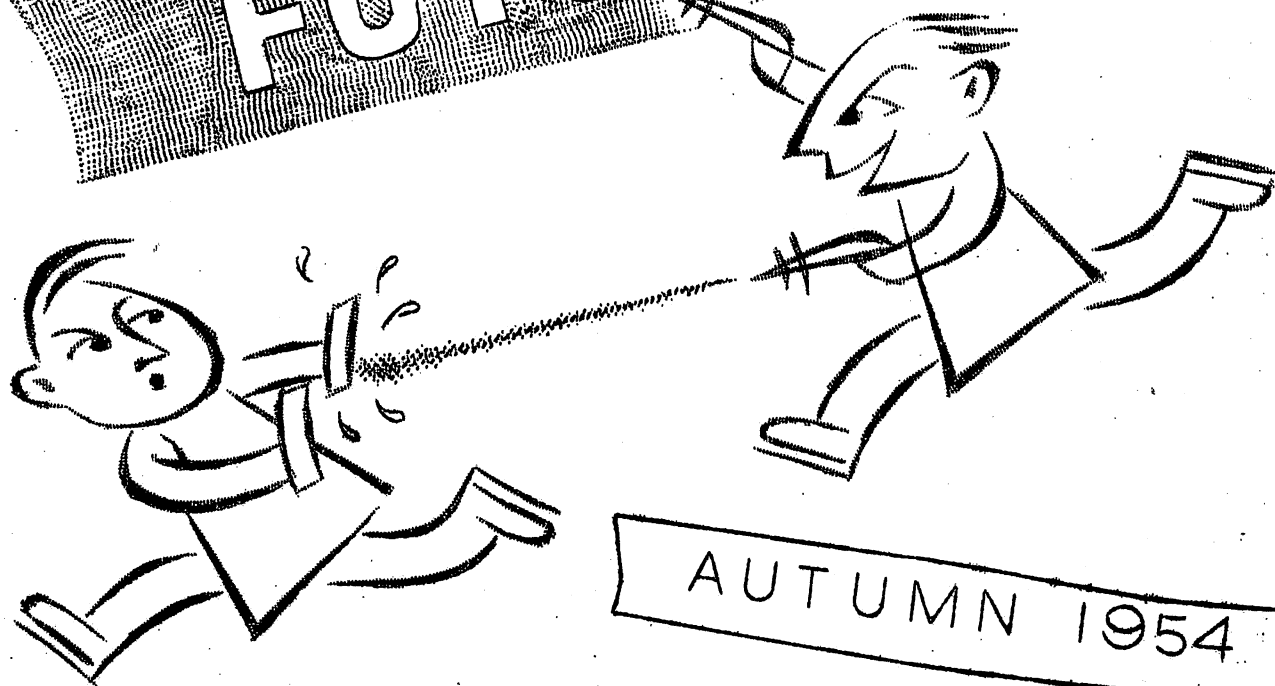




THE NEW FUTURIAN



AUTUMN 1954

Harry Turner 1954

THE NEW

FUTURIAN

AUTUMN ... 1954
Issue number 3.

A rather surprising property of addicts of the imaginative in fiction is the desire - and ability - to put their thoughts into print; on any or all aspects of their hobby and interest. A prolific amateur press has existed since circa 1930 and the number of "fanmags" or "fanzines" which have blossomed and disappeared is legion. One leaflet which appeared in 1938 was the Bulletin of the Leeds Science Fiction League, but after a couple of issues the club decided to put out a more general magazine and the title of "Futurian" was coined for the purpose. 1940 saw the final edition under this imprint, but after an interregnum of chain letters and other ad hoc methods of communication, your editor found himself spending the long hours of air-raid alerts churning out copies of "The Futurian War Digest" on a flatbed duplicator, with the help to some extent of practically everybody left able to take part in British fan activities. Rheumatism in 1945 put a stop to this, but only (!) nine years later along comes "The New Futurian"; which by all sane logic, I still haven't the time to produce but will, willy-nilly, for all that. Price, for those who will pay is 9d. per issue, 15 cents in our late American colonies. Official data on publisher is John Michael (Mike to fandom) Rosenblum, 7 Grosvenor Park, Chapel-Allerton, Leeds 7, England. Publication so far has been quarterly and the editorial fingers are crossed. Literate literary contributions most welcome from all parts of the globe (Martians too, if their English is adequate); comments are eagerly awaited and subject to publication unless noted to the contrary. Exchanges with our contemporaries welcome. All characters mentioned are entirely imaginary.

=====

This magazine is NOT, we repeat NOT, modelled on Mr Walter A. Willis's HYPHEN !!!

=====

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

A. VINCENT CLARKE Just about the beginning of the late war, I remember says JMR, looking through a checklist of fantasy books kept very neatly in a looseleaf notebook by a young fan. That is my first memory of one of the 3 best-known British fans of today. In fact Vinç did become almost a professional fan as he certainly gave up work rather than interfere with fan activities. He is persona most grata with all sections of fandom, the organiser of almost every activity produced in the London area, a prolific and constantly high standard fanzine contributor, in short, a person we could do most ill without.

ROY ROWLAND JOHNSON was Leicester's gift to wartime fandom and a worthy successor to Maurice Hanson of the early days of the Science Fiction League and Science Fiction Association. He took part in all the then activities, organised the "Midvention" in April 1943, and was present at the "Norcon" in Manchester for New Year 1944. Possibly the attenuated context of wartime interests in science fiction failed to hold the attention of so bold and intensive a personality; I feel that in the fandom of today he would be much more at home.

STANLEY RICHARD "RIK" DALTON has had an interest in science fiction for some ten years or more, during which period he has trained and practised as (a) a Bevin Boy in the mines, and (b) a solicitor. Like many other people in fandom his interests are prolific and well-spread - he is an ardent Esperantist, active politically in the left-wing movement of Commonwealth, seems to be concerned with the mutual, non-profit Housing Society movement, Secretary of the International Club in Leeds, a specialist on avant-garde films and so on. Incidentally, he has promised us an article of fantasy in film form, when he has the time. A member of the Leeds Science Fiction Association, he sometimes even shows up at meetings, Married, no family, book, record and cactus collections.



CONTENTS



<u>Historical</u>	THE CLAMCROUS DREAMERS III	WALTER H. GILLINGS	4
<u>Discursive</u>	COLLECTORS ITEM	A. VINCENT CLARKE	8
<u>Book Review</u>	PLANETOID 127	DENNIS TUCKER	10
<u>Commentary</u>	SOMETHING AND NOTHING	"PHOENIX"	12
<u>Analysis</u>	THROUGH THE FUTURE'S FENCE	JOHN K. H. BRUNNER	16
<u>Reply</u>	HAVING FUN	ERNEST THOMPSON	19
<u>Reactions</u>	ARGUMENTATIVE ?	SOME OF THE READERS	22
<u>Play Review</u>	URANIUM 235	RIK DALTON	29
<u>Reverie</u>	THOUGHTS FROM THE WILDERNESS	ROY ROWLAND JOHNSON	29
<u>Book Review</u>	THE LORD OF THE RING	C. ROLAND FORSTER	31
<u>Editorial</u>	PERSONAL PAGE	J. MICHAEL ROSENBLUM	32

PLANNED FOR NEXT ISSUE (i.e. crowded out this time, unfortunately)

THE AUSTRALIAN PAPER-BACKS	KENNETH F. SLATER
AFRAID	DON WILSON
MUSIC OF THE FUTURE	HARRY WARNER
SUMMING UP ON WHO'WHO FOR FANDOM	EDITOR

PLUS the usual columns and regular features, but more material welcome

A few copies of issues One and Two of the New Futurian are still available. Press run this issue is 240 copies. Representatives wanted for America and Australia. Next issue should be along about February 1955, other commitments allowing.

THE CLAMOUROUS DREAMERS

The Story of British Science-Fiction Fandom

by WALTER GILLINGS

THIS series of articles, tracing the growth of British magazine science-fiction and its accompanying fandom, is proving as popular with the younger generation of devotees as with those of 25 years ago, to whom an s-f story in an English publication was something to get excited about--especially if you were the author. In this instalment our Mr Gillings tells of the signs and portents which, in 1931, indicated there were British storytellers who had contributions to make to the field as it was being developed in the U.S.A., even if they could find little encouragement at home.

PART THREE :: THE SHADOW OF THE MASTER

The rise of American science-fiction in the late 1920's brought opportunities to the British writer, no less than to the reader, denied to him by editors and publishers in his own country. Or, if not denied entirely, they were extended very rarely; for s-f stories were seldom to be found in British periodicals unless they were of the sort that catered for schoolboys. The exceptions were occasional tales by a few well-established authors such as appeared in The Strand or Pearsons Magazine (where Wells and Conan Doyle had set the fashion), and novels produced for the book-buying public which were invariably timid in their fantastic appeal. The notable exception in this category was Olaf Stapledon's "Last and First Men," which appeared towards the end of 1930 and got very good reviews; though I did not notice them at the time. At least, if I did, I was not moved to get hold of the book until several years had gone by, when I realised just what I was missing -- and I blush to make the confession.

The only pieces of British s-f I came across in those days which were at all adult in approach were in the Radio Times, and then they were very infrequent, as I recall. But there was always something interesting in the Christmas number; and there was a serial by Bolun Lynch (author of "Menace from the Moon," one of my favourite books), which I remember vaguely as being set in the future but have never been able to identify since. The trouble was that Wells had so firmly entrenched himself as the master of the scientific romance, and had covered the field so thoroughly, that the majority of editors were convinced no lesser writers could produce more than an inferior imitation of his work. Nor indeed, could many of those who had the heart to try, until Stapledon amazed the critics with his masterpiece -- which was hardly the sort of material that could have been presented in a magazine.

Again, science-fiction was being nurtured in the U.S.A. as a specialised form of popular magazine reading, and England had no publications which limited themselves to one kind of fiction, except in the juvenile field. There was nothing

for instance, comparable with the American Argosy, which had made a feature of fantastic fiction since the days of Garrett P. Serviss, George Allen England and other writers whose "classic" tales Gernsback revived, with those of Wells, Verne and Burroughs, to build a foundation for Amazing Stories. Burroughs was, in fact, the only American writer whose work was accepted here, because his books sold as readily as Wells'; and, to my knowledge, it was never presented in an English periodical apart from a twopenny "blood" before 1933, when his Venus stories were serialised in Passing Show.

Some might argue that the essential juvenility of John Carter's exploits on Barsoom, on which we were all weaned, would suffice to account for the attitude of British editors and publishers towards the whole of science-fiction in those days. However, in 1930 I had not acquired the experience or acumen to account at all logically for what seemed to me no more than a foolish prejudice among them, and a shameful neglect of a still promising line of country. So, having set myself the formidable task of persuading them to pay more heed to the genre, I embarked on a campaign of propaganda directed at editors' heads.

It was soon after launching the Ilford Science Literary Circle that I wrote my first article demanding; "Why Do We Neglect Scientific Literature." This I hurled, defiantly, at the editor of a topical weekly which I patronised because it was given to regular articles on astronomy and similar topics which were treated fairly imaginatively--until they got on to the subject of rocket-travel, then appearing in the news on the strength of Hermann Oberth's researches and Max Valier's ill-fated experiments. The paper did not carry fiction, but it catered for a fairly well-educated younger element and I hoped for a sympathetic ear.

The hope was vain. Science-fiction, I was reminded, was not new; the Americans had merely taken the cue from Wells, who had started it thirty years before. What was more, their kind of stuff "would not be very attractive to English readers as a whole. It was rather crude from the scientific and the literary point of view." Which, of course, it was, in too many cases; though Uncle Gernsback would not have conceded the point on the science side, with his panel of twenty-odd Associate Science Editors "passing upon the scientific principles of all stories" in Wonder. But note the general attitude, which I was to come up against repeatedly: as if it had all been done before and there was no future in s-f as far as this country was concerned.

