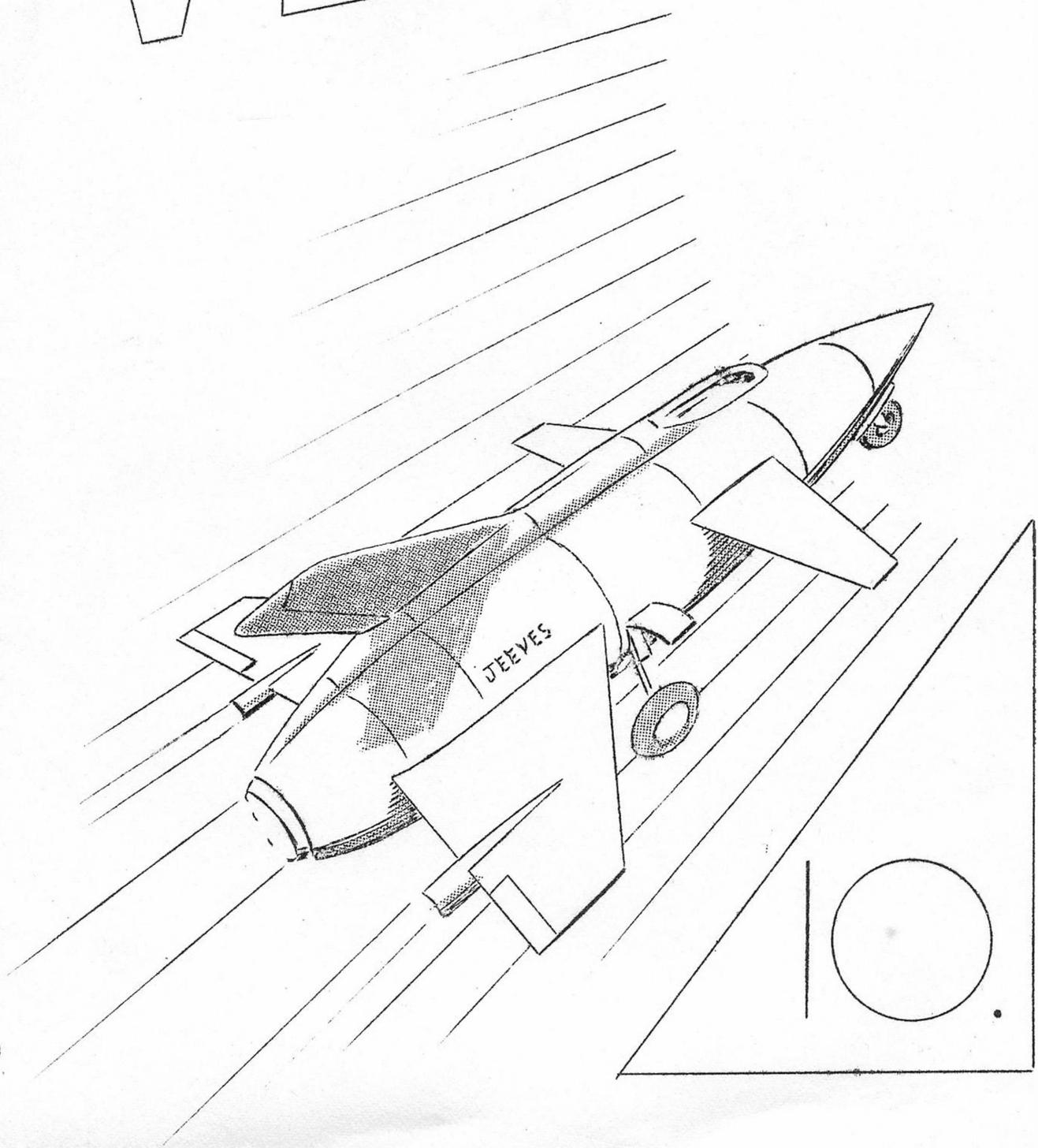


# VECTOR







Official Organ of the British  
Science Fiction Association  
published quarterly  
Winter 1960/61

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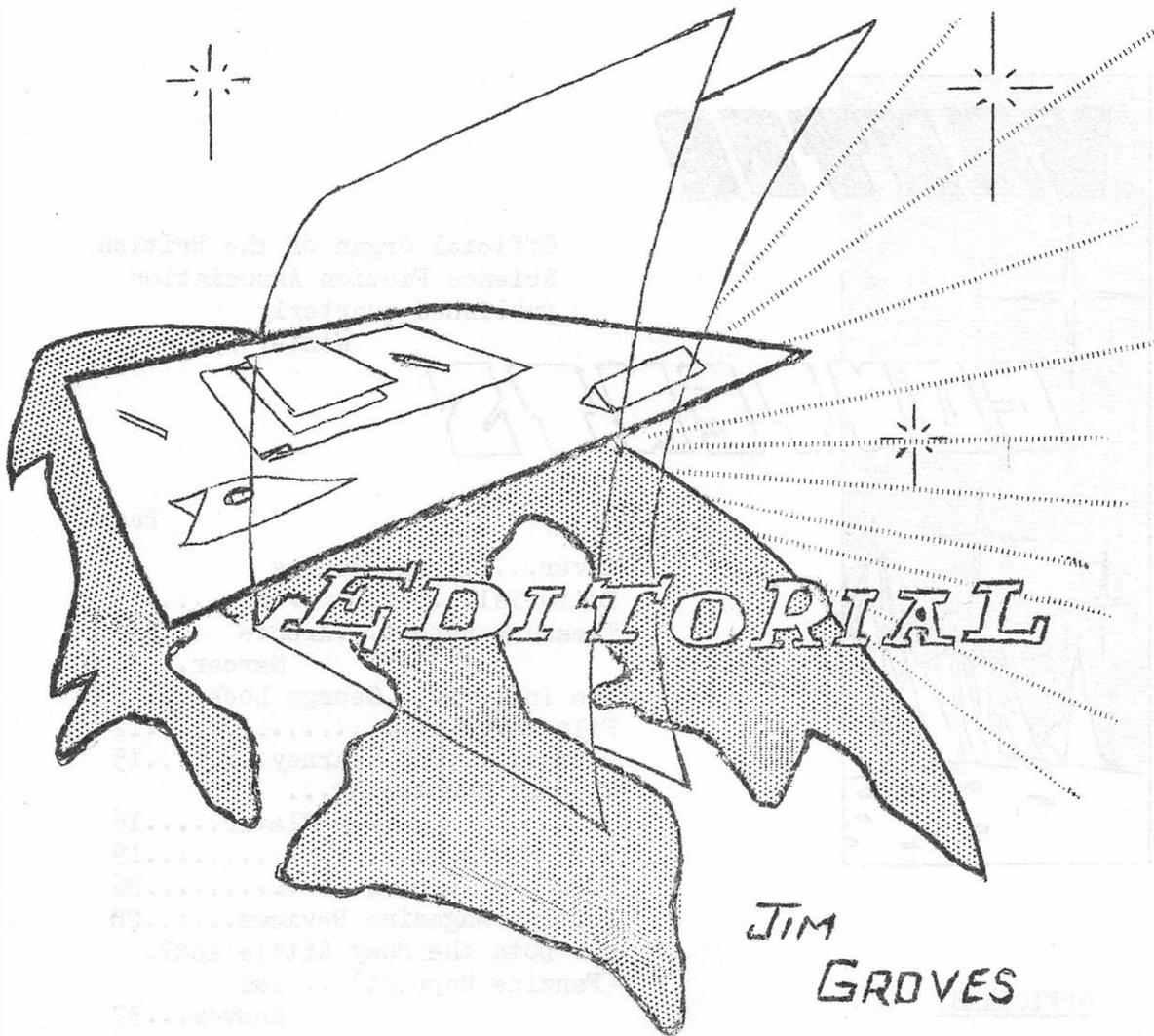
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to whom should be sent all letters  
of comment, contributions, art-work etc.

Deadline for VECTOR 11 is the 25th of  
February.

There is no Secretarial Report  
this time due to pressure of work.

Duplicated for the B.S.F.A. by  
CAPress.



The editorial this issue is short. Not only do I have little to say, I don't seem to be able to find the right words to say it with. Bear with me for a little huh?  
AMATEURS?

In the letter column of this issue you will find a fairly serious criticism, from Daphne Buckmaster, of the way in which the Association is being run at the present moment. In particular the fact that the publications are often late and excuses given pointing out that as the editing is done as a spare-time job you can't expect professional standards, especially in respect of deadlines. I've answered Daphne on this and one or two other points in the letter column so I won't go over them again here, what I want to do is to proffer some more of my own ideas regarding the Association, sparked off by this matter. Your comments are, quite naturally, sought since this is, in the last analysis, your organisation.

When people spread over a wide area have an interest in common they generally want to keep in touch, because it is to their advantage to do so, because they feel 'different' from those who don't share their interest, or just because human

beings are gregarious and like to talk about their pet interests. On the status of their subject depends the way they do this. First in rank come the professional interests - in my own case (I'm a refractories technologist) we have a magazine, The Refractories Journal, to keep us in touch. As befits a professional group it is printed on slick paper, appears regularly, and is edited and produced by a full time staff. It contains a few technical articles and plenty of social chit chat. The next rank contains the wide-spread amateur interests, like the various model-making groups. These are still fairly large in size and able to run semi-professional magazines. These are usually run by enthusiasts but need not be so long as they cater for the enthusiasts. They can still resemble the professional magazines because there are enough enthusiasts to support them. Then we come to the minor interests, of which sf is one. Even if the BSFA contained the majority of enthusiastic sf readers in this country I very much doubt if it could afford to have its publications produced by a full-time staff.

The Association is therefore going to continue to be run as a hobby by amateurs in their spare time. And a hobby, no matter how interesting, cannot be allowed to dominate your life. Ideally, of course, publications should always be on time, impeccably produced and containing nothing but the best in the way of material. Unfortunately ideals are hard to live up to, the best we can do is to try as hard as possible. And we do try. And if our efforts don't reach high enough then the solution, and the Association in the last analysis, is in your hands. And I only hope that that doesn't sound too much as if I'm passing the buck!

#### SNIPPETS.

Here are a few odds and ends 'from the editor's desk' as it were. First a postscript to my last editorial in the shape of a letter from the SFEC letting me know that for 1961 they are increasing the number of choices from six to nine as an experiment, and that they are trying to get American sf not otherwise available in this country. Next a rather sad news item announcing the death of Eric Temple Bell, 'John Taine', in Watsonville California at the age of 77. And last but not least, a note from the editor of 'Books and Bookmen' that the February issue will contain a long article on American sf paper-backs now available in this country.

Change of address.

M 98 Roy Sheppard, 23 Kilbington Drive, Enfield, Middlesex.

New Members.

M198 J.C. Pitchfork, 66 Claremont Road, Forest Gate, London, E.7.

M199 David Parker, 2 Woodstock Road, Strood, Nr. Rochester, Kent.

M 200 John Nash, 5 Whitehedge Road, Garston, Liverpool 19.

## TREASURY REPORT.

By ARCHIE MERCER.

In her recent rundown of possible reasons why BSTA publications don't necessarily appear on schedule, Ella omitted to mention one important contributory factor, namely, that the unfortunate Publications Officer, with everything else done and ready to hand, has to sit stewing his heels waiting for the Treasurer's Report. On the other hand, this works both ways at times, and the Treasurer has to tolerate the Publications Officer of the moment breathing urgently down his neck while he waits patiently for some other far-flung limb of the organisation to submit his current expense-sheet up to date.

There are other reasons, though, why the accounts are sometimes late, even including on occasion pure and simple laziness and/or inefficiency on the part of the Treasurer himself. Thus, having at long last bestirred myself to doing something about the half year ending this past June, I found after it was all over that I seemed to have eightpence too much in the kitty. I had another look, and thought I'd found a home for it, but a friendly type to whom I showed the matter wasn't sure. In the mean time Jim was pressing to get VECTOR 9 into the post, so I had to let the account slide for the time being. Which is why the only financial item in VECTOR 9 was the annual Convention report.

Finally I decided that the only person capable of laying the eightpence to rest would be the Auditor, when he came to audit the 1960 figures. I have therefore provisionally assigned the thing to a special category of its own as an "anonymous receipt", and present the relevant Account herewith.

Furthermore, just to prove that I CAN get on top of the work if I do try hard enough, I am presenting also the Account for the September quarter (which DOES balance). In this case however, I went ahead without bothering to call for all expenditure up to date, so the September figures do not necessarily represent the last postage stamp. This should adjust itself by the end of the year, as soon as possible after which temporal event I intend to issue both the December quarter Accounts and the Accounts for the year 1960as a whole.

As is my habit, I have appended expenditure analyses corresponding to the two part annual Accounts that are presented herewith. Just one point I'd like to mention here - expenditure under the heading "VECTOR" also includes the Newsletter, on the grounds that the two publications use common stocks of stationary etc., and it does not seem conveniently practicable to disentangle them.

*Archie Mercer*

A.H. Mercer  
Hon. Treasurer, BSFA.





# THE INGROWN

GEORGE LOCKE.

You are a science fiction reader. Not for you the Saturday afternoon jostling among the crowds, straining to see ten percent of the game between Tottenham Hotspurs and poor old unpredictable Chelsea. Neither will you be found in an approximately horizontal position in front of the television watching wrestling. No, you will be tramping along a dingy, almost deserted London street, grunting occasionally as a particularly large and frigid raindrop works its way beneath your collar and down your back.

Eventually, you will find the shop you are looking for - The Popular Book Centre or possibly, Plus Books. You will, if you are a staunch sf enthusiast, shudder at the hundreds of 'girlie' magazines flaunting vicarious sex through the shop windows. Your eyes will quickly search out the two or three hidden sf pocket books amongst the gangsters and westerns. Pocket-books captioned by the publisher with such words as "Titillating", "Torrid", "Tense". You might smile. More likely, you will compose an angry letter to the publisher asking him what exactly he thought was so torrid about E.E. Smith's writing.

Undeterred by such vulgar commercialism and misrepresentation, you will enter the shop, and dive for the section marked "science-fiction". You will find there all you want, undiluted by westerns, gangsters or sex novels.

Fifty years ago it wasn't quite like that. Sf had no convenient label, nor was there any specialisation of periodicals into magazines devoting their all to our favourite reading.

I wish, sometimes, it had stayed that way. You see specialisation might have been alright for westerns, detectives, and love romances. It wasn't alright for science fiction.

To try to clarify this, I'd like to take a gentle walk through the history of magazine fiction - and if I seem to be

concentrating on the American magazines, it's only because the main development of sf took place in the States.

Round the turn of the century, a good number of popular fiction magazines began to appear. These were the forerunners of what are known today as the pulps. The most famous, possibly, are Argosy, All Story, Bluebook, and Cavalier. They published almost any kind of popular fiction you could think of - westerns, detectives, adventure stories, love stories etc. There were also very clearly marked parallels in England, with Strand, Pearson's, Pall Mall, etc. The American ones, at first, published very little science fiction, but by 1910 or a little later, these magazines were thrusting, tentatively at first, but with increasing confidence, science fiction and fantasy on the public. And, judging by the subsequent reprinting of many of the tales, they lapped it up.

Such famous stories as Edgar Rice Burrough's Martian and Tarzan series first appeared in Argosy and its colleagues. Many of these are forgotten, now, by all save a few older readers and collectors. Such tales as England's Darkness and Dawn and Serviss' The Second Deluge.

Both novels were printed in book form, Darkness and Dawn in 1914 and The Second Deluge in 1912. The England title is one of the longest sf novels on record - being, in reality, a trilogy - and concerns the world after virtually all life has been wiped out with the exception of the hero and heroine. They sleep for several centuries, and when they awaken again, all that is left is the rotting skeleton of modern civilisation. Now they piece together what little remains intact - an old aeroplane, for instance - and gradually build a new world from one of the most fascinating stories of all time. The Second Deluge is a story of a great flood which submerges Earth completely - and is equally a classic.

Meanwhile, as science fiction was developing along the fascinating lines first traced out by Serviss and England - lines which made these stories stand with the best general fiction being published at that time - an obscure technical journal edited by Hugo Gernsback published a serial entitled Ralph 124C41 plus. It was, of course, written by the editor, or else it would never have seen print. It was nothing more than a speculative article thinly disguised as fiction.

