

VECTOR

20



VECTOR 20

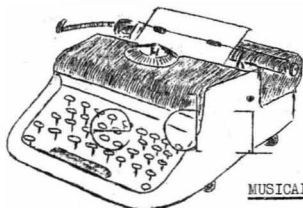
July
1963

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

<u>THE B.S.F.A.</u>	<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>Page</u>
President: Brian W. Aldiss	Editorial The Editor	3
Chairman: J.P. Rogers 5 First Avenue, Ashfield, Scunthorpe, Lincs	Science Fiction in Schools Ron Bennett	4
Joint Vice Chairman: Mrs R. Gray 14 Bennington Street Cheltenham, Glos & A. Walsh 167 Sydenham Road Bridgwater, Somerset	The Future of Science-Fiction ... C. Clarke	12
Secretary: M. Jakubowski 90 Matlock Road, Leyton, London E.10	Now Road-Maps to Chaos C.P. McKenzie	13
Treasurer: Mrs G.T. Adams 54 Cobden Avenue Bittorne Park Southampton	Book Review Sheila Pinnington ..	15
Publications Officer: A.R. Mercer 70 Worrall Road, Bristol 8	The Mail Response The Readers <u>and</u>	16 26
Librarian: J. Navin 77 Collage Road North Blundellsands, Liverpool 23	Fanzine Reviews ... The Editor . <u>and</u>	23 26
	Cover by Terry Jeovos	
	Interior artwork and headings by Terry Jeovos, George Gibson, Chris Priest, Ian Aldridge and "Holstar". Cut on to stencil by Terry Jeovos, Harry Nadler and Gerald Kircho	

VECTOR is published eight times per year by J. Michael Rosenblum, 7 Grosvenor Park, Leeds 7, Yorks. It is distributed free to members of the B.S.F.A. It is not available to the general public.

All material, artwork, letters of comment etc for or concerning VECTOR should be addressed to the Editor, Archie Mercer, 70 Worrall Road, Bristol 8.



itorial

MUSICAL ORGANS, ANYONE ?

The first thing I did when I took this job

over was to try and find out precisely what a vector was. So I asked somebody who knew something about mathematics. He explained it very slowly and carefully in words of not more than five syllables, and after half a dozen even slower and more careful repeats, I thought I had it clear.

"OK," I said. "Now tell me one thing more. What is the difference between a vector and a tensor?"

"Well," said my informant. "They're two entirely different things. Except that one of them can sometimes be the other of course."

At which point I retired defeated.

I do know what a newsletter is, however. This is so obviously practical an arrangement that it has been decided to abolish the N.S.F.A. Newsletter forthwith.

There is no cause for alarm though. This move will be compensated for by the simple expedient of publishing VECTOR eight times a year from now on. Not, for the most part, quite so large issues as you have been getting, but still fully-fledged VECTORS with articles, letters and so on as well as news. This issue, as a matter of fact, was intended as the first of the smaller VECTORS - only it seems to have got somewhat out of hand. That's your good fortune. I hope the re-tooled schedule proves to be all that is hoped.

SEND YOUR QUERIES

We have someone who will have a bash at answering them.

In VECTOR, furthermore. Not specific queries such as who wrote such-and-such a story, or what issue of what magazine did it appear in, but more general ones the answers to which could be expected to interest the membership. Queries like "Why don't we get time travel stories any more?" or "People say Conan stories are bad - is there any objective way of proving that they're bad?" Send them as soon as possible, so that the column may be launched in good style. Over to you lot!

A PRO IS BORN

Heartiest congratulations to Terry Pratchett, possibly our youngest Associate member, for having his story The Hades

Business accepted by Nova Publications - it appears in "Science Fantasy" No. 60, possibly the best over all-round issue of that magazine.

Teachers as a class are not renowned for having what might be called a positive attitude towards sf. There are exceptions, of course. The late "Doc" Weir was a school-teacher, and several members of this profession are currently members of the Association - including the author of the following.

(Reprinted by permission from two articles in the 3rd and 5th issues of ORBIT, dated February and September 1954 respectively)

Science - Fiction IN schools

by
Rev BENNETT

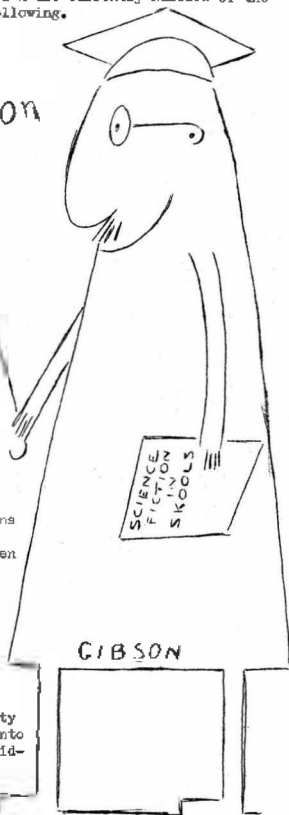
Part I

The idea for this article came from Ernest Stern, who happens to be a Leeds schoolmaster. Ernest said quietly, "Give your class a composition to write with a science fiction topic. I'll do the same and we can do a survey of science fiction in schools."

A great idea, and here therefore is my half of the contribution.

In order that such an opistle could appear before the public, lengthy preparations had to be made. It sounds quite easy to stride into a classroom full of noisy thirteen and fourteen year olds and burst upon them the fact that "this period you're going to write a science fiction composition", but obviously the class wouldn't know where to start. An oral introduction must be presented, so that the class can tune in to the correct wavelengths of their respective imaginations.

I was presented with the added difficulty of supervision. I had to weave the topic into the class curriculum in a natural manner avoiding the watchful and censorial eyes of the class teacher, the school Headmaster and the College tutors. Note also that the type of composition the class usually would write would be "The Life Story of a Two



Shilling Piece" or such stand-bys as "The Boy I Most Admire" or "What I Would Like for Xmas".

I had three composition periods stretching over the three weeks and I proposed to work the 1st one into the second, preparing the class for something "off the beaten track" by using a "John Bull" cover for the first week's composition. I also deviated from the norm in the literature lesson on the Thursday prior to the Tuesday composition. I intended settling on S.F. I read the class extracts from the opening chapters of The War of the Worlds, without the title. At the end of the period, during which the class had shown more than usual interest, I asked if anyone had any ideas as to the title of the book I was holding. About a third of the class had no idea; the remainder guessed it at once, though one bright spark, who offered Journey into Space as the title, was immediately told by his classmates that this was impossible as the invaders had landed on Earth and were not leaving it. The discussion swung over to the film (with a little gentle prodding by me). One boy, to whom I am eternally grateful, brought up the fact that The War of the Worlds was no good and he had liked The Day the Earth Stood Still better. Thus we were launched on to the topic of science fiction films and books as a whole.

"Well," I said, "how would you like to write a composition next week with a science fiction theme? You can be thinking about it meanwhile."

All but three of the class were in immediate favour of such a composition topic. Two of the others decided they too (two) were in favour after a little gentle persuasion. "Would you rather do a composition on 'The Ballistics of Big Bertha'?"

The other said yes, he'd love to write about "The Ballistics of Big Bertha".

From close questioning I gathered that "The Ballistics of Big Bertha" was the topic about which he knew most, in fact the only topic about which he knew anything. Just my luck. I finally quietened him down by "suggesting" that he wrote a story about Big Bertha bringing in as a subplot a Martian horde attempting to steal the secrets of the ballistics of the gun.

"Please, sir, did you see ghost from 20,000 Fathoms?"

"Please, sir, do you believe in flying saucers?"

"Please, sir, it says in the paper that a man's seen a flying saucer ..."

"Please, sir, my uncle's seen a flying saucer."

"Please, sir"

The next day one boy brought me a pile of S.F. mags including an old "Argosy" containing a Bradbury story! I gave him 9d and we were both happy.

And what of the composition? On the Great Day the ballistics expert did not turn up. Perhaps the fact that I might know how to spell ballistics, which I'm sure he didn't, put him off. This left a "shower" of 32 boys of whom 7 were over fourteen and the remaining 25 were over thirteen and a half.

It surprised me somewhat that the most popular theme with the boys and obviously the one thing which had had the most impression on them was the zero hour counting; "Six-Five-Four-Three-Two-One-Zero", and away goes the rocket ship on its long journey into the void. No fewer than 14 of the boys brought in this item. The next most popular piece of S.F. equipment was the space-suit, or pressure suit with or without the added mention of space helmet. Seven brought this into their compositions. There were six different flying saucers, one seen over Greta Green travelling at a mere 11,500 mph. Another landed on the South Downs (in 1965) and "2 big drums on 3 legs with ten big tentacles on each drum" emerged from it.

