

# VECTOR 22

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1963

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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# editorial

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AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION SHGW In the previous issue, there appeared a list of "not-reviews" of recent publications, the information concerned having nearly all been supplied by one enthusiastic member.

One member cannot be expected to cover the entire field every time, and I personally, VECTOR's editor, see only a fraction of the total output of sf and fantasy publications. Therefore, the co-operation of the membership at large is requested. If members would try to get into the habit of taking a brief note of current material they read - publisher, price, number of pages, and the briefest indication as to the contents, and then sending the note to VECTOR - just rough scraps of paper will do so long as they're legible - VECTOR could then aim to supply the fullest coverage in the least space.

If everybody takes a hand, of course, there will necessarily be much overlapping. However, without being sarcastic it can safely be said that past experience reveals that everybody will not take a hand. Therefore the information YOU, personally, supply may well be covered by nobody else.

Please?

While we're dealing with audience participation, there's another matter that might as well be mentioned. Elsewhere in this magazine THE BASRA JOURNAL is reviewed, and reference is made to an article therein concerning the relationship between introversion/extroversion and season of birth. Jim England suggests that the VECTOR readership might be polled on the matter, to provide further statistical evidence. Anybody who is interested might drop VECTOR a line, and if the response is sufficient some sort of questionnaire can be included with the next issue.

A PEEP INTO THE FUTURE Amongst the many good things in hand or promised for publication in VECTOR early in 1964 is an article by the well-known sf writer and galactic citizen Harry Harrison on the subject of: "Why Robert A. Heinlein's Glory Road is a Bad, Bad Book". I gather he means "bad", too. I await it with interest.

ALL THE WINNERS It's a bit stale now, of course, arriving at the VECTOR just too late to catch the previous issue, but just in case anybody hasn't yet seen the list of this year's "Hugo" Award winners, here it is:

Professional magazine	MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION
Novel	THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE (P.K. DICK)
Short fiction	THE DRAGON MASTERS (JACK VANCE)
Professional illustrator	ROY KRENKEL JR
Amateur magazine	XERO (DICK & PAT LUPOFF, NEW YORK)
Dramatic production	(no award)
Special awards	P. SCHUYLER MILLER & ISAAC ASIMOV

The 1964 World Convention was awarded to the San Francisco area, as expected. There, then, is where they'll vote next year on the LONDON IN '65 project. AM

A TITLE SUCH as The Author's Lot, which Brian Aldiss bestowed upon the first of this series, calls to mind plenty of sequel-titles: The Author's Blot, The Author's Slot, or his Clot, Plot, Loft, Log and so on. (In the case of Ambrose Bierce, of course, it would obviously be The Author's Lost.) Harry Harrison, however, has refused to have any of these allotted to him, calling his piece simply



# THE AUTHOR'S LOT III

by Harry Harrison

When I read the first Author's Lot in VECTOR 19 I was stirred to rush into the confessional behind Brian and reveal the whole of my truth in the same manner. But work piled up and we were getting ready to leave for Trieste (a lovely blast that our President has reported on in greater detail). So nothing was done. Then VECTOR 20 arrived and I made the pleasant discovery that the rest of the membership seemed to have enjoyed The Author's Lot as well. Stirred by my own revelatory needs and called on by name by those Old Mancunians Edwards and Nadler, I will attempt to open the locked book of my past.

The beginning is dull. The direct linear progression that Brian reveals never existed for me. At an early stage in life I felt drawn to both writing and art, and after much infantile soul searching decided on art. It took twenty years to realize this was a mistake, and it was science fiction that finally saved me from continuing existence as an ink-stained drudge. I read my first SF story at the ripe age of seven and was instantly hooked: you must have all had that experience. The growing golden light that fills the room as you realize that this-- THIS is it. Through childhood, school, army and school again the SF enthusiasm never waned. I read, letterhacked, collected, traded, joined clubs, went to conventions (including the first: those were the days...) and was famish in every way.

At the same time I was building a career in art. My interests were Classical and my training was done on the antique and I leaned towards portrait painting. However I watched my maestro, the incomparable painter John Blomshield, starving himself to death and had second thoughts. Easel painting is only for those with private incomes. Recognizing the handwriting on the canvas I went to a series of commercial art academies and emerged able to do a competent job of magazine illustration, book jackets, advertising layouts and comic books, all of which I drew with varying degrees of commercial success. I eventually found my niche in the comic books which paid the most money for the least work and gave golden premiums for speed. (I once inked a standard nine panel 15" by 20" comic page in 25 minutes and became known in our professional circles-- not without a certain amount of jealousy-- as Harry the Hack.) I would probably still be there, buying india ink by the gallon instead of the quart and inking with a bigger and bigger brush, if it hadn't been for the enduring SF interest.

I was a true-fan, soaking it up and loving it. At the same time I was an art pro and did as much SF work as I could find. (If collectors want a new excuse to grub through their files, they'll find a book jacket of mine from Gnome Press, and illustrations in the revived "Marvel", "Galaxy" and the original "Science Fiction Adventures".) I also enjoyed the fannish transports of delight of rubbing shoulders with all the pros, ninety-five percent of whom were living in and around New York City at that time.

This heady atmosphere was inspiring and the writing bug bit hard. I had had experience editing various kinds of magazines and had written goodly numbers of comic scripts-- so why not SF? I wrote and discarded a few stories until I finally had one that seemed adequate. At this time I was illustrating "Worlds Beyond" and I took it along when I turned in a batch of drawings and asked the editor, Damon Knight, to do me a favor and read the story. Instead of giving me an opinion he gave me a check for \$100 and since then I have never looked back. (The story was titled I Walk Through Rocks, a terrible title that Damon instantly changed to Rock Diver.)