Then, within a month, the cover of the February '31 Pearson's caught my eye, and Len Kippin's. It showed a monster caterpillar knocking over a London bus, and introduced a three-part serial, "Winged Terror," by G.R. Malloch, the Scottish writer who died not long ago. "Not since Mr H.G. Wells wrote 'The War of the Worlds' for Pearson's Magazine has there been so thrilling a story," the Editor declaimed. That was an exaggeration, I thought, when I'd read it; but the first instalment set me off on another article in which I made the same plaintive plea for more science-fiction and commended the effort as a step in the right direction. Though the MS. came back, its message did not fall on deaf ears. "I quite agree with you," said this editor, more amenably, "that it is high time our more imaginative authors turned their attention to scientific subjects . . and I hope that this story of ours will be followed by others as interesting."

It was, almost immediately--but not in Pearson's. The cover of Chums for the following May was even more arresting, showing a rocket-vessel apparently on its way to the moon. Closer investigation revealed that the issue contained two stories which had appeared eighteen months before in an issue of Air Wonder Stories: Ed Earl Repp's "Beyond the Aurora," and "The Second Shell," by Jack Williamson. Much intrigued, and feeling that things were on the move, I turned my guns on the Editor, who confessed that the stories had been published with the idea of giving this sort of fiction a trial; and if I could put them in touch with any writers who could offer them some more, they would be glad to pursue the experiment.

Fair enough--but where were our British authors who could substitute for Messrs. Williamson and Repp? I little realised that there was one, at least, in Sheffield, who had been contributing science-fiction to juvenile and adult publications since the days before World War I: George C. Wallis, whose later writings I was to use in Tales of Wonder. Not until then, though, did I discover that the author of "The World at Day", which I had read in Amazing's last issue for 1928 (and which was actually serialised in the Daily Herald while I was still at school), was an English writer who had appeared even earlier in Weird Tales.

By 1931, however, it became evident that there were British writers who had not been slow to recognise the opportunities presented by the American s-f market, once it had come to their notice. In the February issue of The Writer appeared a piece by one Gray Usher asking, "Will There be a Science-Story Boom?" This was inspired by the Pearson's serial and posed the question--rather prematurely--which has been put so often of recent years, whether s-f would prove a rival to detective stories. It went on to draw attention to the American magazines indicating their differing requirements, and recommending them particularly to English freelances (unused to such courtesies, as a rule) because of the custom of their editors to explain why rejected MSS. were unsuitable; this apart from the high rates paid for accepted material.

To The Writer, then, went another of my propagandist articles, which was promptly declined as such, but duly printed in the correspondence columns. Here I took issue with Mr Usher, on patriotic grounds, for encouraging British writers to send their science fiction abroad. "If there is to be a boom," says I, "let us have it in England." But the letter from the Editor of Chums gave me something on which to construct what became, in July, my first published article in a periodical other than my own paper; and I was all the more proud because it appeared, paradoxically, in a journal which proffered advice to tyro authors. It was Editor Kennedy Williamson, that patient mentor of so many successful writers, who accepted and tidied up my MS.; and neither he nor I could have imagined that twenty years later, when I has accumulated a fund of experience in several different fields, I should follow in his footsteps as Director of Hutchinson's correspondence school for would-be authors and journalists . . .

In assessing British science-fiction prospects in 1931, I also drew on the experience of an author who had communicated with me, following my earlier piece in The Writer, applauding our Science Literary Circle and expressing a wish to visit us: his home was at Clapham Common. With his approval, I reported in my article that although this "well-known author" had published some fifty thrillers, he had never managed to persuade an editor to take any of the s-f he

preferred to write, until recently. A full-blooded interplanetary adventure novel of his had, in fact, just been issued by his regular publisher. It was "Vandals of the Void," which also appeared in the current Wonder Quarterly, and was the subject of my first attempt at book reviewing--in the Ilford Recorder. I still have the autograph copy with which the author presented me. The inscription reads simply: "With all good wishes. Yours sincerely, J.M. Walsh."

Jim Walsh, as he came to be known years later among his friends of the London Circle, which he visited occasionally after moving to Weston-Super-Mare, has been dead now for two years. His sf output was never great, compared to the long run of detective and spy thrillers which supplied his bread and butter; but his enthusiasm for science-fiction was a great incentive to me in the days of the Ilford Circle, which he visited twice before it closed down in the summer of '31. To our little group, seated comfortably in our drawing-room chairs, his recital of his early struggles as a part-time writer was as fascinating as his yarns of life in his native Australia, where he had been Sheep and cattleman, auctioneer and newsagent before he settled down to authorship in 1923. And when we got down to our subject, his views on the possibility of life on other worlds were not only interesting to listen to, but served as basis for a special Recorder write-up on "The Case for the Martians."

The first professional writer to pronounce his blessing on our efforts for science-fiction was also the first to confirm my suspicions that the task of converting British editors to our cause was going to be prodigious. In spite of the popularity of his other work, Walsh had not easily persuaded his publishers to experiment with "Vandals of the Void," which had been turned down by almost every magazine in England, including those which had cheerfully serialised his orthodox mystery stories. His "Terror out of Space," which finally appeared in Amazing under his Haverstock Hill pseudonym, met with the same cool reception among British publishers, who, he assured me in his letters, were very chary of this sort of thing. "Even the papers that tell me they are on the Look-out for something original seem to think it is too original. They admit the chances are that there will presently be a boom in s-f, but they are all waiting for someone else to take the lead; then they will follow!"

I was to find out the truth of all this for myself, in due course. It would have been easier, perhaps, to have given up the struggle there and then; but, for all his bitter experience, Walsh stubbornly adhered to his belief that British s-f had a future, and continued to punctuate his thrillers with s-f stories which his agents tried in vain to sell anyone but Gernsback--until the coming of Tales of Wonder and Newnes' Fantasy. At the same time, unbeknown to us, other English writers were having much the same setbacks, or avoiding them by sending their material straight to America. Witness the footnote to my letter in Wonder Stories announcing our high intentions, which hailed "the English response to the s-f movement now sweeping the world," thus: The Glamorous Dreamers:

"England, the birthplace of H.G. WELLS, is now acknowledging the meaning and significance of s-f and we believe that this movement begun by Mr Gillings will spread rapidly. We want to accord it our enthusiastic support. Of late many splendid stories have been coming out of England, men like George B. Beattie and Benson Herbert carrying on the Wells tradition. With an ever-enlarging reader interest stimulated by the Literary Circle. . . and more and more Englishmen of talent turning to science-fiction, we believe that old England will closely follow America in its devotion to this new art."

From that day to this, I have never received any other indication that

-- turn to bottom of page 21.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM

by A. VINCENT CLARKE

It was with the same sense of unreality that those (usually ~~unfortunate~~) Unknown heroes must have felt on entering a 'shottle Bop' or similar half-world establishment that I discovered a 'Collector's Shop' in the Victoria area of London a couple of years ago. I love this great, dirty, wonderful city for a number of reasons, not the least of which is its largeness, and ~~for~~ spare-time collector like myself, one who does his book-shop explorings in spurts and spasms the excitement of finding a new back-street shop with a shelf or two of dusty books more than compensates for the usual discovery that they consist of Edwardian girls-school prizes. Those soon-to-be suffragettes were awfully good at winning prizes.

But here, on a main street through which I rarely travelled, was a genuine Collectors' Shop. One encounters shops selling stamps, cigarette cards, and sometimes foreign coins in every other street, but a window which displays two ragged bundles of papyri sandwiched between a stack of (inevitably) Edwardian-beauty postcards (GENUINELY HAND COLOURED) and some exotically painted Lead-soldiers is worthy of a closer look.

I looked. I knew matchbox labels were collected by an elite few, and was not surprised to see a few hundred displayed, but cheese labels struck me as being a fresh field, and I confess the possibilities of razor-blade-packet collecting had never entered my mind. It's the used blades that I accumulate. But one outre branch of esoteric hoarding was missing, and I turned away with the melancholy that, although the book collector will flourish as long as printed pages are bound together, the s-f magazine collector is becoming as rare as the more ancient of the items he hunts.

Where are the collections of yester-year? I mean the Real collections. There was a time when an 's-f fan' was a person with a carefully covered shrine in one corner of the house in which reposed in eternal rest stack upon stack of yellowing, odd-smelling periodicals, the front cover (red sky and flaming rocket ships---none of your scantily clad heriones.) of one firmly impressed into the back cover ("Pick out the hidden faces and win £2000") of the next.

I am quite aware that such people do still exist. The occasional catalogues of the magazine dealers bear witness to that, for only half-witted genuine collectors would pay 7/6 for a dog-eared, moth-eaten collection of naive, ill-constructed and out-of-date attempts at 'scientific romance' which cost about 1/3 a score or more years ago. But the breed is dying out. The war struck the first, nearly mortal blow; how many attics-full of paper which might have found its way into the hands of collectors found instead the maw of the pulping-vats after a 'salvage drive' one shudders to think. Some collections were blitzed; there was a sad story in Futurian War Digest, the beloved Fido, of Weird Tales covers fluttering over the ruins of a fan's house. Ken Bulmer still has the relics of a similar disaster in the shape of several copies with scorched exteriors.

Then came peace -- of a sort -- and for a short time the collectors flourished. I remember cycling around North East London in '47 and finding a shop displaying, on a wire rack hanging outside, about half-a-dozen '37 astoundings. And in the same district another magazine shop had a score of pre-war Wonder Stories and the usual cry of "we had the whole lot in a couple of weeks ago..... if only you had come in then."

But then came the undreamed-of development of s-f book publishing. Serials dragged from hiding places 20 years deep were published. An author's earliest story appeared simultaneously with a current, mature effort. 'Best story' collections flourished with such vigour that the mere collection of good yarns into hard covers was hardly enough, and the 'connecting theme' anthology was born and still appears.

And the old magazines?

Many thought that it wasn't worth while "keeping a mag. for one story" when it could be obtained between brand-new boards. And although printing didn't alter the quality of a story, it looked better. More.... mature, perhaps. Collecting of magazines was difficult, any way, owing to the diminution of those unknown stock-piles during the war. Many stories were altered, and occasionally bettered, for book publication. Add to this the expense of buying US books and it's not really surprising that many exotically-covered magazines were replaced by fewer and not-quite-so-exotically-covered books.

I've no statistics on the number of large 'zine collections that were disposed of around '48 to '51, but off-hand I can recall those of Messrs. Lindsay Evans, Doughty, Parnell, Brown, Flood, Smith and half-a-dozen others, all well known fans of the '40s. With the inevitable flow back to the States, there can't be many of the old-time collections that embrace pre-war items left. When Ken and I helped Ted Tubb to move house the other week and unpacked scores of pre-war Astoundings and stacks of Quarterlies, it was almost like assisting at a sacred rite, and the '5d' stamped in purple ink on the cover of a 1930 Astounding became a mystic, forgotten symbol.

I think the 'completist' collector is now one with myth and legend, unless some unknown millionaire is busily renting warehouses and filling them. The last 'completist' in the London area who was in contact with fandom sold out a year ago. The 'Astounding only' collections a comparatively numerous, and, coming up-to-date, Galaxy and Magazine of Fantasy and S-F will probably be hoarded for some years until all of their stories are reprinted or the younger fans who are keeping them can afford to buy a whole book at once. Short sets;... Tales of Wonder, A. Merrit's Fantasy, etc., will probably be kept for a time, but generally there are few systematic collectors around. 'Want-list' is becoming a term appertaining exclusively to book-collecting, and the encyclopaedic knowledge required of a fan in even the late '40s is becoming anachronistic. ("February '38 ASF? That was the last part of 'Galactic Patrol', wasn't it? Cover showing a racket ship swinging around the Sun...no, I'm wrong, that was the February '37 ish. Feb' '38 had the first astronomical cover, of course, etc etc.")