The readers who were raving over Darkness and Dawn and its kin ignored poor old Ralph. I suppose, though, some of the readers of Gernsback's various technical journals thought well of it, for about ten years later, one of his magazines, Science and Invention began to publish the odd sf story, until, in 1923, it published an issue with several such stories in it. They were all, however, pretty well modelled on Ralph. Meanwhile, the twentieth century's teens progressed, and more and more writers began to turn out science fiction and fantasy for Argosy, Blue Book, and All Story. Serviss, unfortunately, wrote little more fiction, but England continued to turn out magnificent science fiction regularly, although nothing quite touched Darkness and Dawn. Burroughs' reputation grew by leaps and bounds - and, gradually, other writers with a leaning towards the fantastic came out of their shells. Writers like Austin Hall, Homer Eon Flint, Ray Cummings, and Abraham Merritt. Nathaniel Hawthorn's son, Julian, almost

completely unknown as a writer, although he published a number of fantasies twenty years earlier, contributed an interplanetary. These new writers - they each made a hit with the readers with their first works - each added a little something to the spreading pattern of science fiction. Hall and Flint contributed The Blind Spot, regarded by some as a great story, by others as little short of idiotic. Ray Cummings made the world of the atom all his own in The Girl in the Golden Atom. A. Merritt specialised in scintillatingly written fantasies which often nudged the science fictional. Victor Rousseau became famous overnight with The Messiah of the Cylinder.

Some of these newcomers developed and improved their work as they went on; others, however, inevitably turned into hacks.

But, in the twenties, the golden age of the general pulps, like Argosy, was passing away. The first sign of the replacement of the general fiction magazines by the specialised magazines was when Argosy combined with All Story. New magazines were appearing. Detective magazines by the hordz. Westerns. Love romances. Argosy's writers naturally cashed in on these, and helped build them, not noticing that their standards deteriorated, and they frequently ended up as mere hacks.

However, science fiction was a late starter in this trend towards specialisation. The science fiction writers of the early twenties continued to contribute to Argosy and its faithful followers.

But Science and Invention had already attracted one or two - Ray Cummings is a notable example - and began to print some of his Argosy work. Weird Tales formed in 1925, and after a faulty start, boomed. She also siphoned off some of the sf, particularly that with a weird treatment.

The difference between these two marginal fields became very important. Weird Tales, however, never drew more than a modicum of attention from the stfnists, and H.P. Lovecraft became about the only true specialist in weird-science-fiction. Gernsback, however, swayed perhaps by the loud voices of some of his technical readers, and with plenty of money to spare - he was an inventor himself - decided that it might be an idea to start a specialist sf magazine. This came out in 1926 and was called Amazing Stories. Contenting itself at first with reprints, it quickly acquired a stable of original writers, who all strove to outdo each other in the concoction of marvellous inventions. Gernsback himself stated his policy as being fiction designed to teach science - or pseudo-science - and to generate an enthusiasm for science.

Amazing Stories cozed examples of this policy in its early years. However, it was in a way winning against the tide of popular fiction at the time - it was not a pulp magazine by any stretch of the imagination, and didn't cater for the popular reader. However, it succeeded - and its success finally, in 1930, prompted one pulp publisher, Clayton, to produce an sf magazine. This was Astounding in its first incarnation, and it printed a completely different type of fiction from Amazing. It was, in fact, typical pulp fiction - virtually all crud. It could be called a watered-down, hacked-out Argosy type of science fiction whose emphasis was more on story-telling than was the material appearing

in Amazing, but still wasn't very good stuff.

However many words can be spilled in print condemning the fictionalised science articles being published in Amazing and Wonder you can't escape from the fact that the writers were developing, they refused to be satisfied with turning out the kind of stuff first written in 1911 with Ralph, and with the purchase of the Clayton Astounding by Street and Smith, a much better market was found. Under the guiding hand of F. Orlin Tremaine, Astounding slowly improved. However, it was not until Campbell took over the reins in 1938, that the last of the bonds first tied by Gernsback was loosened, and science fiction had a re-birth which brought the standards up to those of the golden days of Argosy.

Pause for breath, while everybody meditates upon how one man's firm ideas nearly killed science fiction. Gernsback was somebody who might have been largely responsible for the popularisation of sf in his own day, but who caused it to grow in upon itself - and one of the favourite themes of sf writers is that of the mess that ensues when a culture becomes ingrown.

Science fiction has been plagued by men causing ingrowth from that day on.

Gernsback was only the first.

John W. Campbell was the second, although the effects of his curiously philosophic mind did not become apparent until at least ten years later. At first his emphasis was on stories - powerful, original stories, and these he got. Sf was ripe for a big jump ahead - and it came, with writers such as Hubbard, Heinlein, Van Vogt, Lewis Padgett, C.L. Moore, George O. Smith and many others hitting their stride with almost as varied a selection of science fiction as hit the news-stands with Argosy. However time passed and the writers became old and tired, and Astounding began to publish more and more of the same kind of story, and Campbell, too, became infected with the same disease. His magazine began to lose its imagination.

Meanwhile Palmer had presented the Shaver Mystery, had found his magazine's circulation increased by it, and flogged the theme to a lamentably late death. Campbell must have seen this increase in sales. He decided to try something of the same sort to try to revive Astounding's flagging sales. Conveniently, Hubbard showed up with Dianetics.

And with Dianetics came the beginning of the end.

We are sitting at the end, glumly wondering what is going to happen to science fiction. We read an editorial on Campbell's latest crack-pot idea, the Dean Drive. We wonder vaguely if his purpose in promoting these fringe science ideas is on the hit or miss basis - if he makes enough stabs, sooner or later one will come out right.

We wonder precisely what Galaxy hopes to achieve by continuing to print the same kind of old stuff as it has done for the past few years. We wonder how long it is going to take for F&SF to become as thoroughly hide-bound as the others. It is well on its way.

And we wonder why the hell someone doesn't try a change of editor. Maybe that would get Astounding out of its rut. An



By coincidence I received two reviews of I AIM AT THE STARS on the same day from two different people, since they take different views of the film I intend to print both reviews.

I AIM AT THE STARS. Columbia. Starring Curt Jurgens and Victoria Shaw, with Gia Scala, Herbert Lom and James Daly.

It is difficult at any time to arouse sympathy for a fanatic, and more so if the dedicated, one-track-minded individual happens to be a scientist. In this film, Curt Jurgens as Werner Von Braun succeeds in showing us the fanaticism, the single minded obsession of a scientist who eats, dreams, and sleeps rockets, but the fanaticism never quite gets off the screen to the audience. We see, but we do not quite understand. This is the fault of the script, in that Von Braun seems unable to explain to anyone that all he wants to do is to build, and so find out about, rockets. I felt that Jurgens had caught Von Braun's obsession, but that the rest of the cast, and the film makers, hadn't, quite.

Economically, we are not given the whole of Von Braun's life-story. There is one glimpse of him as a boy, and his devotion to

rockets, even then, as an experimental model crashes into and sets fire to the greenhouse of a neighbour. The scene then leaps to that moment in the history of the German Space Rocket Society when Hitler's Army thought them worth taking over. We are shown the growing conflict between Von Braun's obsession and the demands of the military for a super weapon, the dark moment when Von Braun, even after joining the Party, after producing a successful V2, is arrested and faces the prospect of a firing squad, as a traitor. Only intervention by the military head of the V2 project, on the plea that Von Braun is indispensable, saves him. An Allied raid on Peenemunde, prompted by the reports of a spy in their midst, brings the rocket men face to face with a choice. Which is more important, rocket .. or Germany? Anton Reger, ably played by Herbert Lom, is the only one to be patriotic enough to stay. The rest, Von Braun, Professor Oberth, Doctor Neumann and the remainder of the technical staff, decide they would rather build rockets than die as patriots, and that they stand a happier chance with the Americans than with the Russians. They take as much equipment as they can carry; and surrender to the US forces.

Here, again, Von Braun faces the prospect of death as a war criminal. The uncomprehending, patriotic, lay point of view comes across very strongly from James Daly, playing the part of Major William Taggart, ex-newspaperman and with reason to hate everything that Von Braun stands for. And, again, Von Braun is saved by his very indispensability. The US need him, to build rockets.

The film ends, dramatically enough, with Von Braun sticking his neck out and almost guaranteeing that the Army Redstone will put a satellite up, after the gross double loss of prestige of the Russian 'first' and the Navy's inglorious flop. Of course, the Redstone goes up. We know it did. So much is history. But the film sequences capture the tension all over again. Technically, the film is without fault, and the cast play their parts perfectly. The larger issue, to my mind, is not so well done. There is much impassioned talking around the matter of responsibility, but at no time does the film say, convincingly, that a scientist does what he does because he must, and that he is not, and cannot be, concerned with the uses made of his discoveries and inventions. Von Braun is reaching for the stars, the whole universe, the future. If laymen choose to take his inventions and use them to blow each other to pieces, is that his concern? I wonder.

John T. Phillifent.

"I aim for the Stars", a film based on the life-story of Werner Von Braun, is an interesting example of a steady trend towards popularising science. Science fiction has already been nudged by this cashing in on the public's interest in the Sputnik and the hundreds of scientific developments appearing annually.

Here was a magnificent opportunity for showing the science-hungry public the more romantic aspects of research, of firing the sense of wonder sparked by the Sputniks. We could be shown the gradual development of the rocket, from a tiny thing a foot or so long, to the V2 and beyond. We could be given some technical information, given a clear idea of the snags and shown how, in the end, Von Braun overcame them.

Instead, we get, in the early stages of the film, a few sketchy newsreel type shots of rockets being tested. Not a word of explanation of what is being tested. Later, we do get a few words thrown in at random about overheating of reaction chambers or some such, but this- the only technical material - is dealt with so casually it wouldn't be noticed if the rest of the film wasn't so weak.

Curt Jurgens, playing the part of Von Braun, is put in charge of the Peenemunde project. At first, he is up against bureaucratic indifference. However, later on, he finds it turns positively hostile, on account of a couple of statements the SS pick up with their elephantine ears.

One of these points out Von Braun's philosophy. He is speaking to his girl friend (who later becomes his wife). "Hitler - the man in the moon. They are the same to me. Come to think of it - the man in the moon is closer to my heart." This basic sentiment - indifference as to who is behind the research and the effects of the research itself - govern Von Braun. When the V2s start dropping on London he is approached with the question of what difference it makes to him if the rockets blast a bomber station or a children's hospital. "Well, the British are blasting our children" he says; and this is as far as the terrible destructive properties of his rockets affect him. What matter why the research goes on, so long as it does go on.

And Curt Jurgens does a fair - but only fair - job of presenting this complex character, combining idealism - "I aim for the Stars" - with indifference.

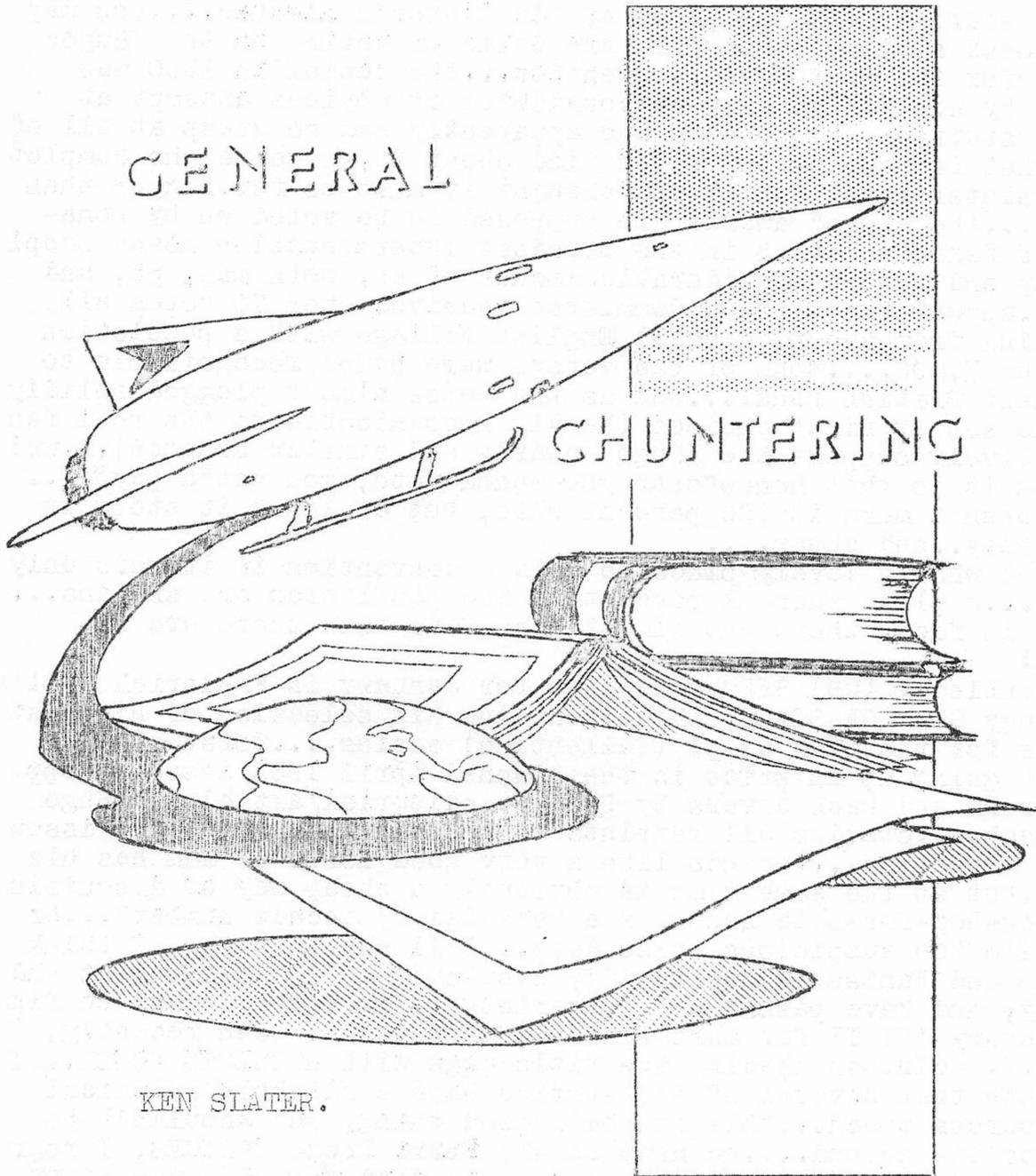
However, was this the real Von Braun? Not having read much about his life, I can't say. Yet, I have grave doubts as to its veracity. You see, the whole story is sketchy, and as full of amateurish dramatics as any second rate spy thriller. Herbert Lom's girl friend is a spy for the Americans...Herbert Lom, of course, finds out about this. There's a tearful sequence which ends up with Lom not giving her away to the authorities. Yet, when the time comes for the Peenemunders to decide whether to surrender to the Americans or remain loyal to Germany only Lom decides to remain.

Von Braun and co. go to America, and spend the rest of the time doing rocket research for the Americans. A few more fragments of stories are inserted here - a bit of ideological conflict between Von Braun and an American officer called Taggart - mention of the rivalry between Army and Navy - but nothing very strong. All story threads in this film are very weak and very short. Nothing more than a series of interlocking sketches which mar the background and obscure the main aim of the film - that illustrated by the title. There is also a lack of urgency, which is only repaired towards the end of the film, when the Navy satellite has failed, and the White House orders a "Crash Programme".

A "Crash Programme" is wryly defined by one of the young German scientists - the only one with a spark of life in him - as "something where, given NIT's pregnant women, you get a baby in 30 days." Nevertheless the attempt succeeds, and Von Braun puts his satellite into orbit.

As a story it is sketchy and aimless.

GENERAL



KEN SLATER.

Before anything else, I feel I should quote from a letter I received from our President.... "Page 186, *The Taste of Too Much* (Hutchinson 15/-), a novel by a Glasgow author, Clifford Hanley, mentions a story in *Nebula*, whereupon 'Good old *Nebula*,' Miss Cumberland murmured." Second item; Penguin have just published a tale of Derbyshire life that will be of fringe interest to sf fans, though it is hardly sf, entitled 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'; interesting details in it of Earthman mating habits....elsewhere Brian tells me that he has written the survey of sf which will be included in the Calder published "International Literary Annual". ...I guess the time has come to let you-all into a secret....a

bit of scandal from the pages of Old Slater's Almanac....you may have noted a slight change in the terms of voting on the "Hugo" awards for the next World Convention...the voting in 1960 was marred by what could only be considered an obvious attempt at ballot stuffing, by someone who apparently had no grasp at all of just what fandom is...or to be kind about it, someone who completely misinterpreted fandom and thought it must be far bigger than it is....the "Hugo" awards are supposed to be voted on by bona-fide sf fans, and that in the broadest interpretation means people who buy and read a considerable amount of sf, both mag, pb, and book...anyway the Pittcon Committee received over 70 votes all emanating from around a small English village with a population of under 7,000....none of the voters were names recognisable to prominent British fans....and as the votes almost plugged solidly for one set of first choices (hardly recognisable to the real fans who actively support the "Hugo" awards and similar schemes)...well, the result is that henceforth you wanna vote, you gotta pay\*.... that doesn't make it 100 percent safe, but at least it stops it being easy..and cheap....