That's the physical history and I have neatly sidestepped away from my emotional reasons for writing-- outside of admitting I was a True Fan, where I knew I would be on safe ground. Let us spiral in towards the old sewer of the subconscious slowly, looking at other writers' sick minds first. As Brian said, SF writing is an ideal therapeutic medium. Or to put it more bluntly: you don't have to be sick to write SF-- but it helps. I'm not really trying to be nasty, just truthful. It is one thing to read and enjoy horror stories along with other kinds of fiction, but it is another thing entirely to spend your working hours writing the stuff. Two-fisted action is invariably written by short, round-shouldered men with severe myopia. I could name names, but following Brian's example I will refrain. Much better if I point the accusing finger at myself. Convention-goers will laugh when I say this, but they must remember that the receding hairline, beer-stained moustache and excess lard are the products of later years. Behind that paunch lurks the ghost of a child who was no more than six inches from shoulder to shoulder, was the shortest in the class, and peered weakly at the world through milk-bottle-bottom glasses.

Perhaps I exaggerate physically, but it is the spirit that counts. If you feel ineffectual you are ineffectual. A very well known writer of smash-bang bash-em-up pulp fiction is over six feet tall and looks like one of his own characters. But he stammers and blushes when you talk to him and tries to hide in corners. With few exceptions writers spend miserably-- or at least lonely--childhoods. This is particularly true of science fiction writers who began life as fans. The lure of distant worlds is so much more attractive than their thuggish playmates that they are continually being tempted to drift further and further away from human companionship and into a warmer internal world of personal phantasy. Do this long enough and you find the walls padded and the windows barred. Stop along the line and write down the current dream-world and you become an SF writer. The act of recording on paper does not reinforce a phantasy but eliminates it, at least temporarily. The same results can be obtained by talking about the thing, which is what keeps analysts' couches warm. A tragic sight, too often seen, is the writer who does not know this or cannot resist the temptation to talk. He will then talk away the story and never be able to write it.

I write from my own needs, as do all writers. Like Brian Aldiss I turn a dim eye on the medieval beliefs of absolute good and absolute evil. I cannot

write about them because they do not exist. But I am much more personally obnoxious than Brian and, it seems, more cynical. I can think of villains who are not possessed by evil, but who are so emotionally sick, socially depraved or morally corrupt that they deserve the violent deaths that I frequently give them. I even exercised my dislikes and obtained the supreme egotistical triumph by creating a villain who believes in absolute good and evil (The Ethical Engineer) and made him suffer horribly for his beliefs.

I turn back to VECTOR 19 again and find myself still in agreement with Brian Aldiss. (Someone else will have to write and demolish his arguments-- if they can. About all I can say is me too.) He says; "... a writer is well advised not to violate his fundamental beliefs for the sake of fiction." Neither should he stay completely away from things he feels strongly about. I have just made this discovery recently, so I must be careful lest I lay too much stress on it. After years of conforming to the SF pulp taboos I wrote a story ignoring enough of them to make me personally happy. It made a few round trips to the United States and the results were so negative that I sent it to Britain where intellectual life is rumored to be much freer. It is. Penguin Books (disguised as Brian Aldiss) snapped it up, "New Worlds" printed it and a number of readers wrote me about it. (The Streets of Ashkelon). It will appear in a Best British SF anthology in France, and another of the same in Italy. This was an enlightening experience to me, which is why I modify Brian's rule. A writer should drag out his fundamental beliefs once in awhile and give them a good airing in print. It is very hard to do because objectivity must be considered all the time or fiction becomes preaching. The very hardest thing to do is to make the characters who disagree with you sound like anything but burbling idiots.

What does this add up to? A writer always reveals his basic nature no matter how he tries to conceal it. Dull stories are written by dull people-- or witty people who were being dull when they wrote. Horror stories are written from sickness. Fantasy is written by escapists. Torture scenes are written by flagellants, rocket ships are phallic symbols and scenes set in dark caves reflect a violent desire to return to the womb. Nowadays we escape the monomania of men like Lovecraft or Howard who could only write the same story over and over, and instead are faced with the modern neurotic writer who enjoys a much greater spectrum of symptoms. In this way he fits in perfectly with the modern world of multiple neurotic pressures and can write about it from intimate knowledge.

This is not a handicap but an aid. A writer's job is to turn the dross of his daydreams into gold. SF is the most exacting form of fiction, making all the demands of ordinary fiction plus the science-fictional rationale. Therefore when it is successful its rewards to the author are that much greater. (Not in money of course-- that is expecting too much.) I really cannot see what pleasure can be exacted from the writing of yet another bed-sitter novel. Without giving away any secrets I can reveal that writing SF is just as much fun as reading it-- and even more therapeutic. Remember; those guns go off louder for me, the blood is redder, the machines shinier-- and the phallic spaceships reach up to the clouds.

Now, a dab at the forehead and palms with the handkerchief and I step down.

Who is next into the confessional?

Harry Harrison

THE FOLLOWING ITEM is included in the hope that <sup>it</sup> may be a useful guide to newcomers to the field among other things.

### "TWENTY OF THE BEST"

(Books read and enjoyed by Round Robin 1: Terry Bull, Keith Freeman, Philip Harbottle, David Sparrow and Bill Webb.)

The five of us decided that it might be of interest to produce a science fiction 'Top Twenty'. We started with 20 books considered good reading, and any of us could add their marks to these, or, if they had not read them, add books which they had read. Each book was marked out of 20.

In order to arrive at the final list, only those books which had been read by three or more of us were considered. Because of this, it should not be considered absolute - many outstanding novels were omitted on account of not having been read by more than two of us. However, we contend that the list contains a feast of good reading and entertainment - besides being at least slightly more reliable regarding merit than the original 'Top Twenty' of the Pop Music world!

