



VECTOR

ERIC
FRANK
RUSSELL

HARRY
HARRISON

E.C. TUBB

AND
ALL THE
USUAL
FEATURES

No. 25

EDDIE JONES

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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Cover by EDDIE JONES. Interior artwork and headings conceived and/or executed by Terry Jeeves, Harry Nadler, Terry Bull, Phil Harbottle & Brian McCabe. Any confusion as to who did what is the editor's fault.

SCIENCE FICTION CLUB DIRECTORY

LONDON

STOP PRESS
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There are several overlapping groups existing in the London area. The easiest way of getting right to the heart of things is to turn up at Ella Parker's flat on B.S.F.A. night - which is any Friday evening. All members are welcome - there's no need to book in advance. The address is Flat 43, William Dunbar House, Albert Road, London NW.6. It's just across the road from Queen's Park station.

MERSEYSIDE

The Liverpool Group (LiG) has its own clubrooms and meets regularly, besides indulging in a number of assorted 'hobbyist' sidelines. For further particulars contact either Norman Shorrocks (2 Arnot Way, Higher Bebington, Wirral, Cheshire) or Joe Navin (77 College Road North, Blundellsands, Liverpool 23).

BIRMINGHAM

The Birmingham Science Fiction Group (BSFG) meet every Tuesday and on most Sundays, at various locations. Amongst other activities they trade books and magazines and things. Details from the secretary, Peter Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31.

MANCHESTERAREA

The ALIEN group, comprising at present mainly a number of enthusiastic youngsters interested in weird-type literature and amateur movie-making, have plans to expand into a full-scale sf club catering for all ages and tastes, under the name of The Salford Science Fiction Society. Details from Harry Nadler, 5 South Mesnefield Road, Lower Kersal, Salford 7.

TYNESIDE

A number of our Tyneside members are in regular contact with each other. Anybody interested should get in touch with Phil Harbottle, 27 Cheshire Gardens, Wallsend on Tyne, Northumberland.

WEST RIDINGCON-
URBATION

Members of the B.S.F.A. living in reasonable proximity to Leeds are invited to get in touch with J. Michael Rosenblum, 7 Grosvenor Park, Allerton Hill, Leeds 7.

GLASGOW AREA(A MOUNTAIN)

Members in the remote fastnesses of our northern provinces are invited to get in touch with Donald Malcolm, 42 Garry Drive, Paisley, Renfrewshire.

GENERALCHELTEMHAM

The Cheltenham Science Fiction Circle has never, so far as is known, been pronounced officially dead. If Eric Jones ("Xanadu", 44 Barbridge Road, Hesters Way, Cheltenham, Glos) learns of any interest being shown in the neighbourhood, he may help to get it restarted.

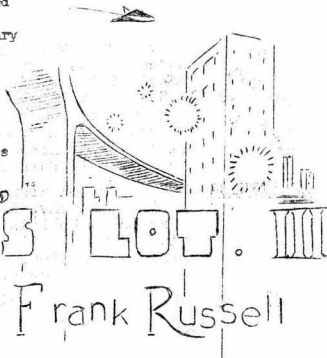
FURTHER DETAILS OF BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION CLUBS (INCLUDING "NOT-CLUBS") ARE INVITED. IT IS HOPED TO KEEP THIS LIST REASONABLY UP TO DATE FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION'S MEMBERS.

IF ONE HUNDRED B.S.F.A. members, selected at random, were asked to name who they thought was Britain's leading contemporary sf author, the chances are that 33 would say Brian Aldiss, 33 John Wyndham, and 33 Eric Frank Russell. (The odd one would say Harry Harrison most likely - we get all sorts). Mr. Russell, long established as one of the leaders in the field both at home and abroad, here gives his side of things.

THE

AUTHORS LOT.

Eric Frank Russell



UNLIKE Lots One and Two I cannot say that interest in s-f came first and was followed by a desire to write it. The approach was from the opposite direction, by which is meant that the urge to write preceded an appetite for s-f by a few years. And when the writing of s-f did begin it was, in a way, somewhat accidental.

My first piece of deathless prose was published upon a back-alley wall. It employed certain recently-discovered words more common to barracks than bathels. With appalling lack of appreciation my mother threatened to wash my mouth with soap. She also promised a bloody battering from my father who - when the matter was reported to him - rolled on the floor and clutched his crotch.

The next step was decidedly higher up the intellectual ladder; I produced dollops of precious verbiage for the school, scout troop and parish magazines - and almost any other printed periodical that wanted something for nothing. This rise in wasted effort became visible when slightly more ponderous versions began to be featured in a couple of glossy business-house magazines. Today, no doubt, they'd look very much like Arthur Clarke's original application for membership in the B.I.S. - a document that must be seen to be believed.

From about the age of five I'd been an extremely avid reader and, as time went on, guzzled anything that came to hand all the way from The Rainbow to the saulets of Confucius. While keeping up with the antics of Tiger Tim and Merzipan the Magician I could and did slog my way through the entire works of Dumas pere et fils. I must admit that the heavier items landed with more zunk when I re-read them as a teenager.

Time came when the Americans used surplus pulp mags as ballast and copies appeared in Woolworths at threepence a kick. This was grist to my greed. Wild Westerns I viewed as ordure but I grabbed all the detective thrillers and s-f mags on which I could lay hands. "Amazing", "Astounding" and "Thrilling

Wonder Stories" were, to my mind, prizes worth seeking - but no more so than mags like "G-Men", "Thrilling Detective" and "Black Mask". I read one as eagerly as the other and viewed s-f as no more than "Verne-Wells stuff".

Something like ten years rolled by during which Woolworths kept me plentifully supplied with pulps and the bookshops, new or secondhand, with what the articulate refer to as "good writing". Within this period baksheesh started being tossed into my bagging-bowl. I witnessed what the late Alexander Woolcott would have called "an incongruous happenstance" and wrote it up and mailed it to the local paper. The editor donated ten bob. Jesus God - money! I had another go at him. Five bob. Yet another go. Ten bob. Drunk with success, I tried his chief competitor. Ten bob. This sort of thing went on for about eight years during which the peak was reached with two guineas from a now-defunct newspaper called the "Sunday Referee".

I continued seizing as prizes all the s-f mags that hove into sight, "Weird Tales" included. One day, end of 1936, I read in "Amazing Stories" a piece of crud so cruddy that the local imbecile could have done it better. In a fit of indignation I wrote a yarn myself and mailed it to the opposition, "Astounding". The editor, F. Orlin Tremaine, took it. Convinced that a mistake must have been made somewhere or other, I tried him with another and then a third. He took those too. From there I carried on.

Looking backward, I cannot accept that any of my s-f reading or writing is attributable to profound psychological reasons of the kind offered by other authors. Seems to me a modern fad to explain oneself in terms of Freudian gabbledegook. Certainly I did not read s-f to escape from anything, or to gain vicarious compensation for my thwarted soul, or to evade reality by living in a dream-world of my own. I read s-f for the plain, simple reason that I liked reading it. Similarly, I did not write s-f in order to express myself, or to convey a message to a breathless world, or to cushion myself against the griefs of modern life. I wrote and still write for the plain, simple reason that my inclination lies that way. Had I had leanings in some other direction, I might have taken up knitting or learned to play the harpsichord.