Other details - personnel, dates, location, destination, etc - varied widely as also did the titles, though in the majority of cases the reasons for choosing a particular title were not made clear in the text and except for the differences in names the stories might have been often the same.

The best title headed the worst composition: Jupiter is Explored. In two periods, each of 45 minutes, the party not only did not explore Jupiter but never left the Earth.

Trip to the Moon and Journey to the Moon accounted for six titles, whilst Journey to Mars and Journey into Space accounted for four more. Destination Mars headed two compositions, strangely these belonging to boys sitting together. One who showed great initiative went along to Mars in 3054 A.D. in a rocket ship travelling at 83,000 m.p.m.; mention was made of a radar screen, atomic motors and jet engines. Mars was found to have a blue rock surface and lakes of boiling water eighteen inches deep. His companion's rocketship possessed also atomic motors and jet engines, though the rock surface bordering his boiling lakes was happily red and not blue. Kids!

One boy wrote about The Man from Mars, a transportation of Wells into Yorkshire, whilst two wrote about The Invaders from Space. One party of these invaders was the Silicon Men from Neptune; "These funny little men were only 2'6" high and the leader had 6 arms and 4 legs". Why only the leader, and if so what about the others, the boy forgot to say.

Adventure into Space, to the moon, The Moon Adventure, Journey into the Unknown, Zero Hour, Rocket Ship x1, The Planet Mars and its People, Return to the Lost Planet, The Invasion of Earth and To the Moon - all these were other titles. The Day the Earth Stood Still was but a copy of another production of the same name. The Trip to Space resulted in a detailed description of a "breathing apparatus". The best composition was headed Journey to Another Sun, a story about a trip round the corner to Alpha Centaurus, which not only baffled the rest of the class but didn't exactly soothe my school-practice-shattered nerves. A Trip to Mars became an intricate description of life on Venus, whilst I've not yet solved the puzzle presented by the title Destination Flight to the Moon.

The first two compositions I marked had plots built round the interplanetary police and the interplanetary space patrol. I thus thought that this Dun-Dare-ish theme would run throughout the entire batch, but these two proved to be the only ones inclined towards the "Eagle" comic. One made mention of a telefinder, used by an expedition to discover whether Mars is populated. The expedition found no life on the planet other than a yellow and blue grass surface.

In one composition Martain Antmen used rayguns to destroy expeditions from the Earth. A new chapter for The Martian Chronicles. Another contained description and authentic background down to the smallest detail of when the expedition recovered from its take-off blackout. The writer, who was the last to awaken, found that "Higgins was preparing a meal for us." He was at fault only in grammar from an English point of view and the space craft's speed of two million miles an hour from the S.F. viewpoint.

The question of a correct or plausible speed for one's rocket ship resulted in some chaos and amusing choices. When actual speeds were mentioned they varied from 2000 mph, 7,000 mph, 83,000 mph and even 8 times the speed of light! One boy decided that a take-off speed of 798,502 mph would be necessary to beat Earth's gravity.

Where dates were mentioned these also varied widely. Only one boy began his story in the past, 1934. Only one began in the present. Evidently S.F. is synonymous in schools with the future. 1955 and 1956 were both popular as were for some unknown reasons 1965 and 1995. Other dates were 1964, 2021, 2553, 2947, 3051, and the 2100th century, which could have been only a howler.

One opening sentence was "The Moon is a satellite revolving round the Earth", which I thought very good. Unfortunately the rest of the composition

Two boys set their launchings at Woomera writing about beds and safety-belts needed for take-off, and the use of magnetic boots for outer space.

One bright spark, evidently familiar with Bradbury's Rocket Summer, pleaded for a law against the manufacture of rocketships. After journeying to the moon, the rocketship "Lunar Xzq7" ran into a race of men possessing 3 legs, 4 eyes, 2 noses and the ability to grow to the size of elephants. One spaceship, the "Fulcon", after being told by a pirate flying saucer to "Land on the Lost Planet or you will Die" chased the said FS which escaped through travelling "too fast for radar to pick up".

For your edification, I am inserting now two representative compositions showing the rather better and the not quite so good types of production. You will recall of course that these are written by youngsters of thirteen and fourteen years of age, which makes their familiarity with science-fictional concepts to be a little surprising.

Journey to Another Sun

On 7th April 2947 the first star ship set off for Alpha Centaurus, the nearest star four light years away. The solar system had already been colonized by the people from earth, and new worlds had to be found to house the population. The space ship was soon out of the solar system and speeding a 8 times the speed of light for the distant star. The journey took six months of travel at 1,488,000 miles per second. The ship was armed with heat blasters and atomic disintegrators to protect it against the weird creatures usaly found on alien planets. At long last the system of Alpha Centaurus came on the televiewers. The space ship made an orbit round a nice green planet about eighty millions miles from it's sun.

The space ship settled down on it's force beams, in a pleasant green valley. The commander of the ship captain Olsen and ten of his crew put on their pressure suits and stepped into the airlock. The air in lock was exhausted and the outerdooor was opened. Cautiously the men walked down the ramp. The captain took out his oxygen tester and tested the air. He found the air pressure and oxygen were about the same as earth's. The men took off their suits and began to examine the strange plants.

Three days went by and on fourth day, in the early morning, the space ship was surrounded by a lot of little people about two foot high. The little men were very kind to the space explores, and told them their history they had evolved from the vegetable kingdom and now their race was slowly dying. The men from the solar system stayed three months on the small planet and they went home to the solar system with the permission of the little plant people to colonize the planetary system of Alpha Centaurus. This action would save the human race from overcrowding and at last extinction. A thousand years later the human race had spread through the universe, thanks to the first star explores.

Destination flight to the Moon

It was the year 1956 and the first rocket ready for the moon was ready to take off. All to gether there were six men four men for the controls and two men watching for meteors. The place were they are to take off is on a big mare outside of Leeds, now they are getting there suplices on. in another hour they out of the earths atmosfeer on the way to the moon.

An hour has nearly passed and the men climb aboard waving to their families soon the air tight door will close and then the engine will start then 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 ZERO the rocket is now going 50,000 miles anhour very soon we can see the earth turning into a big ball and then getting smaller and smaller.

Sudonly! a moteous came speeding toward us if it haddent been for the two men we wouldnt have been able to dodge in time very soon the moon was very big and we could see big crates on it. We soon landed and we got into our oxegen suits and the door opened I was the first to go out. Suddenly! I was surrounded by Little men they said you wasent the first men from earth. We were the first but when we got here we wanted to stay and in years we got used to the air.now go back and tell your people to stop making rockets or we will destroy it for ever. I soon got back and told them what I had heard and seen we soon got back to earth and told the people what I had heard and seen and it was made a law in the world country no one can make a rocket ship.

I've deliberately saved this one till the end; not because of its especial merits or conversely its lack of them, but rather because it ends on a note our chairman, Jack Darlington, would love to have seen. "With a screaming roaring sound of the jets" Yes, Jack, space opera as you like it and by a thirteen year old too! Don't fret Hamilton, Carnell, Boucher, Campbell (both of you!) and Gold! The Stattens of the future are on their way!

Part II Science Fiction in the Junior School

(EDITOR'S NOTE. Interjections signed ((ORBIT)) are by the editor and/or stencil-cutter for that magazine. AM)

In ORBIT 3 I made known the mind-shattering truth about s-f in the Secondary Modern school of today, in all its cosmic significance. (Apologies due here to Mr Kenneth Potter, the "Nebula" writer). The experiment which was made during my first school practice as a student teacher was so successful as an experiment and also as a fan-article that I proposed to repeat it during my second school practice. This I did. For the record I had (actually still have, as I'm still on that very S.P. at the time of writing) a class of 40 nine and ten year olds. Only 35 were present for the actual epic-writing, one having mumps, three being at the baths and one being standing outside the door for having imitated a spaceship almost before I got the magic words "Vargo Statten" out of my mouth. To tell the truth, for a whole fortnight the kids showed absolutely no interest in spaceships, or any other sf stand-bys, even though I prodded them continually with casual references to the topic; i.e. "Wake up lad, you're not dreaming about flying to Mars here." One boy wears a badge denoting the fact that he is a member of the Dan Dare Club. When questioned on the matter he told me his mother had thought it would be nice if he joined a club and as he is too young for the local youth club had sent an application in for him to join the Dan Dare Club. I nearly wept with frustration. Wasted youth. Not even knowing about science fiction. Poor kids .. not even knowing about Ray Brad.....