Any of these novels, then, is recommended to the new fan as well worth trying - not that we expect each and every one of them to meet with universal approval. But certainly most of them. And because of the possibility that newer fans may be 'missing out' on some of these gems, we present this listing, hoping that what we have done may be of value.

In addition, we present each person's choice of one book he would have liked to have seen included, had it not been disqualified.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
1. The City and the Stars	Arthur C. Clarke	88
2. Mission of Gravity	Hal Clement	77
3. The Demolished Man	Alfred Bester	77
4. The "Foundation" series (Foundation, Foundation and Empire, Second Foundation)	Isaac Asimov	75
5. The Weapon Shops of Isher	A.E. van Vogt	75
6. Slan	A.E. van Vogt	72
7. The Stars My Destination	Alfred Bester	70
8. The Sands of Mars	Arthur C. Clarke	70
9. Islands in the Sky	Arthur C. Clarke	70
10. Ring Around the Sun	Clifford D. Simak	70
11. The Four Sided Triangle	William F. Temple	68
12. World of Chance	Philip K. Dick	67
13. Non-Stop	Brian W. Aldiss	66
14. The Star of Life	Edmond Hamilton	66
15. The Space Merchants	Frederik Pohl & C.M. Kornbluth	66
16. Childhood's End	Arthur C. Clarke	64
17. The Caves of Steel	Isaac Asimov	64
18. Lord of the Rings	J.R.R. Tolkien	64
19. Earth Abides	George R. Stewart	63
20. Brave New World	Aldous Huxley	62

Recommended by:-

Terry Bull - The Dying Earth by Jack Vance  
 Keith Freeman - Starship Troopers by Robert A. Heinlein  
 Philip Harbottle - Last and First Men by Olaf Stapledon  
 David Sparrow - The Silver Egg-Heads by Fritz Leiber  
 Bill Webb - World out of Mind by J.T. McIntosh

(Archie Mercer - The Twenty-Fifth Hour by Herbert Best)

YOUR ANSWERABLE QUESTIONS questionably answered .....

### NOW WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE ?

DR. PERISTYLE's Column

FIRST SESSION NOW assembled. VECTOR readers invited to sit at the feet of the mighty Peristyle, from which vantage point they can throw fireworks up his jumper. All questions welcome; which is more than some of the answers may be.

ARCHIE MERCER: Perhaps you could start by defining science fiction?

DR. PERISTYLE: I'm interested that you asked that, Archie, since it is just the sort of horrible question I hoped nobody would throw at me. Sartre took a whole book defining literature (it was called, oddly enough, What Is Literature?), and sf would similarly need a booklet, even for someone with less words at his command than Sartre. Rather than the rigorous definitions Crispin and Wyndham have given us, I prefer the thoroughly zany dictum of John Bowen's: "I prefer to say, even now, that a story is science fiction if you think it is. And if you think it is, and you think you are enjoying it, it probably is, and you are."

TERENCE BULL: How many sf readers are there in U.K., the world (U.S.A.) and Europe and how many fans? Population figures sort of thing. Also circulation figures of sf mags.

DR. PERISTYLE: Circulation figures of the sf mags: these figures vary in the States from about 120,000 per issue for "Analog" to 35,000 copies for the Ziff-Davis group mags, the latter probably being somewhere near the figure for English magazines. I quote these figures merely so that someone can come back at me next VECTOR and give the real ones. There isn't a definite answer to the other section of your question. "Good Housekeeping" recently ran a two-part sf serial by John Wyndham; well, it was sort of sf. Assuming the circulation of "Good Housekeeping" to be 80,000 copies per month, and half the purchasers to have read the serial, then over those two months the sf readership of the country could be said to have increased by 40,000. Sf by a name like Shute sells millions, while a dyed-in-the-wool sf novel, such as Gollancz publish, probably sells not more than 3,000 in hard cover. Also, I'd guess that that 3,000 is bought less by fans - who save their hot little sixpences for the paperback edition - than by more or less irregular readers of sf. But you can't define 'sf reader', or determine where he shades into 'fan'. There are many sf readers who reckon themselves fans and critics of it who would never come near an sf convention or look at VECTOR. For a non-answer, this is a long one. But nobody can answer the question: How many people in the world read books? The question about sf books is that much more difficult. All the same, next issue of VECTOR, someone will - or should! - come along with

definite figures of fans here, in the U.S., and in Germany, Italy, Israel, Libya, etc.

THE B.S.F.A. LIBRARY: Have you any secret information about the identity of John Lynington? We heard he was Charles Eric Maine.

DR. PERISTYLE: Rumour lied. Lynington is John Newton Chance, who writes thrillers under the Robert Hale imprint.

EWAN HEDGER: Why this sudden urge among SF authors and readers to prove that we're all a highly literate bunch, and that we're all on the side of the angels and that we're trying/should be trying to attain Nirvana, via THE PERFECT STORY ?

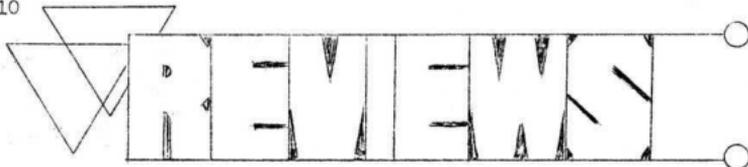
DR. PERISTYLE: You have your mythologies mixed, don't you? Angels are from Christianity, Nirvana is from Buddhism. From the tone of your question, I gather that you prefer the imperfect story. Lucky man; there are so many writers who cater for you. To answer your question bit by bit, I would say there is no sudden urge (the standards of some writers and some readers are always higher than those of some other writers and some other readers, in any field you care to name); that we are not a highly literate bunch (how many grammatical mistakes can you find in this issue of VECTOR ?); that as many recent excellent stories and novels indicate, far from being on the side of the angels, sf writers prove the saw about the devil getting all the best tunes (it was a musical saw you know). As to the perfect story, I would say that this is ideally what all writers try to attain, unless they are hopeless old hacks, intent only on cash. Few of them achieve it; and it may be that that makes them keep on trying. Having said all this, I feel you have not asked the question you wanted to ask. Do try again.

