

AND TO HELL WITH ACTION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

END.

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AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE ART EDITOR'S DESK.

It would appear, from recent letters to ST, that I am being accused of monopolising the artwork in ST. This is not so, the reason being that we are really short of first-class fan-artists to illustrate the mag, covers being our main drawback and consequently I have to oblige - sometimes at short notice. The people we want are those who have the talent to draw and have, as yet, not disclosed the fact. We would also like to find artists who have the necessary STENCIL CUTTING TOOLS so that work for the printer is not so hard. Is there anyone ? Can you draw? Please Write To: Terry Jeeves, 58, Sharrard Grove, Intake, Sheffield 12.

SO YOU'RE A FANZINE EDITOR.

By

George Whiting.

As the editor of a club fanzine, perhaps your biggest headache is the supply of suitable material, by this I mean artwork, short stories, poems and articles. It is obvious that as an editor you must edit, i.e., select the material which will appear in your fanzine. At the same time you must set standards - no matter how low. Remembering that lower than the navel will get you into trouble with the law and anyway Eskimo Nell is copyright.....O.K. so you set your standards but unlike the editor of a promag, you must be tactful in rejecting unsuitable material.

In my own case (Progress - West Country SF Group ) ((This mag is now defunct.Eds)) I tried to encourage people to write to me, to discuss controversial issues stf. Then, I fondly dreamed, all I would have to do would be to sit back, edit and print the flood of letters and occasionally fan the flames of discussion. Letters turned out to be as scarce as space stations, despite all tactics. From straightforward appeals I changed to pathetic editorials, to sarcastic editorials, to insulting editorials; both direct and indirect insults. All in vain. Now I know why the West Country is famous for its cider.

To return from my own harrowing experiences to the question of material. Material, unlike lead pencils, normally comes in three grades, they are:

- 1) Highbrow material - scarce.
- 2) Normalbrow material or ideal material -ex scarce
- 3) Lowbrow material - plentiful.

Right, let's consider now what happens when you set out to edit the fanzine by taking an example from each category.

1) Highbrow material.

One of the club members is a scientific highbrow (only reads Asf) The type who considers calculus is for kids and used a slide rule as a rattle. He sends you a nifty little article on relativity. Six closely written pages, five of which are maths (all those equations make stencil cutting a headache). Now what are you going to do? Let Uncle George help you, don't despair. There are a number of courses you can follow.

- a) You can go right ahead and print it, knowing in your inky little heart that it is a waste of paper. Still you can console yourself with the thought that at least one guy will read it and understand it.
- b) You can ask him to simplify it, of course explaining that whilst you understand it there may be others etc..... The usual reply you get to this is,  
"But it is simplified." To which you feebly answer. "Is it?"
- c) You can craftily send it to another fanzine ed. Not recommended, remember there is honour even amongst thieves.
- d) You can quietly lose it. Only snag here he usually has three car-

bon copies. Or else he rewrites it adding another page. Of maths,  
e) You can reject it with a polite note, thereby offending the gentleman in question who will tell all and sundry. "He only prints what he likes." Without explaining of course what it was that you rejected. They begin to wonder how many *nom de plumes* you have. The only way out of all this is to print it, which brings us back to where we started.

2) Normalbrow material.

Material falling in this category of course presents no problem editorially. The only snag is its scarcity. There is no solution to this except write it yourself or reprint it from other fanzines.

3) Lowbrow material.

This type of material is as plentiful as it is embarrassing. The number of people who like to be told they are fools you can count on the fingers of one toe. It usually covers a wide range from 'artwork' - where the 'artist' buys his paper in rolls and uses a burnt stick, to short stories (sometimes so short as to be indecent) and articles. I have often wondered whether the cave drawings of the Neolithic era were the first beginnings of fanzine artwork.

a) You can follow the same courses as recommended in 1) a, c, d, and e above. Usually with the same results except there are more of these guys. If you print it you can sometimes salvage your conscience by adding as a subtitle .... "A specimen of Fan Fiction," or whatever it is.

The short stories in this category normally contain the maximum amount of action with the minimum amount of grammar and punctuation. About four full stops in five hundred words is the usual dispersal. You find yourself panting after reading one page. This type of writer probably thinks that paragraphs are some form of hyperspace curve - if he thinks at all.

I remember once receiving an article which fell into this category, with a dull thud. It was written on four different sized sheets of paper, un-numbered - which was a novelty. In desperation I arranged them in order of size, with the smallest first. I found out later that this was the wrong order, it should have been the largest first. However, despite this it still made sense - if you see what I mean.

Finally I should mention there is one solution to all these problems - you can resign.

By the way this is grade 2 material, I hope.

END.....

Yes, they're here again.....S.T. FOOTNOTES By Beattie Jay.....

ZAP GUN.....Gun for shooting zaps.

RAY GUN.....Gun for shooting rays.

RAY PALMER..First bloke shot by a ray gun.

TAKEOFF.....Term invented by Gypsy Rose Lee.

LANDING STRIP...ditto on arrival in England.

ALIEN.....Creature often shot by R.A.F types.

AUTHENTIC.. Real tripe, as distinct from Misery and Imitation.....

MOBIUS STRIP...A new twist on take-off, invented by Phillis Dixey.....