But what a lovely place to hold a convention if it were only true! ...a place where 1 percent of the population are sf fans... where, in fact, there are almost more fans than there are in London!

Doubleday (US) SFBC selection for January is Frederick Pohl's anthology STAR OF STARS, which contains his selection of his best choices for the STAR SF pb (Ballentine) series....first sign of AMAZING going up in price is the planned April 1961 issue, 196pp 50¢, front and back covers by Paul....editorial/article by Hugo Gernsback....stories all reprints to be selected from early issues by Sam Moskowitz....sounds like a very good issue if Sam has his way....but at the same time is obviously a cheap way of disguising a try-on-50¢-for-size issue as a "special 3½ decade number"...or maybe I'm too suspicious these days...I'll say this tho, I think that AS and Fantastic are rapidly overhauling GSF in interest and quality, and have passed ASF in variety...I'm very pleased to find the January '61 IF far more readable than it has been recently, with J.T. McIntosh leading the title page with ABSOLUTE POWER...I also note that several of the stories have a slightly whimsical or humourous touch...this can be a good thing, but shouldn't be run into the ground....no news on the Perri Press INDICES, I regret for the benefit of those wondering....no word from Don Day of PF for some long months now...possibly with the nearing deadline he is getting so busy he can't stop....SATEVEPOST Oct 8th, 1960 contained an article about John W. Campbell....the BBC also gave a third programme report on sf which, although it contained little the average fan doesn't already know, also didn't appear to contain any glaring errors....if it comes up again, worth listening to, if you can tear yourself away from the tv screen showing PATHFINDERS TO MARS for long enough....I hate those things....calmly, without turning a hair or calculating an orbit, a change of pilot....the substitution (although they don't know it) of an imposter for

\*in future only convention members will be able to take part in final vote for "Hugo" awards - details of convention and such at a later date....ed.

one of the goal crew....the addition of a young girl (below teen-age?) to the crew...are all accepted....hell and damnation, you can't even get on an air-liner with a paid ticket that flipping easy, let alone onto the third moon-trip! Agreed, this entertainment is for juveniles and teen-age (younger teens) folk, but if they can accept it what a distorted picture of life they must have... okay, lecture-cum-sermon session now closed....any time you see some of the slick American mags around, a glance thru may be rewarding - the mags I mean are things like Playboy, Dude, Gent and so on....the rewards you'll get vary from Algis Budrys to William Tenn, or even Ted Sturgeon...of course you may get the same thing later on in F&SF or Judith Merrill's The Year's Best...but then again you may not....possessors of the Shasta Checklist can add one more note....Whyte-Melville, George J. Sarchedon, A Legend of the Great Queen....the checklist gives this as Ward Lock, 1903, 387pp, ill....I have at the moment an edition published by Ward, Lock and Bowden which bears on the dedication a date of 1871 ....and an inscription on the fly has the date 1896...unfortunately I can't date the book exactly from this, but the list of works catalogued in the rear would tend to place the book in the 1870's ....completists may at least note this....incidentally, I think that the BSFA might act as clearing house for this type of data, and I'll be very pleased to hear from anyone who can give me additional data on any work listed in the checklist, or any data on works which are dated earlier than 1946, but are not listed.... I'll include them in the column as they come in, and someone might like to publish a consolidated list some time....whilst not strictly sf, Vardis Fisher's "Testament of Man" series is of interest to sf readers, particularly the first three titles... Darkness and the Deep, and The Golden Rooms are definitely available in UK now, at 4/6, Pyramid Books imported by Transworld - 50¢ ...the third title, Intimations of Eve, I have not yet tracked down....the later titles in the series, Peace Like a Rivor (now titled The Passion Within), The Divine Passion, etc., classify more as historical fiction than sf, but may still have appeal to a great many sf addicts....incidentally, whilst the first two that I mentioned are 4/6, the pb edition of MY HOLY SATAN (bringing the Testament up to Inquisition days) will be imported at 3/6, although also a 50¢ Pyramid pb...you guess it...other imports come fast and furious, but to no pattern...Star sf 4 is now through (or should be when this appears) but was preceded by 5 and 6...Ballantine are reprinting quite a number of their earlier successes...and so we may get some of the long out-of-print items in the future...T.H. White's THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING is out from Dell as a paperback, costing 95¢, 639pp...whilst Capricorn Books have published at \$1.35 the same author's hard-to-obtain MISTRESS MASHAN'S REPOSE, 255pp, with the Fritz Eichenberg illus, and the map which is used as endpapers in the boards (1946) edition makes another couple of pages after the text...more and more it becomes obvious that even in English letters the day of the paper-back is here...and the Penguin move to prevent boards binding of their titles may be somewhat difficult to enforce if we follow the Continental pattern....I think that it is fairly true to say that only in Britain and America and their immediate associates (in this

the adventures of a boy slan, Jommy Cross, in his gradual growth to maturity, his hairbreadth escapes from humans, his love-affair with a girl slan, his rediscovery of a secret nibbled at by his father .. for 'controlled' atomic energy. This against a vaguely sketched future in which there are the inevitable 'power' figures struggling for world domination. There is a multiple-twist ending, the snatch from despair. There is the V.V. style of interlace of events, sketched and abandoned in the ceaseless rush to pile event on event.

This, for those who came in late, is the way that SF used to be. Big, sweeping, galloping along, with great double-handfuls of gadgets, gimmicks and ideas squandered in every chapter. This is probably why SF, today, is forced to dig deep for ideas. The old-timers were prodigal with their material. They did just about everything, and all in one story. As this, which handles mutants, mutation-machines, telepathy, mind-shields, thought-broadcasting-machines, interplanetary war and space-ships, anti-gravity, crude atomic powered weapons, controlled atom power, ten-point steel (you'll have to read the story to find out what that is) and great slabs of philosophy, all bundled together any old how. And yet, for all the sprawling, shapeless massiveness of it, the old magic still works, cardboard characters, stock situations, and corny dialogue notwithstanding. It's a mystery to me. Read it, and see what you think.

John T. Phillifent.

'NON-STOP' by Brian W. Aldiss. Digit 2/6d

This novel is one of the many pocket-books, put out by Digit in recent months, to be written by a popular science fiction author. They have made available, in cheap editions, much of the previously unpublished work (in this country) of Van Vogt, Heinlein, Pohl and Kornbluth and Edmund Cooper. Apart from THE AMAZING MR. LUTTER-WORTH by Desmond Leslie, this is the only title in their series to have been written by a British author. Digit books are cheaply and often nastily produced. Type-setting is often mossy, covers sometimes poorly printed and proof-reading shows evidence of carelessness. Nonetheless, admirers of Heinlein, Van Vogt, et al, have cause to thank them and now, although the type-setting and proof-reading has been just as poor, admirers of Brian Aldiss, white hope of British science fiction, can be grateful that one of his novels is now available, in Britain, in an inexpensive format.

Frankly I found parts of the book disappointing in so far as the plot was concerned. I am an admirer of Aldiss's short stories and I know that his work is steadily improving but there were faults in NON-STOP which niggled me. Character motivation is sometimes poorly conceived ( I should have liked to have known why one member of a certain expedition, being what he was; joined it when he did) and, although the story is rich in ideas, many of them have not been exploited to their full extent. The central theme is excellent and often exciting; there are several twists to the plot which are unexpected.

The central character, Roy Complain, is interesting, but early descriptions of him promise more than is forthcoming. He is faced with many emotional and mental shocks in the course of the

story - but the reader is left almost unaware of these shocks; he does not experience the impact which Aldiss says Complain experiences. It is as if Aldiss was rather uncertain of his character and skated round the difficult and delicate business of describing, in detail, the character's emotions. Obviously, if handled the wrong way, this could result in heavily overwriting, but as it is the scenes are often underwritten and written with little conviction, as if the author didn't really believe that Complain could exist at all.

As a novel the book does not wholly succeed - as a stimulating investigation of a degenerate, bewildered society and it's causes it succeeds very well. It is good science fiction and it is worth turning a blind eye to it's flaws as a novel in order to enjoy it for it's ideas. It is a tragedy - or was planned as such - but it is a pity that, at the time that it was written, the author was seemingly incapable of communicating this tremendous sense of tragedy to the reader.

There is a hint here of the rhythmic, semi-poetic style which constitutes much of the appeal of Aldiss's current work - a style which he is fast perfecting, inimitably and with distinction. Careful use of alliteration, vowel-rhymes and word-rhymes show that he is, stylistically, maturing rapidly and hasn't stopped at NON-STOP. When it was first published this book was admired - but it cannot compare well with the current work of this exciting writer.

Michael Moorcock.

"THE 22ND CENTURY" by John Christopher. Panther pb 2/6d  
An anthology of stories originally published by Grayson & Grayson 1954

This collection of stories by John Christopher is that rare thing in sf, the book you can confidentially give to that friend of yours who has never been able to understand 'what you see in sf'. For all those that bigotedly refuse to admit that sf can be literature, this is the perfect retort.

The only fault, if it is a fault, with Christopher's writing, is that it is done almost too well. One is caught by the quiet, almost casual, conversational touch, and seduced into a state of utter conviction so deftly that one passes from the real to the unreal without being aware of any break in the image. It is smoothly done, without bravura, dramatic effect, verbal fireworks or assault on the imagination. It looks, and reads, easy. This is the art that conceals art, and is craftsmanship of a very subtle order.

There are a round twenty stories, split into three sections. It would be pointless to pass an opinion as to whether this is the 'best' of Christopher, as every one is a gem of competent storytelling. The first five deal with that version of the twenty-second century which gives the book it's title, and which the author has hand-crafted, with loving detail, as his very own. This is the world in which national and political divisions have been superseded by the big industrial monopolies, the Managerial Society. We see Max Larkin, of United Chemicals, dealing with such things as an anti-machine 'Prophet', a sentient Tree, and a simple case of frustrated love.

The central section, fifteen stories, are of all kinds, from

the doings of Mr. Kowtshook, the india-rubber-man, to a novel and intriguing version of the Loch Ness monster, with a wry look at an 'advanced' weapon, and a speculation as to what might happen if the human race suddenly became telepathic. The final five tales have as a common thread the various ways in which Man might strive to turn away from self-destruction and back to sanity. But such a summary can give but a pale hint as to the treasure of pleasure to be found here.

There is no pin-pointing Christopher's style by some characteristic, as with Bradbury's poetry, Sturgeon's verbal gymnastics, or Arthur Clarke's scientific precision. In this writing, the style is the whole thing. The people are real, human, and understood, the settings touched in with meticulous precision. Where much of modern sf reminds one of the crude brushstrokes and 'attack' of a strip-cartoon, Christopher has all the true-to-life observation and detail of a Dutch interior. And so easy to read, too.

John T. Phillifent.

"CURE FOR DEATH" by Victor Valentine. Sidgwick and Jackson 15/-

In most books the publishers blurb can be considered as being there to do little more than fill up a blank page. That is not true in this case. Here, the publisher has decided to make the reader antagonistic right from the start..at least that's the impression I got after reading "...it must make one wonder how far it is safe to allow our destinies to be controlled by scientists". After this, I realised that anything I might say about the book would probably be biased. I hope this state of affairs is not too apparent.

The plot, although nothing outstandingly original, is handled in a way that is new to me. It concerns a scientist, Dr. John Slade, who, by using a "new ray" which inhibits cell growth, develops a cure for cancer, and from the basic theory gained in perfecting it, goes on to discover a method of preventing death. The process not only prevents death but also makes those who undergo it physically perfect, and of enormous mental capacity. The only trouble is that the Repros, as the "new" people are now known, retain nothing whatsoever of their old selves, and that includes their even forgetting how to eat and drink. Nevertheless, old people want to take the treatment, and eventually there are more Repros than normals, or Originals as they are now known, so that they take over governing the country, and make it law that everybody become Repros on reaching a given age. Only a small group, led by Dr. Slade's daughter, are allowed to live on the Isle of Wight as Originals, where they go about surviving until the inevitable disaster overtakes the Repros allowing the Originals to regain their rightful place in the Universe.

Cure for Death is a curious mixture of good and bad. The original idea is a good one, but a great deal of the beginning of the book is terribly written. It is cluttered with hackneyed expressions, characters that are so stylised they wouldn't be allowed in any decent children's comic, and science that is none too strong, as when the cancer cure is said to be brought about by the use of atomic radiation "...a startlingly fresh angle" of tackling the problem. Although to be fair I must admit that Mr.

Valentine seems to realise this weakness, and keeps his science to a minimum.

To take a look at the characters first. Throughout the beginning of the book the author develops his characters: Dr. John Slade, big, athletic, an Australian (like the author), a genius but modest as hell. To show the type of man that our hero is, we see him demonstrating his process to a friend, he rolls up his sleeve to show a wound 6" long and 2" deep, and when his friend comes up with the brilliant statement that it must have hurt Slade replies "I got used to it". Then we have Dr John's wife. All I can say about her is that she is good enough to be a heroine in a Disney cartoon. We also have a mother-in-law who calls trains 'choo-choos', and who has the temperament of an ostrich. In fact the only person who is real is Slade's young daughter, who spurts in and out of the action of the story, and doesn't stand still long enough for the author to describe her.

Once Valentine has set the scene, and presented his characters to us, he gets down to business and gives us some very reasonable writing. He forgets about people and starts into some action, and it is now that his characters show some semblance of reality, the further the story progresses the more real they become, a clear example of actions speaking louder than words.

In fact there is a marked improvement in all departments as the story progresses, situations become more imaginative, and an increase in pace makes Valentine much more fluent, as if he were glad that now he was getting somewhere. This is not a great book, but it is worth reading, and most people will find some interest in it if they are not completely disheartened by the drivel that makes up the first third of the book. After reading this novel it made me wonder how far it is safe to allow our destinies to be controlled by politicians.

J.F. Patrizio.

"HELL'S ABOVE US" by Henry Ward, Sidgwick and Jackson 15/-

translated from the French by Alan Heame.

The publishers have used their copyright of "The Conquest of Space" to produce a very handsome dust-jacket, showing a space-rocket in full Bonestell detail and colour, which, unfortunately, does not in the least resemble the far larger and more complex multi-stage vehicle described in the book. This jacket is presumably meant to persuade the intending reader that the contents of the book are science fiction, though this is nowhere explicitly stated in the blurb, which is as well, since this is simply an international spy thriller of the Dennis Wheatley type with a Van Vogtian "wheels within wheels" plot.

A British secret agent, investigating an attempt by the Chinese government to purchase the details of a new and deadly poison gas, discovers that there is a giant Russo-Chinese rocket base in the Takla Makan desert. Through the services of a Chinese "double agent" he is able to get into this base, and out of it again with his life.

He announces his discovery to the U.S. government, and is informed that a U.S. robot satellite containing advanced observation and communication equipment, which was launched some time ago

and is now orbiting Mars, has ceased to transmit back information, while a Russo-Chinese space-ship with a three man crew, also orbiting Mars has likewise ceased to communicate.

The U.S. robot satellite suddenly comes to life again (just why is never made clear) and the Americans arrange for its very versatile equipment to relay back to them any signals emitted by the Soviet satellite. Later, faint signals from this vessel begin to come through as its crew manage to repair their radio equipment after it's unexplained failure. The Americans then try to drive the Soviet explorers insane, by bombarding them with signals, actually originating on Earth, but ostensibly from a U.S. crew orbiting Mars, first raising their hopes of rescue as high as possible, and then becoming increasingly gloomy and despairing.

It is then announced by the Soviet crew that either the planet Mars is itself a living entity or else the entire planet is inhabited by a single gigantic living creature. Attempts by the USSR and China to send a rescue expedition are tied in with the Hungarian freedom rising and with the Suez Campaign, and the book ends with the Sino-Soviet rescuer mysteriously diverted from its course, and heading at an increasing speed for interstellar space, while the Martian entity begins to experiment with "Transalpha Radiation" which is capable of exterminating all life on Earth.

As a quick moving action thriller this book is at the top of its class, and I greatly enjoyed it as such, but its "science" is that of the death- and anti-gravity ray soap opera of the nineteen-twenties. For example: in a dissertation on the Martian "canals" the astronomer Lowell is consistently called Lovett, while on page 223 we are informed (shades of Newton!) that Mars, being farther from the sun than the earth, moves faster in its orbit.