ARCHIE MERCER: Wait a minute, Doc - I'm not sure if I oughtn't to resent that bit about grammatical mistakes. It should, I think, be obvious to all right-thinking people that there are no grammatical mistakes in VECTOR. Anything of that nature that gets by my eagle eye is not a grammatical mistake - it's an essential ingredient of the author's style. And it's no good your trying to speak ungrammatically to prove your point - My Decision Is Final.

DR. PERISTYLE: Before I was so rudely interrupted, I was about to mention that I would like some more inquiries please. Remember, it's the loaded question that goes off best. You'll never get a good report by maintaining silence. Class dismissed.

Dr. Peristyle

HAVE YOU BOUGHT YOUR CHECKLIST YET? "Galaxy" (US Edition) checklist 1950 - 1958 inclusive, 60 pages. "Nebula" complete, 20 pages. Indexes by issue and by author's name, etc. Price to B.S.F.A. members 1/6d each (first copy), otherwise 2/6d, post free, from Mrs Jill Adams, 54 Cobden Avenue, Bitterne Park, Southampton.



# REVIEWS

Ray Bradbury: THE SILVER LOCUSTS (Corgi Books, reissued 1963, 3/-)

I rather suspect that in asking me to review this book, Mr. Mercer is allowing his impish sense of humour full play. Asking me to be without bias towards classic Bradbury is like asking Michael Moorcock to review heroic fantasy or Philip Harbottle to review Fearn. Note then that The Silver Locusts, or The Martian Chronicles to give this collection its American title, contains some of my favourite stories. I will readily admit to being prejudiced.

To review a classic collection like this is at this late stage virtually impossible. Everything that has to be said about this book has, believe me, already been said. There can be no long-time devotee of science fiction who is not already thoroughly familiar with it; to the newcomers I can but recommend that they read it. I cannot promise that you will enjoy it, however, for Bradbury is easily categorised for each and every sf fan. There are those who will read avidly everything written by Bradbury and there are those who will have nothing to do with him. The choice is entirely a personal one. In many cases the opinions have been formed by reading stories of the type which form The Silver Locusts.

Here are fourteen stories which have been arranged, with the addition of intermediate links, to form a highly personalised interpretation of man's future conquest of Mars. Many of the stories, like The Earth Men, The Third Expedition, Usher II, The Long Years and The Million Year Picnic have been reprinted and anthologised many times. Some, like And The Moon Be Still As Bright and There Will Come Soft Rains have been adapted for sound radio. All are written with Bradbury's facility for emotionalising stock sf situations without recourse to stock clichés. These stories, which critics today laud and praise, were first published in the pulps which many of the selfsame critics abhor. It may then be said that the stories which comprise The Silver Locusts began the climb of sf out of the literary gutter of the pulp magazines towards the position of esteem that it holds today.

R.M.B.

(I'd like to point out that I do not expect reviewers to be unprejudiced. I expect them to deal fairly with the work in question, irrespective of their prejudices. I think VECTOR's reviewers do all right in this particular. AM)

Derek Ingreby: PIG ON A LEAD (Faber & Faber 1963, 252 pages, 21/-)

This book was sent out for review in the usual way, and in due course of time found its way back to the Vectory with the following comment: "Sorry, but I find Ingreby's Pig on a Lead distasteful, unappealing and not worth the paper it's written on. Quite frankly, I'm not prepared to waste time and effort ploughing through it; doubtless someone else will think it's quite magnificent though!"

The foregoing is quoted as representing fair comment so far as it goes - which is not, however, far enough. Therefore, time being short, the book falls into the White Man's Burden and I have read it myself.

It is not, I agree, an easy story to read. The narrative is written in a pseudo-biblical style which itself is not the easiest style to read in this day and age, and the conversation - which accounts at a rough estimate for some fifty percent of the whole - is mostly written in a sort of basic gibberish that frequently needs going over several times in order to produce some sort of sense. For instance, here is one paragraph:

Bloody dirty pig what don't come out no sea all times you fool!  
 Don't no pig ever in water, it cut up throat it swim sea a pig! Lord  
 send it down along what us come grub! And never it say Lord create dirty  
 pig it don't, never you read them word the book! It don't say what he  
 make pig anywhere all times! You hear me what talk?

The above strictly sic, even to lack of inverted commas.

The story is set in post-catastrophe times, and deals with the adventures of a small band of degenerate survivors. In theme it is a curious mixture of the repulsively squalid and the appealingly innocent, with (to my mind) exactly the ending it should have.

I am given to wonder what, for instance, Sturgeon would have made of the story. I can easily imagine him using exactly the same theme, and exactly the same plot - but entirely different language. The imaginary Sturgeon version, too, would probably not be all that easy to read - but there, I think, the complexities of the style would tend to lure the reader on and on, rather than to lay the book aside in despair as I was sorely tempted to at times. Very probably, Mr. Ingrey has written this book too early in his career for perfection. He should try more straightforward writing first.

However, those of VECTOR's readership who maintain that science fiction should set out to be great literature in its own right ought to be interested to read this book, to see how far it matches up with their ideals.