Should one move with the times in this case? Reason, and the thought of those horrible stories, answers: "Yes! Get rid of those bug-eyed-insect bearing pages and buy new books! Less space --- cleaner --- better in every way"

I look at them, The serried ranks of blue-and-white, black-and-yellow, black-and-white spines. Astoundings. Floppy orange spines and short pink ones. Pre-war Wonders. Blue-and-white spines of wonderfully varying thickness and height. Amazings before the horror of Ziff-Davies. That one I spotted lying under a pile of junk in an Elephant and Castle shop. Those were hanging in an incredibly dirty marine-store window down by the docks.... the whole street vanished during the blitz. That one was in a pile incongruously placed on a Chippendale table in a respectable antique shop. This.....

I riffle through them. An anthology will never never reprint that story.. .. and yet there's something about it.....Of course, those illustrations weren't reproduced in the book... I remember how I first read that on a 'bus coming back home.... Ah! the letter section! The short-sighted---"Spiders of Mars will be immortal!"---the crudite---"The Einsteinian equations quoted by your author--"---the humorous, the would-be-humorous, the solemn, the voice-in-the-English-wilderness wanting contacts, the atmosphere of dead times...but interesting times. And of course, there's the rarity value. How many copies of Amazing Stories Annual exist today? Who the hell cares? None of it would be printed in a magazine of 1954.

Schizophrenia, here I come. A collector is a collector is a collector. And a story is a story. But a magazine is a medley. It's the good and the bad together, and you choose what you read. And it's small slice of history. Not only the history of the writers and the fellow who gives his opinions at the back and of the development of the whole s-f field. There's a personal history attached to every magazine on the shelves. How and when you obtained it and how you felt when you read it. It's nice to have a series sold to you as one book; it's nice not to have to wait ten years, as I once did, to read the second and concluding part of a serial. It's nice to have the cream carefully skimmed for one. It's entirely illogical to keep this magazine that reprints Verne and Wells, and announces a terrific forthcoming story by Edgar Rice Burroughs. It's unreasonable. Unscientific.

Handle that carefully! Dust it and put it back!

Don't you know that's a collector's item?

[illegible]

BOOK REVIEW

Author: Edgar Wallace. Type: Science-fiction
Title: PLANETOID 127. Published by: The Readers Library
Publishing Co. Ltd.
Date: None given, but I should guess at about 1925-30
Synopsis: Radio communication with the inhabitants of another world.
Reviewed by Dennis Tucker.

I find several things about this book of particular interest, not the least of which is the actual discovery that Edgar Wallace wrote some science-fiction.

The book was apparently one of a very cheap series made possible according to the foreword, by preparing for a sale of 'hundreds of thousand of copies' of each volume. There are 252 pages of quite large, well-spaced print, but the story under review is contained in 147 of them, the remainder of the book being devoted to a 'crook' story of the type for which this author was so well-known, - "The Sweizer Pump". (The particular series is, in fact, called 'The Crime Series') Although a cheap edition, an editorial note claims it to be the first publication of the material.

My guess as to the date of publication is based in part on the style and condition of my copy and for the rest on various slightly out-dated references in the text, for example: 'motor-bicycle', - 'electric hand-lamp', - he could afford the luxury of a car...' and also to a mention of eight planets in the solar system, plus an interesting remark about 'an undetected planet beyond the orbit of Neptune'.

The story itself, which is quite slight, concerns a scientist, Colson, who by mysterious means, becomes very rich. He dabbles in stocks and shares and appears to be able to obtain advance information on the markets, which he uses to his own advantage and, needless to say, to the detriment of the willian, one Hildreth, a financier, who is out for his blood.

The actual hero, if such he can be called, is a sort of grown-up school-boy, - around eighteen, I gather, - a pupil of Colson's, who rejoices in the name of Tim Lensman. (! !)

Colson reveals to Lensman that he has succeeded in establishing radio contact with the inhabitants of another planet. This world occupies the same orbit as the Earth but is 186,000,000 miles distant, i.e. directly opposite to us on the other side of the sun, and forever invisible to us. (Can this be the earliest use of the idea ?) Having overcome language difficulties, he makes staggering discoveries: not only is "Neo" geographically similar to Earth, but the incidents of life run on parallel lines. Persons, wars, railways, aeroplanes street cars, Stock Exchanges and so on. Persons, wars, disasters, were duplicated on both worlds. (Colson was, in fact, speaking with a sort of alter-ego or "twin soul" on Neo) However, the incidents were always duplicated two or three days before or after their occurrence on the other world. Hence the two Closons in due course make each other rich by giving "advance" information on stocks and shares, and each thereby makes an enemy. The principal difference between the worlds - and I don't quite see the reason for this - is that Neo has a universal tongue. "Planetoid 127" of the title is the satellite of Neo, which was observed by Colson on photographs of a total eclipse of the sun as a speck close to the corona, although, as mentioned, the planet itself remained out of sight.

Colson, then, hears of the murder of his counterpart on Neo, and, in due course is himself murdered by one of Hildreth's thugs, but not before he has prepared a document giving the above information, for Lensman (who is to continue Colson's work.) Before he is killed, he carefully hides the papers (why?) and leaves a clue to their hiding-place in the form of a cryptogram. Hildreth solves the cryptogram first and steals the papers, makes a get-away in a car and is chased by Lensman on a motor-bike. The lad catches up and does a Wild-West leap into the car, -(I'd like to see it happen!)- has a tussle with the villian

recovers the document, jumps out, runs away and falls into a quarry. The villian cannot find him, drives off and comes to a sticky end in a smash.

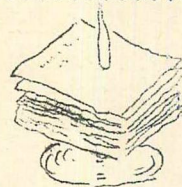
After this the story just peters out. Lensman has one final contact with the assistant of the other-world Colson: "... they are breaking the machines... they are here.... good-bye!" - and various smashing noises and a scream. Communication with Neo has ended.

The only love-interest in the story- true to the s-f tradition, in earlier days, of little or none! - is contained in the last six lines, when a girl-friend enquires whether Lensman really wants to know what will happen tomorrow or the next day: "No, I don't think so. But I should like to know what will happen in a few year's time, when I'm a little older and you're a little older?" ----- "Perhaps we'll find a new world of our own," said Elsie ! (End)

As far as I can tell, the science is fairly accurate. For example, mention is made of the time-lag of 1,000 seconds before the transmission from one world reached the other. (Disregarding Heaviside and other layers.) The difficulties of establishing communications are touched upon: "We made a start with the cardinal numbers" - and various other details concerning this aspect, - not simply a bald statement that communication was established. These small points suggest that a considerable amount of thought and ground-work went into this story by an author to whom the medium must have been strange. I certainly class this book as a very interesting find, if not exactly high-quality science-fiction.

In conclusion, may I ask the indulgence of the reader if this review is not as concise as it might be. I believe a true book-reviewer is born, not self-taught !

"SOMETHING & NOTHING"
by "PHOENIX"



If any Martian should pass my way, don't bother to call; just keep going. I don't want to see you. In fact, I should hate the sight of you. Go and visit Michael, who is used to weird visitors, weirder than thee.

What ! You thought I was a fan ! Full of interplanetary bonhomie ? more at home with a bunch of aliens than I would be with human beings, supposing I knew any others ? Go and shake tentacles elsewhere. You shan't sit in my armchair. And kindly stop smoking that pipe; it smells like Lubla.

I'd have you know that I don't even like my own species, except in small doses. Some of the more normal ones I do tolerate up to a point, just to get along, providing that they don't offend my own rather rigid conventions of behaviour and appearance, but only after first counting their heads. More than one apiece and I show them the door. Eccentrics I cannot bear, as the mutant said. It's a psychological thing.

It came on quite suddenly at the 1951 convention, as a result of listening to Yma Sumac for two days and nights. Miss or rather Mrs Sumac is, of course remarkable in that she has a voice range of $4\frac{1}{2}$ octaves; she can sing therefore, both very high and very low. She is also, in a fashion that matches her exotic Inca name, quite beautiful. For me, however, the combined effect of voice and name and remembered beauty was too much. The human voice should not be able to sing so high and so low, I felt, and indeed was there not at both extremes a certain quality in her voice that could only be called unhuman. My skin prickled in response to a gestalt image of masked priests, sungods and cruel-smiling idols. If only her name were not so evocative; if only she really were Any Camus.

But Oge Ekralc would not have it so, and how precisely right he was in playing Yma Sumac records at an SF Convention! When the first non-terrestrial sings to us (many of those present must have thought) it will sound like that and I wonder how many felt, like me, the first swoop of panic as if they were children again when the candle gutters?

And a year later: Nat King Cole. Nat, that most effortless of popular singers, whose creamy, urbane voice never failed to give pleasure when I heard it on the radio. A real artist, never a note to jar on me. Much less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ octaves, of course.

The shock came when my local cinema showed a short film in which he was the star, and I realised that this mellifluous voice which I had so admired came from a man who, to my eyes, is appallingly ugly.

I'll say no more. Others may find him Handsome. Or it may have been a bad camera angle. But he gave me the creeps again.

So you see how it is: if I can't stand Yma Sumac's Voice, or Nat King Cole's face, I can't be expected to take to pipe-smoking Martians who knock at the door thumbing a phrase-book and twiddling cameras and generally performing actions that only humans should do.

Try next door. You might be welcome there. On the other hand, you might not. My opinion is that you aliens should either be completely alien both in acts and manners, or else be indistinguishable from human beings, like the London Circle fans. Any other way, you're liable to end up on a gramophone record.

-----ooo000ooo-----

"... and this record is for Mr and Mrs Glue from their son Richard; with love to Mum, Dad, Auntie Hilda, Sticky....."

-----BPC " Family Favourites" programme, July 1954

-----ooo000ooo-----

An acquaintance has recently returned from a holiday on the Costa Brava. He went with a friend. It was their second visit. As near as can be, the following is a verbatim record of a conversation with him.

- Q. "So you had a good time. What did you do?"
 A. "I visited the bullfight again."
 Q. "And what did you think of it?"
 A. "Oh, it was wonderful. I was absolutely thrilled."
 Q. "In what way?"
 A. "The atmosphere....the excitement."

Q. "Something like a boxing-match, perhaps ?"

A. "Not quite; it's as if the boxers were also ballet dancers. The whole things an art-form."

Q. "Did you like it as much as last year ?"

A. "Oh, more so. I didn't have any sympathies for the bulls. Just no feelings about them at all, except for one that got stabbed in the lungs instead of the spine. Or is it the heart ? This one just stood there, with the blood streaming out of its mouth. There must have been gallons...ugh ! "

Q. "And what about your friend ?"

A. "He liked it more this time. Last year he would hardly speak to me all evening after the fight, to show his disapproval."

Q. "You think it has grown on him ?"

A. "Yes. And also this time he saw one of the toreadors gored, which made the fight seem more even. It was all over in a second. I hardly noticed what was happening. The bull charged him twice. According to the papers, he had a 12 inch gash on the thighs and prolapsis of the "testiculos". Have you got a dictionary ? I must look up "prolapsis".

(Does so and appears somewhat sobered as a result. Continues.)

"You know, they think a lot of the toreadors. According to popular belief, they possess exceptional sexual vigour. No wonder the papers made a lot of it."

Note: The speaker is about 28 years old, unmarried, a graduate in science, and by profession an applied scientist.

If you wonder what the above has in common with science fiction, the answer should be obvious. But no matter.

Among the much-travelled New Futurians, are there any who have seen a bull-fight ? If so, I would like to read their reactions to it. Hemingway's "Death in the Afternoon", which the above speaker stated that he had read before going to the fight, should not be quoted. First-hand stuff only, please.

---oooOooo---

One night not long ago, on one of those endless overnight train journeys across Europe, when sleep won't come and the compartment feels like the sunside of Mercury, I went out into the corridor for a smoke and some fresh air. It was about 3 a.m. and the Milan Express was sweeping through Lorraine; I should think somewhere near Metz, judging by the occasional glaw of steelworks and the volcanic glare of converters against the skyline.

I began to think of the craziest things, the way one does at such an hour, when the better judgement is napping, such as how to get a cup of coffee, or what to do if we really should be rushing across the face of Mercury. Even about buckling down to write something for Michael, so you can guess that I was far gone.