Sticking to the already successful formula I managed, by interchanging a PT lesson with an art lesson, an arithmetic with an English lesson and another English lesson with a Religious Instruction lesson, to get a double-period of RI which did not follow a double-period of PT and also a double English period, which was the true reason for the champing round. ((I thought he owed Bradbury, not van Vogt. ORBIT)) I now had just under one and a half hours for the job. Hurry. Hurry.

First I read extracts from the opening chapters of Wells's War of the Worlds. I then suggested (when my throat was sore enough) to warrant their doing some work ... I was perfectly happy reading Wells) that they do an essay on either someone coming to the Earth from Space or someone going to Space from Earth. Anyone could be in on it and the time and setting could be anywhere. The kids set to work. One wrote three and a half sides, by far a class record. Unfortunately so far I haven't been able to decipher a word. Three or four of the more sluggish members wrote as little as four or five lines. On the whole the compositions lacked initiative of thought and had very little coordination. Scientific ideas were detailed only in the occasional effort. This, I suppose, should have been expected. These boys were four years younger than the first lot, and even in s-f four years can make a lot of difference.

The most popular titles were Flight to Mars and Destination Moon. There were meteorites and Phantoms from Space to say nothing of a Monster from Mars. Other Earth visitors included The Men from Mars and the Invidious Invaders, and also The Inns from Outer Space which was based on The Day the Earth Stood Still. There was The People Who Terrified Earth (so someone else got Jeeps in Moon 133) and there was the Battle of the Planet. (No doubt about those covers).

The Journey to the Unknown stated: "In about a month's time we came to Titan a planet which floats about Saturn there .." The People Who Terrified Earth was a pippin. The whole was as follows:

Once a man thought that there was life on Mars but all the people around him would mock him and said 'You are silly you are not altogether upstairs'. So Jack thought he would try to get Professor Charles to build him a ship to take him to the Moon it was soon arranged for the ship to be made. It was two years before it was made but the time came when there was a crowd around a great take-off station it was going to happen. The prof. put on the clock 9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1, fire! Boom shshsh and off went the ship leaving a green vapour of heat, on its way to Mars when it got to Mars no one has ever seen or heard of those men since they left Earth on 1876 so perish all men who go to Mars.

I gave him 8/10 and wondered if he had read at least the opening story of The Martian Chronicles. ((I must apologise for correcting most of the errors up to this point; I hadn't realised they were intentional. ORBIT))

There was The News from Mars, the Devel girl from mars, From Outer Space and the Story of Mars, which was all about eating chocolate after crashing an aeroplane, and Space Ships from the Moon, which began:- "The year 2000 E.C. a report on the radio saying that an invasion is coming to the Earth in three hours time. All spaceships are being filled with petrol and space cars are flying all over the place carrying people to their stations for the invasion."

There was a Trip to Mars in which everyone went to Jupiter (Abbott and Costello no doubt). There was an interesting account of a journey to the moon entitled The Monster from 20,000 fathoms. There was also one last interesting one called Journing Into Space.

Seven stories, as they were rather than essays or compositions, were based directly on The War of the Worlds, whilst a faint similarity could be read into others. At least three were based in some way on the radio programme Journey into Space whilst Dan Dare accounted for two more. Only two boys named their rocket ships. These were "The Valient" and "Flying Buaty". The ships' destinations covered Mars (by far the most popular), the moon, Jupiter, Mercury and Titan, of course. Settings ranged from the days of the ancients through 1589, 29th December 1811, 5th 'April' 1949 and 1999 to 3000 A.D. The boy who set his tale in 1999 London wrote: "Three scientists are going out in M-H car and M-H car is a car that works by M-E fuell". Science! Great! Another wrote: "The racket flies off into space at 75,000, 000 M.p.h. We were surprised to reach Mars in one hour going at this speed." Secombe or Milligan?

The counting which had proved so popular with the first batch also interested (comparatively) this mob. Three gave it a mention. One boy was chased down Briggate by a Martian 'Octapuss'. Another who called his effort Destination Moon went to Mars and told that there were "march men on mars".

And that, I'm sorry to say, was that. The second which follows the best seller never lives up to the promise of the first. So must it be with this tri.. I mean epistle. As must be expected these children cannot write, as intensively as thirteen year olds, with the result that most of these writings were little more than rambling muskets. One or two do, true, deserve a quote.

Destination Moon

It all begins in New York about zero time the men are just getting into the spaceship. They fasten their safety belts and the man in the control room goes 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1,zero and up up very high in the sky it goes untill it is out of sight then suddenly they land when they get out of their space suits the moon looks like green cheese and just then they look round and saw one of their pals floating into outer space so one of them la went back to the space ship and tied a hook.

Journey to Space

In the year 1589 the stories of space was read by many people and they thought they would set an adventure to space. They started making space-ships and other things that would carry them far into space. It took them four months to make a space ship at last the hard work was done. At last they got into the space ships at London and set of for space. It was a dreary ride and it took them about one year or over at last they reached space. I was a peculiar place the people had their mouths at the back of their head and their eyes were on top and they talk very funny indeed. When they saw our space ship they were horrified and they ran into their very funny homes. We went around and saw what very funny houses they were. When we had had enough we went back to Earth and told the people our funny story. But we never went again.

One which took me thirty five minutes to mark, so bad was the writing, went as follows:

Journey into Space

One day my pals and I planded to go to space. We got the spaceship ready to go then we all got in then. She set of. We went 10 miles an hour we put a tellyfwer to see how far we are. Then a sudden thing happend the tellyfwer went of we at landed. We thought we at landed on Mars in stead of spacewe sput on our space-suit then we opened the door and went outside we found ourself in spce we walked about for an hour and we were just about go back we heard noise above us we look up and we saw another spaceship we thought it had come to resenct us but we lost shight of it, it had landed a mile away from us so we began to walk back to our spaceships.

That was the first I marked and with the thought that they might ALL be like that I almost gave the whole darn project up. One last word: this one I really liked. I always did enjoy those grammatical blunders of Sam Goldryn, i.e.; "Include me out". I was thus forced to laugh when the second brightest boy in the class came out with: "When I heard a blinding crash."

Ron Bennett

SCIENCE FICTION SPECULATES on the future of many things. But what of its own?

THE FUTURE OF

by
C. CLARKE

SCIENCE-FICTION

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of science-fiction, for the aid of a large number of good men is needed to turn S.F. from a second-rate story-writing into a first-rate art form. Up till now the modern literary scene has consisted almost exclusively of 'orthodox' literature, a literature differing from science-fiction in that it is concerned with life as it is now, predominantly with human relationships. This is natural enough, since it is these that have largely occupied the minds of those men who have concerned themselves to communicate their ideas to others. A literary work of art is formed when an idea is felt deeply and with conviction by such a man, a man, moreover, who is capable of expressing it in literary form.

But has the field of science-fiction produced any works of art to date, or is it likely to do so in the future? Surely, if we consider the greatest achievements of modern literature, the novels of D.H. Lawrence or the poems of T.S. Eliot for instance, no science-fiction work can be found to equal them in the power with which they affect and transform the reader. The only possible S.F. runners in the field would be Ray Bradbury's short stories or C.S. Lewis's trilogy; I know of no other S.F. writers who can match the skill with which Bradbury weaves an atmosphere of imminent unrarity which raises his stories to their terrifying intensity, or the impact of the sense of wonder which Lewis is enabled to convey simply because of his literary skill. Yet these cannot be classed as science-fiction at all. They are rather fantasy. In fact, with few exceptions, none of the science-fiction novels which critics deem to consider as good literature are directly inspired by science; Catholic theology is the dominant theme in Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, for instance, and a large part of John Wyndham's novels consists of the ideas of mainstream fiction extended in an S.F. idiom. Yet in John Wyndham, together with Brian Aldiss and James Blish, we have a hint of things to come.

The content of science-fiction is vast, literally cosmic, and all modes of human consciousness, all aspects of the universe, are explored with powerful imagination. Why, then, does it come off second best from a comparison with orthodox fiction? Not simply because of its smaller output, but because the style of language used to express these ideas is often pitifully inadequate. Over and over again we encounter the tragedy of a writer expressing the wonder of the cosmos through the language of a horror-comic, or at best of a detective story. For merely to feel the importance of an idea with deep conviction is not enough to produce art. Aldous Huxley has pointed to the low literary quality of suicide letters to illustrate this.