AM

THE BASRA JOURNAL, vol. 7, no 4 (published by the British Amateur Scientific Research Association, 64 Ridge Road, Kingswinford, Staffs. Mainly for members of BASRA)

Once again THE BASRA JOURNAL seems to contain something that should be of interest to everybody who has any interest in science. Its 38 quarto pages, the reproduction of which is comparable to VECTOR's, contains articles on the relationship between introversion/extroversion and season of birth, recurring decimals, the planet Jupiter and heredity, besides a sizeable letter column and sundry editorially-written matter. The membership of BASRA, including Secretary/Editor Jim England, are clearly enthusiastic - if things keep on at this rate, BASRA can easily find itself a force to be reckoned with.

The main fault I have to find with the JOURNAL is that not all the matter is as clearly written as it might be. BASRA members, by and large, are most probably more interested in science than they are in writing, so this is therefore to be expected. This is where an overlapping membership between BASRA and the B.S.F.A. could be extremely useful. B.S.F.A. members, as science fiction enthusiasts, can be expected to be interested both in science for its own sake and in writing for its own sake. B.S.F.A. members, then, would I think tend to make particularly valuable members of BASRA. I recommend anybody who's interested to write for a copy.

AM

# MAIL RESPONSE

JIM ENGLAND (Kingswinford) If we can't have a good fixed design for the cover let us, at least, have good science-fictional covers like Terry Jeeves's rather than fantasy covers. By the way, have you ever thought of giving VECTOR a coloured (say, pale blue?) cover? It might be an improvement.

Apropos of Report on Trieste; I was fascinated by the brief reference to foreign S.F. This is a subject about which many readers of VECTOR must know nothing, or very little, and it would be an excellent idea to publish some articles about it. In particular, I would love to hear more about Russian science-fiction. Brian Aldiss refers briefly to an Italian, Luigi Berta, speaking of S.F. as "a means of scientific research". One would like to have heard his views in full. I suspect that they were exaggerated, but there is certainly food for thought in the idea. (Incidentally, I had a letter published in "Amazing" about 15 years back on this very subject.)

Apropos of Hyper-Space; Philip Harbottle is doing "a grand job" with these heavily-researched articles of his and it seems unfair to criticise him, but I do wish he would have his articles vetted by someone rather more sophisticated before submitting them. He tends to sound like a fifth-former lecturing to third-formers, and his "clangers" are legion. Even a third-former, I imagine, would dispute his confident assertion that "zero minus one is still zero". His very next sentence refers to the "new discovery in physics" that "time is slowed down" near light speed. This "new" discovery is surely about as old as "hyperspace" itself, which Philip assures us goes back "to the 20s at least" - but which surely doesn't go back further than Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity (?). The concept of hyperspace, anyway, ought not to be developed (as he suggests) in S.F.; it ought to be jettisoned, or described very briefly and included as a necessary evil.

Donald Malcolm's letter was chiefly note-worthy (to me) for the frequency of occurrence of words like Jim, English, England, Britain, British, etc. (Even Jim England, Jim Inglis and Jim Britain!) Patriotism is not dead, it seems. (Is Jim the commonest Christian name in the B.S.F.A.?) I would just like to say, here, that Jim England is NOT a non-de-plume for Jim Inglis! (Re the cover - any year now you may see something on the lines you suggest. But it takes time to do these things ..... AM)

C.P. MCKENZIE (London) I'm afraid VECTOR 21 was something of a paradox. On page 3 we are informed in regretful tones that space is at a premium, and then, turn over, and what do we find? Nine pages of sloppily-written drivel about contradicting foreigners. The whole thing shouldn't have been allowed to extend beyond the second page.

The Phil Harbottle piece was excellent. Just the right length, highly informative, and by far the brightest spot in the whole issue. In my opinion, not nearly enough has been done about this punning on each other's names. General warning:- Something is About To Be Done!

(That was a genuine letter from contributor C.P. McKenzie, who is NOT a pseudonym for myself. I couldn't resist running it next to Jim's. AM)

MARY REED (Banbury) On the subject of English masters, the last one we tortured gave us great subs. for essays - A week in the Life of Dracula (after we'd raved over Chris. Lee and laughed over the story for days) or: write an essay starting with the sentence "On looking out of the windows of college I saw a host of bald-headed men playing bagpipes on the tarmac" .... have I suddenly uncovered a plot of some sort ..... and only last week I found out he was a Bradbury fan. On the other hand, the teacher before gave us mainly comprehension or grammar - and whilst my spelling was out of this world, so were the marks I received.

With ref. to N.P. Morton's query 'bout female s.f. fans - I think that the age at which you first read s.f. has a lot to do with whether you stay a fan or drift off into the limbo. As the only s.f. fan in the whole school at an age when everybody else was devouring romances, I sometimes felt I was years ahead - or behind - but in the main I read s.f. because it appeals to the other-worldly streak in me. Also, my tastes in some things are decidedly tom-boyish. Though this may have nothing to do with my addiction, it could have a bearing on it, and in fact was the reason I first began reading s.f.

I was about 15 and was just finishing a Western craze. The first s.f. fan I ever met was one of our tutors, Mr. A. Potts, who's a member, and he started me off on the star-trail, as it were. Since then, I've finished practically every book in the town library's pitiful selection and re-read my brother's mags. dozens of times .... in trying to give the main reason, I'd say it appealed to my tomboy streak (this is speaking only for myself) but after three or so years - let's face it with a stiff upper lip - I've never grown up. That may be another reason, but I very much doubt it ..... in other words, I don't know why I like s.f. .... why do you males like it hmmm?

About the s.f. in schools angle - anybody tried this on a class of girls? Betcha the results would've been interesting .....

However, the camels require feeding, so I must rush off with this thought - why is there such a battle raging over the serious/not serious aspect of VECTOR .... I dig s.f. in all ways and if everybody dug the same type, how boring VECTOR would be .. not to mention us missing the spectacle of raving Eds. tearing out handfuls of their wigs to please everybody .... hmmmnnnnnnnn?