There's one bee in my bonnet that I'd like to exhibit to public gaze: that being my belief that science fiction could have been helped more in the past, and gained readier acceptance, had it been better named. Editorial awareness of this need is evident in the face of magazines with titles such as "If" and "Science Fantasy" and "The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction". After all, the stuff is speculative fiction not necessarily related to scientific theories that can be adopted in one decade and abandoned in the next. Speculation is and always has been legitimately part of the mainstream of literature, not the separate thing that s-f pretends itself to be. What is wanted is a self-explanatory label less suggestive of literary apartheid - but I fear me the old s-f tag has been stuck on so long it's there for keeps. Which is a pity.

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL

HARRY HARRISON IS an American living in Denmark. At odd moments he contrives to see quite a lot of various countries - including Britain - and the resultant cosmopolitan outlook is here focussed to good effect on one of his - and ~~by~~ your - favourite authors.

Why Heinlein's
GLORY ROAD
IS

A BAD, BAD, BOOK

by Harry Harrison

THE DOCTOR SAYS, "This may hurt a bit— but it's for your own good," as he jabs the blunt hypodermic needle into your arm until it grates on the bone. But the patient who wants to be cured will endure a bit of pain in exchange for the eventual cure.

Do you hear me, Rob, way out there in the Rocky Mountains? I'm on your side, really I am. I have been reading SF since 1932 and have been a fan all the way. Life will never again contain the pure joy I experienced when a new issue of "Astounding" went on sale-- and there was a new Heinlein serial to read. I liked all your earlier books-- still enjoy and reread them-- but am heartbroken at the recent turn of events. You say about Glory Road that, "It will outrage all those who were outraged by Starship Soldier and will upset all those who were upset by Stranger in a Strange Land..." I was not outraged by either of these books, but I was upset. Though not in the way you mean. I was upset because they were written so badly and did not succeed as books. You have always been a painstaking craftsman, but you are forgetting your craft. The good bits-- the machinery, the characters-- are still there at times, but the urge to propagandize has won. This tendency has taken over completely in Glory Road which does not succeed on any level other than that of inducing painful boredom. It is bad propaganda, has bad characterization, bad organization and absolutely no trace of plot or motivation. And it breaks my heart to say this about a book of yours.

The philosophy first. Some critics have called you a fascist, and this is not fair. Your ideas are all your own and I'm sure you think that they are original. At worst you are a "fascist fellow-traveler" who does not realize the bad company he is keeping. You idealize the wrong people. In The Puppet Masters you refer to a train terminal named MacArthur Station. In Starship Soldier there is a reference to the MacArthur Hotel. This is more than chance: you must advise this man to choose his name before all the other generals of recent years. It is a bad choice. There is no room here to go into this general's record and character in detail-- but, in brief, he represents the worst of America's reactionary tendencies. In addition the men who served

under him loathed him, referring to him only as "Dagout Doug". You seem to like the Man on the White Horse, the Strong Leader, the Military Genius who will solve our problems for us, the independent man who knows how to use his gun. In the same books with the Mack, Thur hotel and station there appear almost identical phrases, references to the man who "...shoots his own dog."

This is terribly wrong. We no longer shoot dogs but have them disposed of in a gas chamber by the A. or R.S.P.C.A. What was good for the frontier is sheer poison in an integrated, mechanized society. I outlined this article and made my notes some months ago, long before the horrible events in Dallas. I do not enjoy seeing this terrible proof of the dangers of violence, and perhaps I should be polite and not mention it here. But I am not polite about this. I will be more polite about the purely literary criticisms, but I am so completely opposed to the violent aspects of the philosophy that you are touting that I intend to expose all its ugly parts. In both Methuselah's Children and Starship Soldier you say "...there are no dangerous weapons, only dangerous men" Wrong. There are both. Will you not remove the bias of your own preconceptions and examine the records? In Great Britain the police do not normally carry firearms nor do the criminals, the latter because of the sliding scale of punishment related to the weapon used-- or even carried-- in a crime. We are gun-happy in the United States, lack any sensible controls, so that we have a morally backward state like Texas with single cities that have more murders a year than all of Britain and Ireland. If the human race is ever to become civilized we will have to outgrow our bestial love of killing and its attendant weapons.

I am a bit confused about the rest of the "philosophy" you plug so industriously. Madism is not a bad idea, though a little impractical in most latitudes. Free love? I don't think you are really for it; you just enjoy writing about it. I noticed in Stranger in a Strange Land that you had people running around with each other in the nude for thousands of words-- yet never had them perform an act in front of the reader any more erotic than a kiss. Which, if not a prelude to bigger things, can be done just as well with the clothes on. In Glory Road sex picks up a tit, and even if it never takes place on-stage, there is a good bit of reference to what happened off-stage. But all of the conversations seem a little strained, even embarrassed, as if the characters did not believe what they were saying. I am forced to conclude that you like to toy with this as an intellectual idea but would probably beat the hell out of me if I abused your hospitality by making a pass at your daughter.

Let us drop the philosophy. This is all that I have gotten out of it and I am not sold. Let us look at the writing-- the craft of fiction as you have employed it-- and wonder how a man as knowledgeable as you could have made such dreadful mistakes. In the first place you give us a book that is just two-thirds as long as the one we thought we were going to read. What plot were its builds towards the climax of regaining the Egg. It is regained-- rather too easily after what we have been led to expect-- and the story ends. The final third is just talk, plus a lot of propaganda for your theories. Some of the furniture gets moved around a bit, but even the characters don't like what is happening. The hero gets bored-- and says so-- and we realize that it is not for the reasons you give, but because he has outlived his time. The book staggers on for pages and pages until it finally expires: a dreadful experience.

In truth, the first two-thirds of the book aren't much better. The first-person hero is an awful prig and it is impossible to identify with him, much less like him. He talks too much about how wonderful he is. There is a leavening of action that keeps the story tottering along, but it is strangely barren of the famous Heinlein invention, and grace and horror is not much of a substitute for a story line. And all the time there is this horrible talk-talk about the damned philosophy until the eyes glaze over.

Man-to-man, writer-to-writer, Bob-- let me make a strong suggestion. Stop it! If you like your new theories so much, by all means do a non-fiction book and present them clearly, with all the arguments laid out for discussion and consideration. There might even be money in it-- look what happened to Ron Hubbard and his Dianetics. Then go back to writing books we all want to read. Let me be blunt. You are a very skilled writer and not a moral philosopher. You are a writer of fiction, and science fiction at that-- one of the most difficult forms to write well. Don't listen to the fans when they worship you and say you can do no wrong. Or rather listen for pleasure and egotism-- then forget everything they say when you sit down in front of the typewriter. Read some well-written and interesting fiction by current writers, books like Catch-22, Take a Girl Like You or One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. Then compare them to Glory Road. They all manage to handle a philosophy, moral problems and a story, and do it well. You're cheating. You're letting your books be bought not on the strength of your earlier works, and you are growing steadily worse. You are going up a blind alley and you must turn back: there is nothing ahead.