On the caachwork was a trilingual notice about not leaning out of the window: "Defense" (it said very politely but firmly) "de se penser au dehors." O gallant Gaul ! as if, not wishing to offend the reader, the official had decided to take the impersonal approach, which is probably the best in France, where folk are apt to take umbrage against rules and regulations, instead of ignoring them like the Italians, or looking for loopholes, like the English. Better by far, he must have decided, not to be too blunt, or some disgruntled passenger might hang him outside.

The German version wasn't so pernickety. "Nicht hinauslehnen" it snapped. Say that smartly out loud, and see if the dög doesn't cringe. There's no doubt

about German being the language of command; one of the points overlooked by the "Daily Express" Don't--Arm-- Germany campaign is that the Germans are already armed. Their language itself constitutes a built-in weapon. What to do about that, Lord Beaverbrook? Should the very dictionaries be censored, so as to remove even the means of thinking about war, on the lines of George Orwell's 1984" ?

To my mind, the Italian version on the little notice said it best; "E pericoloso sporgersi" it pointed out. If after reading that, anyone didn't agree or was prepared to risk the danger, well, O.K ! it's a free country. Everyone's got rights. Let him stick his fool neck out, and see what happens. Shrug of the shoulders.

By now I had decided that it was quite impossible to get any coffee before morning. Also that if this was Mercury, I was due for trouble with no visa. As for Michael, what on earth was there to write about ?

-----oooOooo-----

Once there was a time when I couldn't understand the covers. They didn't fit in with the stories. Then someone pointed out that the whirligigs represented atomic nuclei, all very symbolic. Presently the articles started giving me trouble; all about some obscure chemical called thiotimoline. Couldn't understand a word of it.

Things got better for a while. Sometimes there was a cover with a recognisable scene from the leading story. And the thiotimoline article turned out to have been a joke, which, since half the readers hadn't seen it, led to simpler articles thereafter. Of course, I still didn't grasp the stories.

But the July 1954 issue is as bad as ever. What is one to make of a cover which depicts a naked man sitting on a bath-mat and gazing at what is presumably the bathroom wall, while in his hand is a little plucked boiling fowl, trussed for the pot ? The wallpaper is very Contemporary. I shouldn't like it in my bathroom.

The monthly article deals with transfinite mathematics and is at least partly the editor's work. I found it interesting and not too abstruse, although such mantras as "any set that is equivalent to a proper subset of itself is infinite" or "the class of real numbers is non-denumerable" did, at first sight, send me scuttling to Bertrand Russell's "Mathematical Philosophy" for a refresher course in that particular type of language.

But while it was intelligible, did the article mean anything ? My reading was entirely uncritical, since I am not a mathematician, and what calculations I do nowadays are strictly slide-rule stuff. Who am I to say whether or not Campbell is talking through his hat again, as he did with Dianetics ? For all I know, he is pulling all sorts of intellectual fast ones on me.

Would any mathematician care to diffuse a little knowledge and tell me, in plain terms, with no messing, whether the article makes sense ? Because if I wait for readers' opinions to be printed in the next issue I have a sinking feeling that I shan't understand those either. I wish I were clever.

-----oooOooo-----

JMR sayeth... I spent two of the most pleasant days I ever remember during September when I wandered in and around London with Paul J. Searles, an American litterateur with fantasy interests and also interested in practically every cultural activity there could be - a compleat gentleman in short, whose contacts with fandom include publishing several issues of Olon Wiggins Science Fiction Fan circa 1935 and attending the U.S. Convention two years ago. A visit to the Globe was much enjoyed by both of us.

THROUGH THE FUTURE'S FENCE

with J. K. H. BRUNNER

The title of this second article in the series on the literary values of science fiction is taken from a poem by Siegfried Sassoon called "In Me, Past, Present, Future Meet". (In passing, it is well worth looking up if you don't know it. You'll find it in the Oxford Book of English Verse).

I chose it because the writer of science fiction has in some ways a much more difficult task than the writer of ordinary fiction. A measure of all fiction- dramatic, literary, or film- is that it suspends disbelief, and to achieve the suspension of disbelief in a world or in people of whom we can by definition have no knowledge is a task of no small order. It calls for a control and discipline of the imagination which is unparalleled anywhere in literature. It also calls for either an innate knowledge or a very thorough study of those so-recently formulated rules for the writing of fiction which I mentioned in the first article in this series (Topsy - New Futurian 2). And it is because of the success achieved by writers of this particularly testing genre that I consider sf to have made a genuine contribution to the art and craft of writing.

It is by no means adequate to make the comparison between the writer of sf and the writer of fiction about New York or the Matto Grosso who lives in London and has never been further from it than Brighton, for there are people for him to ask and books of reference to consult. Aside from the obvious authorities- textbooks on astronomy or psychology or what have you - the author of sf has only himself to guide, and he must, with that sole aid, bring to life and comprehensibility something which not only does not exist and never has existed but which does not even bear a resemblance to reality.

Since the Miracle Play, it is hard to find another example of the dramatisation of important truths so all-embracing as sf. The Miracle Plays showed in a form that people could easily understand the mysteries which were the most essential factor in lives lived on a flat surface between heaven above and hell beneath. Today, we are not so concerned with the spiritual values as we once were. In many ways, it is a pity, but it is an inescapable fact which we must face. Those things which are our hope for salvation are just that - things. And of course, ideas. It is therefore enormously important that one can today turn from Korzybsky to Van Vogt and find the ideas in action; read the tangled history of the Renaissance and its associated era, and then pick up Asimov's Foundation series and find the forces at work laid out and ticking for one's inspection.

At the commencement of these articles I had not intended to touch heavily on the social and educative forces of science fiction; but in studying the subject I have come inevitably to the conclusion that one cannot divorce the literary values of it from the functional task which it performs. Science fiction is a phenomenon unique in history, and very possibly it is a powerful one, for the reason outlined above. Therefore the manner of achievement of this task is indissolubly linked to any judgement of its worth as literature.

It carries out this function, then. It does it by means of an extension, or a broadening, of each of the three main elements of any fiction. These are background, event, and character, and of them background is the most essential, for from it the other two must derive. In setting up a society of the imagination one has to break down the fundamental prejudices of the reader caused by his conditioning from babyhood into his way of life. Only then can one stage one's plays, bring on one's actors, and sell one's message.

All character must be conditioned by the background: one would not try to

fit the characters of Coward's The Vortex into the earthy society of Zola's La Terre. Event is important in fiction only in so far as it displays character or derives from character. Background, therefore, and whether the background of a science fiction story is that of a ship between the stars or a culture of aliens it is doing something which has never been properly mastered before, and that is re-orienting the ways of thought of the reader into a pattern which may or may not exist one day. This holds true even in the case of stories like the War of the Worlds, or in that tradition, The Day of the Triffids and the Kraken Wakes, for in that case, though the background is superficially that of today on this earth, the reader is asked, "What if -?"

To illustrate the contention that science fiction has acquired a new technique in the mastery of background development, I have selected a story, excellently written from a technical point of view, and not very long, which has about as alien a setting as any which we can conceive - that of the interior of a starship whose inhabitants have forgotten that there ever was such a thing as Outside. I refer, of course, to Heinlein's Universe. Most of the readers of this article will know it is an acknowledged masterpiece by an acknowledged leader of the field.

The situation becomes clear to the reader almost at once - and yet it is not until some twenty pages have elapsed that the fact is stated in so many words. This is provision of background by implication, a tool which no other field of fiction has developed to such a keen pitch, and which was developed as a matter of sheer necessity, just like any other such instrument to convey ideas. The opening scenes of the story - Hugh Hoyland's expedition to no-weight- reveal immediately that there is a ship, and that it is spinning to produce pseudo-gravity. Together with the hero, we follow the Lines from the Beginning, the poetic legend of the ship, and because it contains truth-in-riddle, like the Book of Genesis, we who are outside the story can see what must have occurred, and yet can still believe that those who are inside should not.

Universe, though a brilliant story, belongs to an earlier age. By contrast one of the most meticulously and cleverly written novels of the modern era: Bester's The Demolished Man. Set in a society which has only a fraction of history in common with ours, it yet provides a consistent and convincing framework from which the plot develops with the inexorability of an exercise in Aristotelian logic. The necessity of setting this in motion has compelled the author to open in the style of an older technique with the exposition of a half-dozen details: the invention of Nulgee, the emergence of the TP mutation, the bookshop which hid the idea for the murder, the weapon, and the business war between Sacramento and the D'Courtney Cartel- set up, however, in eight pages, casually, hurriedly, almost and dismissed with a wave of the hand and an injunction to forget. And yet, though the author's air is that of refreshing one's memory one embarks on the book with a knowledge which covers what the ordinary person of that society has as part of his background in the same way as we count 1066, Magna Charta, the invention of flying and the atom bomb part of ours. In addition two tricks are employed: the odd Typography of the names Augustus T8, @kins, Duffy Wyg&; and the ingenious setting out of TP conversations - but these are employed judiciously and obtain the desired effect.

The result is that it no longer seems as if we are watching a play within the small compass of a theatre, but events actually taking place on that greatest stage of all - the world.

Background defines people. event displays them or is caused by them. With skill in depiction of character, as in the last mentioned story, but in a few

tales the background is so wholly familiar to us that it needs no definition; one would not think of defining London in a book published in England. In such a case, the characters are even more important than in the straight novel. One story stands out above all others as the epitome of character-drawing in sf.

Kris Neville's Bettyann (New Tales of Space and Time: Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1952) is a masterpiece because it is a contradiction in terms. It is the intensely human story of someone who is not human at all.

Some time ago, two visiting aliens - shape-changers, members of an old race whose planet is forgotten, who roam endlessly and emptily from world to world seeking experience, and chiefly colours - were killed in a road crash. But with them was their daughter - Bettyann.

She lived, despite the crash, sustaining only a paralysed arm.

This is the story of her growth among human beings - a story which might, perhaps, have been told of any crippled orphan girl of unusual sensitivity, but to which Neville's own extra-ordinary imagination lends a thousand important variants. He opens our eyes to the most ordinary things, to people, to sights and sounds and smells and happenings, which Bettyann too sees - but which she understands. She is not human, and yet to be human is all she knows, and with that added vigour which her alienness supplies she puts an uncommon richness into this commonplace existence of ours. She sees and understands so much! And we, who are human, know that it is good, and that we have the blessings of a youthful race.

But she is found by her own kind, the aged, the weary wanderers, who, kindly but not understanding, for they have forgotten that there is anything but what they themselves do, show her, her nature and invite her to join them on their endless voyages.

Yet she is human. And no human being could face the emptiness of that existence. We see, we feel the bitter contrast between the rich vitality of men and the ancient tiredness of the aliens; and when Bettyann chooses what she must we know that she is right.

This is Kris Neville's masterpiece to date. It is the kind of story that one might be satisfied to have written and then die. It possesses a fullness, a sensitivity, a quality of humanity, which places it on a level with Sturgeon's More than Human, Simak's Time and Again, C.L. Moore's No Woman Born, and Lawrence O'Donnell's Vintage Season. It is a kind of nobility, one might say, which makes one read and live with these of whom one reads.

Finally: event. There is little to be done that is new in the sphere of event resulting from conflict of character in sf, unless the background is so far-reachingly different as to produce entirely new characters for our delectation. The Demolished Man achieved just that, and the recent tale by Heinlein reprinted in Nebula No.9 - Ordeal in Space - was one of the very rare stories which manage to use quite an ordinary event to carry out a complete and convincing development of a character. But there is much which sf has done in the field of action affecting character which does not fall under the small, personal heading of Ordeal in Space.