(Mary Reed, although her address would lead one to visualise a fine lady upon a white horse, is actually, 'twould seem, a Geordie (sub-species Lesser Gurgling) in exile. We seem to have picked up a good few Geordies in the B.S.F.A. lately, or at least members with Tyneside addresses. What is there about Geordieland that breeds such a healthy respect for sf in its sons and daughters? AM)

N.P. MORTON (Liverpool) VECTOR 21 was as interesting and entertaining as usual despite being a little overloaded with Aldiss B.W. who grabbed about a quarter of the space used. The article on hyper-space served to cause upsurges of my favourite grouse, this being the tendency to write about today and make the setting tomorrow, instead of writing about tomorrow. A lot of bright-eyed writers are using S.F. to air their feelings on subjects that are being hammered to death by "orthodox" fiction. Why bother? S.F. should contain ideas, events, people and themes of the UNKNOWN, technologically that is. Mr. E.W.B. scores a B.E.M.'s eye on this with his hefty thump at Lynton J. Lynton seems to be using the S.F. theme of invasion from any-old-place to show the actions and reactions of various people under some sort of stress. Hardly S.F.!??

D.M. wants writers to avoid split infinitives and slang. How can he? If he writes about people who use slang in a familiar, easy manner then slang will enter both the narrative and the speech. Besides, all this tub-thumping

about the standard of the English language in literature gets me down. What the hell does it matter if one uses split infinitives? Who says it is wrong? And why is it wrong? Some of them sound more natural than the "correct" version! And it is the sound that matters.

(Hear superlatively hear! Formal grammar, as taught by pedants, is frequently only fit for pedants. Split infinitives is a good example - another is using (as the cliché has it) a preposition to end a sentence with. This is frequently the obvious way to end the particular sentence concerned, and trying to dodge round it in order to be formally grammatical only sounds unnecessarily stilted. Mr. Churchill's notorious "... up with which I will not put" is an instance where he deliberately tried to sound stilted, but more often one would rather not. AM) (On second thoughts, split infinitives is not a good example. Split infinitives are a good example. AM)

ROY KAY (Birkenhead) Thanks a lot for the plug. You say it needs a name?

(No, I didn't mean the plug needs a name). Well, perhaps you're right; at the moment I refer to the project as the WRITER/ARTIST CHAIN which does sound rather vague...you could say even erotic.

Our Noble President's report on Trieste was interesting. I was intrigued to read about the hot-bloodedness of those Italian authors. Maybe we could do with a little of that injected into the veins of the British sf fraternity. It could very well do them some good. Bare your arm, Aldiss!

Philip Harbottle's hyper-space article was obviously very well researched. I can't say I agree with Philip's conclusions though. He accuses writers of misusing hyper-space as 'a mere back-drop', but surely that is what it's meant to be. Of course, the concept is a fascinating one, but it was invented as a convenience only, a method of getting your hero (or your villain) from point 'A' to point 'B' when 'A' and 'B' are light years apart. A means of transport. Whoever wrote 'a major novel' about a Tram or a '62 Austin?

N.P. Morton's voice in the wilderness about why there aren't many female readers of sf is simple to answer. Women, bless them, are basically unimaginative creatures. While we menfolk have our fantastic dreams, women's dreams are rooted in reality. Sf demands readers who are able to dream, and there are more men than women in this category, by a long way.

Philip Harbottle should be more careful, giving away plots like that in his letters to VECTOR. This sounds just the sort of thing someone like John Lymington or R.L. Fanthorpe could use...

Top marks for One Foot in the Grave. That mystical pro author Donald Malcolm is certainly speaking the truth in this meaty short article. For myself, I'm not sure I relish the idea of Kingsley Amis as a father figure for science fiction. Anyway, for my money, this was the best article in the issue.

(Well, Dr. Peristyle has solved Lymington for us - I wonder if he knows anything about Fanthorpe. Hey, Doc? AM)

C. CLARKE (Swaffham) No one has succeeded in defining literature, but one quality is that it must be possible for a fairly large number of people, given suitable backgrounds of knowledge, to enjoy it intensely; this despite the belief of inverted snobs to the contrary. In some ways many SF works equal the literary 'greats' in this respect, despite the style in which they are written, whereas many mainstream novels only succeed because of the style. Remember SF writers do not have to invent their style from scratch: they have 1,000 years of English Language behind them to draw from.

The readership, quality and pleasure-potentiality of SF can all be increased by setting our sights higher and taking SF seriously. Not gloomily, but incorporating, if possible, joy, optimism and beauty. Or are these dirty

words these days?

DONALD MALCOLM (Paisley) A brief comment on Phil Harbottle's article on hyper-  
("A Haggis in Orbit") space: it would take a stupendous feat of imagination  
for anyone to write even a minor novel on the concept of hyperspace, because  
nothing is known about it. There is not even one concrete fact that a writer  
could take as a starting point, so that everything would be pure invention.  
I think, in any case, that it would be hard to rhapsodise over hyperspace as we  
science fictioners conceive it to exist, namely, as a means of allowing ships  
to travel beyond the speed of light.

Butting in on the "great literature" debate, I would define it as any piece  
of writing that has the necessary qualities to make it worth re-reading many  
times, and the power to affect the reader emotionally.

Just think: Phil Harbottle is practically a Scotsman! I wouldn't entirely  
agree that the hero should necessarily be subordinate to the theme. Rather,  
they should be about equal. Admittedly, some sf themes are overpowering, but  
that should be no bar to having a hero of comparable stature.

Bearing in mind that Archie has threatened to be ruthless with letters,  
it's time to block up the hole in the Wall till next time.