The characters are cardboard types, the main interest being the ingenuity of the psychological pressures that are brought to bear on the occupants of the Soviet satellite in the endeavour to send them "round the bend". Misprints are few, though there seems to be a word missing from the last sentence on page 134. The translation reads smoothly, and Alan Poole is to be warmly congratulated on what must have been a very trying assignment.

Arthur R. Weir.

"A STIR OF ECHOES" by Richard Matheson. Corgi pb 2/6d (reprint)

As in all Matheson's works, this one is not overly concerned with plot structure. It is loose, formless and discursive, yet it achieves a cracking pace and grip, an immense conviction. The story is told in the first person by Tom Wallace, an ordinary, unspectacular man, happily married, with one child and his wife expecting another. His neighbours, and his neighbourhood, are alike commonplace. A visit from his wife's brother, Phillip, who is a psychology major, and a light-hearted experiment with hypnosis, starts the whole thing off. Tom is hypnotised, much to his own surprise. Then .. things begin to happen. Unpleasant things. The hypnosis, somehow, has triggered off a latent talent. He finds he is telepathic. Right at the end of the story, by accident, he loses the odd talent as suddenly as he acquired it. The meat of the in-between comes from the compelling portrayal of fear, pain, bewilderment and fascination as Tom tries to deal with his unwanted,

unwelcome gift. You may disagree, as I did, with the flat assumption that suddenly acquired telepathy would necessarily be a horrible thing, but there can be no dispute that Matheson, here, has pictured a very ordinary set of people, fully and warmly human, who are afraid. In this case the very formlessness of the writing conveys, strikingly, the confusion and torment of the afflicted man, and his struggle to rationalise something over which he has no control, and for which he has very little understanding. It is immensely readable, but not recommended for late at night, alone. Not if you're the nervous type. It's as good as that.

John T. Phillifent.

"THE TIDE WENT OUT" by C.E. Maine. Corgi pb 2/6d.

The first thing to breed trouble in any situation is mistrust: This mistrust in the mass mind will often degenerate into violence, which is contagious at the best of times. In certain rare cases however, trust can be equally as devastating for those concerned. The "End of the World" for one.

In a case like this there is usually some controlling element, be it business tycoons using their huge combines in an effort to save them and theirs, intellectuals with brilliant solutions, or, as in this story, a government working to develop a haven and placating the people with temporary measures.

In such a story the development of the theme is more or less standard. Our authors seem unanimous that sex and sadism will be the foremost factors in a society gone wild with fear, and this makes me think. The film censors allow only so much of the two S's as visual entertainment. Has it been left to the writers to satisfy what must be a popular demand for stimulation through auto-suggestion? Suffice it to say that this book contains its share.

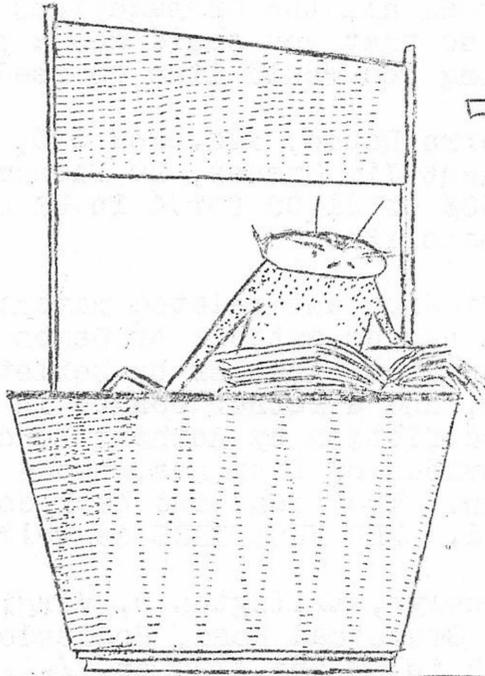
The plot is handled in a light manner, but, as the blurb says, "Eric Maine makes the improbable become reality". Therefore certain passages can and do shock as the author displays the type of thought usually suppressed. For example, a bunch of soldiers openly agree that any wounded woman who has blundered into their lines should be taken into the nearest building and raped. The effect of this, as you find yourself in mid sentence and the realisation of what it means hits you, will depend on your taste for dramatic impact.

It is through skilful use of words in this manner that the author does create his effects, and, in a plot where the hero is one of the government selected hero's who has his share of events peculiar but still manages to miss out on the final evacuation and has to create his own, there is plenty to entertain the reader in a manner befitting the author's reputation.

Tom Heatley.

All the books reviewed here will be available from the library. The address is Basement, 130 London Road, Cheltenham, Glos.

If you want to buy them, or any other sf (books or magazines), contact Fantast (Medway) Ltd., 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs. They issue lists at intervals of second-hand books and magazines in the sf and fantasy field.



# For Your Information

Unless otherwise stated the publications reviewed here are duplicated.

ESPRIT, Daphne Buckmaster, 8 Buchanan Street, Kirkcudbright, Scotland. Available for comment, contribution, or 1/3d per issue. Nos. 1 and 2 to hand.

ESPRIT is an interesting departure from the normal run of fanzines, it is intended to be completely serious in content and to cover as wide a range of subjects as possible. In these two issues it ranges from science fiction and fandom to education and history, from the 'status seekers' and advertising to the fringes of religion. It has a new departure as far as its letter column is concerned as well - comments are printed under subject headings instead of printing complete letters, it certainly helps you to follow the arguments. If you like to think about any and everything then you will find plenty for you in ESPRIT, try it and see. ELDORITCH DREAM QUEST, Peter Mansfield, 14 Whiteford Road, Slough, Bucks. Priced at 1/- per copy in UK and 20¢ in US.

DREAM QUEST has been called the British AMRA and while AMRA has the edge as far as reproduction goes, it being photolith, the material is fast coming up to its standard. Most of the present issue is centred on the Tolkien LORD OF THE RINGS saga. If you are interested in heroic fantasy it will be well worth your while to send for a copy to see if you like it.

SPECULATIVE REVIEW, Dick Eney, 417 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, Va., U.S.A. British agent Archie Mercer, 43 1/4 Newark Road, North Hykeham, Lincoln. Priced at 25¢ or 2/- for 3 issues.

SPECULATIVE REVIEW concentrates mainly, at the moment, on magazine reviews with some book reviews thrown in. There is the beginnings of a letter column, somewhat on the lines of that in

ESPRIT, but whether or not it will expand is itself a matter for speculation. If you don't get to read all the US magazines but would like to know what is in them so that you could get a particular issue if it contains something you would like to read then SPECULATIVE REVIEW is what you need.

NEW FRONTIERS, Norm Metcalf, c/o Terra House, P.O. Box 336, Berkeley 1, California. British agent Jim Groves, 29 Lathom Road, East Ham, London, E.6. Priced at 50¢ or \$1.00 for 4 in US and Canada, 2/- or 7/- for 4 in UK. Photolith.

Issue no. 3 to hand.

NEW FRONTIERS covers science fiction and related material in its pages. For instance this issue has an article by Damon Knight on what good and bad science fiction are. Another by Derleth on the Arkham House publishing venture, and a rather tongue in cheek piece on Sherlock Holmes and science fiction by Anthony Boucher. To round the issue off there are reviews of fanzines, books and films, and a very good letter column. The front and back covers are by George Barr and they are good. NEW FRONTIERS is well worth getting.

AMRA, George Scithers, Box 9006, Rosslyn, Arlington 9, Virginia, U.S.A. British agent Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Herts. Priced at 20¢ or \$1.00 for 5 in US and 1/9d or 7/- for 5. Photolith.

AMRA is well worth getting for its artwork alone. However the text is just as good. In the issues to hand (12 and 13) there is for instance an article by Fritz Leiber on a game based on his Gray Mouser and Fa'hrd stories. Then there's Anthony Boucher on the Superman/Clark Kent syndrome, tracing it back trying to find when it was that an author first decided that man to were-wolf was not the only possible transformation. There's another article on AMRA's main theme, Howard's Conan stories, this time on the ocean trade of Hyboria. To top off George Barr contributes what looks like the start of a series of full page illustrations from the Conan stories.

FILM REVIEWS (cont.)

As Werner Von Braun's life-story?  
I'm afraid it didn't convince me.

George Locke.

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER. Starring Vincent Price, Mark Damon and Myrna Fahey.

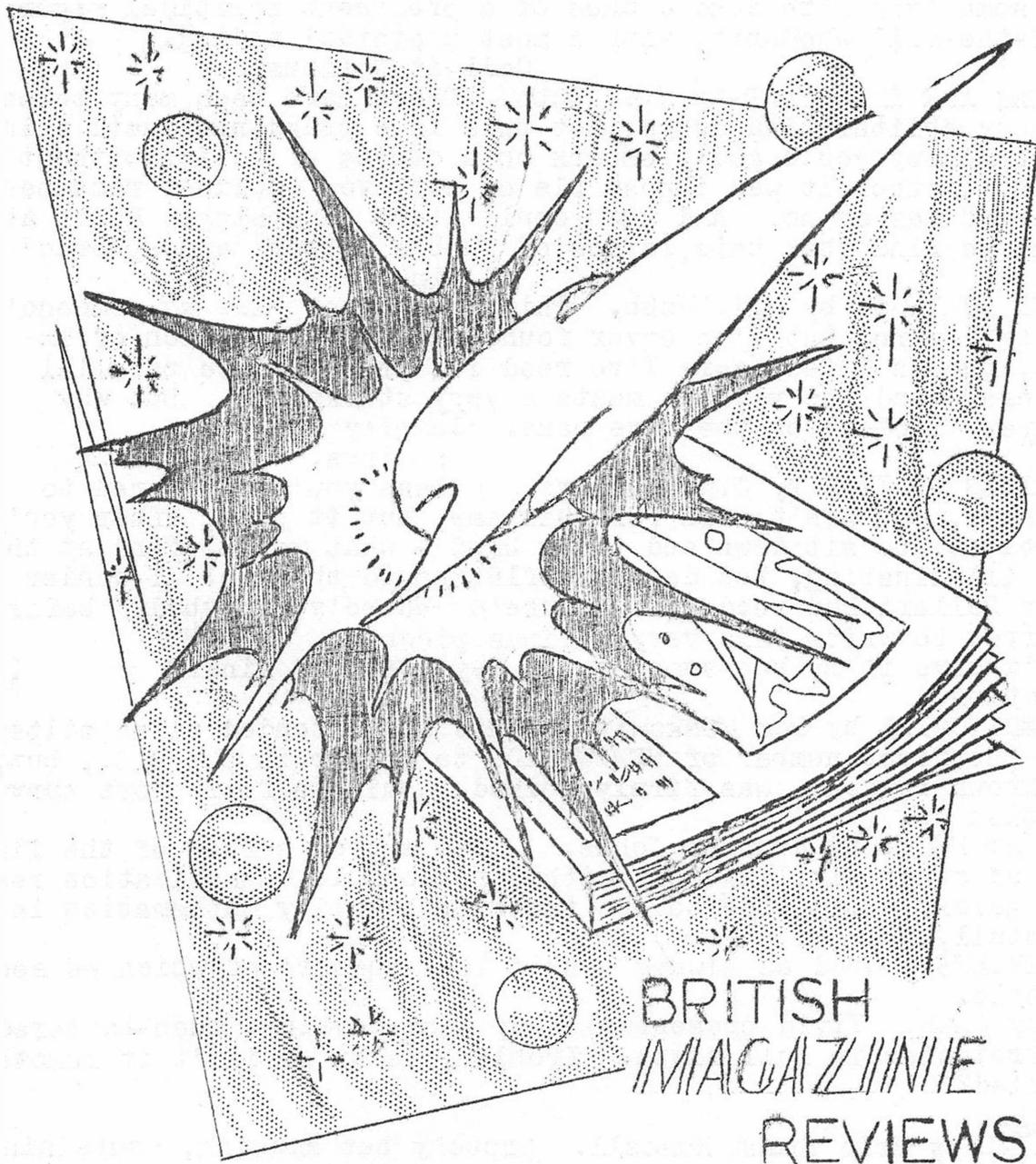
This film is a must for all weird fans. In my opinion it's the spookiest movie since "Macabre". And then some.

It is of course the story of the lunatic brother who entombs his sister alive. In true E.A. Poe style, there are creaking floors, shrieks from the vaults, groaning coffin lids, and all in colour and Cinemascope. Vincent Price portrays the brother very well while Myrna Fahey plays a very desirable sister (or at least so Mark Damon thinks).

Apart from patches of corny dialogue, it is a first class spook show, with brilliant photography and directing.

Certainly not for family viewing (it has been given an "X" cert.), it will I'm sure appeal to the ghouls amongst us.

Patrick Kearney.



NEW WORLDS.

No. 99.

EDITORIAL - "MISSING LINKS". John Carnell has slanted this for the new readers of the magazine on the other side of the Atlantic (and may there be many of 'em!) and includes some interesting details of sf distribution (or maldistribution) in the U.S.

THE APPRENTICE by James White. Adventures and misadventures of a Centaur-type humanoid pitchforked into a job in a large department store on Earth. Good, inventive, and amusing, to the point of being almost uproariously funny in places. I wish he'd be equally uninhibited in his "Sector General" stories, good as they are.

A minus.

THE EXPOSING EYE by Colin Kapp. A press reporter specialising in

"candid camera" photos is called in to find a spy camera that has taken some even more candid ones of a prominent political figure. Run-of-the-mill whodunit, with a most unethical ending.

Call it C minus.

MEMORIES ARE IMPORTANT by E.C. Tubb. There have been many tales on memory obliterating drugs, but this is a brand new one(I think!) Without memory you'd gaily embark on a course of action without worrying whether it was impossible or not; you wouldn't remember whether it was or no. And that could start something! Right at the end we find that this is one of Tubb's better "atmospheric" tales.

A minus.

THE RED DOMINOES by W.T. Webb. This is another "Are we someone's property?" yarn, but I've never found quite this version of it before, though I feel sure I've read its pretty close parallel somewhere. And the villain meets a very sticky end. But why "lamphrey" instead of the more usual "lamprey" ?

B minus.

THE VOICES OF TILE by J.G. Ballard. Unless you're prepared to think hard, you won't care for this one, but it pays, after you've finished it, to sit down and think hard - what you'll find at the end is illuminating, but deuced deflating to the ego! I wonder whether Ballard had read A.C. Clarke's "Where's Everybody" before he started to write this very curious piece.

I'd give it B, but some of you may put it D minus.

Non-Fiction.

GUEST EDITORIAL by Sam Moskowitz. This was intended as an editorial to the first number of NEW WORLDS to appear in the U.S., but, for unknown reasons, was firmly spiked. Quite a fair short survey if British sf.

ANYONE AT HOME? by Kenneth Johns. Quite a good survey of the likelihood of other civilizations within reasonable communication reach in our galaxy. I'd like to see their probability mathematics in more detail, though.

B.

BOOK REVIEWS. Good as always - this is a feature of which we see too little.

Cover by JARR. Vivid presentation of long-service, much-battered space freighter in full blast. Problem, is it or isn't it remote-controlled?

B.

No. 100.

EDITORIAL by Eric Frank Russell. Grouchy but amusing, containing a truth that all sf readers and authors might well remember: a story does not consist of what the author puts into it, but of what the reader gets out of it!

SITTING DUCK by William F. Temple. ASF had a story with this title and the same basic idea, that a space station is a sitting duck target for a guided missile. Temple takes it from a very different angle indeed. If you dislike the ending - well what are you doing to make it less likely?

B.

THE GLASS OF IARGO by Colin Kapp. A new compound of spy-story and whodunit, with a really ingenious twist ending, though I feel that the secret of the composition of the glass would have been found out sooner in real life.

A minus.

THE EMPTINESS OF SPACE by John Wyndham. Some people think the last two of the "Troon" stories weren't up to the level of the

first two - this one is certainly up to their level; indeed I'm not sure that its not the best of the lot. A.

UNFINISHED SYMPHONY by John Hynam. A very curious compound; ghost story or time travel? But fantasy, not sf. B minus.

OLD HUNDREDETH by Brian W. Aldiss. An after-the-end-of-mankind story, and better than most; I think he must have been re-reading Stapledon recently, and the tale is the better for it. It manages to have the same nostalgic beauty as A.C. Clarke's TRANSIENCE or his own OUR KIND OF KNOWLEDGE. A minus.