Whereas previously men were inspired by religion and their inner universe, now many are realising the beauty and mystery of the outer universe as revealed by scientists, and they are being inspired by the implications of their discoveries. Surely a writer capable of using the English language sufficiently well to be able to express these ideas adequately could produce a work of art

of even greater worth than those I mentioned earlier. I imagine a writer capable of creating a novel combining the frenzied imagination of, say, Alfred Bester in *The Stars My Destination* with the more sober but far more impressive style of John Wyndham; or imagine an S.F. equivalent of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings.

Science-fiction is a young art-form, and it has already produced an exciting body of work. We, the readers of S.F., must not let it remain a source of thriller excitement and intellectual provocation for the few. If we keep up demands for a higher standard of writing it can be transformed into an art form of unprecedented power, capable, through its repercussions in other fields of human activity, of transforming the thinking of mankind.

C. Clarke

THE ABOVE ARTICLE outlines one possible future for sf writing. Here is another.

NEW ROAD-MAHS TO CHAOS

C. P. McKenzie

In this article I am going to raise a plaintive voice in a direction totally opposed to the current general flow. Of late, a lot has been said and written about ways and means of getting sf popularised, and recognised generally for the high form of literature it is. Most of the recent "New Worlds" guest editorials have been in this vein; month after month sf writers are putting into black-and-white the problems facing sf authors, editors and publishers. The need for better stories, higher quality writing, and, mainly, more readers.

VECTOR, too, has its share. Although not so apparent as in "New Worlds", the general tone is for improvements all round, more letters, more articles, more members etc. The letter column tries to point out what is wrong with the B.S.F.A. and ways to correct these faults, and improve it, and VECTOR, generally. This in itself is good. I think I'm in the majority when I say I like VECTOR. It has its faults, of course, but they do seem to be corrected soon after their appearance. Okay; but there are further-reaching implications too, and these are what I want to explore in this discourse.

To start off with, let's have a look at the world's population as a whole. It depends on who you are to determine how you view the division of the people. For instance, educationalists say 'literate or illiterate', South Africans say 'black or white', Frenchmen say 'man or woman', and so on. I tend to see the world as being sharply divided between people who do, and people who don't, read sf. However, it's not an even division; in fact it's decidedly lop-sided, with the bias in favour of the 'don'ts'. This is particularly true of Great Britain and the United States, although not so true of some other countries. (For instance, would anyone like to estimate the sf-reading percentage of Swaziland?)

So the line is drawn. Just now I said it was a sharp division; but is it? How do you define an sf reader? Where does the line come? The Day of the

Triffids was a best-seller; twenty million people watched A for Andromeda on television; The Day the Earth Caught Fire was one of the cinema box-office draws of last year. And yet the membership of the B.S.F.A. is only about 150. So the general public must appreciate sf, even if they don't know it. Somewhere inside most people, there must be a little spark of Fan-dom trying to get out. And the professional publishers know this! If they can only convince people that sf is good, then they're going to achieve one of their biggest aims.

The B.S.F.A., too, wants more people to become paid-up members. Each year, successive Committees are baffled by 'The Silent Ones' who come and go, people who apparently decide to join, pay the sub., and then, mysteriously, disappear when the next sub. is due. Is it because they're hard up? I doubt it. The real reason is because their contact with sf was just a mere flirtation, induced through an overdose of James Bond, and the chance discovery of one of the sf classics.

So, the potential must be there: not in everybody by any means, some people just will not adapt to sf, but there is a large body of people who have the possibility of becoming avid sf readers.

I have only recently come to this conclusion, but sf publishers have been aware of it ever since the days of Hugo Gernsback. For the last forty years the covers and blurbs of sf books and magazines have been alternately toned down and tuned up, as fashions changed, in search of wider readership. The publishers' angle is plain to see - more readers, more profits. But, taking the long view, is this what we want? Is it such a good idea to get the non-discriminating majority into our select midst? I say "No", emphatically. My reasons will be plain to see if you just follow my lines of thought as the inevitable, chilling logic of it all unwinds itself. Let us imagine a state of affairs in the none-too-distant future; say in six months. Overnight, the potential spark of sf Fan-dom in millions shifts itself into a roaring furnace of sf-devouring fervour, the magic number 451 proudly flaming.

One of the first visual things to become apparent is the sudden demand for sf in the book-shops. The immediate result - all available books are sold. People ask for more, and they get them. Publishing houses reprint their current titles and eventually revive most of their old. So far, so good. Everything looks fine. The bewildered devotee finds that the titles that have been eluding him for years are suddenly popping up in his local book-shop, resplendent in new covers. This is great, the unsuspecting fan thinks to himself, heaven on earth. But, unbeknown to him, the thin end of a very stubborn wedge has been well and truly placed.

All our favourite hack/crud writers are awakened, led gently up to a room bare of all but a chair, table, typewriter and paper, and told; "Write you'll be paid by the ton." The door is then locked, collections made daily, and the results rushed at high speed to the printers. With quite alarming speed, "science-fiction" books appear on book-stalls. Magazines, too, find a new market, and encourage by this new mags pop up, crammed with stories by 'new' authors and stories 'by the author of

The B.S.F.A. cashes in on the boom, too, with rising membership, worthy VECTORS in coloured covers and on glossy paper, weekly Newsletters, and, best

news of all, the 1964 Convention fills every hotel in Peterborough.

Just what the sf industry needs. Authors wear out their pens writing, publishers wear out their hands rubbing, readers wear out their eyes reading. Guest Editorials in "New Worlds" reflect the need to find more material, and deplore the fast-diminishing store of ideas. The British edition of "Analog" reappears with letters in 'Brass Tacks' from Americans saying they've built and tested a Deane device, and that the view from the Moon is just swell. "Private Eye" takes over Nova Publications. Kingsley Amis writes the inevitable sequel to New Maps of Hell, sympathizing with the now-defunct satire industry. Charles Clore takes over "Private Eye". Elizabeth Taylor is invited to open the 1965 Convention, which consequently fills every hotel in London.

In other words cheers. In the midst of all this lunacy, it is still just barely possible to find the occasional thoroughbred fan, still clinging desperately to his sanity, buying with discretion, a supercilious leer on his face as he watches the toading plebs clamouring for space-opera. It couldn't go on for ever. Inevitably, the boom grinds to a halt, as fast as it was born. Magazines fold, publishing-houses close, book-shops hold 'Closing-Down Sales' and, accompanied by loud cheers from a faceless minority, all the hack/crud writers are one by one returned to a dreamless slumber. The few remaining genuine sf writers suffer a stunning blow to their ability to sell their material. A slump, no less.

I ask again; do we want this to happen? Publishers - we know you're good, and we'll keep it quiet if you will. Just don't try to widen your markets. It's not worth it.

(P.S. Have I been reading too much cataclysmic sf?)

C.P. McKenzie

BOOK REVIEW

Andre Norton: Catseye (Collins 192 pages, 12/64)

This is a science fiction novel written for children by one of the best known authors in this particular field. It tells the story of Troy Moran, who has been deported from his own planet of Norden - where he was a hard rider - to Korwar during a Galactic war. There he becomes a third class citizen, the lowest stratum in the society, and is very pleased when he obtains temporary work in an expensive pet shop which imports animals from other planets, including earthly ones. Moran soon finds that two cats, two foxes, and the little furry kinkajou are no ordinary animals but are able to communicate with him mentally in a clear, logical way. This leads him to wonder why they are being bought and who it is who controls them, whom they so obviously fear. When Moran's employer, Kyger, is killed, Troy and the animals are forced to flee from the city to save their lives. Their escape to a dead underground 'city' and their eventual bid for freedom make very good, exciting science fiction.

Basically the ideas in this story are very good, but the manner of their execution is not. Firstly, communication with animals is an idea which would particularly appeal to 8-11 year olds, yet the style of writing and vocabulary used is far more suited to a teenage reader. Secondly, children are - on the whole - impatient readers and like a fast-moving story with plenty of action;

yet the first third of this work is primarily concerned with setting the scene for the adventures of the latter two-thirds. This is too large a proportion for the average child reader, and he will probably never reach the more exciting parts. Thirdly, any reader, but particularly the child one, is greatly influenced by the first few pages; if they are satisfying he will carry on reading, but if they are dull or too complex he will put the book aside. I think that many children will give up Catseye without giving it a fair chance, since the opening pages are full of strange words, ideas and names. Indeed, within the first half dozen pages the reader has to cope with: Korwar, Tikil, dipple, the Big Cough, a spacer, a roller, a flitter, two animals - a dofuld and a Phaxian change-coat - Gentle Homo, Gentle Fan and plozaglass. Possibly the avid sf fan could cope with this weird vocabulary, but the unacquainted would find it difficult.