Please write books again, not propaganda.

HARRY HARRISON

SOME NOT-REVIEWS

- Lewis, Roy: The Evolution Man (Penguin 123 pp 2/6d) Fantasy of sub-human family who are instrumental in furthering the progress of the race.
- del Rey, Lester: ...And Some Were Human (Ballentine/T&P 160 pp 2/6d) Collection of del Rey short stories, often sentimental.
- Lovecraft, H.P.: The Case of Charles Dexter Ward (Panther 127pp 2/6d) New England "atmosphere" horror in usual H.P.L. style.
- Silverberg, Robert: Recalled to Life (Lancer 144pp 3/6d) Story of a group who succeed in reanimating corpses, and the public reaction thereto.
- Anderson, Paul: Orbit Unlimited (Pyramid 158pp 2/6d) The struggles of idealistic pioneers from an autocratic Earth to found a colony elsewhere.
- Brunner, John: The Dreaming Earth (Pyramid 159pp 2/6d) Overpopulated Earth gets a new drug whose addicts start disappearing.
- de Camp, L. Sprague: Lost Darknesse Fall (Pyramid 2/6d) Classic story of a scholarly time traveller who tries to stop the Dark Ages (banned in Eire).
- Knight, Damon (ed): A Century of Science Fiction (Gollancz 352pp 2/-) Classified groups of shorts, novel-extracts etc, with Knightly intro.
- Blish, James: The Night Shapes (Four Square 2/6d) An African romp with pre-historic monsters etc.
- Brown, Rosel George: A Handful of Time (Ballentine/T&P 160pp 3/6d) 12 stories by a female author whose work has been compared to that of Frederik Pohl.

IVAN YEFREMOV, born 1907, is a professor of paleontology in the Soviet Union, and his sf (and possibly other) novels are said to be highly popular amongst the reading public in those parts.

JEAN GRAMAN is a member of the B.S.F.A., lives in south-west London, and has the useful accomplishment of being able to speak Russian.

YEFREMOV'S

ANDROMEDA

PLOT-SUMMARY AND COMMENTARY

by JEAN GRAMAN

ANDROMEDA - a Space Age Tale by Ivan Yefremov. English edition published by Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, U.S.S.R.

OUT IN SPACE, one and a half parsecs from Earth, is the spaceship Tantra, Commander Erg Noor, with a crew amongst which is Nisa Creet, astronavigator, who loves him. Tantra should have by now met the spaceship Algrab, but this seems to be lost.

Tantra tries to land on Zirda, a planet that has stopped communicating with the "Great Circle". (What the Great Circle is is explained several hundred pages further on.) Zirda's space station is filled with dead people. Apparently Zirda had the H Bomb and got radiation poisoning. So there is no point in landing.

Tantra has not got enough fuel (called "Anameson"), and should have got it from Algrab.

A spaceship called Parus has been lost for eighty-five years, but their last message, calling for help, has been picked up. Erg Noor wants to follow Parus' route, but has to return to Earth, as Tantra has not enough fuel for this.

Erg Noor was born in space, and people not only live longer in space time, but on Earth as well.

The crew take turns in "long sleep", and during Erg Noor's time Pel Lynn and Ingrid Dietra take over. They get into the field of an "iron star", which is invisible but nasty, and land on one of its planets.

Darr Veter, Director of the Outer Sections of the Great Circle, is giving up his job and awaits his successor. Nven Maas, who is an African. Darr Veter loves Veda Kong, who is very beautiful, and who in her turn loves Erg Noor. The transition of information round the Great Circle is due, and Veda Kong speaks for Earth, dressed, for some reason, in the costume of Old Crete. She talks about Earth's history, which is now the Era of World Unity, consisting of the Ages of Alliance, Lingual Disunity, Power Development and Common Tongue. This takes nine pages. Everything is wonderful now.

After her turn another planet sends. Everything is wonderful there including dark red humanoids. It is a pity that this planet is six hundred light years away, and they might not even know of the Great Circle. Especially Nven Maas is very impressed.

Meanwhile Tantra on the black planet rights a spaceship. Is it Parus? The planet's gravity is three times that of Earth. Therefore the crew wear "jumping skeletons" - "steel, leather-covered frames, that were worn over the

spacesuits and were fitted with electrical motors, spring and shock absorbers to enable the crew to move about under conditions of excessive weight". (This is a new one on me, J.G.)

There is no trace of Parus's crew. But there is enough anameson for Tantra's return to Earth, also lots of files. Parus's logbook is on tape: damaged, caught in field of iron star. After landing the crew began to disappear mysteriously. There is a non-terrestrial spaceship nearby also abandoned, but Parus is too much in a hurry to get off to investigate. There is a warning of the last survivor NEVER to leave the ship: "There is nothing but fury and horror." Tantra's crew build a sort of corridor to get the anameson. Then the "Nothing" appears: a sort of gigantic black jellyfish, who are able to get into a sort of telepathic communication with humans, sending dread. But they can be beaten off by light, and the Tantra crew manage to catch two of them and seal them up in a tank. They then try to investigate the extraterrestrial ship, but are attacked by a "walking black cross", and Nisa Crest is hurt and unconscious as she throws herself before Erg Noor. But the cross is beaten off, and they try to cut through the spaceship's hull with a robot, but flames come out and melt their only robot, so Tantra decides to leave.

Meanwhile Veda Kong and Darr Veter are on a "flying platform" over Siberia. They have an accident, are attacked by a big bull whom Darr Veter beats off, and manage to get to a camp of scientists, who take underground photos of petrified animals. They get in touch with Veda's group and decide to push on. At the seaside Darr Veter is swimming with Veda's aide, called Miyiko, who is a good diver, because her forebears were pearlfishers. They discover a big statue of a horse on the bottom of the sea.

Mven Mass wants to contact the planet of the red people.

Meanwhile Darr Veter meets Veda and two other women: Edva Nani, a famous psychiatrist, and Charn Nandi whose name "has some sort of resemblance to his" though how and why is never explained. ("Darr Veter" means in Russian "Gift of the Wind". Does anyone know any language in which "Charn Nandi" means anything similar, and if so, will he please let me know? J.G.) She is a model for Carl Sann, an artist, who paints ideal women. They are joined by Mven Mass and Renn Rose, and a discussion about Art follows (Six pages). Then the men get together on "bipolar mathematics", and Renn Rose is all for Mven Mass' experiment - to contact the red planet somehow. Everybody else thinks it is too dangerous.

Meanwhile Nisa Crest is still alive, but in a state of suspended animation. Tantra is returning to Earth, and the crew is running off the files Parus has taken. There is a blue star, Vega. It has two planets which cannot be approached, as they are in a state of constant geological upheaval, and even the third one is not much better. The fourth is a desert without any sign of life. Tantra's crew is very disappointed, because for some reason the people on Earth have thought so far that Vega and its planets should be the nearest thing to paradise.

Louise Lavey, the ship's doctor, offers treatment for his love to Nisa to Erg Noor (NOT what you think - purely medical treatment) but he refuses.