This difference is achieved by utilising the very novelty of the forces which such developments as space travel range against people who are otherwise quite ordinary. We have all read innumerable stories which deal with the evolution of heroes or cowards or neither, from the Red Badge of Courage via Death of a Hero to the last poor imitation of the Green Hills of Earth in the last issue of the worst magazine on the market. Where something new has been done is in

the careful plotting of the subtle variations on this theme made possible by the newness of the event in all its ramifications. One of the very finest examples of this is Chan Davis's Letter to Ellen. The narrator is a person like you, or me, a quiet and normal man whose work entails artificial production of life. He has a friend, who stumbles across the fact that what they are making is in fact men; and then discovers that he was made and not born. The knowledge kills him - and the story ends, quite simply: "You see, Ellen, I wasn't born either. I was made. I had to tell you that, didn't I, Ellen, before I asked you to marry?"

Most of these few good stories depend on a single event to bring about a crashing change in a person's life. It is commoner to find a short short using this technique, but there have been novels - Earth Abides, for example - where, because the hero has no part in the event which so profoundly uproots him, one may say that event has been used in this manner.

A sidelong glance is due here at what the French so sweetly call 'l'anticipation scientifique genre western,' and we call space opera. Like any fast action fiction, this depends less on character than on stock pieces, and less on background than on colour and excitement; but there is an important distinction to be drawn between the good space opera, of which George O. Smith (The Hellflower) and Jack Vance (Planet of the Damned, Son of the Tree) are probably the leading exponents, and the ordinary tough or fast adventure story, no matter how good. This is important because it so heavily underlines the newness of s-f: it is that no matter how much the story may have been bodily lifted from Pecos County, Mississippi, or from the dives of the Windy City or the depths of the jungle, there has at least been an effort to follow in the steps of the masters of the old days, like Rider Haggard, and to add something more than sheer superficial excitement to the stew to make it palatable.

In the next article, I propose to take the three authors whom I believe to have made the most important contribution from s-f to fiction in general, and try and relate their work to their counterparts in other fields. I have selected Bradbury, because he has achieved wide-spread critical acclaim; van Vogt, because he is generally regarded as the aficionado's own writer of s-f; and Sturgeon, because I happen to be convinced that he has never written a bad story, and is more of a writer than both the others put together.

See you in Number 4.

HAVING FUN !

by Ernest Thompson

Perhaps it is not permissible to use such a title in a science-fiction magazine, particularly when the contributors appear to be so serious about the literature with which they are concerned. But it's quite true - I'm having lots of fun, especially when I see the replies to my former effort.

And now I must gird up my loins and prepare for battle. I have been taken to task so severely by my opponents, yet Mr C., I gather the impression that you agree with me more than you disagree, even though my poor effort was worded in such a vague manner. (Michael having informed you that I was trailing my coat will now I hope have caused a light to appear to those intellectuals who hadn't previously noticed it.

Your dogmatic definite of s-f is very acceptable as far as you and I are concerned; but, unfortunately, there are authorities who are 'au fait' with this type of literature (and it is a type) who say that s-f does not stand apart from

fantasy and that it is not possible to draw a hard and fast line between s-f and fantasy. The Arkham Sampler (Winter 1949) lists what are considered by writers, editors and readers of s-f to be the basic titles of any s-f library. When looking at your definition, it is surprising to find there are so many titles which do not and cannot be s-f in these lists. Who then am I to believe? Do I put my trust in Mr C? It is this desire to take over everything possible in order to make a bigger and better showing which may perhaps increase financial benefits to those concerned, which makes me ask 'is it the attempt to be the gathering in of a new type of writing' The gathering in 'being a harvest in more senses than one.

Having been a library assistant, you ought to have taken greater advantage of the opportunities it offered. Perhaps you were too busy doing the general routine work to have realised that librarians do have to choose books for their libraries as they have neither the money at their disposal, nor the space to stock them all. It will be pertinent to mention here that between January and July of this year, 2610 new fiction titles were published, and of these, a large percentage would (in my estimation) have saved time and trouble if they had not been issued. Really good books are rare, and here I agree with Mr Hopkins, feeling that s-f in the main, is not up to the standards required by me.

The Atlantic Award was mentioned because it was offered to you and accepted by you for your writing, and whether it was for writing s-f or not there should have been sufficient proof in your collection to have warranted the Award. You are 'leery' about librarians; do you mind if librarians are 'leery' about Atlantic-Award winners?

Your comparison as to the length of time you have been writing and the length of time John Wyndham has been writing is beside the point. Surely the book must be judged on its merits, not on the assumption that in twenty years time your writing will be better - leave that for Time to tell. Nor does your mock modesty affect me. I think you have some talents which may be shown to better advantage later. As for Martian lubla, I'm glad you agree with me, because in your quotation from Brave New World there was no word which was not in the vocabulary of the average person, and I assume that you are writing for the average person. (Don't tell me now that there is no such animal as an 'average person' - or perhaps Mr Hopkins will take me up on that.)

It is difficult to give a brief summary of likes and dislikes for it is quite feasible that a thing can be liked on account of certain associations; for example, I like P.G Wodehouse and Stephen Leacock because they were early adventures of my own and in certain moods they can still be enjoyable; I like Christopher Fry for the sheer delight in his ability to use words - a thing many authors cannot do; I like s-f if it has sufficient literary quality to justify its being read - David Karp's One being a case in point; I like an author who is trying to bring something worthwhile to your notice - as Croft does in his Spare the Rod even though he doesn't quite get the thing over; I like the writer who just says 'Let's have a good time and enjoy ourselves' as with Kazantzaki's Zorba the Greek and I like H.E Bates My Uncle Silas. I like Kenneth Tynan for his biting, studied prose; Frank Sullivan for his mirror of the world today; but do you really want me to go on? If you do I could continue to fill The New Futurian without a great deal of trouble with authors who can really write.

Even as a tipster I'm afraid you failed, for your final thrust didn't come anywhere near the target. I did read your dedication. My training as a librarian has taught me to check dedication, foreword, introduction, glossary, index, appendices, imprint, contentnotes lists of illustrations or diagrams, maps and whatever else might be of any use besides the text of the work concerned. Always supposing they were there to be used. Instead, therefore, of using your dedication as an excuse, I really think you should cry 'Peccavi'

And now greetings to Mr Hopkins! May I humbly suggest that you take great care of your Ps and Qs? I have a fear that you are Petty and Pernickety; Quarrelsome and Quibbling

Your assumption that the success of John Wyndham has gone to my head simply infers that I continually accept the opinions of others and make them my own. Do I then accept your opinion that s-f is rubbish or do I follow the fans? Please Mr H. do let me have my own poor thoughts; and in justification, may I suggest that I have seen too many 'Book of Some Month' blazoned before the public gaze in the hope that some weak mutt will be induced to read, or, worse still, to purchase it. As for John Wyndham, I consider he is a good writer who is writing much better prose than a number of his colleagues in the s-f world. Of course he is not writing in the style of the classic authors, and I would not expect him to do so, but he does have the ability to write a story where the action keeps moving and the style is readable. Each word can be read and does mean something. (I'll give an example of the opposite when I come to Mr Jeeves.)

One thing which strikes me very forcibly and which I fail to understand is when you state and reiterate 'Science fiction is rubbish'. Yet you say Bradbury writes so well you are inclined to say 'Bradbury does not write science fiction.' But Bradbury does, and in the light of your comment it must be rubbish. You even disagree with yourself. Then you make the statement 'some s-f is worse than other s-f.' What a stupid remark! Is there worse rubbish than rubbish (apart from this article?) Or do you grade your rubbish and then throw it away?

With regard to your Quibbles about my 'unpolished standards' etc. The article I gave to Michael was not an attempt at a literary-exercise and I am at fault for making your hair rise so upright and firm. Had I known that the literary quality was the essential I would have certainly 'polished up' my phrasing for you. May I also say that 'calibre' can be defined as 'degree of excellence/importance,' in which case my phrase could quite easily read as 'stories of a more interesting and imaginative degree of excellence/importance' which can be understood. I fear your 'shell' is a dud!

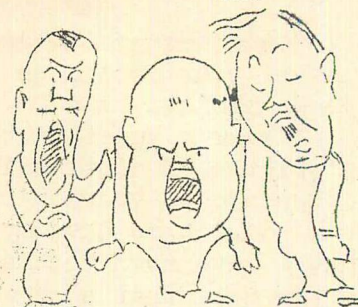
And now we come to the discerning Mr Jeeves! It seems that Mr C. has let you down. He's on my side. He wants to disown 'lubla'. Not that I blame him either for even when you say it softly or loudly, harshly or sweetly, it still doesn't really add up to 'the fragrant weed' however carefully it is blended. Atmosphere can be obtained in better ways than this and better ways than this extract from another s-f book which has recently been published '...Young Williams leaped to the fuel switches and threw the mordel lever which had been fitted by the alterritas to regulate the flow of spartel.' This excerpt is taken from P. Wilding (Spaceflight-Venus) No wonder one reviewer rather succinctly commented 'nothing new in Venus except names.' Perhaps one can see too much which may blind the reader to more grievous faults.

P.S. To Michael - Don't you think it would be a good idea if instead of having a Who's Who in Pandom it would be more useful to compile a dictionary of words and phrases to enable the groping layman like myself to know what the author is writing about when he is compelled to read a s-f book.

THE CLAMOROUS DREAMERS (continued from Page 7.) George B. Beattie was an English writer, except for the allusions in the few stories he contributed to Wonder, which suggest that he knew this country pretty well. But Benson Herbert had just made his debut with "The World Without" (Feb. 31) and John Beynon Harris was not far behind. His name and address had actually been printed in the Sep. 30 Wonder: he had won a \$100 prize slogan contest run by Air Wonder Stories which had merged with Science Wonder, so that his "Future Flying Fiction" tag was never used. But I missed it and five years passed before I made contact with Harris, Herbert, Pragnell & Cockroft, by the simple method of requesting their addresses from Gernsback in the name of the Science Fiction League.

--- (To be continued)

Selections from the missives

Argumentative?

KEN BULMER :: ...drop you a line to tell you how much I enjoyed and was thrilled
 *** ***** by Fido. Oh, sure, I'm still calling her Fido. Can't help it. Ties
 and associations too strong, you know. Call your new zine the New Futurian. all
 you like, and incidentally, I was tickled to notice how rapidly and effectively
 it acquired the nickname NuFu, which I've always said was the hallmark of a zine,
 and which is so sadly lacking today. They all call the current crop by their
real names! That goes to show that fandom has changed an awful lot since you
 last stuck your respected neck out and had a look into the publishing world. I
 don't know if you've found any difference in the climate, probably not as much as
 others might, in view of the wonderful fact that you've unearthed so many of the
 old names and they still carry with them the aura of the earlier days. Even I,
 young as I am in fandom compared with you, you venerable old methusalah, am con-
 sidered a relic today. Shades of Fido, Star Parade, Tin Tacks, The Gentlest Art,
 Sands of Time et al! Perhaps you have noticed what a lot of funfanning goes on
 and how deep into disrepute has fallen the type of fanning which we knew; called
 serious and constructive, sercon, sericon, secon, or s & c. That is even a dirty
 word, as you know. Shades of our idols of the past. Enough. You've begun the
 republication of Fido, let us rejoice. Let us look into the future. Leave the
 old shadowy days of six and ten page zines in the past and face up strongly to
 the modern 40 pagers. And just this minute, Pamela walks over, sees what I'm doing
 says 'You're fanning, you lazy dog.' I ask you, Michael, is it fair? 40 pagers
 did I say? Some of the current crop are running regularly to 60, and Christmas
 Issues are quite normal at 100 plus. At least, that is what is being planned for
 the Christmas i. Have you any information as to just when Fantast and Satellite
 and Gargoyle are resuming publication? ((Doug the Web says Fantast will not
 come from him - shame! There is a modern fanmag hight Satellite but it only has
 its title in common with its predecessor. Gargoyle is now called British Radio
 & Television and I am given to understand, is more serious in tone)). ... The
 whole issue reeks of JMR; the way you infuse your personality into a zine is
 simply amazing. Is it the way you present it, as though you had thoroughly
 enjoyed getting it all out? Is it the reproduction which is shocking enough
 ((I just revel in compliments)). Is it the wobbly Reading lettering? Which,
 incidentally, looks just the same as the Fido stuff - could it be be the same
 shaky hand, I wonder ((definitely more shaky now, with old age and insobriety))
 Is it the astounding way in which you inevitable put out an issue with page
 sizes so different that it looks dog-eared when brand new?