The final drawback is the choice of names which are not easy to take in at a glance and thus make the characters more impersonal, which is bad in a children's book where the reader likes to be able to identify himself with the main ones. By all means use different names to our earthly ones, but not such complex ones as Dragur, Maselli, Rogarkil or Berne; they are too pseudo! And then the animals, the one aspect the human brain can easily and fully understand and appreciate but no! They too have become confused in our minds by all having similar names; the foxes Sargon and Sheba, the cats Simba and Sahiba and the kinkajou Shang.

I have gone to some lengths to point out the defects in Catseye; but if one is strong enough to be able to overcome them, the latter parts of the book will be found to be first rate and to provide excellent juvenile reading containing all the elements which appeal to the child reader; interest, action, excitement and finally a satisfactory, well-worked-out ending.

S.R.P.

The MAIL RESPONSE

(LETTER COLUMN)

PHILIP HARBOTTLE (Wallsend on Tyne) I hope I may be forgiven for returning to Fearn again, but the nature of most of the condemnatory remarks levelled at him in the current VECTOR are such that I feel called upon to refute them. Thus:-

Charles Smith instances Statton and Gridban as inferior sf, and says that even if my claim of their acting to introduce a great number of people to sf is substantially correct, it cannot justify so extensive a laudatory analysis as my three VECTOR essays afforded. In this he is perfectly correct. But the Seion pubs are irrelevant to the series as a whole, and if you care to look, you will find that I stated my justification for the series quite plainly towards the end of the concluding article.

My intention was to give publicity to those stories written before 1950, before Statton and Seion Ltd ever existed. Between 1933 and 1948 JRF produced stories of outstanding interest and value to the genre as it then was, and it was to them that I gave my attention. In VECTOR 17 I quoted two opinions which acclaimed certain Fearn stories as being actual classics of that period. And

Isaac Asimov and Frederik Pohl are not exactly fools. Only lack of space prevented the quoting of similarly eminent testimonials for many other stories. Whatever Fearn did afterwards in the way of Scion novels has no bearing whatever on the merit of his earlier yarns. And such was their volume that it took three articles to merely outline them.

Further, I'm incredulous that a man of the standing and accomplishment of Brian Aldiss can come up with such a farrago of red herrings and distortion about Fearn. Once again the Scion period is the target for abuse. And in this case it is even more grossly irrelevant than before. I am not suggesting that Brian's unhappy experience in submitting stories to the Scion magazine is exaggerated. However understandable the editorial belligerence towards certain elements of fandom, in view of their bigoted hostility, it was wrong for this to be directed at would-be contributors. But as Archie indicated, Fearn was not, repeat not, connected with the editorial side of the magazine at that time. Alistair Paterson was the man in charge. What is more, it was Fearn himself who was instrumental in Paterson's resignation. He did not assume any editorial responsibility until issue number 7. Thereafter Fearn went to considerable lengths to encourage new authors.

As to Brian's other point about the magazine's allegedly trashy exterior putting respectable authors off, what about the Standard magazines? The well-executed but distasteful covers for "Thrilling Wonder" and "Startling" by Earle Dergoy didn't seem to deter men like Leinster, Kuttner and Brown from contributing some of their finest work. What's more, soon after assuming control Fearn introduced a standard cover which incorporated a simple painting and the contents panel.

The slight on Fearn's personal nature is not worth answering, but in any case this has already been done for me by Bert Lewis's extremely pleasant and interesting letter which preceded Brian Aldiss's in VECTON 19.

As for the literary aspect of Fearn's work, I would point out that nowhere in my articles did I make any extravagant claims for genuine literary content. In several cases I frankly stated the absence of it (see Part One). However, there were a few notable exceptions, some of which I detailed. One of these, *Wings Across the Cosmos*, I had lined up for a special analysis in my first draft of the series whilst unaware that it had, in fact, been anthologised. Fearn had to write within the editorial limitations then in effect, and I think he did it rather well. On the few occasions when he wrote over and above them, the result was a story of outstanding competence from a literary or any other standpoint.

The elegant sincerity of Don Smith's letter was a revelation to me. I have no quibble with his personal view that Fearn's stories gave him no pleasure or entertainment. That is his privilege. I personally loathe the prose of Jane Austen and regard her novels as a blot on, rather than a credit to, English literature. A lot of eminent people think otherwise and they are probably right.

Again, Don is correct in saying that Fearn chose the easier path of mass production, with its quick returns, rather than write to the best of his ability. But only after 1948. For my own part, I have always been aware of this deficiency in his later work, and have never ceased to regret it. But I have also never ceased to be grateful for the grounding, the very necessary introduction to higher sf - such as I now enjoy - that the Scion novels afforded me as a teenager. I see the loss of Fearn's reputation as a sacrifice to the advancement of British science fiction.

Finally, I would add that I discovered Fearn's earlier work only a few years ago, courtesy Ken Slater, and that I approached it as an already exper-

ionced and I hope nature of reader. I applied modern tastes and standards to it. Only rarely did I find it wanting.

There is plenty of vintage JRF material in the BSFA Library. I suggest that members should borrow it and evaluate him for themselves. And I include present day English writers; if they swallow their pride and jealousy they might learn something.

(I hadn't realised that Fearn had ever had anything to do with the editorial side of the Scion magazine. Though I must admit that I never paid much attention to Scionics in those days. AM)

DONALD FRANSON (California) A small contribution to the Fearn discussion - anyone wanting to know when he first appeared in science fiction magazines - it was in the March 1931 "Amazing Stories", in the 'Discussions' column. His letter tells of his interest in science, his enthusiasm for science fiction which he had just discovered, and that this was his first letter. He considered that Dr. David Keller and Edward E. Smith were the magazine's finest authors, and discusses the science in Skylark of Space.

In Aldiss's letter, he says teenagers shouldn't be written down to. This is true. There should be no such thing as juvenile science fiction, unless it's for eight year olds. I discovered "Amazing" at thirteen and I remember that at that time I thought Tom Swift and Burroughs's Martian stories were for kids before that I read Wells. I'll admit Verne wrote for juveniles, but not down to them. Educational and entertaining stories were his aim. What is educational or scientific or literary about Burroughs? (H. Rider Haggard is better). Wonder why some fans are still interested in ERB (if not just for nostalgic reasons?) I didn't mean to imply that Burroughs was juvenile, not in the least. Moronic might be the right word..... I see you are an ERB fan. Why?

You mention Lem Gulliver; thought everybody'd forgotten him. The GCM you'd want would have to be an interesting speaker, in addition to his hero capabilities. "Jerkens" was a great story-teller, for example. A theme for a costume party could be Lewis Carroll characters - they are almost endless, and are certainly fantasy. Fame for a space drive: either "zip" or "DasRaketenwissenschaften" "Euer-erock-Weltraumschiffahrt nach den Sternen".

(I think I got the idea - by the time you'd said that lot, you'd be half way there. I don't know what this makes me, but at the time I was turning up my nose at anything with the Scion imprint I was lapping up the cheap ERB paperbacks then available. Just mentally retarded, perhaps. AM)

BENT LEWIS (Ashton on Ribble) Sparking of letters, I was very interested to read the one from Brian McCabe of Slough and also that you yourself are. note that he is an Edgar Rice Burroughs fan and also that you yourself are.

Although I did not mention this in my last letter, I am a very keen fan of Burroughs; in fact I could almost say that he was the first S.F. author that I remember. I will remember reading his first three Tarzan titles, then managing to get hold (by sheer ingenuity) in the local library of a copy of Son of Tarzan, which I promptly started off and read it through with only a break for food and drink, finishing it off at about two in the morning in between shouts from my father about the lateness of the hour and threats that he would 'throw the book on the fire if I did not come to bed'.

Tarzan sure was some character to me and in the capable hands of Burroughs he really lived; so much so, that for a long time I thought there was such a person. I thought that here was the age of book-characters; then I found his Mars series. From that time it became my favourite book series and even today I find these stories the easiest to read with the most satisfaction afterwards.

BRIAN ROLLS (Bournemouth) I have a beef about the book reviews, or lack of them. Unlike some people I don't mind how long the reviews are - I never find that they are so long that it is unnecessary to read the book. If I haven't read the book, I am only interested in whether I would enjoy it - a fact I can usually tell no matter what the reviewer's opinion: If I have read it, I enjoy comparing views. However, I can only read a fraction of the books that come out reviewed in VECTOR. I know that it is the custom only to review books if copies have been sent to you, but after all you cannot really expect publishers to send copies to an organisation with only a few hundred members.