FREROGATIVE by John Brunner. And here is the first disappointment I've had from Brunner. The science is excellent, but I don't see people acting like this nowadays; and, under present-day law, the coroner wouldn't have needed to sit with a jury, anyhow. C.

GREATER THAN INFINITY by E.C. Tubb. We've had this one several times before - the space ship that goes off course for no apparent reason, so that its crew may be put through a test examination by some et super-intelligence. But it's well done, though the concluding intended dilemma is actually a howler in elementary theology. C plus.

COUNTERCHARM by James White. Dr. Conway, now a senior physician, has, as such, to take and retain an educator tape for a long period while he instructs a team of et surgeons in a new surgical technique. But the tape has given him not only the knowledge but also the aesthetic appreciation of the et specialist who recorded it, with distinctly embarrassing results. B.

Non-Fiction,

PROFILE of John Carnell(long overdue) with a most severe looking portrait.

THE SCIENCE FICTION ETHIC by John Rackham. As one would expect from him, this article is full of meat, well argued, and violently controversial.

FILM REVIEW. Arthur Sellings reviews H.G.W.'s "The Time Machine" more mercifully than most of the critics I've read hitherto.

Cover by LEWIS. Research space satellite over New York, good but not outstanding. B minus.

Well, Carnell has left himself a standard to live up to, hasn't he? Thank you, John, "for benefits received" for fifteen years.

No. 101.

TRIAL RUN by John Rackham. This is another find-the-weapon-to-stop-the-et-invasion story: There are some slips in its science, but the action is exciting, all its characters come to life, and the basic idea - that a fresh mind will see points that are missed by better brains living too close to the problem - is sound. B.

THE BELL OF ETHICONA by Colin Kapp. A story with a double-twist ending in which an electronic brain-washing machine is used to perpetuate a most unpleasant social system. An unpleasant but ingenious picture. B minus.

REASON by Robert J. Tilley. This is, I think, a new variation upon the take-over of the Earth by psychical invasion, under a well-devised psychological camouflage. Unfortunately the author's powers of writing are not up to bringing it convincingly to life.

A for the idea but C for its carrying-out.

WHEN IN DOUBT by Larry Maddock. The third of the "Wobley" stories, with a study of the possibilities of multi-sexual reproduction that

is nearly hilariously funny. Let's hope that Carnell soon regains touch with the author. B minus.

GREENIE GUNKER by Kenneth Bulmer. This is simply the new-chum-makes-good tale we have heard recounted about many RAF bomber crews transferred to hyperspace drive. The author of BEYOND THE SILVER SKY can do so immeasurably better than this level of mere slick competence that it amounts to a disappointment. C.

Non-Fiction.

TIME & DR. MOSSBAUER by Kenneth Johns. How synthetic radioactives have been used to give the most accurate experimental confirmation yet of the relativity time-distortion effect. A good and clear account of a theoretical conception. A.

BOOK REVIEWS - this time by Carnell as well as Flood. Details of two good new anthologies, and of a most remarkable publication which Sidgwick and Jackson have been careful NOT to label as sf - and it isn't, either!

EDITORIAL - Carnell gives himself a pat on the back for securing a brand-new serial by Sturgeon. If it's Sturgeon at his best he'll deserve it all ( and may it boost his U.S. sales); if not, the impact may always be transferred eighteen inches lower down. Meanwhile - see Psalm 40, verse 1.

Cover by LEWIS - Good, but not outstanding illustration to THE BELL OF ETHICONA.

Arthur R. Weir.

#### SCIENCE FANTASY.

No. 43.

BEYOND THE SILVER SKY by Kenneth Bulmer. Unlike his former "Green ~~Fantasy~~ Destiny" underwater novel, this novelette story reads entirely convincingly, and, indeed, suggests that it rather "took hold of" its author. It is a gripping and appealing story, but entirely maddening to the reader in that it leaves unexplained and unconcluded even more things than it tells us. It is set in an underwater realm reminiscent of Blish's "Surface Tension" and the mutated water-breathing human inhabitants are faced with a triple threat: the constant exhausting war against another type of sea-creature, the Zammu; the increasing incidence of mutation among their children; and worst of all, the slow, incessant drying-up of the seas in which they live. We are never told of the cause of any of these, nor are we even told what the Zammu are like. This story cries for a sequel or else re-working into a full length novel. A minus.

STARDUST by Alan Lindsey. This, for once, is a poem, but, unfortunately, in a monotonous clank-foot metre, though with an interesting rhyme-scheme. But the story has been often told before and could have been better handled in prose. Still, the effort was worth the making. C plus.

THE LAST WORLD OF MR. GODDARD by J.G. Ballard. This story of a man who played God to a small-town community starts well, but seems to finish in the middle because the author could not think of any possible way to go on with it. I've read others like it, some better, some worse. C.

EXPECTATION by Richard Graham. This is the question of how far heredity may or may not affect, not our lives, but our deaths -

and not necessarily natural deaths, either. Meat, with a lovely understated twist punchline at the end. B minus.

### Articles.

STUDIES IN SCIENCE FICTION No.8, JULES VERNE by Sam Moskowitz. This is better than some of Moskowitz' essays in this series have recently been, though he seems only to be familiar with Verne's better known works, since such excellent, but less familiar works as "The Floating Island" or "The City of Steel" are not mentioned. After nine pages of Verne he loses interest and goes off on the subject of some of his markedly lesser U.S. imitators and the early days of AMAZING STORIES for three pages more. Call it C plus.

THE FIRST DECADE by Kenneth Johns. This is a survey and assessment of the first ten years of my own favourite magazine, SCIENCE FANTASY, which richly deserves it. It is a pity that the joint authors go out of their way to perpetuate the "grim, tough, and realistic" tradition about Ted Tubb, without calling attention to the fact that not only has he contributed more stories to SCIENCE FANTASY than any other single author (twenty-two in all) but that these include such delicate and "atmospheric" tales as THE LAST DAY OF SUMMER, A FINE DAY FOR DYING, THE BELLS OF ACHERON and THE WINDOW. Ted Tubb can write several kinds of fiction. B minus

Cover by LEWIS: and for once it's something very like a masterpiece! What I described as his "green-grey purple-pink" humans are exactly in place in this subaqueous scene, while the scene itself has obviously appealed to his sense of the dramatic. A.

No. 44 (Special "Weird-Story" Issue).

ALL THE DEVILS IN HELL by John Brunner. Girl sells her soul to the powers of darkness for the gift of being able to attract any man and to bring misfortune on anyone of whom she is jealous. Hackneyed theme, relieved by excellent character drawing among minor figures, and an interesting account of "psychosomatic" illness.

B minus.

THE BLACK CAT'S PAW by John Rackham. Unevenly-written black magic tale, rather of the style of Guy Boothby, the fantasist of the early 1900's. The stainless and unbelievably beautiful "pure vessel" heroine has been used too often to be credible! The title as it stands makes no sense, since there is no cat in the story, which is about a West Indian who is used as a tool by a master of Black Magic.

C plus.

THE PAINTER by T.B. Swann. How the famous XV-th-century painter of demons (see for instance his "Dives in Hell" in the National Gallery) Hieronymous Bosch, may have got his inspiration. Suffers from the author's being unable to make up his mind how far to be archaic, and in what style - always a difficult point in "historical" tales. Otherwise good.

B.

STUDIES IN SCIENCE FICTION No. 9: H.P. LOVECRAFT by Sam Moskowitz. For once the author has kept his account to a reasonable length and refrained from divagating after side issues. But it is not enough for him that Lovecraft is one of the great masters of fantasy, ranking with Machen, Blackwood or Dunsany, and also the author of probably the best "horror" sf story ever written - THE COLOUR OUT OF SPACE - and a half-dozen more minor sf masterpieces, such as COOL AIR. He must also assert that Lovecraft was more a writer of science fiction than of fantasy. However sincerely he

may hold this opinion, it does not entitle him to be deliberately dishonest in the presentation of his evidence, in such passages as, for example:

"With the excision of a few incantations, THE DUNWICH HORROR, which fundamentally deals with the problems of the adjustment of Wilbur Whateley, offspring of a creature from outer space who has mated with an idiot human girl, becomes science fiction."

This is nonsense, since the Dunwich Horror was evoked only by the "incantations" so cavalierly dismissed, and could only be destroyed by them, after all "scientific" means had proved useless. The fundamental theme here is the invasion and conquest of Earth by transdimensional forces of evil. Wilbur Whateley is killed two-thirds of the way through the tale, and its main climax and most important action occur after his death.

Moskowitz further tries to make his point by describing in detail some of the stories whose contents are of sf type, while such magnificently "atmospheric" fantasy tales as THE CATS OF ULTHAR or CELEPHAIS are merely named. A typical "slant" is that the great 48,000 word DREAM QUEST OF UMINOMN KADATH, which was not only one of Lovecraft's most magnificent fantasies, but which was also the final connecting link between his several fantasy myth-worlds, is not mentioned at all.

It is a fair account of Lovecraft's life, and, with the above distortions and omissions a moderately good account of his work, but Moskowitz has tried to present Lovecraft from a point of view the falsity of which is shown by the final quotation from Lovecraft's own writing:

"Since marvel tales cannot be true to events...they must shift towards...moods wherein the human spirit seeks...escape from the galling tyranny of time space and natural laws." B minus.

Cover by JARR. Not one of his best. In the background mountains, in the middle distance a "City of Fairy Towers". In the foreground the magenta faced e-t entity whose acquaintance we made on the cover of No. 39 is inspecting a bicycle - Heaven knows what for!

A.R. Weir.

## SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES.

### No. 17.

Cover by JARR. Quite a good cover this, illustrating a planetary landscape with ornate fantasy-type buildings.

EARTH'S LONG SHADOW by Ken Bulmer. This is set in the far distant future when Earth is cut off (and presumed destroyed) from the rest of the galaxy by the 'Blight', an area completely depopulated of stars. In this part of the galaxy Earth is just a legend. The whole area is divided into a large number of federations all ready and eager to fight, where a traveller is judged by the size of his home federation and is treated accordingly. Into this setup comes Dave Caradine, hiding under the name of 'John Carter', running away from his responsibilities. How he finally realises that there's nowhere far enough to run, especially for a man accustomed to leading and ruling an empire, and needed in that capacity, makes an interesting piece of space opera.

TRANSMAT by Ian Wright. The matter transmitter was the best way to move goods from star system to star system, unfortunately every

so often a consignment would be transmitted but not received. This was a drawback until someone spotted that it happened regularly, so they made sure that that particular consignment was something valueless, like steel bars. Then those consignments started to come back! A good humorous piece of writing.

No. 18.

Cover by LEWIS. A not very inspiring piece of work illustrating the lead story.

THE LONELY PATH by John Ashton. This is the story of a 'find' made by an expedition to Mars. Detected by the satellites around Earth it was a Tower, three thousand feet high (diameter unspecified) with later evidence that it extends as far down into the rock as it towers above it, and that at the time of 'erection' only the top few feet were above ground. There are niches every so often up it, each one an entrance openable only by intelligent beings. A party of men enter and explore it, one disappears, meets the builders and learns the reason for it. This is a story on the same theme as Clarke's PYRAMID, but far better. Highly recommended.

THE AZTEC PLAN by Ken Bulmer. Another episode in the triangular war between Takkat, Shurilala and Earth. A competent potboiler this, with methodical, logical, and hence stupid, intelligence agents on their side and quick witted heroes on ours.

UMBRELLA IN THE SKY by E.C. Tubb. An interesting study of people under stress, and an ingenious answer to a minor solar flare.

J.A.G.

THE REPRINT MAGAZINES.

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION.

October 1960.

This issue of F&SF offers six stories which, on looking back, did not live up to the expectations derived from the line up on the contents page. Not that there were any really bad stories, but after most of them I was left with a sense of loss - loss in that I felt that the author did not get the most out of a reasonable idea.

Take, for instance, THE GAME OF FIVE by Gordon Dickson. Here was a story that I tried very hard to like. The basic plot was, admittedly, an old one, but one that's still got a lot of life in it yet. We have Homo Sapiens setting up trade relations on alien planets. They hit a snag on one that they have recently come into contact with (but naturally), and the chief human representative on said planet gets help from Earth. It arrives in the form of a standard type hero who proceeds to sort things out. We also have the usual dumb blonde, and a complete set of humanoid aliens. The whole thing could have taken place in Outer Mongolia for all the originality it had, and would probably have made a better story if it had. Hack work, Mr Dickson, and it could have been such a romp.

I had very similar reactions to THE GILASHRIKES by Charles Finney. The author moralises a bit in telling us what may happen when you cross a Gila monster with a shrike, but five pages was much too short to do other than barely state a number of incidents. An obvious ending puts the seal on this one.

To brighten things up a bit we have Will Worthington's PLENITUDE. This was a first class example of how a short story

should be written. The story tells of an episode in the life of a family who have rebelled against the ultimate in home entertainment. Worthington makes his characters into real people as he gives us his idea of what this ultimate will be, and its effects on the lives of those who go along with it, and those who don't. My only complaint is that this wasn't a full length novel.

Miriam Allen de Ford developed quite a good little horror story in *THE MONSTER*. Unfortunately, the ending wasn't all it could have been and left me with a vague uneasiness instead of the state of shock that I expect from my horror stories.

The most that can be said for Howard Fast's *THE MARTIAN SHOPS* was that it presented an original reason for having world peace, and an original gimmick to get it. The writing was adequate, the characterisation virtually nil, and the plausibility won't stand much scrutinising, apart from this it wasn't too bad.

This month's lead story is *THE GOLDEN BUGS* by Cliff Simak. In this we are told of the turn of events when a house is taken over by alien insects. Simak writes well, as usual, develops the plot smoothly, and rounds the thing off logically. However a great deal of the effect was lost, for me, by the characters unreal reactions to some odd incidents; eg they come down in the middle of the night to find the refrigerator on the living room carpet, but all the woman thinks about is that her carpet will be ruined. Apart from this it's worth reading as long as you don't expect Simak at his best.

#### November.

There are eight stories this time, and as an added attraction F&SF have departed from their usual policy and given us some good heading illustrations, not many but enough to make it interesting.

This issue starts off with Stephen Barr's *OH, I'LL TAKE THE HIGH ROAD*. It is the story of a mathematician who develops a theory that will make space-ships obsolete, as all that is necessary is that you look at a diagram, and if you understand it you're on another planet. Of course you don't know where, but you're there anyway. Our hero and his true love attempt to prove his theory and this lands him in parts unknown, with no sight of the girl. He starts looking for her and we are given a sickening account of his emotional agony, until he finds his true love. After starting quite well this piece gets into a well-worn rut and grinds along to a very obvious conclusion. I don't suppose I'll ever know why this wasn't published in some woman's weekly, but I wish it had been.

*THE BURNING* by Theodore Cogswell is very different. It is not so much a story as an episode concerning some future, gruesome matriarchy, in which on certain days someone is burned alive, for some unspecified reason. This story tells of one particular Burning and how the story teller got out from under. Here we have five pages in which every word counts.

In *THINGS* Zenna Henderson gives us the old plot of Earthmen bringing death and destruction wherever they go, no matter what their intentions. This story has nothing to commend it.

We have aliens again, in Avram Davidson's *FAIR TRADE*, but this time they are visiting us. They have stopped at a homely little place where they are not treated as aliens usually are, but

are invited to the annual moonshine-drinking session. Even though they don't know the language they still manage to have themselves a ball, so when they leave the next morning they give their host a run-on-anything whiskey-still in order to show their appreciation. The gimmick in this one is that they take away with them some article which is never actually divulged, although a great deal of implication is used to let us know what it is. I'm sorry to say that, although this was never in any way a great story, it was a pleasant little effort spoiled by this unnecessary gimmick.