JULIAN PARR :: ... John Christophers counter-attack was very well-written and a
 ***** **** pleasure to read. I've guessed since reading it, that it is none
 other than our old friend CSY, which solves one little problem I had as to his
 fate. Anyway beth his and Eric Hopkins rebukes are well-done, and the latter was
 especially provoking in that it revealed my own lack of experience and background
 On the other hand, it was also a much better answer than Thompson's essay
 deserved: Eric C paid him the compliment of taking him too seriously .. Eric C
 himself is open to criticism for his platitude "science fiction is rubbish." -
 as also for this statement "These errors of 'Triffids' & 'Kraken' are not to be
 found in the competent non-s.f. novel." This general description "S. F." is of

little value nowadays, I feel: to make such statements as these would be ridiculous: "These errors ... are not to be found in the competent non-love-story" or "Love stories are rubbish." While Eric C's lesson in English is vastly entertaining and worth noting by many contributors, his general prejudice against s.f. (which gives me the idea that he is voicing it in an effort to ward off long-standing attacks on his own interest in s.f.) is questionable.

The White Elephant of Palomar is certainly well-done, but somehow doesn't belong. Above all, Alistair McLean does not help at all in dispelling doubts as to the usefulness of this mighty and expensive object; his reasons for its construction; "new techniques, laboratory methods and the mathematical work of Einstein" - six million dollars to start with - but how much did it finally cost - and how much the upkeep - ? The 48" telescope maps, and the 200" 'scope pinpoints & analyses anything of interest. "And who can say when some really exciting discovery may be made?" Such as the fact that the money could have been better spent on something else?

"Topsy" brought to mind an article I read recently in a German newspaper, which attempted to show how detective novel writers "mirrored their age." ((this seems to your editor to be so interesting that it worth printing here despite not being an actual letter and possible infringement of copyright))

...In these detective stories /Dashiehl Hammett etc/ we find not only genuine tension and literary stimulus, but we can also discern the changing social and spiritual situation of mankind. For where does one see this more clearly than in the extreme position of the criminal? The rôle of the criminal in society, the relationship between criminal and society (to be seen in the relationship between the criminal and the detective) give more evidence about a period than sociological theses, which have mostly only aesthetic (and thus non-committal) character... The Anglo-Saxon detective story is really the only one - Simenon is the exception which proves the rule that on the Continent are no masters of this class of literature. This is possibly due to the lack in Europe of the social consciousness developed in the individual citizen of England and America. This social consciousness is the precondition for the detective story. The criminal must come to terms with a concrete society - never with an anonymous and abstract State. The State Criminal is an invention of the totalitarian era - totalitarian States have therefore no detective stories.

Sherlock Holmes and Co. use logical induction or deduction to track down the criminal. Such a method has - as John Paterson recently showed in the 'Saturday Review of Literature' - a "closed world picture" as a pre-condition. The detective of the old school is related to the transcendental philosophers; their world is a closed whole, a continuum in chess-board pattern, in which the results are attained through calculation; the criminal is built into a system of logical determinants and must finally enter the detective's spiders web of logic.

But Dashiel Mammett's world is one of discontinuity, of pure chance. The cruelty of Chance rules. Both criminal and detective realise this. Therefore Sam Spade is no representative of the law, but a hunter in the human jungle. In contrast to earlier detectives, Sam comes from the bottom. He knows only the dark side of life. He is always in touch with the criminal, in fact is only a few steps from him. In the "Maltese Falcon" he has an affair with the murderess - but hands her over to the police because he is afraid of her. His motives are of simple survival. No ideas, no speculation; in the American thirties the laws of the jungle are valid.

In the 'Flaming Decade,' the 'Roaring Twenties,' the dandy Philo Vance saw, in that democracy of the newly-rich, only mob-rule. Philo Vance, an American individualist of Nietzschean tradition, resented the intervention of the State in legal quarrels. He respected the murderer more than he did the State, and gave him the first chance - if only that of withdrawing from the matter by means of a revolver laid elegantly beside him.

After the social jungle of the thirties, however, when Roosevelt's New Deal had begun to show its fruits, a new detective type arrives: Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe who is admittedly an immoralist, but one with a soft core. He is sentimental, loquacious, and even shows, in contrast to Sam Spade, something which resembles pity. As he knows the situation of the detective and criminal, both are merely action and reaction in a universe of suffering.

The Second World War brought the real change. The age of the isolated individual is at an end. The criminal is revealed as the "lonely man," - a sick, lonely man. The criminalist has become a criminologist and finally a psychiatrist. Thus in Helen McCloy's novels Dr (!) Basil Willmy solves his cases with the aid of Freud's psychoanalysis rather than finger-prints... in the place of logical deduction - psycho-analytical association.

But with this development the criminal ceases to be a criminal. He becomes a clinical case. In place of the prison (at least in a Utopian sense) - there is the hospital. The vision of a George Orwell or Aldous Huxley arise, but what is grey and black in their pictures appears now light blue and pink.

The detective story is in dissolution. Partly because crime is no longer taken seriously, but partly also because the whole world seems a nest of criminals. The whole world is understood - for instance by Graham Greene - in a theological sense to be anarchistic and lawless. There is in all of us something of Pinky of Brighton Rock. The appropriate consequence is, with many heroes, not murder but suicide. The only detective is God himself.

With this a problem becomes acute which was not even seen in the twenties and thirties - the problem of free will. The criminal, against whom Philo Vance, Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe fought, could just as well become a detective in the next instance. And vice versa. The detective no longer embodies the world spirit, as he did in the 19th and early 20th centuries. He is linked with the criminals, he is their antithesis. Just as, for instance, in Jean Paul Sartre's "The Devil and the Loving God" the knight Goetz changes from Monster to Philanthropist - for good and evil are relative.

But, then, when there is no longer any belief in good as the spirit of order in the world; when we are finally tired of the senseless dialectic of good and evil because it has gone on ad absurdum, as Sartre has shown, what is then left for the detective story?

The obvious end of the detective story indicates that spiritually and socially we have stepped into a new landscape. The dimensions of this new landscape stand out in clear relief in quite a different kind of literature which, like the recent styles of detective story, is of American origin. This new literature leads into the world of technical utopias - into science fiction, where the problem of free will now stands again to debate. This type of literature, too, needs examining in its background - it would show that in it, too, is hidden a new philosophy and theology..."

Phew!!! That was quite an exercise in translation for me.

BILL TEMPLE :: If its old-fashioned for a fanmag to provide food for thought & ***** something to get your teeth into, then Futurian is old-fashioned - and I like it that way.... John Christopher trampled the Senior Librarian so thoroughly into the mud that there really wasn't any need for Ericopkins to come charging in to do his wardance on the remains, ((but Eric didn't know JC had reacted when he wrote his intriguing letter to your editor)) especially as he kicked so wildly in all directions he overbalanced. He hits at the construction of the Triffids while calling Silver Locusts a novel, which it isn't at all (just a collection of short stories linked artfully). He calls Tucker's soldier "thoroughly human" - also "shrewd, opportunist, merciless, calculating, amoral and vicious".

unsympathetic." The latter aren't popularly known as human qualities, but perhaps Eric employs a language of his own. I think he must - he says Wyndham's novels "suffer from idealism". Would that a few more contemporary novels 'suffered' from the same defect.

He says we don't much care whether Tucker's hero lives or dies. True. And what's the point of following the adventures of a hero if we don't care a damn what happens to him?

Style is a matter of taste, of course. Bradbury's is more than a mite too hysterical for mine. Its novelty intrigues at first, but repeated doses begin to pall, then irritate. Wyndham's matter-of-fact approach at least helps to persuade the reader, temporarily, that the described events - and some of the people - are real.

Re Walt Willis's query about Maurice Hanson. I'm sending Maurice this copy of Futurian. It may stir him to write to you ((not as yet)), but I doubt it. His wheel too, has turned full circle, and he's vegetating quietly in Leicester, reading George Elliot, gardening, house-decorating, listening to music, subscribing to the New Yorker, grinning at Wodehouse and Frank Sullivan, writing to no s-f people except myself (and then only twice a year), and working daily in the science lab. of the local university among gen-u-ine scientists who also garden, house-decorate, etc., and don't read science fiction.

DALE R. SMITH (Minneapolis, USA.)

**** ** ***** ...First, I would like to ask Eric C. Hopkins which reports he has been reading concerning Chicago. It is evident that he has never been there. I have never, at any time, in any section of the U.S., including Chicago, found it "safer to shoot first and ask questions afterwards." And I would suggest to Mr Hopkins that if he is ever likely to visit us that he leaves all his guns at home. Even the Indians in Minnesota have been subdued by the White Man to such an extent that they are completely harmless.

Second, I would like to take this opportunity to advise all concerned that I am preparing to file a complaint with the appropriate department of the United Nations concerning one, D. R. Smith. This gentleman, with whom I have corresponded, off and on, for about 15 years, persists in using initials instead of his full name. I have often been accused of authoring the material by D. R. Smith - and I must admit that it often pains me to refuse such credits. I suggest to Mr Smith that if he doesn't expand the D. I may contact Dale and then he will be sorry.

DAVID H. KELLER (Stroudsburg, PA., USA.)

***** ** ***** This morning the mail man brought to my Ivory Tower a fanzine from England, No. 2 of the New Futurian, which, after hastily glancing over, I started to read the article by Walter H. Gillings in which he tells of the formation of a Science Literary Circle in Ilford, England, sometime in 1935; for in that year a review of my tale, The Yeast Men appeared in the Ilford Recorder.

I at once consulted my card index and found in Box I of my Keller collection a copy of Amazing Stories, April 1938. To my surprise it contained the review of the Yeast Men with a carbon of my letter of thanks dated June 14th, 1935.

All this presented some interesting questions: Seven years had lapsed between the printing of the story and its review by Mr Gillings. When and how did he first discover the story? Then I found that he was only eighteen years old when he wrote the review and therefore only eleven when it was printed.

For some reason this story pleased the members of the Literary Circle and it seems that Mr Gillings remembered it kindly for in my Box I, I found Tales of Wonder No. 7 with a reprint of the story. The editor of the magazine was none other than Mr Gillings; but I do not know from who he obtained permission to print the tale or just how I obtained a copy of this number of the magazine.

I have never been able to understand just what there was in The Yeast Men which aroused such favorable reaction from the English Science Fiction Fans. I also wondered why The Revolt of the Pedestrians which preceded it and The Worm which followed it were not commented on or reprinted. Perhaps Mr Gillings can explain. I feel certain that the story aroused far more interest in England than in America.

As I continued reading his article I discovered another fact which was both interesting and understandable. At that time he was interested in a young lady who later became his wife. He wanted her to become interested in Science-fiction and persuaded her to read my story, A Psychological Experiment, in Amazing Stories, June 1928. I found this story and once again looked at Paul's picture of babies in large glass bottles. I cannot tell whether the picture or the story pleased the lady most but the combination evidently started her reading s-f.

It was four years later in 1932 that Huxley wrote Brave New World, in which he used much of the science I developed in The Psychological Experiment. I have often wondered whether he read my tale before he wrote his novel.

All this happened Far Away and Long Ago. Gillings is now past 45 and I am a ripe 74. The years have certainly passed. I have often wondered just what has happened to him and his wife and whether they have produced babies in glass bottles or otherwise. Also whether they have read my novel The Homunculus; if they have not they should and I will be glad to send them a copy on request.

It is pleasing to me to learn that I contributed in a small way to the development of science fiction in England. Perhaps Gillings or some member of the Ilford Literary Circle can tell me whether they read and appreciated my Revolt of the Pedestrians and, if so, what their reaction to it was. In America it started a new type of Science Fiction story in which human interest became more important than the gadget. But all this happened Long Ago and now space opera has assumed greater importance, it being felt that a trip to some distant star is far more interesting than a story of the little people who live next door.