I should like to see VECTOR print a review of as many SF and fantasy books as possible - it would be valuable to collectors and borrowers. There must be many other members like me who buy a few SF books every month. If a few of these were to write a short piece about each book as they read it - it needn't be much; just the theme, how it was written and so on - we would not only have a fuller VECTOR, but to judge from the letter columns, a more satisfying one.

As for magazine reviews, I feel they are only of interest if you are a subscriber.

(Something on the lines of a title-author-publisher-price listing with about one line of factual (as distinct from opinionative) description might prove feasible. I'm frankly beginning to get worried about the space-angle now. Under the new dispensation this issue was supposed to run to only 20 pages - and look at it. It's mainly Bennett's fault of course. AMB)

DENNIS TUCKER (High Wycombe) Re my letter, there certainly does seem to have been 'a spot of confusion'. Did I really wander like that? I usually try to be more precise when setting my thoughts down. Maybe I should strictly have said 'strip cartoon' rather than 'comic strip', but, as you remark, the latter term does not necessarily imply any humorous content these days, and it was certainly not my intention to imply that there was anything funny about Witch War. When I remarked that humour should not be out I was really changing the subject slightly and was referring to the waste of a full page (page 2, Vol.6.) on a cartoon. Hope that clears the matter up.

Liked Brian Aldiss's article and the letter section best. I was surprised at our President's remark that Tolkien's and Moorcock's stories leave him untouched because he cannot believe in absolute good or evil as an entity. Surely - and as an author he should appreciate this - the prime essential to the enjoyment of SF or fantasy is the ability to suspend disbelief, to become immersed in the world of the story?

ROY KAY (Birkenhead) James Parkhill-Bathbone's article, The Real Thing, was very well written and must have come closer than many others in defining what SF should be. I'd like to say hear hear to the last lines of the article "For both the scientist and the layman, science fiction should be able to say something about both the mind and heart of man, and the possibilities of his intellectual and emotional imaginings." Now's that for the perfect definition?

Three cheers for the President. His article was a fascinating insight into the minds of those mystical creatures, PRO AUTHORS. It would be still better if, as Brian suggests, it was the first of a series authors talking about their reasons for writing. Well, they said television was impossible.

Now to the letter column and particularly to Dennis Tucker's view that the BSFA is "a serious-type body with serious objectives". He also refers to "the

dignity of a serious body". Surely the BSFA isn't as serious and monastic as all that? The way I see it, this is an association for people who enjoy reading, and perhaps writing, science fiction. Science fiction is a special division of entertainment literature. There is a difference between reading SF and, say, the study of pre-Raphaelite architecture, or the assessment of the artistic merit of early oriental woodcuts. What I'm trying to get over is that we're not a lot of erudite professors poring over works in dusty and respectful atmospheres. We care about SF, but we don't want to render it dull and emotionless by taking it too seriously. Maybe I'm wrong. I'd like to hear what other members think about this.

Re "Not-competitions".

1. John Carter, Warlord of Mars, who would give a talk on "Deeper Character Insight in Science Fiction versus the Banth." (d Bomb the banth. AM)

2. The spread of Earth Culture through the Galaxy.

3. "The Stellerrela", used amongst space hands as a slang term for a warp drive based on relative Stellar distances.

Right; having answered the "Not-competitions", I claim the "Not-prize".

To close, may I move away from V.19 and put up a few general ideas? I was thinking of the possible use of the Questionnaire. Members who feel unable to write a letter of Comment might fill these in. Future VECTOR contents what sort of things members would like to see brought in what, if anything, is unpopular with the readership, etc. On a wider plane, how about a questionnaire on SF in general? Thus the BSFA could perform a service, indicating current tastes and preferences amongst readers.

(In view of the not-unusually large number of not-entries for the not-competitions, the not-prize is being not-awarded this time. By the way, Ray, I trust you'll fill in the not-questionnaire that is being not-distributed with this issue? AM)

DON R. SHIM (Nunenton) Two of the three "Not-competitions" are concerned with Conventions, and are therefore not for me.

For the third I suggest "Durrp".

Interesting article on The Author's Lot. A quick mental review of Aldiss's work that I can remember (excluding one I remember because I was so disappointed in it) suggests that I like his earlier stories better, before - if I read his theory right - he straightened out his ego and went all smooth on us. I find his statement that, having no belief in evil, he therefore cares little for stories based on the theory of absolute evil and/or absolute good, quite at variance with my own reactions. I've no particular belief in evil as a thing in itself either, but I'm inclined to put that down to leading a sheltered life, and in any case I revel in stories which are based on that idea. If I may be a little solemn, I will say that in my view both good and evil exist in each of us, that our lives are a struggle for the supremacy of one or the other over the control of our personalities, and that stories, such as The Lord of the Rings, which depict this struggle on a larger scale, fascinate because they reflect our own inward struggles.

Another old timer in the letters section? Prone to exaggerate as ever, aren't you Dennis? I am grateful for you recalling to the ignorant youth of the day that I was once known as The Sage of Nunenton, also The Thyme of Warwickshire and even The Hartshill Herb. Happy days, Master Shallow.

And so to bed

PAUL LAHNER (London) My views being what they are, I didn't fully enjoy the fannish slant you gave the last VECTOR. Not that it wasn't well done, far from it, but apart from Brian's article it lacked appeal

to the new neo-fan that the BSFA caters for (or is supposed to cater for) as a whole. I sincerely feel that VECTOR, official organ of the BSFA, should hold items of interest to the more SF minded fan.

N.P. MORTON (Bridlington) Commendation for the awe inspiring amount of work seemingly performed by one K. Cheslin, Esq. If what I have gathered thus far is an accurate indication of the amount of work done by this gentleman I feel confident in predicting the over-running of our planet by super-human "Cheslins".

This book review paper is getting out of hand. Never in the history of literary endeavour have so few written so much about so little. This means your reviewers are virtually telling us the story and taking quite some space about it.

DOREEN PARKER (Deeping St. James) I think Brian Aldiss has got a thing about S.F. fans not reading Best Sellers - Spring, Nigger, etc - and I certainly don't agree with him. I am an ardent best seller fan and so are my friends, father, brother, sister, etc and we all like S.F. I don't think you can be dogmatic about it but I find that readers who will read anything - will also read S.F. I agree S.F. is a compulsion but the compulsion is in the fact that the person who reads S.F. is a compulsive reader Full Stop and S.F. is the next logical step after Main Stream Fiction. (I don't think I've come across this particular idea before - it's certainly intriguing. (Though C.P. McKenzie wouldn't approve!)) Personally, I'm an extremely selective reader, both within the sf-fantasy continuum and outside it. AM)

TONY EDWARDS and HARRY MADLER (Manchester area) The Author's Lot was a good plug for that new author's work. But we enjoyed it anyway. How about the same idea by Harry Harrison or someone like that? The story entitled BSFA Membership Roll 1963 had too big a character list. We never made it to the plot. Seriously though, it's a very useful item.

Has anything on the lines of a fanzine directory ever been published; something like a list of current fanzines, addresses, contents, publication dates etc etc?

(Yes, but not recently that I know of. Trouble is, the field changes so rapidly that they're mostly out of date as soon as they appear. AM)

TERRY JEEVES (Sheffield) Not-comp 1. An excellent Con guest of honour would be Clarissa Kinnison in the garb she wore on Lyrae 2 - NOT her greys. This should prove quite entertaining.

Not-comp 2. Re-Incarnation and You - without a date, this gives you the whole of history to choose from.

Not-comp 3. The Phlogitwell-Dean propulsion scheme for deep space - natch.