As they come near Earth they listen in on a discussion on sending more expeditions to Blue Stars. This is an Earth-wide broadcast, and anybody can join in. Tantra objects. They land on one of Neptune's satellites as this

is a quarantine planet.

An expedition has found out that Pluto does not really belong to our solar system.

After finishing quarantine Tantra lands on Earth.

Meanwhile the horse in the sea has been examined and found to be made of pure gold. This seems to be a clever scheme of some dead and gone ruler to hide his ill-gotten gains: make it into a statue and set it up in a public place. Nobody will look for it there.

A long discussion on abstract art follows between Edva Muhl, Darr Veter, Veda Kong and Cort Samt (who are against it). Chara Mandi sings, then there is a transmission, and Veda Kong learns that Erg Moor is safely back. Darr Veter feels he has now lost her and applies for a job in Siberia, but there is no vacancy in the mines, so he decides to go to South America instead. This is easy because nobody has more belongings than he can carry, and you can give up your living accommodation at a moment's notice.

On his way to South America he meets the son of a friend, who is working in the Watcher's Service in the West African Swamps. Next year he will begin his Twelve Labours of Hercules, which every young man must accomplish before he is accepted as an adult. (No mention of what happens if he cannot or will not accomplish them.)

His friend, and his friend's girl friend, "dream of working in a field where music helps us to understand the development of living organisms, to study the symphony of their structure". They ask Darr Veter to be their mentor, and he consents. He then goes on to the City of Chemists. They work on the seashore. Darr Veter is working in a mine as a mechanic.

One evening the House of Higher Music transmits the 13th Blue Cosmic Symphony in F Minor by Zieg Zehr. This is a combination of sound and light. Afterwards the message is transmitted that Satellite 57 has been destroyed. Darr Veter has to leave at once.

This is the result of Mven Mass' and Renn Bosc's experiment. Mven Mass' thoughts on this are described on ten pages.

There is the Fete of the Flaming Howls, and the Women's Spring Festival. The Men's Festival is in autumn. Veda Kong sings a few songs in the gigantic Solar Hall of the Tyrrhenian Stadium. Applause is shown by pressing buttons that control golden, blue, emerald or red lights. (No buttons for bucs. J.G.) Chara Mandi dances and is a great success.

Later Veda confesses to Edva that she really loves Darr Veter, and only did not want to do anything about it as long as Erg Moor was still in space. It is not made clear whether they just, in our terms, "had an understanding", or whether they were what we now call "married". Both girls decide to go to the Academy of Sorrow and Joy and also visit Edva's seventeen-year-old daughter, who is still at school.

All children live at schools, co-educated. Children under school age stay with their mothers. Follow seven pages describing Mven Mass at the telescope

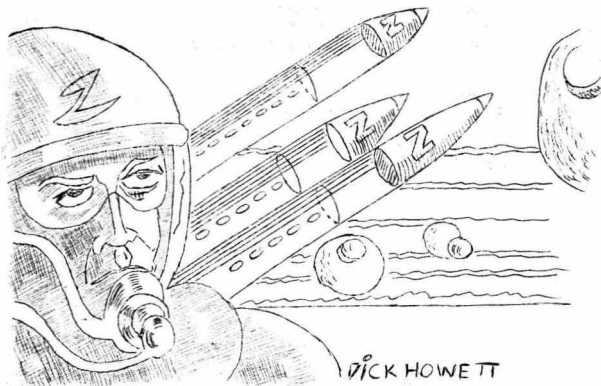
before Satellite 57 blows up.

Each "cycle" (I suppose we would call it "class") have separate schools and living quarters, but the older children select "wards", and look after them, until they are moved on, which happens fairly frequently. Veda goes for a walk and meets a group of boys to whom she gives a lecture on living, philosophy, history etc, with which they are thrilled. Edva Nahl gives another lecture to the whole school. This takes fifteen pages.

Meanwhile Renn Bose and Mven Mass begin their experiment the outcome of which we have already been told forty-four pages before. Renn Bose is badly hurt, but he is operated on and will survive. Chara Mandi is giving up dancing to work in a factory growing artificial leather. She and Edva Nahl think Mven Mass was right in making the experiment. But he will be tried for it. Edva tells Chara to go to him - he needs her. She herself will look after Renn Bose.

Mven Mass has gone to the "Island of Oblivion". There live the people who prefer to live as farmers, fishermen, herdsmen etc., and "do not want to work on the same level as other people". If not watched "bulls" might become leaders of the island - tyrants and murderers. But the rest of the world watches over them, and sees to it that everybody is good.

Somewhere on the island is Beth Lohn (a man), a mathematician who was also involved in some sort of uncalld-for experiment. (I really cannot remember what it was: it is so far behind in the story. J.G.) Mven Mass wanders about on the island and meets a girl who is frightened of a man who is following her. Mven Mass fights him and the gang he is part of, and then Beth Lohn (who is the leader of the gang) turns up. Mven Mass gives him a lecture on his bad ways,



and Beth Lohn and the gang go away snarling. Later Mven Mass is attacked by a tiger, but Beth Lohn helps him, and later the US Marines turn up - sorry, I mean Chara Nandi and some of her friends, and Mven Mass agrees to return to the world with them, and face his trial.

The Astronautical Council assembles and shows a photo of our Galaxy, taken from the side (? J.G.) Everybody is very impressed, as well they might be.

Somebody then proposes to alter the Earth's axis "to warm the polar regions, smooth out polar fronts and increase the planet's water supply". (I thought we had too much as it is? J.G.) This would now be possible through Mven's and Renn's experiment. Then they examine Mven Mass' case, and he gets off lightly.

They then discuss another Cosmic Expedition, with special reference to the extraterrestrial ship Erg Moor has found about two hundred and fifty pages back. They decide to have three new expeditions.

A team of scientists examine the black jellyfish and the bit of metal Tantra has brought from the black planet. They find that they will be able to cure Nisa.

Erg Moor meets Veda Kong and they agree that he loves Nisa and she loves Darr Veter, and they can all be good friends. Erg and Nisa will be off again into space.

Darr Veter is on a satellite that is still in construction. This is a new experience for him.

Veda and her team are in a tunnel that leads to a huge cave. There they find motor cars from "the Era of Disunity", also all kinds of machines. This seems to be a cave men had built to record their achievements for posterity. In the next cave they see jewellery. But there is another cave with a steel door. They wonder what is behind it, but cannot open it, and before they really get going there is a landslide and several hundred metres of rock fall on the steel door.

Mven Mass is "on the top floor of the History House in the Indian Section of the northern inhabited zone". He gets a call from Veda who asks him to ask the "Prophetic Brain" how to get to the door with the minimum risk.

Meanwhile Darr Veter is at El Homra waiting for the spaceship Lebed (Swan) to be finished. Tintagella has gone to the black planet to investigate the foreign spaceship.

Renn Bose wants to come with Erg, and for the take-off Veda comes too. Junius Antus has news: he was watching the take-off, but he has found a communication from Andromeda Nebula, which must have been sent long before Earth's ice age and the appearance of men. They now know that the spaceship on the black planet is from there.