JAN JANSEN (Antwerp)

*** ***** ...I have some comments on Eric Bentcliffe's piece. I don't know the Italian magazines, but I do get the French regularly. Fiction and Galaxie are both definitely monthly magazines. Fiction reaches the newstands about the third of the month, beaten by Galaxie which is usually a few days ahead. Both have issued issue 10 this month. I think I may object to Eric's note: that continental sf does not differ greatly from the American. Though the rupture advert is still carried, this and one on plants to diminish weight, occupy exactly one quarter of a page, the two together. All the other adverts concern only various sf editions in book form, or an occasional literary magazine. For Galaxie the same applies in the question; of choice of adverts. Total ads come to five pages, including cover ads, which is certainly less than any US mag excepting the MoFSF. Galaxie has only once or twice given an original story, otherwise containing only translations from the American edition. Whilst in Fiction's case, every issue contains two, sometimes three, quite original French science fiction tales.

GRAHAM B. STONE (Sydney, Australia) ((a delayed letter after receipt of NF 1))

***** ** ***** O Joy! for The New Futurian. Like a pearl among so much oyster guts to the dreary parade of lousey imitations of real fanmags I've suffered these many years. Not the only good one, of course. But unusual enough from Britain today to deserve comment and appreciation. Carry on with the good work

Gillings says: They were, on the whole, more serious days." MY GOD, how much this is an understatement! The fall from prewar fandom to the teenage activities of today's cultists and imitators is no less than horrible for us who

knew those days for being commonplace. What to do about it? I have long held the opinion that we could do much by just running our own activities to suit ourselves, and to hell with the little morons. Why be engulfed by the rising tide of juvenility? Is it any more sensible to mix with bums just because they proclaim themselves stf fans, than it is to read Amazing or Vargo Statten because they belong vaguely to the tradition of science fiction? A rhetorical question, to which I for one answer No. It is no good bothering with people who call themselves the "Gnomes, Elves and Little Men's Chowder, Marching and Science Fiction whatever it is" and with characters who happen to be interested in stf as well as Dianetics or unidentified flying objects -- and who publish badly produced, illiterate derivatives of what we started and call themselves fan editors. It is of some use if we devote our efforts to trying to pick up where we left off -- or perhaps in some directions, start off afresh -- and to make something out of our interest in and study of stf.

That is roughly my attitude to fandom. I have noted quite a fair amount of work in the direction of real fandom - S. F. Advertiser for example - from the USA. From Britain I have had little to encourage me, though I admit that my connections have been pretty thin for some years.

Gillings: "...perhaps we were all a little too serious with ourselves." Like hell! See point of view stated above. Besides, if we did tend to such imbalance, there were plenty of ruthless contemporary debunkers to help us snap out of it. All of modern fans' levity, which I prefer to think of as hysterical gaiety, escapist reaction to personal inadequacy, does not produce anything comparable to the state of mind and influence of Yerke, Tucker and the general atmosphere of VOM. Whatever classic-period fans were as a group, they weren't escapists typically, nor were they second-raters.

(JOHN) CHRISTOPHER SAMUEL YOUNG

...I enjoyed most of the latest copy of the New Futurian, but there is only one thing that rouses me to the point of comment, and that is the contribution of my old pal, Hoppo.

Eric suffers from a portentousness of style. The things he says, considering the way he says them, had better be good. When they aren't, they are -- in the words of the old adage -- horrid. I am very sorry that in pointing out to Eric the error of his ways it should become necessary to criticize a fellow writer, even a fellow science fiction writer. (Because, whatever Eric says, I regard Bradbury as precisely that).

One of the few things Mr. Thompson and I appear to agree on is the linking of Bradbury and Wyndham. They are utterly dissimilar writers, but they don't look out of place on the same evaluatory peg. That is, Bradbury is a lot worse, and Wyndham a lot better than Eric believes.

I think I know why Eric believes it. Eric's own bent is in the direction of philosophy (providing the modern disciplines of language analysis can be called philosophy), and his besetting sin is a preoccupation with significance. It is significance that he finds in Bradbury and, having no firm literary (as opposed to philosophical) standards to judge by, he shoves Bradbury to the top of the tree. Wyndham, perforce, must come down.

The trouble is that, looking at it from where I stand, I can see that the success of Bradbury has gone to Eric Hopkins' head. Bradbury is notable for one simple thing: he imported into the field of science-fiction the entire apparatus of the modern American liberalist short story writer. I have sometimes felt that he might have done this with malice aforethought, but it is more probable that it happened accidentally.

You see, none of the earlier writers could have been expected to do this. The earlier science fiction writers were not, in the main, fans, and they were not literary. The nearest thing to the Bradbury irruption that happened before was a young writer called Frank K. Kelly -- and I should still like to know what became of him because he too had talent: derivative as Bradbury's is, but talent. It was destined by whatever fates control the byways of writing that science fiction and 'literature' should enjoy a brief honeymoon. The essential catalyst was bound to be a young literary writer for whom the science fiction field was a natural mode of entry. Bradbury filled the conditions and so Bradbury swept on to a double success. He conquered the science fiction field by using techniques pioneered by the highbrows outside, and he then conquered the highbrows by showing them their favourite techniques operating in a new medium.

John Wyndham is simply a straightforward story teller. It is his weakness, perhaps, that he will not try to be anything else, but story-telling is an art only under-rated by people as obtuse to the principles of fiction as Eric. Of course the flaws cited exist in "Triffids". The success of the book is that he overcomes those flaws and -- for most readers -- carries the line of interest forward. Bradbury has wisely not tried to do a full-length novel (I gather that "Fahrenheit 451" is simply an extended conte: I haven't read it). The fact is that Bradbury has got about as much narrative sense as Chekhov -- and that's no compliment. I cannot understand what Eric is thinking of when he describes "The Silver Locusts" as the only contemporary science fiction novel worth reading. He knows very well it isn't a novel, but a collection of short stories from Thrilling Wonder Stories loosely strung together. And one can think of a number of contemporary science fiction novels worth reading on a far higher level than Bradbury will ever achieve. PLAYER PIANO, EARTH ABIDES and GRAVY PLANET, to be going on with.

I have no objection to Eric telling people that science fiction is rubbish, but he must put Bradbury out with the rest. I say this although I have much more sympathy with Bradbury's ethos than with that of the Van Vogts and the others. He is a better writer than V.V., too. But he is not the best science fiction writer (whoever that mythical monster may be) and, the faults of each weighed fairly, he makes a nice package with John W. Concepts, my dear Eric, wobble when any other decision is reached.

Eric gives the game away when he talks about sampling the year's novels 'needless to say ... not at random'. Eric can give himself whatever holiday tasks he thinks necessary to equip him with a cultured outlook, but my heart goes out to him in this sampling of novels, most of which -- bitter experience has taught him -- are not worth reading. Whisper it not in Cambridge, but novels are meant to entertain. He reminds me of an atheist frequenting churches, most of which are not worth visiting.

And now I will return to the Minor Works of Jane Austen.

ARTHUR HILLMAN ... May I put in a plea for more modern s-f book news? I do not ***** think that long elaborations of corny and hoary novels written in 1894, 1904, etc. interest most devotees today. Such epics may have had their worth in the era when a s-f book of any sort was an event, but today the flood of publications elbows, in my opinion, those ancient tomes out of the limelight. I should prefer to see more space given to publications just out, as this would enable intending purchasers to make a more appreciative selection. Also a column of the latest book news is something urgently needed by rabid s-f bibliophiles. Hope you can do something on those lines.

((Situations Vacant -- one reviewer of modern, and available, s-f novels !!!))

=====

An unusual Drama of interest to connoisseurs of science - fantasy

=====

I missed the play "Uranium 235" when it was produced by Theatre Workshop in various parts of Britain a few years ago, and only by chance did I find out a few weeks ago, that it had been published in book form.

The play is described as being "a documentary play in 11 episodes" and the published version contains an introduction by the Scottish Nationalist poet Hugh MacDiarmid, who refers to the play as 'dealing with the problems raised by the recent discovery of methods of utilising atomic energy and tracing the history of thought into the fundamental nature of things from Democritus to the present, held together by dramatization of contemporary events relevant to the theme'.

The work is reminiscent of some of the theatrical experiments of the late 1930's and is therefore very different from any ordinary play - little or no scenery seems to have been used and the characters include a Greek chorus, a man from the audience, Paracelsus, John Dalton, Mendeleef, Einstein, Max Planck, Death and an Alpha-particle, Energy, various protons and neutrons (including a hard-boiled neutron called Lola the Smasher) and quite a selection of others.

After the first scene, which is a sort of prologue, the man from the audience jumps 2500 years backwards in time and then scene by scene, travels forward to the present era. The story is presented sometimes in prose and sometimes in verse, sometimes in song and sometimes in dance, and even sometimes in mime; sometimes realistically and sometimes symbolically; but in spite of this multiple style the theme is not a complex one and the play is never difficult to follow.

The story tells how science has struggled forward, hindered by intolerance, public indifference and war to the conquest of the atom and how its discoveries have been perverted into the paths of war. Finally we are returned to the present day and the audience (or reader) are asked by one of the characters ($E = MC^2$) which road it is to follow -- that of the sinister Puppet Master and his servant Death, symbolising destruction, or that of the scientists and construction.

The play is not without several glaring faults, the protagonists are represented as pure black or white, evil or good, a hint of a dubious political philosophy is slipped in, situations are very much over simplified and the play shrieks its message. However the drama was written primarily for the stage and subtlety does not, perhaps, get across footlights very well.

On the whole the book, in spite of its faults, tends to make most magazine science fiction appear by comparison to be rather dull stuff and can be recommended as an intellectual stimulant to the adult science-fictionist.

Rik Dalton.