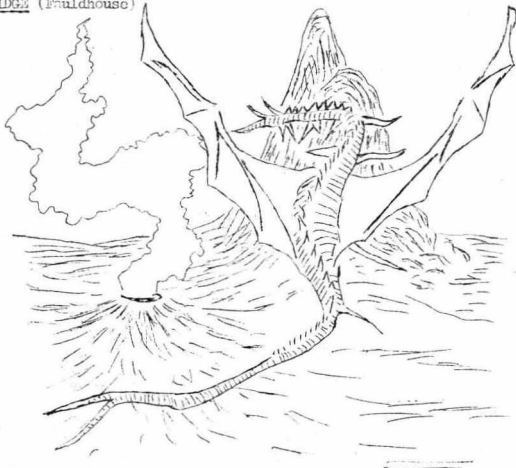
C. SMITH (Salng) The Real Thing is interesting but rather "preaching to the converted". Probably Aldiss is right; Evil as an entity, as a force in the world, does not exist. This, however, should not prevent its appearance in the realm of Fantasy. The whole point of Fantasy is that belief in reality should be suspended. Anyway, in those stories that he cites absolute Evil and absolute Good only appear in the realm of the supernatural, whereas the characters themselves are only too human. One could not describe Eiric or the Hobbits as wholly good. Eiric in particular is as much

composed of evil elements as good.

all satire is ineffective? I suppose in the sense that it does not cause any lasting change in contemporary society, but it does help the individual to view existing conventions, temporary taboos with less than awe and thus helps him to adjust to coming changes (I hope anyway). If satire succeeds only in making the public more aware of the political scene, in making them want to know more of what is happening in the world around them, in making them raise their heads out of the morass of apathy, it will have done a very great deal.

EWAN HEDGER (Cyprus) writes an interesting and provocative letter concerning VECTORS 17 & 18. The main reason it is not being quoted from, however, is not the fact that it's overdue but that it was addressed to Ken Cheslin, and I'm not sure if it was intended for publication. MAXIM FLURNER (London) criticises The Day of the Priffids for not making the best use of the possibilities inherent in the book, though he has nothing but praise for the film of The Damned. He finishes: "The lesson is, obviously, that the film companies should treat science fiction as it is: a specialised medium. It's been said before I know; but with, seemingly, little effect. If this lesson were learned I've a feeling we'd get more films of the calibre of War of the Worlds, Forbidden Planet, and Night of the Eagle etc"

IAN AIDRIDGE (Fauldhouse)



(Have you reported it to the police? AM!)

FANZINE REVIEW

Brian Allport & others (ed.): ICARUS 4
 (Editorial address: D. Wood, 14 Edinburgh Street, Radford, Nottingham.
 Price varies but is still ridiculously cheap).

ICARUS is another fanzine put out by some of the younger members of the Association and their friends. It is devoted primarily to amateur sf stories (in fact it subtitles itself "A Magazine of Science Fiction") with short filler paragraphs of mainly scientific interest. It is very sparsely illustrated - in fact this copy contains only three very small illustrations throughout, the largest (sic) being the postage stamp stuck on the back cover. The text, however, is very well typed and duplicated, and refreshingly free from such elementary faults as bad spelling, messy layout and the like.

The material, unfortunately, is not altogether worthy of the presentation. The stories - under inspired bylines such as Atole Lewis, Thor Halveston and Inigo Pendragon - are mainly very short with either a stock-variety point that was not worth writing to, or no apparent point at all. There are two significant exceptions - Jay's Dilemma by "Inigo Pendragon" is a full-pager with an amusing climax, and Future Desert Roads by W.F. Mann, whilst not precisely a story, takes a really interesting technological possibility and proceeds to have some extrapolative fun with it. Also present is a review of The Day of the Triffids (the film that is) and a letter of comment on the previous issue by someone who should be well known to you all. (He, to be precise.)

At 20 pages of mostly elite type, ICARUS 4 is certainly well worth the 4d (repeat - fourpence) asked. The previous issue cost only 3d, but the cost of living's gone up since or something. (Or possibly the size of the thing). The fifth issue, due out shortly if not already by the time you read this, is scheduled to contain 30 pages plus photographs. They're asking sixpence for it though - they don't quite give them away, only appear to.

SMALL-ADS FREE TO MEMBERS SMALL-ADS FREE TO MEMBERS SMALL-ADS FREE TO MEMB

WANTED. Will pay high prices for any of the following intact with covers, better prices for better condition naturally! Remember, if you have some of these and don't want to part with them, I'd still like to hear from you, so that I can get some information to complete my researches; in extreme cases will even pay for this information!

5048749 Cpl Hedger E.R.
 Room 27, 264 S.U.,
 Royal Air Force, B.F.P.O. 53

ASTOUNDING (BRE) 1940: all except Sept (21 issues) 1941: Jan, Feb, March, Apr, June, Aug 1942: Jan, Mar, Aug 1943: Jan, Jul, Dec 1944: Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct 1945: July

DYNAMIC SCIENCE STORIES (BRE) No.1 HORROR STORIES (BRE) No.1, 2 & 3

FANTASTIC SCIENCE THRILLER (BE) Any except No.5

FUTURISTIC SCIENCE STORIES (BE) No.14 & 15

MASTER THRILLER SERIES (BE) Individual titles: Tales of Terror, Master Thriller, Fireside Ghost Stories, Ghosts & Goblins, Tales of the Uncanny, Tales of the Uncanny No.2, Tales of the Uncanny No.3 (Contd)

(Cpl E.R. Hedger contd)

NEW FRONTIERS (DE) No.1 & 2

OCCULT SHORTS No.1 & 2

QUEER STORIES (any issues)

STRANGE TALES No.2 (unnumbered - not the Non-stop to Mars issue)

SUPERNATURAL STORIES (DE) No.2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24 & 25

OUT OF THIS WORLD (BE - Spencer mag) No.1, 2, and any other except Nos.13,17,19

SWAN YANKEE SF MAGAZINE (BRE) No.3, 11, 21, and possibly 16 (?)

SWAN YANKEE WEIRD SHORTS (BRE) No.6,14,19 and possibly 16 (?)

TERROR TALES (BRE) No.1, 2 & 3

THRILLS No.1

THRILLING STORIES (BE - Utopian Pub) No.1 (containing Cats Eye - H. Vincent)

VARGO STATTON/BRITISH SF MAGAZINE (BE) Vol 3. Nos.6 & 8

WEIRD POCKET LIBRARY No.1

WEIRD STORIES MAGAZINE No.1 & 2

WEIRD TALES (BRW) First series: published by Swan. No.1 (contains 7 Seconds to Eternity), No.2, No.3 (contains Dragon Moon)Second series: published by Morritt. No.1 (contains Tiger Cat by Kellor)

Third series: published by Thorpe & Porter (pulp). No.20 & 23

UNKNOWN (BRE) 1939: Sept, Nov 1940: all except Apr & Aug (10 issues)

1941: Feb 1942: June, Oct 1943: Jan, May, Oct 1944: Jan

WORLDS OF FANTASY (BE - Spencer mag) No.12, 13 & 14

WORLDS AT WAR (BE - Tempest Pub Co) No.1 (more a pb than a mag)

SCOOPS (BE) No.1 to 20 inclusive

AMERICAN FICTION (BE) Pub'd by Utopian Pubs. No.8 (contains Youth Madness by ^(Coblenz))MYSTERY STORIES (BE) Pub'd by World's Work. Any except No.20

SPACE FACT & FICTION (BE) Pub'd by Swan. Nos 1 to 10 inclusive

STRANGE LOVE STORIES (BE) No.1 WORLDS OF THE UNIVERSE (BE) vol.1 No.1

(That was a small-nd? AM)

FOR SALE DUBROUCHS BOOKS

From Canaveral Press Inc (USA) - for £1 each:

The Gods of Mars (illus. Larry Ivie) The Moon Men (illus. Blaine)

Fighting Man of Mars (illus. Blaine) Pellucidar (illus. Blaine)

At the Earth's Core (illus. Blaine)

Tamar of Pellucidar (illus. Blaine)

Taran at the Earth's Core (illus. Frank Frazetta)

From Grosset & Dunlap (USA) - for 10/-:

The Land that Time Forgot (illus. J. Allen StJohn - improvised cover)

OTHER BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

From Collins - for 5/-: The Invisible Man by H.G. Wells

From Macmillan - for 10/-: The Jungle Book by Kipling (illus. L. Kipling & ^(W. Drake))

"Science Fantasy" Vol 17 No 50, Vol 18 No 52, Vol 19 No 57, 1/6d each

BRIAN McCABE, 2 Beaumont Road, Manor Park, Slough, Bucks

WANTED: Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction - 1959 August

Fantastic - 1959 April, May, June, August, Nov, Dec

Amazing - 1959 Feb, March, April, May, August

New Worlds - No.15

Most issues of Avon Fantasy Reader (please quote)

CHARLES E. SMITH, 61 The Avenue, Ealing, London W.13

WANTED: The following issues of "Nebula" - Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 40(sic. AM)

Willing to pay 3/- per issue. Contact:

R.A. WORRELL, 29 Highlands Avenue, Northampton

TERRY JEEVES WISHES to thank D.R. Smith, E. Ball and F.W. Barron, who between them have supplied all the information he advertised for in V.19. (They will, he states, get free copies of the index in question of course).