And now Lebed is off to Achernar. Darr Veter, Veda Kong, Chara Nandi and Mven Mass see them off.

Andromeda is a strange book. It seems to me that it is not so much a novel as the author's blueprint for the Ideal State of the Future, meant for the earnest young student who is supposed to do his bit to make this come true. There is not the slightest trace of humour in all the 422 pages. Now one could argue that there are a great number of books of world literature without humour - but in a perfect world, where practically any disease can be cured, and nobody is ever hungry or out of work or otherwise in need I would expect people to be gay and carefree - but they are all deadly serious all the time, and not one laugh is ever even mentioned. And though the author describes any number of highly dramatic scenes it is always done in such an academic and dry style that at least this reader was left completely cold.

The same applies to descriptions of beauty. In one sentence of Ray Bradbury ("Dark they were and golden eyed...") I find more poetry than in all the pages describing terrestrial and extraterrestrial scenes of beauty. This may be the fault of the translator, though I doubt it. I have tried it the other way round: translated Bradbury into Russian, and the magic works - translated a sentence from Andromeda back, and it remains lifeless.

The characters, too, remain curiously un-alive. They all speak alike, and their dialogues seem rather to be the thoughts of just one person, uttered by different mouths. Here are a few examples taken at random. I will give sixpence to anybody who can guess correctly who says what:

"You were right when you said before the transmission began that something unusual was going to happen today. For the first time in the eight hundred years since we joined the Great Circle a planet has appeared in the Universe inhabited by beings who are our brothers not only in intellect but in body as well. You can well imagine my joy at this discovery. In the old days people would have said that it was a lucky sign and present-day psychologists would say that coincidental events have occurred that favour confidence and give you encouragement in your further work."

"You are very popular. Is that due to your work as a historian or to your notorious beauty?" - "Neither the one nor the other. You either hide in the depth of a laboratory or go away alone for some terribly straining night work. You do more for mankind and much more important things than I do but it is all one-sided and not for the side that is nearer the heart." - "Again a reproach to our technical civilisation?" - "Not to ours but to the left-overs of former fatal mistakes. Twenty thousand years ago our troglodyte ancestors knew art and the sensations connected with it were no less important to society than science."

"You, with your powerful intellect and will-power made of the weakness of the human spirit, of their willingness to submit, a factor that was responsible for many of the calamities of the ancient world. In the old days men could avoid responsibility by laying the blame on the stronger, by submitting blindly and obediently and then laying the blame for their own ignorance, laziness and weak will on God, an idea, a military or political leader. Was that the same thing as reasonable obedience to a teacher of our world? What you want is to train people who are loyal to you in the same way as oppressors in the past did, you want human robots." - "Enough, you talk too much."

All through the book the characters are telling each other how things were in the "dark ages". I may not move in the right circles, but I cannot remember hearing remarks like: "How wonderful it is that we now have electric light, and what an achievement it is seen against the Middle Ages when people had to exist miserably with torches and candles in their draughty caves." Though told in great detail of the personal feelings of the Top People about whom this story is, we learn very little about everyday life.

Apparently they do not use money - but how do they get food, clothes, books, records and record players, or whatever takes their place; do they cut their hair, do the women use handbags and if not where do they keep the 1001 things they need, have they got newspapers, does everybody get the same pay, if any, who cooks, and what do they eat? - the list is endless.

Surprisingly there is no mention at all of psychical development: neither ESP in general nor even telepathy have evolved. The only difference between us and the people in the book is that: "They live much longer".

And to end this: another sixpence prize for anybody who can tell me why the book is called Androueda

JEAN GRAMAN

(A few issues back, somebody was wondering what Russian SF was like, and this exhaustive androgonanalysis is the direct result. Jean adds, though: "Let me hasten to add that this is the only Russian SF book I have read so far, so don't let's judge by that alone." AMH)

NOT-REVIEWS

Heinlein, Robert A.: The Man who Sold the Moon (Pan 238 pages 3/6d) Reprint of some of RAH's early "future history" stories, all well-known.

Clarke, Arthur C.: Prelude to Space (Four Square 159 pages 2/6d)
Documentary-style account of the first flight to the moon.

Heinlein, Robert A.: Methuselah's Children (Collins 192 pages 15/-)
The long-lived "Howard families" search for a better home among the stars.

Koyes (ed.): Contact (Library 176 pages 3/6d) Short stories on the theme of first contact with extraterrestrials, by big name authors.

Phillips, Mark: The Impossible (Pyramid 157 pages 2/6d) Poi criminals of 1972.

Howard (ed.): Here Is (element 173 pages 3/6d)
8 prize winning stories by mainly name authors.

Knight, Damon: Analogous Men (Corgi 160 pages 3/6d) Man controlled by machines.

Pohl, Frederik: The Abominable Earthman (allantime 159 pages 3/6d)
Short novel, novelet & 5 shorts, mainly from "Galaxy"

Harrison, Harry: Planet of the Damned (Dutton 135 pages 2/6d) Fight to save a race from symbiotic damnation in future society (NOT the Vargo story of the 1960s)

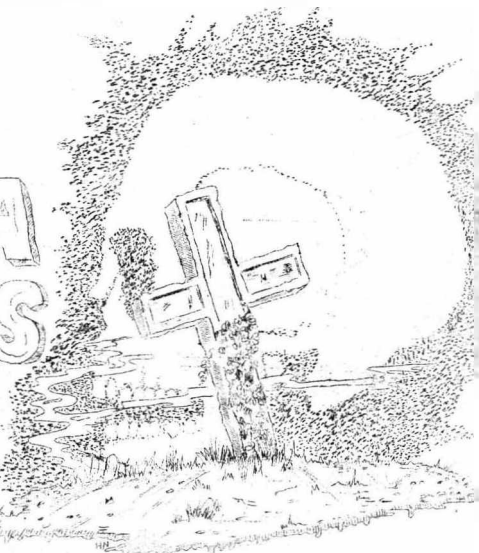
von Vogt, A.E.: The Voyage of the Space Juggler (Panther 189 pages 3/6d)
Varieties of alien life met by an interstellar expedition.

Vonnegut, Kurt: Sirens of Titan (Corgi 220 pages 3/6d) Satire - an attempt to avoid a preordained future.

VECTOR IS NOT a fiction magazine, being primarily a camp-follower of the sf field. It has never been averse to the occasional story, however, and here is one by an author most appropriate to the occasion - VECTOR's first editor and this year's Convention Guest of Honour, Edwin Charles Tubb. One doesn't, these days, see so much of his stuff about as one used to. This is generally regretted - nevertheless, in his time he has played a major part in helping to shape British sf. Perhaps we'll see him make a comeback some day, with more of his thought-provoking concepts.

AN ERA ENDS

by
E.C.
TUBB



IT WAS SUNDAY, but there would be no bells, no happy bands of worshippers wending their way to old, familiar buildings, no organs lifting their multi-throated voices to the Glory of God. But it was Sunday and there would be a service. That much, at least, remained.

Tiredly the Reverend John Parish rose from his narrow bed and, as he had every morning of his remembered life, knelt and commenced his day with prayer. He did not pray aloud but consumed softly within himself and, as always, he begged for guidance, for strength and humbleness and, above all, he prayed God to forgive those in need of forgiveness.