"Uranium 235" is by E. McColl, and is published by William Clellan, Glasgow, 92pp.
 ~~~~~

THOUGHTS FROM THE WILDERNESS.

by ROY ROWLAND JOHNSON

I want to let you know - just as I want to sum up for myself, for I'm still cogitating - my feelings at suddenly being confronted once more with something I thought I had put behind me almost a decade ago. Am I pleased? Annoyed? Unconcerned? Disturbed? It is difficult to know. Only a couple of weeks ago, I unearthed a very old travelling case in which my - quite large - collection of fanzines, British and American, had rested untouched for many years: and along with numerous copies of the "Manchester Guardian" and "New Statesman", not quite as old, they formed the nucleus of a bonfire which delighted my four-year old



son immensely.... I'm sorry now that I destroyed all these, for they might have proved interesting to the younger generation of fans. But I had heard nothing of Fandom for years, and my own interest had died long since, so it seemed the obvious thing to do.

My own interest had indeed died long ago, during my university days in fact, and I wonder now whether any revival is possible, likely, or desirable. I regard the old Fan days, enjoyable as they were, as merely a stage in my mental and emotional development, and in some respects a rather puerile one at that: Frankly, when I remember some of the things we did and said and wrote, I feel embarrassed at having been so foolish... Strange, that, for the youthful extravagances I took part in during, for example, student Rags and the like, cause no such embarrassment, even though I recognise that they, equally, belong to the past.

Fandom was a stage, a stage which was valuable in that it caused a rapid developing of a young and enquiring mind, a worthwhile contact with others of similar views and interests, an introduction to the art of self-expression, and a large amount of of simple and perhaps harmless enjoyment. It was in some ways a bad stage: it led to intense egotism, to a deplorable readiness to advance dogmatic opinions about subjects about which I was ill-informed, and to the devotion of far more time to matters which were, in themselves, divorced from the real world in which I had to live... Fandom, and science-fiction, assumed an importance which intrinsically should not be theirs. Despite protestations from all and sundry to the contrary, it was a form of escapism, and it was escapist even when fans were professing to be vitally interested in "les affaires", in politics and sociology and the immediate future. For that interest itself was still contained essentially within the framework of Fandom, discussions were remote from the world outside even when they dealt with that world, an argument with A.N.Other on Socialism was far more important as an argument with A.N.Other than as an examination of Socialism.... (How right Doug Webster was in many of his remarks on these topics)

Fandom seems to me, in retrospect, to have been a closed world, an escapist world, in many respects a juvenile world: in many other respects it was alive, vital intelligent and stimulating - don't let it be thought that this is an outright condemnation! Above all - and this in the final analysis is why I have lost interest in it - it was too conscious of its own importance. Science-fiction is only a branch of literature - a branch which Fans happen to prefer to other types (I still do, though I read little of it), but which, for all its stimulus to the imagination, its power of shaking one out of the ordinary rut of existence, its value in giving one a new viewpoint on life, is not in itself of very great importance. Thus fandom was in the nature of a vast superstructure built on foundations which were slight and insubstantial. Had it been merely a loosely-formed club or society in which those of like tastes could discuss and discourse on all manner of topics interesting to intelligent people, it would have been good and worthwhile: it was that, in fact, to some degree, but not sufficiently, and the "Fan" aspects, and Science-fiction aspects, assumed too great an importance.

Such, I think, is my opinion of the matter. In some ways it may seem hardly complimentary to those who still remain fans. I think, though, that it must be borne in mind that Fandom and Science-fiction affected different people in different ways, and although I believe that my own experience of it was typical of many, I did and do recognise that there were those whose approach was more mature, more detached perhaps, and who, probably through encountering it later in their lives, assimilated it rather than being assimilated by it. Remember, I was only about fourteen years old when I first encountered Fandom, a couple of years younger than that when I first became interested in Science-fiction, and only seventeen or eighteen when I more or less dropped out of it. Tender and impressionable years



Author: J. R. R. Tolkien

Type: Pure Fantasy

Title: "THE LORD OF THE RINGS"; Volume 1 of "The Fellowship of the Ring".

=====

Reviewed by C. Roland Forster.

Pub: London, Geo. Allen &amp; Unwin Ltd, 21/-

If you have not read any good fairy stories recently, here is the book you are looking for. You don't like fairy stories? Then, try this one and you may change your mind.

Yes, this is a fairy tale, or at any rate a third of one: for after more than 400 pages and about 200,000 words the reader is left high and dry with an unfinished drama - to be continued in our next, i.e. in Vols 2 & 3, "The Two Towers" and "The Return of the King", as yet unpublished.

It has no fairies of the traditional kind, but it does have just about everything else. Here we have elves, dwarves, trolls, wizards, men, as well as a number of previously unheard of and generally unpleasant beasties, born of the authors fertile imagination. Above all we have Mr Tolkien's own special contribution to mythology, the Hobbits - the gentle "little people" who, in this tale of extraordinary beings and men who are supermen, take the place of ordinary humanity with all its virtues and failings.

The plot of so vast a saga cannot be summarised in a few lines, except by saying that the theme is the age-old one of the struggle of good against evil, set in the author's mythical Middle-Earth at the close of the Second Age. And whatever the final outcome may be, virtue doesn't have everything its own way, not in Vol. 1 at least.

So skilful is the narration that only the minimum of that 'willing suspension of disbelief' is required of the reader before he finds himself accepting without question a world where the supernatural is the natural and the magical the real. Professional critics have compared this work with that of Malory and Ariosto. Another, after mentioning Spencer's "Faerie Queene", goes on to say: "One can't praise the book by comparisons - there is nothing to compare it with". Here then we have Super Fantasy of a kind to which the terms 'epic', 'heroic' and 'unique' may be applied for once without exaggeration, a novel that may well be going through new editions when 99.9% of the current output of science-fiction and fantasy is outdated and forgotten.

From this eulogy you will understand that with "The Fellowship of the Ring" J. R. R. Tolkien has gained at least one devotee who is eagerly awaiting the publication of the remainder of the trilogy.

(Note .. also by Tolkien - "The Hobbit", same publisher 8/6. This appears to be a preliminary venture along similar lines but is not in any way essential to understanding or enjoyment of the current work. Editorial further note .. I have enthused about the Hobbit for years now, and my comparison could only be the immortal 'Alice'

\*\*\*\*\*  
 R.R.Johnson, from previous page Today, I feel that I can still muster a slight interest in Fandom, but only to the extent that it brings me into contact with people of intelligence whose general interests are not unlike my own, and with whom I can have the normal intercourse of intelligent beings...with Fandom itself, as a separate entity or organisation assuming no importance at all. During the time I was actively associated with Fandom I met perhaps half a dozen people in all whom I liked and respected and would be pleased to have as friends, with no reference necessarily to interest in Science-fiction: the memory of those people is one of the few things I look back on with pleasure .....

That's telling us - JMR.



With a final flourish of trumpets, we present - wait for it --

the editor's P.E.R.S.O.N.A.L ... P.A.G.E.

So this time we have a Turner cover, with a complete change of mood. Precisely what it is supposed to represent I am not quite sure, though I have a sneaking suspicion that it is the "Spirit of Fandom"; or maybe "Fandom with Spirits" or perhaps "Fandom's High Spirits". Even should it be a semi-libellous representation of a covey of our contributors, we are immensely grateful to Harry for his kind thought. There is a half-promise of a cover from Ken Bulmer, which we hope will eventuate but other artistic endeavours will be greatly appreciated.

This issue has some seven pages of letters selected from a prolific and most interesting mail, all of which I would enjoy answering. Perhaps by now the people who thought from my remarks in the first issue that I was discouraging letters of comment and opinion, have got the idea I was trying in my own sweet way, to convey. Letter are welcome. All letters saying anything at all about the magazine are appreciated and form the basis of judgement as to what is wanted by the clientele. BUT there is something a little cheap and trite in publishing all letters (even were that possible). One letter can express a point stated in several, and though it is always pleasant to a correspondent to have the ego-boom of reading his remarks in print, the practise of reviewing a complete fan magazine commenting briefly on every item, has become too prevalent in fandom. No, what I would suggest is that if you feel strongly on one or two points, say so and make your points fully and comprehensively; so that others can appreciate your ideas; even better, if you have further information to offer - as Julian Parr had this time - do so. You want to raise a new subject of general interest, but don't feel that it warrants a full-dress article - s'all right, tell us about it. That type of epistle is what our columns are for. Thus 'Argumentative' fulfils its title, and becomes a discussion in print.

In one way we are sorry that certain items have been omitted from this issue for reasons of space and we apologise to the authors thereof. On the other hand we gloat that the response to requests for material has been more than adequate. But there is a tale that a good magazine should have its next issue fully planned when one issue is published, and the issue after that about half ready. We are not yet in that happy position. So there is room for everybody. Re contents - do readers feel that a column of up-to-date book news should be included, or is this aspect covered sufficiently in otherazines? I have the idea of dealing with current cheap editions of competent stuff as a special item, if there is any demand for it.

Incidentally, you folk may be interested to know that the library branch looked after by Mr Thompson is now developing a special interest in fantasy, with a listing of the titles in stock, compiled from the Bleiler Checklist and current catalogues. There may even be rocket posters decorating the walls soon. Nothing new... somewhere or other I have a little printed leaflet issued by the Indianapolis public libraries about 1938 listing their available fantasies, sent to me by a fan of that era, Samuel Cox, of whom I have heard nothing for many years.

There has been a suggestion that personal advertisements - books and magazines for sale or wanted, information requested and so on - should be allowed in our pages. This is quite agreeable, and will be done gratis unless there is so great a response that extra paper and work is required. Which leads on to say that if anybody wishes to produce a sheet or two of personal publication, as was done in the days of "Fido" and entitled 'the Litter', I will distribute same with this magazine for them to some 200 recipients, with pleasure.

And that appears to wind up matters for the moment, I'll just let the cat out, and then -- Goodnight.

JMR.



AMONGST THE CONTEMPORARY FAN PUBLICATIONS WELL WORTH INVESTIGATION, ARE .....

GENERAL TOPICS

"ORBIT"

Organ of the Leeds Science Fiction Association. Quarterly at 1/- from George Gibson, Little London, Aberford, Leeds.

HUMOUR

"B. E. M."

Anything goes for worthwhile wit. Quarterly at 9d. from Tom White, 3 Vine Street, Cutler Heights, Bradford 4. Mal Ashworth also plays.

Also GENERAL with light-hearted touch

"Alpha"

The English fanzine from Belgium, with the friendly atmosphere. Bi-monthly at 4/- per annum from Jan Jansen, 229 Berchemlei, Borgerhout, Belgium.

ESOTERIC FANDOM

Phantasmagoria

Highly Irregular but hot from Baker Street. Sent by Derek Pickles, 197 Cutler Heights Lane, Bradford 4, to those who comment or trade. gratis.

ALMOST LEGENDARY

ZENITH

Another issue of fandoms best-produced magazine may appear soon. Contact Mr Pickles in the hope of obtaining it. The production side is looked after by Harry Turner which speaks for itself.

NEWCOMER with top billing

TRIODE

Treasurer is Eric Jones, Xanadu, 44 Barbridge Road, Cheltenham for subs at 9d. per copy. Editor is Eric Bentcliffe and art editor T. Jeeves. Well done in all aspects.

The idea of the coupon in issue number 1 of The New Futurian seemed to work to a certain extent, and to save time and trouble to those persons who would like to receive future issues but have not yet got on to our regular mailing list or are not sure of their position, here is another which can be cut straight out and mailed to J. Michael Rosenblum, 7 Grosvenor Park, Leeds 7, England.

From ..... Address .....

Please send me the next/future issues of your publication The New Futurian

because:

1. I enclose/have sent a subscription for ..... issues
2. I enclose/have sent a literary contribution
3. I would like to exchange fan magazines, mine being .....
4. Please send a copy to be reviewed in .....
5. As an old friend I hope you will think of me
6. I enjoy receiving fanzines but am financially embarrassed
7. As an expert on/in Fandom I need a copy.
8. I promise to always speak nicely about you.



\_\_\_\_\_ A SUBSCRIBER  
\_\_\_\_\_ CONTRIBUTOR  
\_\_\_\_\_ EXCHANGE  
\_\_\_\_\_ REVIEW  
\_\_\_\_\_ SAMPLE

NEWS SNIPPETS, gleaned as we go to  
press .... the Lancaster boys have  
brought out their fanzine Brennschluss  
41 pages of very pleasant drivel on  
this that and the other fannish topic  
... incidentally the perpetrators Ken  
Wood, David Potter and girl friends  
visited civilisation for a day recently  
coming to Bradford and Leeds ...also  
out recently was the Pickles/Thomas  
Phantasmagoria, very neatly produced  
Next issue for Xmas will be larger &  
as it is obtainable for the trouble of  
writing a letter, is the best bargain  
in fandom .... Lakeland's Andromeda  
changed completely into a weekly pair  
of sheets, but will go back to monthly  
in future - mailing and postage takes  
up too much time and money ... results  
of the Space-Times Research Bureau's  
Survey of British Fandom have been  
collated, and will be published in the  
11th issue of prozine Nebula; then we  
shall know all about us ... where is  
that 1955 Convention going to be held?  
Apparently the only contender apart  
from Old Faithful London is Kettering.  
The year after - 1956 - may be angled  
for by the Leeds area ... next Orbit  
- number 6 - due out around Christmas  
time, will feature a parody on the Ron  
Bennett article on Science Fiction in  
School. Written by Nigel Lindsay, it is  
entitled Science Fiction in Reformatory  
... Leeds member Jack Darlington now  
home again after testing diesel engines  
for his firm all around London area,  
reports that a slip in the dimensions  
prevented him finding the Globe on no  
less than four occasions ... a grateful  
thanks to him, and other Leeds members  
for coming along to help assemble this NF.

Printed Matter.  
Amateur Magazine Only.

The New  
Futurian III

9 m. Frederick  
of Grover Park

Sheet 4.  
England

[illegible]