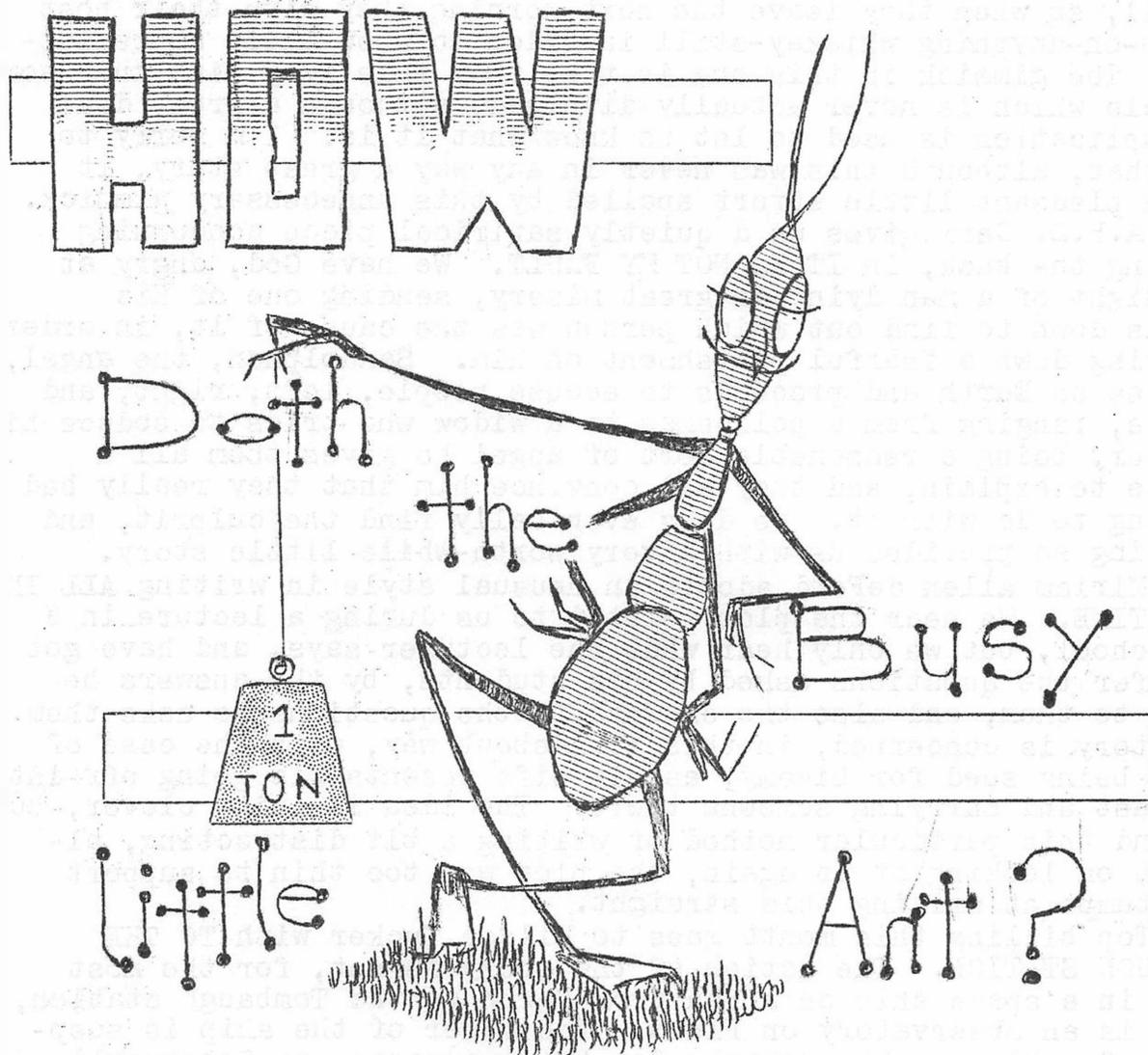
A.H.Z. Carr gives us a quietly satirical piece concerning passing the buck, in *IT IS NOT MY FAULT*. We have God, angry at the sight of a man dying in great misery, sending one of His angels down to find out which person was the cause of it, in order to bring down a fearful punishment on him. Sandolphon, the angel, arrives on Earth and proceeds to accuse people, left, right, and centre, ranging from a policeman to a widow who tries to seduce him. However, being a reasonable sort of angel he gives them all a chance to explain, and they all convince him that they really had nothing to do with it. He does eventually find the culprit, and in doing so provides us with a very worth-while little story.

Miriam Allen deFord adopts an unusual style in writing *ALL IN GOOD TIME*. We hear the plot related to us during a lecture in a Law school, but we only hear what the lecturer says, and have got to infer the questions asked by his students, by the answers he gives to them, and also the answers to the questions he asks them. The story is concerned, in this roundabout way, with the case of a man being sued for bigamy, as his wife resents his going off into the past and marrying someone there. The idea is quite clever, but I found this particular method of writing a bit distracting, although on looking at it again, the plot was too thin to support an attempt at writing this straight.

Top billing this month goes to Wilson Tucker with *TO THE TOMBAUGH STATION*. The action of the story is set, for the most part, in a space ship on a run from Earth to the Tombaugh station, which is an observatory on Pluto. The owner of the ship is suspected of murdering his partner for the insurance, so Interworld Insurance Co. fix it that Kate Bristol is the only passenger on the ship. It's her job to find out whether he did it or not. While unfolding the plot Tucker manages, as usual, to include the names of some sf fans, and this gives added interest to those people who understand the references, but even for those who don't the story moves along pretty well. Tucker has told us elsewhere that the version to appear in *F&SF* was drastically cut from the version that he originally wrote. Unfortunately this fact shows through to quite an extent, giving the effect that *TO THE TOMBAUGH STATION* always promises to be a really great story, but never quite makes it. That's not to say that it is bad, it isn't, it's just that it never becomes as good as you feel it should. Let's hope he publishes *TO THE TOMBAUGH STATION* in full - here's one who will buy it.

Joe Patrizio.

FANZINE REPRINT.



by PAUL ENEVER.

(from HOW No. 5)

We watched this ant spellbound. At the door he had picked up a tiny scrap of some antish delicacy and was carrying it determinedly homeward. For the first six feet or so his intelligence was never called into account. After that, however, he came onto some rough unswept concrete and it was then that things got interesting.

I said that it was a tiny scrap of food, but I was thinking in human terms. Antwise it was a whole beef carcass, bigger and at least twice heavier than Ant himself. Still, he had a good grip on it - presumably with his mandibles, though he was never still long enough for us to determine - and, whenever the way was clear he went rapidly ahead. But, as I have said, there were obstacles to be overcome; pebbles and dead leaves and odd stalks of grass which would have been boulders and tree trunks to human beings.

Some he detoured. What decided him we could not tell. Why he should go round one small stone and over the next exactly similar one is a matter for ant psychologists to argue about. It seemed obvious that he was not following some mysteriously laid trail, because at least a score of other ants crossed and recrossed it ahead of him, and that would have confused even a full-blooded bloodhound.

Nevertheless he did not falter. Although he tacked a bit every now and then his general direction never varied and we were fascinated by his porterage technique. Sometimes he would come to a square-faced pebble which meant a vertical climb. Standing erect, he was in danger of being toppled over by his burden - indeed he was the first time - but he soon learned. He went up backward and pulled his booty up after him.

It took him eight minutes to cross the concrete and we imagined that the edge of a small flower border was his objective. It wasn't. He got over the raised edge, a climb of at least three inches, and did not even stop to survey the terrain ahead. Perhaps he was afraid to. Perhaps even his indomitable anthood would have blanched if he had known exactly what was before him.

I'd just hoed that border, which made it, antishly speaking, a bulldozed jungle. The earth was torn and tormented into huge gullies and hills, tree-trunks (alias weed roots) lay piled in wild confusion and such rare patches of soil as were clear were so loose and friable they must have resembled the rockier sections of Brighton beach.

Ant was not worried for one minute. Off he went in a twisting, devious course, now rearing up on his end over a sand grain, now plunging head first into some yawning chasm, and all the time his carcass of beef waved and twitched triumphantly before him. True, he covered three times the distance he need have done. He zigzagged when he could have gone straight and struggled to go under where it would have been simple to go round, but he kept going.

We were so fascinated that we lost count of time. I got lumbago from squatting so long, but he was half-way across the border and I just couldn't leave him. Sometimes we lost sight of him - he was a black ant on black soil - but always spotted his burden easily enough. It appeared to be travelling of itself, in a series of fiendish jerks and twitches.

Maybe a hundred other ants were scurrying around him, all seemingly unaware of his existence. Not one of them offered to lend a mandible - if, indeed, he would have accepted. I somehow knew he was too independent. However, their presence argued that the nest was nearby and we deduced that it lay beneath a large piece of rockwork at the end of the border. But now, a mere yard from his goal, Ant almost gave up. It was my fault really, though I meant well.

A part-buried stone had him temporarily hornswoggled. He tried burrowing and rejected that. A concavity in the face of the stone prevented him from employing his upside-down technique and then, to crown it, his beef carcass had gone and got itself wedged between two crumbs of soil. I could almost hear him cursing. At last, with a furious wrench he freed his booty and had another

go at surmounting the stone.

It was, too much for me. Eager to help, I reached down and plucked the pebble out of his way. Now I ask you, what would Hilary have done if God had reached down and whipped Mount Everest away just as he was about to climb it?

Ant did nothing. He froze. He just couldn't believe whatever senses had informed him that the stone was gone. Perhaps he imagined that it was about to fall back on him, and was crouching with metaphorical hands over hypothetical ears, waiting for the crash.

A full minute he waited. Then his courage reasserted itself, he lifted his burden again (for he had never let go of it, only lain flat with it held before him like a dog guarding a very dinosaur of a bone) and shot through the gap left by the vanished pebble. He reached the rockwork without further mishap and disappeared into a crevice at its foot.

In human terms he had carried a carcass of beef just half-a-mile over the sort of country we find only in the Fell district. Watching him, I was as exhausted as if I had done it..... And incidentally, Lord knows how much further he really went. I moved that piece of rock an hour later and there was no sign of an ant-nest below it. It was just an underground route to him.

THE INGROWN continued.

injection of fresh blood will always tend to revive an ingrown organism. If they kicked Gold out of Galaxy, nothing but good could accrue. FBSF should look to its future with at least an eye to reconsidering the true worth of Robert Mills.

There is a perfect example of the efficacy of this ruthless method of dealing with the problem: Amazing.

Yes, the same Amazing which first pointed out the dangers of specialised magazines. The same Amazing which went down the drain tragically at least twice - with Gernsback and with Ray Palmer and Richard S. Shaver. The same Amazing which, until 1959, was the most appalling purveyor of crud that you could imagine. The Amazing which threw out Paul Fairman, and brought in a face fresh to all of us - Cele Goldsmith. Goldsmith, who is currently providing some of the best and varied fantasy and science fiction on the market.

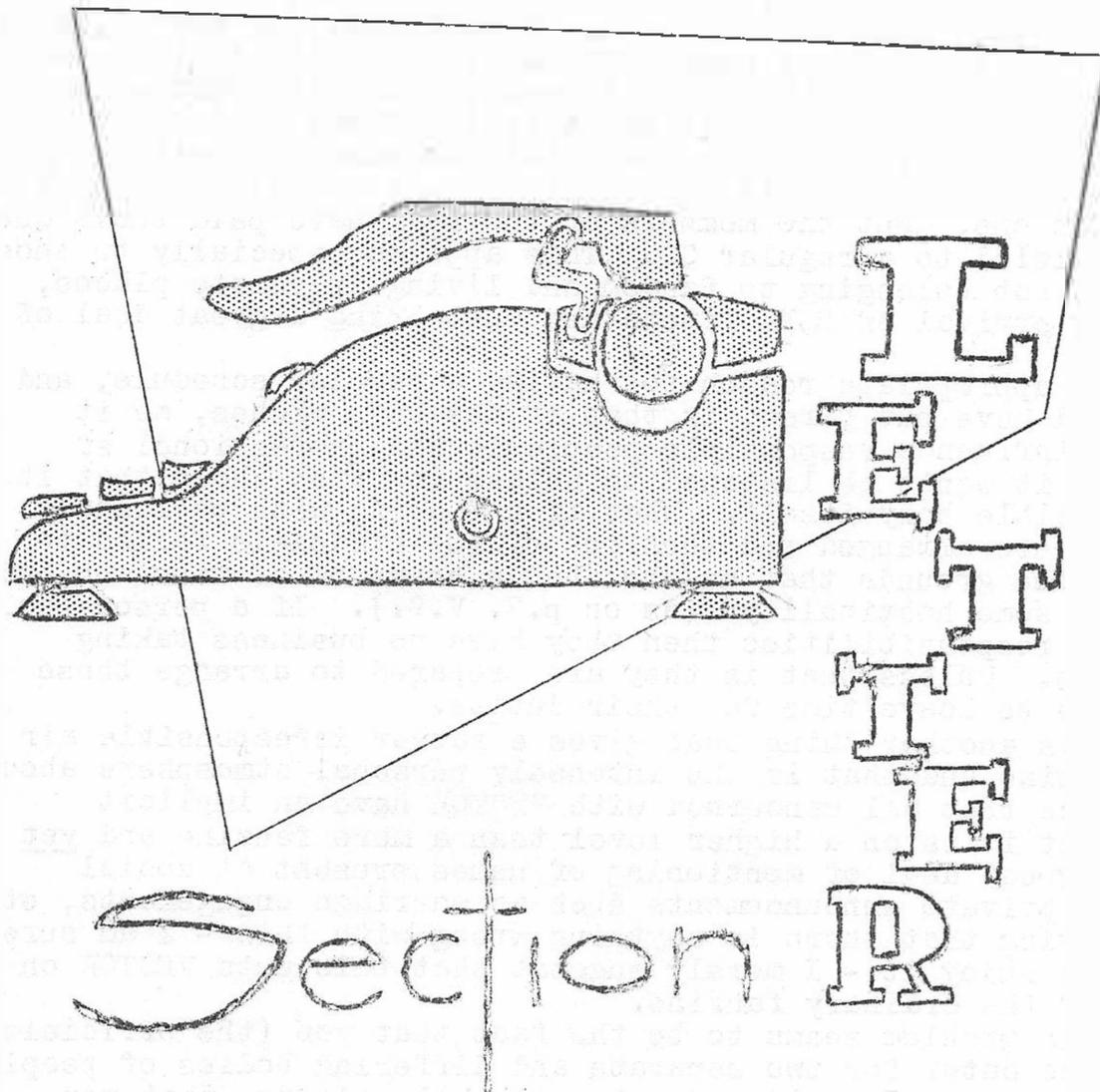
A faint glimmer of hope - a slender straw - but let us all cling to it.

THOMAS continued.

rotating sphere which was situated on the top of the humped shape. The facade of the 'Crown and Anchor' dissolved in a cloud of fine debris.

Thomas paused, but moved on as a small door slide open in the side of the machine. A vague shape glided forth and confronted poor Thomas.

"Good morning, uncle," purred poor Thomas, "Why is it that you are four milliyears early?"



Daphne Buckmaster, 8 Buchanan Street, Kirkcudbright, Scotland.

Regarding covers, it always seems to me that an official organ should have a plain cover or at least a very simple one. That rocket on No. 9. would have looked striking if it hadn't had that muddly background behind it. As for the cover of No. 8., it looks like a meaningless doodle - Atom's better when he sticks to cartoons and **BEF**-humour. You imply somewhere inside the magazine that you're finding it difficult to get artwork for the cover; why not, then, get a good design and stick to it? That rocket, for instance, would do as a permanent symbol. It would also save a lot of work.

I have one serious criticism to make and that came to me almost as soon as I started reading the two latest issues of **VECTOR**. In both there are apologies for lateness of publication, of both the **OO** and the Newsletter. The reasons given (by Ella) are that the officials are only doing it as a spare time job, that they have lots of private correspondence to attend to and that

they have family commitments and social engagements to deal with. Now I submit that this is not the right attitude. If anyone takes on an official job for any organisation, it is their duty to the members to put that job before their own private circumstances (with the exception of illness, of course). There is nothing wrong with an ordinary fanzine being late because the editor usually does not promise his readers a regular schedule and they don't expect one. But the members of the BSFA have paid their dues and are entitled to a regular OO. This applies especially to those sf readers, not belonging to fandom and living in remote places, to whom the arrival of BSFA literature must bring a great deal of pleasure.

A more appropriate reason for having a regular schedule, and one I should have put first, is that if the BSFA wishes, as it states, to influence responsible people in the professional sf world, then it won't be listened to unless it first shows that it is a responsible body itself. What if a meeting with publishers or editors were arranged and then one of the officials failed to turn up on the grounds that he/she "had a houseful of fans who had to be shown some hospitality" (as on p.7. V.9.). If a person has these other responsibilities then they have no business taking on an office. Unless that is they are prepared to arrange these other things to leave time for their duties.

There is another thing that gives a rather irresponsible air to the magazine and that is the intensely personal atmosphere about it. I notice that all concerned with VECTOR have an implicit attitude that it is on a higher level than a mere fanzine and yet there is a great deal of mentioning of names present at social gatherings, private announcements such as marriage engagements, etc. I am not saying that there is anything wrong with this - I am sure many readers enjoy it - I merely suggest that this puts VECTOR on the level of the ordinary fanzine.