He was a long time on his knees and, when he rose, fatigue washed over him as if it were a tangible thing which he had to fight as a swimmer fought the waves. He was so accustomed to fatigue that it seemed his natural state but even so he had to pause for a while, leaning against the wall until strength returned and he could recommence the routine of the day.

He washed and shaved and dressed with painstaking care, the rusty black of his threadbare suit catching the broken shoes and the shirt which, though clean, was far from new. He combed his hair, smoothing the tangled locks which wreathed his head, the baldness of his natural tonsure rising a dome of pink from a sea of grey. He placed a battered hat over the baldness and then, his toilet complete, he lifted a loose floorboard and from beneath it collected the things needful for this day.

It was early but even so the streets were not deserted. Life began early in the cities and the tempo of each day was the same. He passed a cafe and his stomach sent urgent messages to his brain at the scent of coffee and food. He ignored the messages; it was not yet time to break his fast.

It was not time to linger either. The soaring buildings and substantial homes, the well-fed citizens and easy living which had bred tolerance were things of the past but the slums remained and the slums, old or new, housed their own, peculiar form of life. Rusty life. Boys with the faces of men; girls with the eyes of women, children who surely must have been born mature. A different form of life to that he remembered and yet, was it so wholly different?

Were not all men beasts beneath their skin?

The judgement was too generalised. He knew it and felt a momentary shame at having yielded to the bitterness of cynicism. All men were not the same. Even in this world there was tolerance and a rough kindness. A little, only a little, but even that showed that men could not be wholly bad as men cannot be all dirt if it contains flecks of gold. And, if to that tolerance and kindness faith could be added, would not the world be reborn?

He stumbled and almost fell, his hand grasping his breast pocket to safeguard that which rested within. There had been nothing to make him stumble; the pavement was free of obstruction, but he did not wonder at it. Often he stumbled and often he fell, both without apparent cause. It, like the fatigue, had become a part of his life to be accepted without question.

He paused, leaning against the side of a building and, for the first time, discovered that he was not alone. Two men had followed him down the street, and now they stood watching him, whispering each to the other, their eyes glinting like those of animals studying their prey. The sight of them brought a mounting dread.

He did not like to feel the terror. He did not like feeling as if he were a criminal even though society had proscribed him as such and he carried that on his body which, if discovered, would cause his death.

How long he remained leaning against the wall he did not know but, after a while, his heart ceased its hammering and some of the fear left him so that he was able to life his head and look around. The men had gone and, aside from a woman entering the cafe, the street was deserted. Relieved he contin-

ued his journey.

Past the warehouses, empty now, broken and gaping roofless to the sky. Past the sear patch of ground ringed with red-painted warnings. Past grined dwellings with papered windows and croudering brick, the scent of them an abomination. On to the intersection and then right and so past St. Andrew's where fire-scorched stone reared forlornly towards the sky.

His feet halted him there though he knew it was unwise and he leaned on a crumbling wall as he looked at the ruins. They were not unique. The church-as had been the first to go. The spires and arches, the stained glass windows, the buttresses, the stone and wood all had dissolved in flame. Chapels and cathedrals, missions and churches, every building which bore a cross. None had escaped.

He had never quite recovered from the shock of it. Even now it still seemed incredible that the inertia of two thousand years could have been negated in so short a time. He remembered when he had been young and that had been forty years ago when, in a world of change, one thing did not change. Customs could alter and the world could dwindle but God and the worship of God remained. It would always remain, something as eternal as the stars.

Dreaming, he stared at the ruins of his church.

There had been warnings. Historians had pointed out that all societies obey the cycle of growth and decay. Sociologists had warned of the pendulum of extremes and the psychologists had pondered on the tensions of modern living, the lack of any firm belief. Above all there had been advertising and the fiction of success which was no longer a contented heart but the acquisition of possessions, the display of status symbols, the cult of self so that humbleness and a reverence for God became alien to the modern way of life.

It was indifference, they said; a sign of the times. It was natural in the scheme of things that there should be a swing to the other extreme. For centuries God and the worship of God had ruled the thoughts of men but science and cynicism had bred doubt and men no longer worshipped God or feared Him or revered His name.

Then the Devil had smiled. The door of Hell cracked open and, for a while, the churches were full of desperate creatures pleading to the God they had ignored for help and protection. The door of Hell had opened wider and, when it finally closed, something of Hell itself remained behind so that the world would never be the same again and craters glowed where cities had sprouted and things too horrible to be called human had been born to parents pained without outward sign of injury.

It was dangerous to linger too long; more dangerous to linger in the coils of memory even though they were a quarter of a century old now and a new generation crept where the old had strutted. Sighing he left the crumbling wall and continued down the street to the main intersection where a traffic control officer stood on his dais, the peep of his whistle shrill as he directed the pedal-cars, the slave-tandems, the cycles and the hand-pushed carts. A hauler, a collared outant, stumbled as he watched and the hiss of the driver's whip drew blood from the back of the grotesque thing. The faces of the people around him remained stolid at the spectacle of cruelty.

He was not surprised. Despite appearances this collection of individuals was not a true civilisation. No true civilisation could exist until it had been blessed by the knowledge of God and these people, so superficially human, had denied their Creator. The memory of that terrible time was not easily to be forgotten.

The Reverend John Parish did not forget. He walked as he had walked each Sunday for the past twenty years, his feet carrying him with a knowledge of their own so that, as he walked, his mind drifted on other things. He thought of the time when Hell, disguised as war, had touched the world and men had pleaded with their Saviour and, when no miracle had immediately occurred, they had turned and sought a scapegoat in what they had once worshipped.

They were not wholly to blame. An animal, blind with agony, cannot be blamed for what it does. Civilisation, torn and wounded almost unto death, shed tolerance and kindness, gentleness and understanding. There had no longer been room for the gentle virtues and the Golden Rule. There had only been room for self and the law of the jungle. Something had to take the blame.

Not man himself; for who ever accepts blame? Not the governments for they no longer existed and certainly not the blind self-lust and self-gratification of the individual. Individuals were not big enough to suffer as they should. Humanity needed something as large as its hate, as huge as its sin.

They had burned the churches. They had reviled God and those who served God. They had slaughtered the innocents and, in blood, had sought to wash away their guilt. God had been blamed for the failure of men to live by His teachings. To serve Him was forbidden.

It was growing late, the sun bright in the sky, the streets thronged now with people. He stepped out more briskly and came to the market place where hand-made goods were displayed on open stalls together with small packets of herbs and mounds of certified produce. An inspector wandered the stalls, his counter slung over his shoulder and an old man sat beneath a blackboard teaching a handful of children the rudiments of arithmetic.

The Reverend John Parish hesitated by the scholar, his eyes on the scrawled symbols on the blackboard, hoping to see, as he had seen before, the sign which would have meant so much. There was no sign. It had been fifteen years since he had last seen it and he felt the conviction that he would never see it again. The sign of a fish; of a Christian, the same now as it had been in the days of Imperial Rome.