THE B.S.F.A. IS PROUD OF ITS ELLA PARKER, and shows her off every Friday evening to the membership. Any member who turns up of a Friday evening at Flat 43, William Dunbar House, Albert Road, London NW.6, is sure of a welcome from Ella and the gang. London's most popular science-fictional rendezvous in the rarified atmosphere of the seventh floor. (Near Queen's Park station).

TONY WALSH WANTS FIVE SHILLINGS of your money. Send it to him at 167 Sydenham Road, Bridgwater, Somerset, and he will register you as a member of the 1964 B.S.F.A. Convention, to be held at the Bull Hotel, Peterborough, over Easter. The five bob will entitle you to receive Convention publications, etc., as they are issued, and counts towards the admission charge.

CHECKLISTS ARE IN THE AIR. Besides Terry Jeeves's "Astounding" index (out shortly - for further information contact Terry at 30 Thompson Road, Ecclesall, Sheffield 11, Yorks) the B.S.F.A. is pressing ahead with several. The first of these to see the light of day is probably a complete listing of the now-defunct Scottish sf magazine "Nebula". Price to members will probably be 3/6d or 4/-.

FOR SALE:

"Galaxy" Science Fiction (American edition) from OCT 1950 (Vol 1 No.1) through OCT 1959, COMPLETE. All in excellent condition. £17

"Astounding" Science Fiction (American edition) from SEPT 1949 through SEPT 1959, COMPLETE. All in excellent condition. £19

Write or telephone: J. Chambers, 113 Dartmouth Rd, Willesden, London W.11 - GLA 1541. (AFTER JULY 16 call GLA 7338)

SF WRITERS ANONYMOUS

By Helskar



PAZINE REVIEW ANNEXE

ALSO RECEIVED: Roy Kay (ed.): CHAOS 2

Roy Kay, 91 Craven Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire. 1/6d for two.

Mainly assorted material by the editor (Roy Kay - though there is a two-page satirical sort of thing by none other than VECTOR's editor), the main content being a middle instalment of a serial. There are also letters, and artwork by Ken McIntyre and - uh - Roy Kay again. The boy's certainly versatile. The duplicating could do with a bit of improvement though. AM

THE MAIL RESPONSE ANNEXE

JIM ENGLAND (Kingswinford) First of all I must accept your apologies for the skit on B.A.S.R.A. appearing in B.S.F.A. Newsletter No.17. This I read in the spirit in which it was (I hope) written. I would like to counter with something equally side-splitting, but I am not very good at that sort of thing. I am glad that you think that, at least, I "have the right idea". Before finishing with the subject, I would just like to say that if B.S.F.A. members want to see sample copies of the B.A.S.R.A. journal before joining, Nos. 1 - 3 (so far) can be borrowed from the B.S.F.A. Library.

Now for VECTOR. The Letter Column, as usual, was one of the most interesting items. The Book Review section was almost as interesting. Aldiss's article deserves a whole letter of comment on its own. The Real Thing, by James Parkhill-Rathbone, I also liked. Concerning art-work, all I wish to say is that I agree wholeheartedly with Dennis Tucker's comment: "art-work transferred to stencil is nearly always atrocious", and I was relieved that there was very little of it in this issue. Why not have a good, fixed design for the cover?

Bert Lewis asks "How the H... did Stethoscopes for Sale get into VECTOR?" Dennis Tucker, less vehemently, asks the same. On the other hand, L.R. Jones and Don Smith seemed to like the article. So did I. I would like to see more articles of this type. It seems that B.S.F.A. members can be divided roughly into two categories - those interested in science-fiction (and science itself) and those primarily interested in fantasy. From the point of view of one of the former it would be more appropriate to ask "How the H... do articles like And the Snake Came Down the Chimney -- get into VECTOR?" They have nothing whatsoever to do with science-fiction or science. (Somebody Up Here Likes It. AM)

I found Brian Aldiss's The Author's Lot very thought-provoking. Why do writers write, and why do readers read? (Science-fiction, in particular). It has been said that writers write because of a lack of something in their environment, but the reason must be a complex combination of both environment and heredity. (It would be interesting to compare the percentages of writers in different environments.) An obvious point is that writers are a minority group and hence (in a sense) atypical human-beings. Readers, on the other hand, are definitely not atypical. People will seek vicarious experience and satisfaction through imagination, no matter how satisfying their "real" lives, because they are constitutionally "never satisfied". But why are science-fiction readers a minority group amongst readers - and will they always be? "That," to quote Hamlet, "is the question." It seems suitable for tackling by detailed psychological questionnaires rather than by individual introspections however.

A final comment - Aldiss points out that a "belief in evil as a force external to man" is implicit in Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. I have recently

been reading Colin Wilson's The Strength to Dream - a fascinating book with some very interesting things to say about science-fiction - in which very similar criticisms are expressed. Now, I am very far from being a devotee of "pure fantasy", but I have read Lord of the Rings (loaned to me by Ken Cheslin). It is a delightful and unique literary work, the most memorable parts of it (to me) being the long, beautiful descriptions of idealized countryside. Brian's criticism of it is justified, but how can he say that it "leaves him untouched" simply because it is "based on a fallacy"?

(I have now seen a copy of the B.A.S.R.A. journal, and I was pleasantly impressed by the broad range of its contents - which run the gamut from duodecimalism to archaeology. The library copies are appreciated - though if such are sent here first, they can be used as review copies. Which reminds me - members who don't happen to live close to a friendly neighbourhood Cheslin can of course borrow the Tolkien books from the B.S.F.A. library. AM)

NEW MEMBERS

- M.378 Peter Asher, 57 Wimpole Street, London W.1
 M.379 Maxim Plummer, 210a Battersea Park Rd, London SW.11
 M.380 Don R. Smith, 226 Higham Lane, Nuneston, Warwickshire (Welcome home)
 M.381 Ian McAulay, "Illyria", Sandryford Rd, Co. Dublin, Eire (And you)
 A.382 P. Oddy, 16 Newlands Avenue, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham (And you mate)
 M.383 C.G.P. Smith, No. 8 Elizabeth Road, S. Tottenham, London N.15

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- M.349 Ian Hatton, 13 Talbot Avenue, London N.2
 A.291 Gavin Dixon, 283 Hertford Road, London N.9
 M.316 Eric Casner, 55 Vermont St, Braintree, Leeds 13, Yorks
 M.219 5048749 Cpl Hedger E.R., Room 27, 264 S.U., Royal Air Force, B.F.P.O.53

The shouting's died down now, but the other week the Russians sent the world wild with excitement by putting a woman into orbit for the first time.

It goes without saying that the Americans could just as easily have scored this particular "first" if they'd wanted to. If they'd appealed for volunteers, they'd have had no lack of suitable ones I'm sure. The project would doubtless have upset several important and easily-shockable lobbies, but amongst those of the world's population who took any interest, both male and female, there would have been far more cheers than boos.

Nevertheless, the Americans saw fit to leave the Russians to score this important propaganda point. And we are faced with yet another triumph for the Soviets.

I wonder what are the odds that the Russians will put the first Negro into orbit?

Then there's this business about the hovercraft - cushioncraft - what-ever one calls the things. Last year one was put into service across the Dee estuary, from Cheshire to North Wales. All the much-plugged advantages of hovercraft over orthodox sea- and air-craft disappeared when it was found that the hovercraft couldn't take rough weather either - in fact, if

anything, it needed the calmest weather of the three.

This year they put one in service on the Thames. There is a serious hitch almost immediately. Not the weather this time - the Port of London Authority can apparently keep that under control. This time it's simply trouble with driftwood. The hover (or cushion) craft can only ply the gentle Thames waters if an orthodox boat travels in front clearing driftwood out of the way. Shades of the man with the red flag!

A word about the Not-competitions in V.19. The project seems, on the whole, to have been not-successful. The "guest of honour" one has produced a bit of facetiousness - which is maybe all it deserved. The "space-drive" one much the same. Only the "costume-party-thence" not-competition has turned up anything in particular - and there, at least one of the suggestions strikes me as being first-class. Congratulations, Mr Jeeves.

I'll have one more not-competition this time. NOT-COMPETITION No.4, then: think of a suitable subject for a not-competition.

Which brings this column (a sort of bonus-editorial) to a close. V21 is scheduled for publication in September. Until then, happy holidays everybody.

AM