The main problem seems to be the fact that you (the officials) are trying to cater for two separate and differing bodies of people, fans and non-fans. I would suggest, with all modesty, that you cannot do both in one magazine. By taking up space mentioning all the names who've visited London in the last quarter, you will be alienating the serious sf reader who is only interested in reviews of books and sf discussions. On the other hand, the more fannish types will feel that the sf part is dull. This still leaves you, of course, with the "In-betweens", but I cannot feel that a society which is trying to advance in two opposite directions at once has a very promising future. Especially as the editors and publishers in the professional sf field have never made any secret of the fact that they do not want or need any contact with fans, as such. It is my belief, therefore, that you will either have to decide that you are going to be a reputable organisation to encourage a serious and impersonal interest in the sf field or that you are an organisation for recruiting sf readers into the ranks of fandom. And if you want to do the first, you will need a more formal attitude if you want to be taken seriously; for instance the use of the officials' Christian names, and even nicknames, in print, does not look very responsible.

I'm sorry if this letter seems to have been full of harsh criticism and I hope you will take it as being quite impersonal.

I have no criticism of the sf articles and the discussions in the letter columns which are all of good quality. It is merely the overall attitude which I feel needs taking a good look at.

\*( \* No offence taken naturally, but you've raised some very interesting points. All that you've said would be true if the BSFA was, or could be, a professional organisation. But it isn't and can't be so. The reason is that the BSFA was intended to bring together sf fans (using that term in its generally accepted sense) and being an sf fan is a hobby not a profession. The BSFA is therefore a hobby organisation and strictly amateur. In a professional organisation the official posts are filled by full time workers who can give adequate time to the work. In an amateur organisation however all the work is done by volunteers in their spare time. The only people likely to volunteer for BSFA posts are fans, since they have the contacts and the experience and so fandom will always have a sizable foothold in the organisation. I'd like to see some of the reader members taking a more active part but I'll be very surprised if they do. I don't think that anything we do will affect the professionals much but its worth trying. I like editing VECTOR, but not to the extent that I'd subordinate everything else to it.)\*

Ken Slater, 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs.

Thanks for VECTOR 9, to hand yesterday. I shouldn't be writing you a letter of comment - I never do - but my schedule has been upset by a visit (unexpected) of a B.B.C. rep complete with tape recorder to do an item for the VHF East Anglia "Weekly Magazine". He arrived at 2 p.m., and said he'd like an item to run about a minute and a half, question and answer, about sf. Well, I should have known what to expect from the experience of watching 'em at work at the World Con in London....it took an hour and a half. The first try, after we'd sorted out some suitable questions and I'd more or less got warmed up to spontaneous answers, was fooled by the fact that we'd not locked the shop door, and the warning bell rang in the middle of things. The second try was overloaded with echoes from the part of the room where I was sitting. The third try...well...I'd gotten myself so confused I was gabbling about August Derleth having published Van Vogt's Lensman stories in Samothrace.

Thank the lord my steam radio doesn't accept VHF, and so I'll never be able to hear the abortive results.....

But anyway, the thing so unsettled me that I've actually sat down and read a novel without stopping, and now I'm writing a letter to you (and VECTOR) instead of getting on with some of the orders. And it is only seven in the evening, too!

The cover was an improvement over 8's. Atom is best at his humour work, I think. Eddie Jones' effort looks cleaner, or something, to me. I can see the point of Atom's "Spaceship and the Sword" artwork, whilst I can't adduce any ulterior meaning from the Eddie artwork. (Unless perhaps Saturn from its ninth moon?).

I'm very amused by your serious acceptance of the Hieronymous machine on the one hand, and the rejection of the Flying Saucer Cultists on the other. So far as I can trace, the "psi" machines, or psionic machines if you prefer, stem by round-about routes from the group of cults dealing in "metaphysics", such as Madame

Blavatsky's Theosophists with their Atlantean civilizations of mind-powered machines. They belong in the same group as the diagnostic machines, and in my experience of meeting the exponents of the various arts, there seems to be little to choose between such groups and the branches of the UFO cults of which you have had that recent experience. The main point I note is that the fan-experimenter or researcher (be he interested in UFO or psionics) is usually considerably more reserved in his activity, his judgement, and his declaration of faith (if any) than the cultist. This is a point - and a very big one - in favour of the fan. He is willing to be convinced, but.....

Actually, I look on UFO-ology and psionics, radiesthesia and such like things, when they reach the cult stage (as the one you describe) as the modern equivalent of spiritualism and mediums and all that mystical nonsense.

I'm not certain of Ella's proposal. I don't quite see the point - from my understanding the Library is a more-or-less self-contained unit, operating on something like benevolent dictatorial lines. (A sort of government I can find favourable, provided the populace have the right to sack the dictator when he is no longer benevolent). Can this be enlarged upon...the why and wherefore explained?

Magazine reviews - Look, Doc, you are getting like me. You have read so much of the stuff that you don't like any of it any more. None of it is 'fresh' (incidentally, the idea in Deities, Inc. I am reasonably certain was used in a modified form at least once by Edmond Hamilton, and the business of finding new uses for old gods almost got itself overworked in UFFOUM) and very little approaches the standard we wish. The fault, I fear, lies in us and not in our authors (pardon the liberty). So please lower your aim (if not your standard) and be just a little more encouraging.

Incidentally, Mr. Editor, I wish you would make all your reviewers give up this rating racket. I have always flatly refused to do it; none of us are literary critics - few of us are even competent to write reviews - and I feel it an imposition to 'grade' a story. Give some idea of the plot, say how you like it or don't like it and why, but please don't award marks as if the authors are sitting some damned examination. When I wrote my opinions of books for Peter Hamilton, the star gradings he used to attach were always his - not mine. From a literary standpoint and from the viewpoint of most of the reviewing done in VECTOR, anything written by ERB would qualify for C-. But I can assure you that ERB is still a very good seller, and extremely popular....

Dear Doc (I ain't pickin' on ya, feller, you just keep getting in my way), I'm suprised at you. After all the thought I went to to invent, dream or think-up a pantechnicon expression to convey my meaning without labeling any particular one of the Lovecraft school, you have to pedantically jump on me! I played around with composites like "Cthulathotep", "Yug Athothoth", "Nyarlathlhu" and sundry other tongue tangling terrors until I decided on "Yog Shuggoth" which is at least pronouncable and has a familiar ring without being a definite...er....character from one of the cycle of stories started by HPL and supported and continued by Derleth, Clark Ashton Smith, Frank Belknap Long and the other less well

known writers of that group.

Then you come along and rap me on the knuckles. Ah, the shame and pity of it. You are hereby consigned to spend the next aeon under the sickly light of primal Sarkomand's nocturnal sky, in the company of Pickman and a score of other weeping ghouls, who shall glibber at you unendingly. Unless, of course, you can immediately state to which story I have made reference, and thus shield yourself in the armour of knowledge.

\*(The difference in my attitudes to the psi and UFO boys does look odd I suppose, but it's mainly due to the fact that the Hieronymous machine can be built and tested by anyone, whereas it takes a very clever type to grab a handful of cultist ideas and put them under the microscope. My criterion of the investigation-worthiness of borderline ideas is the extent to which they can be proved or disproved by physical experiment, whether or no they seem reasonable. Heck, I'll even smile at Campbell and his Dean Drive! At least you could build one and try it out. If one of these cultists was prepared to submit his ideas to a logical analysis then I'm prepared to listen, if not then I've better things to occupy my time.

Re that proposal - I believe the idea is that since Peter does so much for the Association he should have some sort of say in the running of it (over and above that he has as a member). I'll pass your question on to Ella for more comments.

Ratings - Um, you have a point there. It seems to be the custom and I use it myself mainly because I think in terms of definite scales usually, no matter what the subject. What the reviewers do is, of course, their own affair (within limits). As for ERB - you're probably right, but I can't stand him myself. I wonder why he's so popular? There's not half as much colour and action in his works as there is in Howard's Conan stories, or even a good historical novel. Popular appeal does not necessarily indicate literary worth.

Over to you Doc! \*)

Peter Mabey, 10 Wellington Square, Cheltenham, Glos.

V9 - first of all, Eddie Jones has done the best cover I've seen so far on the mag., I hope you can persuade him to do more! Next, matters raised in your editorial: it certainly does seem to be true that 'Sexy SF' is getting worse. In the old days the covers used to be pretty lurid - I'm thinking of the period up to 5 to 10 years back, but the stories were rather innocuous. (For an account of this phase, see 'Girls for the Slime God' by W. Knoles in the November "Playboy" - with some very good parodies, almost pastiches, of typical covers by Bill Elder.)

Next subject: the SFBC - I've been a member since it started, and agree that it's fallen off rather. It seems to me that there's been a change of policy - originally they got the best, regardless of date, that they could: now the books seem to be the most recent available fairly cheaply. Hence the choice often seems to duplicate paperback reprints - not to mention the 'Neon Halo'! Still, 'The Lord of the Rings' is just coming out as an extra which is some sort of consolation. The only reason that I continue to keep on with the thing is that I'm in a small syndicate at work which gets the magazines published, plus the SFBC books: we put in 4d per week,

out of which these are paid for, and pass them around. Hence I'll continue to be a member till most of our group decide that it's not worth having the SFBC, and although several of them are fed up with it, we haven't reached that state yet. (To anticipate your query - I've not persuaded any of them to join the BSFA yet: in fact, I've only got two into the CSFC!)

Our results with our psionics machines are similar to the ones Ken Cheslin reports: consistent, generally, for any person who gets results; but totally inconsistent for different people.

The review columns are good, but don't need comment - I see you've got another reviewer, Tom Heatley, an unfamiliar name (or just a pseudonym? - I've not got a list of members here, so haven't checked on him) - I'd like to see more by him, to 'get to know' him better.

One item in the letters prompts me to put forward a suggestion - though I admit that it would be pretty hard to comply with - John McGovern wants to know about 'CF': this makes me realise that probably very few members know anything about the history of organised fandom in this country. What's needed is a UK counterpart of 'The Immortal Storm' - we won't be able to find a Moskowitz who knows it all mainly from personal experience - but it should be possible to piece the story together. Certainly I'd like to know more about the first BSFA, the second BSFA, the BSFS, the Cosmos Club and so on. I came into the picture near the last days of CF, and when the BFL was the only functioning remnant of the BSFS. An appeal for accounts of old-time fandom might prove successful, and could be very interesting.

\*(Tom Heatley is, as far as I know, a real person. He's one of the reviewers we got by the appeal made some time ago in Ken Slater's catalogue.

This history idea is a good one, even if we can't write the history we can at least preserve some of the essential information which is otherwise going to disappear with the older fans as they leave fandom. You seem to have a better idea of the sequence than I have, perhaps you could commit it to paper, with dates where possible, and add any names that you associate with various events and let me have it. This might be worth printing in itself and even if not it would give me some names of people whom I could approach with requests for information.)\*  
Angus Watt, 47 Stanton Road, Luton, Beds.

I was surprised to see the paragraph in your editorial on the Science Fiction Book Club stating that a number of BSFA members have left the club because of its choice in books. When, last year, I found that I had read the next six months range of books before, I asked them to change my quota and let me have three books from the past titles in their place, and they did this for me. I found that selection quite satisfactory and have no complaints.

This issue of VECTOR is the best that I have had yet. The article by Doc Weir on compiling an index was interesting and helpful. The book reviews are the weakest point. It would be much better to have an extended article like Ken Slater's "General Chunterings", which is undoubtedly the best article in the magazine.

Ken Cheslin, Levey Farm Road, Stourbridge, Worcs.

I am at present a member of the SFBC though I doubt that I'll renew when my present credit runs out, reason being, of course, this very thing, so many of the books are reprints of too recent stories. I'd like to see some of the out of print books, the ones that are a devil to get hold of now, and/or (preferably and) books of the type you specify in this editorial.

Psi....the main trouble of course is that there just isn't enough information yet to make any sort of rules/regs/laws of psi.

A Letter from Joe....one thing that I think keeps a fair number of new BSFA members from becoming fans is that they are what MAD would call "Look! we're different" conformists..ie they read, and probably somehow enjoy sf while at the same time nursing the idea that they are somehow better than the "masses" and have "broad mental horizons" and like that. You probably know the deadly serious type that I mean. OK sf should make you think but take time off occasionally from your devotion to sf to stand aside and take a good look at it, and laugh at it if need be, or even to administer a good swift kick if it warrants that too. It's this deadly serious snobbishness that causes a proportion of the new could-be-fen to be contemptuous of fandom and think of it as so much childishness.

Jim Linwood, 10 Meadow Cotts., Ketherfield, Notts.

I'm suprised that you should lump the anti-bomb campaign together with anti-vice and gambling stuffed-shirts, and then justify your statements by quoting Heinlein on "human nature". The CND is composed mainly of people who previously haven't battered an eyelid at all sorts of atrocities committed in the name of "human nature", who have banded together to make people realize that they are in possession of enough power to destroy themselves, and survival is also a part of "human nature" y'know!

I think your comments on the letters are over long and in most cases unnecessary. I get the impression that you're trying to pick arguments with the letter-writers.

\*( \* To take your second point first, I'm doing my best to encourage discussions/arguments about various subjects among the members. This CND subject is one about which I feel fairly strongly, so I naturally drag it in where I can. I lumped them with the anti-vice and gambling set mainly because all three resemble one another. They all seek to abolish what amount to universal human activities. The only culture that I know of that doesn't have a word for war is that of the Eskimos and the reason there is probably that the struggle to survive doesn't leave much time for fighting.

My main objection to the CND is that it is too limited. If you did get a ban on nuclear weapons (which raises the interesting question of who do we trust to enforce it, and how?) that would still leave conventional weapons, bacteriological, psychological, and gas warfare. The whole problem will eventually be solved by the social scientists working on it, and not by marching up and down in the street. If the marchers would stop wasting time and set about raising the money to finance these scientists they might achieve their ends.)\*

A.R. Weira, Primrose Cottage, Westonbirt Village, Nr. Tetbury, Glos.

EDITORIAL: Glad to hear that VECTOR proposes to encourage story writing - it is one of the things we're supposed to stand for, and I think that the effort is well worth making.

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB: Yes, I'm a member and have been these three years and more. I don't agree with all their choices, but I find that of the six books in the year I have always been glad to accept four at least, and usually five, so that even then I get the rest well below the market hard-cover price. I quite agree that Knight's "In Search of Wonder" De Camp's "SF Handbook" and the Bonestell books are all things that they might well reprint. My own chief beef is that they don't take their readers into their confidence as they might; for example, they advertised, just the once, that the French SF novel THE FORTRESS was on the way; in the next edition of the bulletin they simply said that this was a mistake, and gave no other explanation - why couldn't they have said that negotiations had fallen through, that there were copy-right troubles, or whatever the real reason was? We would simply like to know!

PSIENCE PART II: If any of you followed in the papers, the fortnight's report of the "Black Box" trial, you must have learnt a good deal about psi. And I'm surprised that nobody has commented on the verdict, which is the first time that a British law court has admitted the existence of any sort of "extra-normal" powers, even by implication, since the seventeenth century! I have myself visited the de la Warr Laboratories, where these appliances were and used, and have been tested myself with them. I am one of the people who can "make them work" myself.

It is interesting that they find that the most varied people get identical responses on the dials for given "objects" - that is, if they get any response at all. This also bears out what I myself have found for the majority of people, using a "printed circuit" Hieronymous machine; I have done most of my work with pure chemical elements (being a chemist) and I find that of the people who can "make it work" the majority - i.e. about six out of seven - get identical readings; eg. they all bring in zinc at about 65 on the dial. On the other hand, the odd people - about one in seven - get zinc at a point quite consistent for them, but unlike anybody else's readings, though they may get very strong readings indeed.

Now here's an interesting point - all these people who get results in unusual places give considerably higher than average scores when tried at a "clairvoyant recognition" test with Rhine cards - at least they have so far. Coincidence?

TRAVEL BY WIRE: First class. There should always be one humorous item in VECTOR and the very fact that it is so completely different from PLAYERS OF THE LENS makes it go down all the better.

BOOK REVIEWS: I was much interested in the review of Tsiolkovsky's book - but I'll bet my boots that the introduction by Vorobyev doesn't say that he died poor and neglected, since the Soviet government didn't show the slightest interest in rocket research till after 1944, when the German rockets had already shown what could be done!

LETTER COLUMN: If nobody else will, I might have a stab at Powys, after I've read a bit more of his stuff. So far I've only read

his ATLANTIS, but I'll plague the Gloucester County Library for more of his. Once you've got used to his style - and, good God, it takes some getting used to. No ordinary man goes off on a three-pages long parenthesis after a side issue, in the middle of a sentence, and then, so please you, comes back and finishes the sentence - he's quite impressive.