Almost he was tempted to make his own sign; surely the scholar would not betray him? Then wisdom asserted itself and he continued on his way. And now he almost ran for it was very late and, while time was not of great importance, yet habit was strong.

He left the scholar, the market, the busy portion of the city. He hastened down narrowing streets, ducking beneath a red-painted warning which ensured his privacy and came at last to a flight of steps which led downward to an underground cellar which had once been used for the storage of wine.

It never occurred to him as he prepared for the service that, in all the world, there had to be one man who would be the last of his faith to reverence

his god. And that he should be that man.

The service refreshed him as it always did; giving him a spiritual warmth and a divine content so that he smiled as he left the cellars and even patted, with strange affection, the red sign which guarded the cellar which was his church. Strange about that sign. It warned of invisible death and yet he had not died. It could have been due to his short exposure but he liked to think that there was a deeper significance. If only he did not feel so continually tired.

He returned to the market place and paused, looking at the men and women and Irish children feeling, as he always did on a Sunday, that they were friends who would know and understand if he could but find the courage to tell them what he was and what he stood for.

A man bumped into him, nodded an apology, walked on. Two girls, their skin white and openly displayed, glanced at him and giggled at the sight of his sombre clothing. A matron, plump and breathless, looked keenly at his white, strained face and pursed her lips as she made a wide detour. Then the sun seemed to expand in the sky so that it filled his vision and a rushing sound filled his ears as weakness assailed his body.

He was fainting; he had fainted before. He was falling; he had fallen before. He did not resist; experience had taught him the futility of that. Instead, as darkness replaced the brilliance of the expanded sun, he slumped to his knees, his hands sliding before him, his head hanging low between his arms.

Something fell from his inside pocket.



A child saw the crucifix and ignored the man for the oddly fashioned toy. A young woman saw the figure nailed on the cross and shuddered with conditioned revulsion. A man, no longer young, saw it and understood. His shout formed a crowd.

They gathered around him, so close that they cut off the light of the sun, their legs forming a cage so that, when he was finally able to stagger to his feet, he saw nothing but hard eyes and faces which bore the stamp of hatred.

They searched him. They found the tattered bible, the stub of candle, the other things which he had guarded for so long. And, now that they had been discovered he felt, not the numbing terror he had expected, but relief and a degree of pride.

The terror had been the fear of discovery; now there was no need of fear. Any secret unburdened brings a measure of relief and pride, surely, was forgivable? He was a man of God. To him there could be no higher calling.

He remained silent as they stripped him. He said nothing as they beat him. He stood there, an old, defenceless man with nothing but pride between himself and their fury. And his pride turned then into a mob.

There was no sense or reason in them. No individuality, nothing but a snarling, shouting animal screaming its hate as it had screamed it in the past. Then they took him and nailed him to a tree and waited, watchful, for him to die.

He was thin and frail, the ribs prominent against the skin of his chest, his hair, spiked with sweat, creathing his brow, his body lacerated and, on hands and feet, the cruel wounds made by the hammered spikes.

Yet, despite his obvious agony, his face was strangely calm as if he felt an inward wonder and a sense of awe. And, seeing that, the crowd grew more savage than before. They cursed him, derided him and then, someone who owned a gun produced it and opened fire.

He aimed at the legs but his aim was bad, the bullet hitting higher than intended. The Reverend John Parish jerked against his tree then slumped against the walls, a fresh wound added to those on hands and feet. A wound high on the left side over the heart.

E.C. TUBE

OT-REFUGES

- Lish, James: Earthmen Come Along (Gayflower, 227 pages, 3/6d)
 ascending orbiting tour the galaxy looking for work - or trouble.
- Luttrell, Henry: Pury (Gayflower, 190 pages, 3/6d)
 ascending climbs to the stars from the seas of Venus.
- Lish, James: Tison's Daughter (Four Square 142 pages 2/6d) Giant "tetraploid" men and women, created artificially, are resented by the "diploid" humans.
- Clarke, Arthur C.: Tales from the White Hart (Mallantine 151 pages 3/6d)
 mainly humorous short stories in "fannish" setting plus autobiography.
- Radbury, Ray: The Day it Rained Forever (Penguin 233 pages 3/6d)
 one of Radbury's many SF/fantasy collections.
- Gold, J.L. (ed.): The World that Couldn't Be (Pocket Books Inc/UKP 260pp 2/6d)
 Sluck, Damon Knight & others with novelettes from "Galaxy" - 9 in all.
- Gold, J.L. (ed.): The 5th Galaxy Reader (Pocket Books Inc/UKP 241 pages 2/6d)
 17 "Galaxy" shorts by Leiber, Pohl and others.
- Pohl, Frederick: Gladiator at Las (Mallantine 171 pages 50d) The "Galaxy" serial - trial by combat run riot in a future extrapolated from this.

THOSE OF YOU who are rash enough to smoke, carry on smoking. Old razor blades may be eaten quietly. For the rest, will some intelligent young man rise and deliver a shrewd question?

NOW WHAT SLEMS TO BE THE
***** TROUBLE? *****

--- DR. PERISTYLE'S COLUMN

IVOR R.S. LATTO: Does the appeal of sf lie mainly in its speculative aspect or in escapism?

DR. PERISTYLE: There was once a beautiful princess whose father, the king, was enormously rich. All men desired the hand of this damsel, and some of them aspired to the kingdom as well. When the princess was eighteen, the king announced that suitors might come and woo her with suitable gifts. At once, three princes appeared at the court. The first prince arrived on a splendid white charger, loaded down with all the gold of his kingdom, and laid it at the feet of the princess. The second prince arrived on a jet black steed and bearing all the silver of his kingdom, which he placed at the princess's feet.

The third prince had no riches. He arrived on foot, for he had no horse. But on his way through the woods, he espied a chestnut that was newly fallen from a tree and lay on the ground rich and brown and glossy. He took it to the court in his hand and laid it before the princess. The princess rose and stretched forth her hand, choosing the man of her heart. Of course she chose the prince who had brought the gold.

This tale, which I retell with thanks to the ghost of Thurber, embodies a well-known principle of sf. It turns the expected upside down. It plays with logic. It teaches where we thought it was going to lull (a way of saying it is speculative and escapist). Although the two aspects seem opposed, in the best science fiction they often meet, blending together to become part of that special tonic dose we call sf.

ANCHIE MERCER: Would you say that a professional writer can expect to get as much pleasure from reading other people's professional writings as he did before he became a professional writer? Furthermore, supposing he wrote to suit himself rather than his publisher, would one expect him to get more pleasure from writing his own material than from reading other people's?

DR. PERISTYLE: Perhaps there are many answers to this question; here is mine, the first part of the question first.

A writer would probably get deeper pleasure from fiction but on a narrower front. That is, he would more readily appreciate the weaknesses of some of his fellows and the strengths of some of the others - he is in the privileged position of a man who can read a musical score. I suppose this is obvious enough; one of the less obvious results is that one gets "non-writer's writers" and "writer's writers".