(Several people seem to think that I'm now calling for shorter letters.  
That wasn't the idea. What I meant was that they would have to be shortened  
to a greater extent than has recently been the case. The Editor of VECTOR is  
always glad to receive letters of comment, and they should preferably be of the  
length that the writer feels like writing to, whatever that may be. Even the  
deleted portions are read - and even, at times, acted upon. Re themes and  
heroes, do you mean that strictly minor theme should never have a major hero?  
(AM))

J. PARKHILL-RATHBONE (Wheatley) The present issue of VECTOR contained so much  
worth commenting upon that it would be diff-  
icult to keep general comments short enough to suit your required letter length.  
I'd like to take one item from Brian Aldiss's article and discuss that: Why (and  
with honourable exceptions) are s.f. films so poor?

Modern films are the result of teamwork, and the best ones are usually made  
by sympathetic and enthusiastic teams working under an experienced director-  
producer with a fair idea of the practical work involved and an imagination.  
Most s.f. films are difficult to finance and all have to be aimed at wide dist-  
ribution. This means, if not ray-guns and space-ships (not necessarily bad  
things in themselves, since space-ships are certainly involved in the possible  
future and magnetohydrodynamics may yet produce a ray-gun), at least other  
costly effects: such a film has to pay, and the average film producer has a fair  
idea where he's safest as regards box-office. Or at least, he did; for some-  
times I wonder whether the whole of the film industry wouldn't benefit with a  
lift--a real big one--into outer space (and I don't mean that literally, though  
I have sometimes thought that that wasn't a bad idea either).

It's only within the last twenty years or so, and with the notable ex-  
ceptions of Garbo and Dietrich, that the film-makers in the U.S. at last dis-  
covered the human face. Before that every character was a symbol or something  
of this or that--still back in the Middle Ages of allegory and the masks of  
Greed, Usury, Lust, etc. And I remember the ugly-handsome face of Raymond  
Massey as Cabal in Things to Come (I never see him in a film but I think of  
him as Cabal) and think of that as another exception.... Surely there is room  
for, and possibilities in, really human characterisation in s.f.? And as long  
as the audience is watching (and I hope feeling) the drama of this, all the  
expensive props, BEBs, and so on can be kept to a minimum. Really good actors,  
excited by new ideas and possibilities; directors with better notions of light-

ing than the usual flats; sound technicians using electronic equipment sensitively and imaginatively, and script-writers inspired by the stories that lie under every story, coupled with somebody who really likes s.f. and wants to produce it properly: surely these would help to make better films--and cheaper ones too. And, for goodness' sake, some wit and real humour. We've grown up now. Hasn't anybody noticed?

I suppose I have in mind a kind of poor man's version of the French new wave, where psychological states are woven into beautiful films whose fantasy and delicacy of treatment are a wonderful lesson in the possibilities of the camera and microphone used almost carelessly. And there was The Red Badge of Courage, a film done on a shoestring but of such quality that it got through to the box-office. People like good things if they are gone about the right way. There will always be the small claque that likes even better things, good for the middle-brows because it foreshadows something more generally appreciated. S.f. is a field in which this could be done.

IVOR R.S. LATTO (Glasgow) is perturbed at the doctrine of "exclusion" propounded recently by both C.P. McKenzie and Donald Malcolm. "May I point out," he asks, "that even the briefest of tides leaves some evidence of its passing; it may clear some rubbish from the beach, it may deposit some, but do we have any option but to look with favour upon its passing?" CHARLES PLATT (Letchworth), as a new member, sounds somewhat baffled by trying to pick up the conversational threads carrying over from issues of VECTOR he hasn't seen. As a result, he found much of the letter column boring. This, unfortunately, is a standard reaction among new readers to any publication such as VECTOR - unless one has access to back files (there is always the B.S.F.A. Library of course) one can't very well do more than simply sit tight picking it up as one goes. Paradoxically, the later issues sometimes help to explain the obscurities of their predecessors. (One recently-joined member didn't even know what a banth was, though I tried to explain in this instance). I'll be interested to see how Chas gets on with this and future issues. Thank you all for writing. AM

SMALL-ADS FREE TO MEMBERS ... SMALL-ADS FREE TO MEMBERS ... ETC ... ETC ... ETC

WANTED ARE THERE ANY GENIUSES IN THE B.S.F.A.? Jim England thinks not, otherwise they would surely have communicated their original ideas to him at:- 64 Ridge Road, Kingswinford, Staffs. PS. You don't have to be a genius to join the BRITISH AMATEUR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ASSOCIATION.

WANTING TO BUY with extreme urgency, the following articles, for which almost any asked price will be more than gladly paid:-

1. A CHECKLIST & HISTORY OF "NEW WORLDS" (a BSFA Publication)
2. A CHECKLIST OF BRITISH SF & FANTASY, Part One (and Part Two, if it exists) by E. Dentliffe
3. A CHECKLIST OF THE STORIES OF E.C. TUBB, BRIAN ALDISS & FRANCIS G. RAYER IN BRITISH SF MAGAZINES by B. Burgess

Also any checklist of the late "AUTHENTIC SF", and "SCIENCE FANTASY". I would be interested in any such, and personal bibliographies of any British Sf writers (excluding the recent Aldiss bibliography, Item 43), such as James White, Phil High, Bob Presslie, John Brunner, Kenneth Bulmer, J.G. Ballard, E.R. James, etc.

Please contact David Busby, 33 Rances Lane, Wokingham, Berks.

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Maxim Jakubowski, the B.S.F.A.'s Honorary Secretary, has been recalled by his employers to his native France. He has most obligingly offered to serve out his term of office nevertheless. He seems to have not yet settled on a permanent address in Paris, but in the mean time he can be reached c/o the B.S.F.A. Library, 77 College Road North, Blundellsands, Liverpool 23.