The trouble about Paul Andrews' suggestion for a series of articles on major SF authors is that Moskowitz is doing this already and SCIENCE FANTASY is publishing them, so there would be relatively little demand, I should think.

John Derbyshire, 62 Friars Avenue, Delapre, Northampton.

The editorial raised an interesting point re the SFBC - personally I'd prefer to see about one collection/anthology to every two novels. I've been a member for over a year and have no intention of leaving. By the way I'm glad to see that you didn't mickey-take the Aetherius Group - I'm all for open-mindedness in SF.

Now I have a request. Do you have any idea where I can get a copy of A HANDFUL OF DARKNESS by Phillip E. Dick. I know that it was published by Rich and Cowan in 1955. Since Rich and Cowan do not appear in the 1959 list of British publishers I can only assume that a/ they've gone out of business or b/ they're American. Either way I'm stuck, if you can help me I'd be most grateful.

\*( \*I wrote up the Aetherius Society meeting straight mainly because nothing I could write could be half so ridiculous as the plain facts.

According to my copy of the Tuck Handbook of SF A HANDFUL OF DARKNESS was published in Britain. Unless one of the members can help you out your best bet is to ask Ken Slater (of Fantast Medway Ltd., 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs.) to want-list it for you.

John also criticised Doc. Weir's reviews of the magazines. I didn't put these in as I've a letter from Mike Moorcock later on in this column which deals with this subject in more detail, and with a reply from Doc.)\*

Chris Miller, 44 Wheatclose Road, Barrow-in-Furness, Lancs.

Well, I've gone and lent VECTOR #9 to a potential BSFA member so I'm afraid I can't give a letter of comment on it, unless I can remember what the contents were.

Lessee.....!hm, I hope that the Friday evening meetings will continue to be as interesting as they were when I was in London. D'you think that some person could give a sort of report of these meetings? An outline of what happened, what you talked about and so on.

The fanzine reprint was great! Why did Arthur never publish it in an SF magazine? I'm sure that it was good enough for that.

\*( \*The address above is Chris' home one although he was at Oxford when he wrote this letter, I suppose that this potential member is also a student. Keep up the recruiting Chris. As for reports on the Friday evenings - well its a good idea, and when someone writes them they'll appear in VECTOR! Your other suggestions noted, I've added them to the list of ideas for "consideration when time permits"! \*)\*

And now here's a composite item that might interest you. It started when I received a letter of comment from Mike Moorcock. It was so interesting that I replied instead of just printing it here. Since it concerned Doc Weir and Mike asked me to pass it on if I didn't print it, I sent it plus a carbon of my answer to Doc for his comments. Thus the following consists of the original letter from Mike, my reply, another note from Mike, and Doc's comments on the whole lot. I hope that you find it of some interest.  
Mike Moorcock, 18 Beatrice Avenue, Norbury, London, S.W.16.

Editorial a bit depressing. You've fallen into the trap, I feel, of regarding SF fandom as the total readership of SF. Not consciously, perhaps, but certainly sub-consciously. Facts remain, and facts, of course, tell us that the majority of SF readers are comprised of that 'general public' you mention in your third paragraph. You wouldn't be getting any magazine if it wasn't for them. As for pornography - some detective stories are pornographic; some westerns are; some historicals - ad nauseum. So what? People don't brand all detective stories as pornographic. Lady Chatterly's Lover might be thought pornographic but few people would consider banning all of Lawrence's works from the book-shops. In fact, because of the ICL business, Lawrence is selling better now than he ever was. Couldn't the same apply to good SF? The more readers the more magazines and books becoming available to SF enthusiasts. This thing is bigger than all of us.

Your point about SF writers is taken. Personally, I always saw the BSFA as a recruiting organisation not primarily for fans but for potential writers. However, this is a personal idea.

Those staff-written Badger perversions are given far too much space. The reviewers say how terrible they are. Then they say how terrible they are. Wouldn't 'skip this' be more concise and give you space to devote to, perhaps, a few factual books?

Why this rambling treatise on Brian's cover for SF 42? Surely Doc realises that a cover design is primarily to make a magazine attractive. If he's such a stickler for authentic mythical details (rather an anachronism any way) why does he read fantasies which bend them around? This is petty-fogging. And why this emphasis on old SF stories being revived?

Originality or lack of originality shouldn't be emphasised - particularly where magazine fiction is concerned. The standard of writing and treatment of theme is surely what should be judged? How do we judge Shakespeare? So, you've seen one love scene, you've seen 'em all? So, you've seen one accelerator, you've seen 'em all?

Now, Doc and I clash again. , Whats all this Peake/Kafka jazz? Oh, there are certain superficial similarities between the two writers. They both use the English language for a start. Peake's work difficult to read? Is that the implication? For that matter it's the first I've known that Franz Kafka's stuff was hard to read!

In your reply to Doc's letter you talk about a definition of sf and say that you hope there won't be one because that implies definite limits. If you said that the thing that attracted you most was the fact that there were few limits, I'd agree with you wholeheartedly. But, aside from this minor quibble, I entirely agree with that statement.

Jim Linwood says that the film's concern for the individual rather than society is a highly commendable point and you tut tut and say that the Race is more important. Well, I agree with Jim, whether he meant exactly that or not. What says society has got to be more important? Why should you accept this so completely? Possibly this way of thought (pretty general in the Western world) is a hangover from a primitive tribal society which no longer exists. Political nostalgics are continually trying to get back to this tribal society, forgetting that our social system, being so much more complicated, prohibits most of their ideas from being able to work.

Ford said, a trifle baldly and I don't know if he was ever given a chance to qualify this statement, "History is Bunk". He might have meant that too much dwelling on the 'good old past' was detrimental to a society (or an individual for that matter). This, of course, goes for thinking too much about the future. I wish we'd concentrate more on the pretty enjoyable present for a change. I Like It Now.

I'd like you to tell me just why you are so firmly convinced that Humanity Comes First. If this is so, why do so many people enjoy reading stories where the individual - the hero - says to hell with humanity and up with me Jack?

Jim Groves.

Firstly that bit about my tending to regard fandom as the total readership of sf; this I deny - in my editorial for VECTOR 8 I deliberately mentioned the difference between fans and readers, and said that to cover both in VECTOR I was going to try to appeal to that side of them that they share - that concerned with sf. As for pornography increasing sales and readers, sure if you want that kind of reader and that kind of reading matter. As for setting up as censors, we do anyway, I don't read all the junk that's thrown at me under the sf label, and I don't suppose that you do either. All that I was suggesting was that VECTOR should carry reviews of all or nearly all the sf published so that none of our members would have to buy the crud to find out that it is crud.

I'm glad that you agree about new sf writers, but don't concentrate on them alone - reader-writer-publisher - it's a symbiotic arrangement from which we all benefit and to which we all contribute.

Those Badger perversions were given so much space so that the reviewers could state why they disliked them. I'd have thought that sf readers would be leery of pronouncements of authority along the lines of a mere 'this is rubbish, leave it alone'.

Doc's reviews - The reason that I published these as they reached me was that I don't like to edit any of the material that I get unless it's really necessary. That happens to be the way that Doc thinks in this case. It's the old story of specialist knowledge. Doc knows something about mythology and so he notices these things. As for fantasy bending such details, well certain things are permitted and certain are not. If you wish to use 'real' characters then they must conform with the accepted facts about them, unless you can explain the differences. For most of us it doesn't matter in this case but the reviewer happened to be Doc so he spotted it. It spoils a story when you spot such an

error, I know, I've had it happen when some sf writer has violated a scientific principle without explaining why. It's not the violation that disturbs me (otherwise I'd not read sf) it's the fact that it's not explained away. The same thing applies whenever an author slips up in front of anyone with special knowledge. Like, shall we say, if a doctor reads one of those stories of hospital life and one of the characters does an operation in 30 minutes that the doctor knows would take a real surgeon an hour or more. For most of us it's a minor point I know, but it does exist.

Re the Linwood letter - Any text book on sociology or anthropology will give you the facts on how important races, groups and individuals are in relation to one another. Consider it this way though - how can a part be more important than the whole of which it is a part? If I were to die Western civilisation would not be seriously inconvenienced whereas if Western civilisation were to go I would be in a right mess.

You like now do you? Complete with bombs, brainwashing and tyranny? I like it too, but only because it's a challenge, to be met and changed; if it was permanent I'd hate every minute of it, and so I suspect would you. The fact that so many of the current books reflect the "I'm all right Jack" philosophy is good cause for alarm at the fate of our civilisation. As for such books being popular well no one likes to believe that he is insignificant even if it's true, and sf always has been called 'escapist' literature!  
Mike Moorcock.

Yes, you've certainly got a relevant point there - about the comprehensive reviewing of crud. Still think it should be shorter all the same. Also the crud carries the good stuff, quite often. An indiscriminate producer of crud often produces, almost incidentally, good stuff as well. Take Digit for instance. I don't like Reinlein or van Vogt much, but they've published quite a few of their titles along with some of the poorer stuff. A boom, even a mild boom such as we're currently experiencing, produces a lot of trash - but a lot of good stuff also comes out of it.

I thought that I was something of a specialist on mythology too. I've studied it for some years and have a pretty comprehensive library devoted to the subject of myths, legends and folklore, but I still don't feel annoyed that Lewis made a 'mistake' in his cover painting. Surely it's unimportant whether it's 'accurate' or not? A magazine cover is primarily a design - its aim is to please the eye and to attract attention. Lewis covers for the most part do this. The long statement about the cover was, I maintain, irrelevant. This, I believe, was my original criticism - the statement was out of place and, I say again, designed to tell the readers what Doc knew rather than what he felt. It's a danger many academicians are subject to. And if, as you state in your doctor/hospital story analogy, for most of us these things are minor points - then the reviewer shouldn't forget that he's writing for most of us.

Doc Weir, Primrose Cottage, Westonbirt Village, Nr. Tetbury, Glos.

I quite agree with you that the larger readership we can get for sf the more is the likelihood of good stuff turning up; in this connection, my compiling of the SCIENCE FANTASY checklist gave me a new slant - there are a surprising number of the 'one-

shot' authors therein whose stories were of a surprisingly high level, this, I suppose, is the practical demonstration of the saying "everybody has at least one good story in them" (I overlook the cynical conclusion: "the trouble is that they never know when to stop telling it!") The more and larger sf mags and pbs, the more likelihood of these stories seeing print.

Brian's cover for SCIENCE FANTASY 42 - what's worth doing at all is worth doing well, and if Brian Lewis sets out to illustrate a given story, he should see to it that he's accurate to what the story tells - and however little they may know of the usual trappings of Zeus or Juggernaut I'll bet that there isn't even one who's prepared to take the Norse Odin looking like a gorgonzolified version of the Mikado!

Emphasis on old sf stories being revived - I think the readers may as well know whether an author has come across with a brand new plot or not; but I've no objection to the old ones providing the handling and atmosphere is fresh enough to be interesting. My objection to having three variants on Wells' "New Accelerator" in three successive issues is that Carnell isn't editing as well as he can; I classed one of them as B minus and another as C plus on their own merits; I also gave "Nuclear Justice" B minus as a good yarn, even though the killer-golf-ball gimmick wasn't new.

Now you say you "can't help but think these reviews have been written primarily to let us know how much Doc Weir knows". Well, these reviews are written, primarily, to let you know what are Doc Weir's reactions to the stories concerned, and how good, or otherwise he thinks them. Note that I say Doc Weir's reactions - I do not, because I cannot, try to "criticize for the general membership of the BSFA" because in order to do that I should, for one thing, have to be fairly well acquainted with every member of the BSFA - I couldn't "represent" the BSFA if I tried, and so I don't try; what I do try to do, is to give a fair criticism within my own limits.

I'm not taking the resemblance between Peake and Kafka any further than I made it then - that both write about people who are struggling in a social environment that is too much for them, and that they can't adequately cope with and don't understand; the resemblance simply doesn't extend further.

I found Kafka distinctly difficult to read - but then, I read him in his original German, and a translator, especially in as vague and cloudy-headed a language as German can be, is often a clarifier as well.

As regards any definition of sf - well any definition involves a set of limits somewhere, and every different definer sets them in a different place; it's good fun trying to find a definition, though, and a good exercise in the logical use of words, which exercise we all need from time to time to keep us from getting sloppy.

As regards society versus the individual, I think you and Jim take opposite views in a dispute where the middle-of-the-road track is the most desirable. We can't run our present-day way of life - and I agree with you that it might be worse, and can be quite pleasant to live in - on a purely individualistic basis, but since society mostly makes progress through the misfits and exceptions who have unusual ideas and insist on raising hell till something

gets done about them, you mustn't let society squash individuality too far either.

\*( \* As a parting shot in the 'individual versus society' argument I'm rather taken with the quote from Art Rapp "it's all very nice being beat providing that there are enough squares left to run society". Substitute "individualist" and "cog" in that and you have the answer. 'Society' can carry a small percentage of such beats, individualists, rebels, lunatics and what have you, but too many will blow the whole lot sky high. \*)\*

WEALSOHEARDFROM.

Harry Douthwaite from Manchester, Archie Mercer from Lincoln with a list of typos that got through, Jim Norrie from Edinburgh, Terry Jeeves from Sheffield, and a brief note from Arthur C. Clarke in Ceylon. And thats all for this time, thank you all for writing.

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GENERAL CHUNTERING (cont.)

field)is the hard cover still the "top" of the publishing field.. and with more and more original work appearing in paper back, it may not be so long before the boards-book becomes the rarity...at the same time there is a steady increase in the sales and numbers of "talking books"...although it is doubtful if these will ever be successful for use as reference works in our present state of knowledge...the problem of indexing the grooves of a record is somewhat too complex when placed against the (current) simplicity of numbering the pages in a book...however you'll note that the use of taped evidence in court has been given serious consideration ...partly because of the unreliability of policeman's notebooks... which it appears have become somewhat..er...oh well, a sign of the times, I guess...reverting to "talking books" there are several which should have appeal for fans, and I feel that it would be a good idea for a "review" column covering these to appear in some fanmag...unfortunatly I don't stock them, so can't play 'em buck-shee to see what is on them...and if there is any bright young electronician in the audience, a system for indexing a actual recording so that a pre-selected set of grooves can be "read" immediately, without either having to sit through all the previous part of a disc, or the horrible and damaging "guess if I drop the pick-up about here" method of selection that some folk indulge in, is essential...and probably fortune making...oh, work has been done in the field, and some systems of keying do exist, but none that are really suitable for use in the home or office...holl, you don't want to send the junior file clerk on a two year course in electronics..."technical" labour creeps in all over to do jobs which adequately performed by juniors some ten-twenty years back...and which should now be performed by simple machines operated by juniors ...but in effect require "experts" to handle...this shoves production costs up all the time...instead of releasing technical labour for improvement of existing techniques/machines...just dream up a few simple systems after your Christmas Dinner...bring down production costs...the four hour week...plenty for all...oh, well, its a nice dream for Christmas...best...KFS.

# CONVENTION

'61

## have you joined yet?

This year's BSFA Convention is being held Easter weekend at the New County Hotel, Southgate Street, Gloucester. The Convention fees are quite reasonable being 10/- for BSFA members over 18 and 5/- for the under 18 and overseas members. An application form was circulated with the last Newsletter, if you didn't get one and do wish to come write to the Con Sec/Tres., Keith Freeman, c/o 44 Barbridge Road, Westers Way, Cheltenham for details. When registering you have only to send the Convention fee to Keith, the hotel bill does not have to be paid until after the Con., when you leave. The New County is probably full by now but there are several overflow hotels available - the Bell Hotel (charges 27/6 B&B), the Wellington (charges 22/- P&B), and the Lamphrey (charges 18/6 B&B).

STOP PRESS The voting on the proposal made by Chris Miller about the postal election of officials went as follows - for 13, against 0. Therefore the election of officials from this year on will be by post. Since it is now later than the dates proposed the voting will have to be speeded up. Nominations are invited for the following posts:- Vice-Chairman; Secretary; Treasurer; Publications Officer. It would speed things up a little if nominators could also submit at the same time the name of a seconder, and also get the consent of the person nominated. All nominations should be sent to the present Secretary, Ella Parker, 151 Canterbury Road, West Kilburn, N.W.6. Nominations should be in by 13th of February. Further details on this and other Constitutional matters will appear in the Newsletter appearing just after that date.

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Bottom section of handwritten text, possibly a conclusion or a separate list of items.