Our President, Brian Aldiss, is expected to depart for a several-months' stay in Yugoslavia shortly, having been commissioned to write a book about it. He is at present understood to be undergoing an intensive course in Serbo-Croat.

American sf author Mack Reynolds, currently resident in Spain, is reported as having left for the far east in search of local colour. (Yellow, presumably).

EVEN IF YOU DON'T NORMALLY SPEAK TO STRANGE WOMEN ON FRIDAYS, you should visit Ella Parker's flat if you happen to be in Town. Ella holds open house for B.S.F.A. members every Friday evening at Flat 43, William Dunbar House, Albert Road, London NW.6 (not far from Queen's Park station). There is always a welcome for a new face. No need to book an appointment - just turn up as you are and meet the gang.

MORE SMALL-ADS AND THINGS ... MORE SMALL-ADS AND THINGS ... MORE THINGS ...

LIBRARY SERVICE - CHRISTMAS 1963

To ensure prompt service, would any members wishing to borrow books over Christmas:

- 1) send their requests to reach Joe Navin by Saturday, 14th December; and
- 2) list an alternative on the back of each request slip

TERRY JEEVES'S ANALOG ("ASTOUNDING") CHECKLIST (Part 1) is still on sale. It covers the years 1930-1939, has stiff covers (Gestetner 'B' Board), and is divided into four sections:

- A ... a complete listing by issue
- B ... a complete listing by author
- C ... a complete listing by story
- D ... a complete listing of all fact articles

There is some cross-referencing of well-established authors' pseudonyms, and the spine is bound in plastic. All this, 54 pages of it, is obtainable from: Terry Jeeves, 30 Thompson Road, Ecclesall, Sheffield 11, Yorks, for 4/6d; or LeRoy D. Haugsrud, 118 West 33rd Street, Minneapolis 8, Minnesota, U.S.A., for \$0.65.

Other fan-eds please copy this - ta!

THIS IS THE usual reminder to the effect that the 1964 B.S.F.A. Convention takes place over Easter week-end at the Dull Hotel, Peterborough. 5/- to Tony Walsh, 167 Sydenham Road, Bridgwater, Somerset, ensures your receiving the various publications concerning the Convention as they are published, and counts towards the admission fee if you attend.

MORE LIBRARY NOTES: the revised B.S.F.A. Library List is expected to see the light of day before very long now. The trouble is that the library keeps growing, so every edition of the list takes longer to produce.

SF WRITERS ANONYMOUS

By Helstar



THROUGH HYPERSPACE AND OVERTIME WITH BERNARD BODFOLD, Jr. I

In 2287 the para-complex reached its penultimate climax once more, and in line with tradition a national holiday was declared. To celebrate, representatives from every nation and planet were invited to the culmination of the festivities, the presentation of the "Hugo" for the year 2286 to the President - the Immortal Aldiss.

In his capacity as Chief of Staff, Bernard Bodfold, Jr., was invited to make the presentation himself, but on this occasion the Great Man gracefully declined, in order that his communist-sympathising mother (Red Hot Momma to her friends) might make one of her rare public appearances.

In order that the whole Universe might get a comprehensive news coverage of the celebrations, Press representatives converged on Earth City and clamoured round Bodfold in the hope that they might be allowed to photograph the actual presentation.

"No," he said, with a peremptory wave of his hand, "films must not be taken of my mother. She has specifically requested that she never be photographed when near another man." He inclined his head a little, and confided; "My late father, you know ..."

A tear sprang to the corner of his eye, and the reporters nodded sympathetically. "Dut," a younger news-hound persisted tactfully, "can't we even shoot the handing-over of the life-size statuette?"

"What?" replied Bodfold, aghast at the thought. "Aldiss and Mummy too?"

C.P. McKenzie

COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING

by

Dick Howett

As coincidences go, I'm not one to harp on them. You know: "A big red bus hit me today. Now isn't that funny? One hit me yesterday, too."

But to return hastily to the main line, a little more sober, I recently came across one of the above mentioned coincidences and to be quite frank, it rather shook me. (Forget the bus!)

I bought a book. A science fact paperback sharply named Projects: Space. The book, published by the Washington Square Press in 1961, joyfully announced just what was going to be achieved as a direct result of NASA; the science of America; the this, that and the other scientific bodies, all conspiring to put a man in space.

The edition related all the facts, cutting out big words such as "miniature components" and substituting (just for the layman) words like (wait for it) ... "microminiaturisation", or with tongue in cheek, "magnetohydrodynamics". In all, a comprehensive little volume.

Rattling gleefully on about ... "The rewards of space", the writer of the book proclaims that due to space research, "... a miniature two way wrist radio is practically on the production line". He continues; "Housewives are already

anticipating being able to call up their husbands to remind them to pick up the groceries on their way home from work .....

There was once a chap called Bradbury. (Still is I hope). He wrote a short story in 1953. The story was called The Murderer. (See The Golden Apples of the Sun, from Corgi).

In this work there was a man called Brock. He was a prisoner. He was faced in his cell by a psychiatrist. Brock was insane. He hated wrist radios. He went around smashing all he could find, such as his "insanity". When asked why he smashed all he could find he replied that he was fed up with his wife calling him up and telling him "..... not to forget ....."

Dick Howett



THE ABOVE CARTOON is very timely, because according to the B.S.F.A. Constitution, "During the period 1st November to 31st December nominations for the various Committee posts are invited and should be sent to the Secretary," to be "... published in ... VECTOR ... During the period from the publishing of these names to 20th January the proposed names must be seconded and the candidates must signify their willingness to stand." Usually, nobody is in fact either nominated or (inevitably) seconded until the time of the AGM, when those with the least excuse for refusing are dragged into accepting office for the ensuing year. Constitutionally, though, nominations are now in order. AM