Heinlein is possibly a non-writer's writer, his work being on the whole unenthusiastically received by his fellows, who find a shoddiness in his approach to fiction that is not so apparent to the general reader. J.G. Ballard is possibly a writer's writer; to his fellow professionals, his inventiveness and wit are readily apparent, although someone in a recent VECTOR called him a "dismal johnny". And there's the case of Jim McIntosh, who once said he thought he was an "editor's writer". That struck me as a perceptive remark.

To the second part of your question, yes, a writer gets more pleasure from his own work - far more pleasure and far more grief.

IVOR R.S. LATTO: In view of the impending demise of the Nova mags, can you tell me just how much an sf periodical must depend upon non-fan custom? As a corollary to this, how many readers, proportionately, must a magazine such as "New Worlds" aim at over and above its regular hard-core of sf buffs, and how would an editor set about attracting non-fan sales?

DR. PERISTYLE: How can any magazine depend on fan custom? Numerically, the fans are too few. Look at it this way. Suppose your magazine must sell 40,000 to yield a high enough percentage of profit to satisfy its backers. Suppose 1,000 fans buy every issue - and you know the number is probably half that - that would mean they formed 2.5 percent of the magazine's readership. So obviously the magazine must depend almost entirely on non-fan custom. How would an editor set about attracting non-fans? He would produce a magazine that looked as if it was with it - a touch of the sixties design, no provincial printing, no painfully representational paintings on the cover. Above all, he would get professionals to supply the contents: Alan Brien would review the sf films, and be given space to do it; Robert Conquest would review the new books; people like Ritchie Calder would write general articles; there might be a regular column on the visual arts - where painting is going, new designs for motorways or teaspoons, trends in architecture; and the fiction would be by people who can write, people like Golding, Graham Greene, Iris Murdoch, John Bowen, and so on, as well as the better sf writers we all know. Much of the writing in "New Worlds" (alas, by other names we know!) was sub-literate, owing to the editor's difficulty in paying for anyone better; all that would have to go. The new rates of pay would be at least four times as high as Nova's. This could easily be done with an editorial board and an editor of sound enough reputation to attract the right sort of backing - which certainly exists now. The result would be a revolution... and what would be fandom's reaction, I wonder? You tell me next session.

III. PERISTYLE

THROUGH HYPERSPACE AND OVERTIME WITH BERNARD BODFOLD JR.

III

The VECTOR Editorial office having moved to Surrey, Bernard Bodfold Junior was asked by Alderman Hancock, the local Mayor, why the quality of the magazine had improved so much recently.

"Why, that's easy," Bodfold replied, rolling his umbrella. "It's our Cheam air, sir."

C.P. MCKENZIE

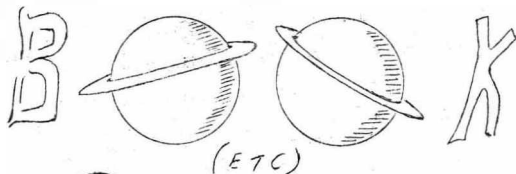
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Reviews

ALDISS, BRIAN W.: The Dark Light Years (Faber & Faber, 190 pages, 15/-)

This book should have as its sub-title A Touch of the Henry Millers. What with the alien characters wallowing about in their own droppings and one of the humans being banished from the house for perpetrating a 286a on his girl-friend, we have a promising start.

Brian Aldiss has built up a reputation on "way-out" ideas. But how far does this extend? When he was writing this, he must have felt in need of a mental laxative. It's a pity he excreted in print. He's gone so "way-out" that he's in mortal danger of orbiting in ever-diminishing circles and disappearing up his own intellectual rectum.

This is a humans-meet-aliens yarn. Brian shows, in his usual polished style, just how difficult communication between two races with nothing in common is going to be. Most stories of this type gloss over this fact. He tackles the problem from both view-points, and succeeds very well. In particular, he deserves praise for keeping that hoary old device, the instantaneous Language Translator, hidden, and attempting to solve the language barrier the hard way. I fear this is how it will be.

We are treated also to some profound philosophy, which suffers from close proximity to delightful puns - in the context of the book - such as: "Do to others as you would be dung by" and "Law and ordure were restored".

While this is a clever, well-written book, I doubt if it will attract any new readers to SF. I wonder if it would have been published had it been submitted by someone with fewer ties than Brian has with Faber & Faber? A pertinent question, I think.

D.M.

KAINE, CHARLES ERIC: The Man Who Owned the World (Panther, 123 pages, 2/6d)

I have been told that the basic idea of this book has been used before, but it is one that I have not previously met. Thus I greatly enjoyed The Man Who Owned the World.

Briefly, it tells how Robert Carson becomes the owner of the world after being killed on the first manned rocket to the moon. Eight thousand years after his death Carson is revived by the Martians who have successfully developed the science of antinorphics. Wars and the Earth have been at war for a long period and the Martians see in Carson a means of completely controlling

the Earth; for a trust fund has been set up to his memory and this fund has financed virtually every industry and property on the planet. Thus if Carson returned to Earth he would, in effect, own it.

Eventually Carson does return to his home planet, to find it very changed from the one he originally knew. Atomic warfare has created many social problems, so it is no small task for him to satisfy everyone on Earth as well as escape from Martian dominance. How he eventually resolves everything makes interesting and very worthwhile reading.

S.R.F.

(Editor's note: the cover to this edition carries the same illustration as that to the U.S. paperback edition of Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land - which is not on an altogether dissimilar theme. AMH)

COOPER, EDMUND: Transit (Faber & Faber, 232 pages, 16/-)

Most science fiction readers will have, early in their reading, come across and probably enjoyed The Swiss Family Robinson, an uncomplicated story of a group battling an unfamiliar environment. Transit, too, is a story of a group in an environment alien to them. Four people, two men and two women, are given an intelligence test by an alien race, dumped down on an island on another planet and left to see how they handle the situation.

Since this is primarily a story of our times, the author has seen fit to characterise three of the group as sexual misfits, which of course gives plenty of opportunity for lengthy paragraphs describing their rehabilitation, making the book into almost a Sick Transit.

Not that I have anything against erotic realism in literature, but I strongly suspect that any psychologist reading Transit would be astounded at the ease with which the neuroses of the characters are overcome.

There is a group of Daddies on the island as well, but of course the Goodies come up trumps in the end in accordance with the well-known theory that Earthmen are better than anybody.

Transit is not a bad book, inasmuch as it will pass a couple of hours fairly pleasantly, but the possibilities of the situation are left largely unexplored and the few answers that are produced are too pat. By all means borrow it from the D.S.F.A. library and read it; perhaps you will even think it very good. Me? I'll stick with The Swiss Family Robinson. I.R.McA.

ICARUS Vol 1. No 5 (and last) Amateur duplicated magazine published by Dave Wood, 14 Edinburgh Street, Radford, Nottingham. 32 quarto pages, 6d.

This is the final issue of the Nottingham lads' ICARUS. However, a new magazine called GREEN ONIONS, "not entirely devoted to SF", is scheduled to appear from the same address, and contributions are invited.

ICARUS is primarily a science fiction magazine, and the contents incline heavily towards fiction. "William Lazarus's" satire The Ginnicks Are Free tops the issue by a long way, being to my mind of professional quality, though the shorter Wolsey Limited by "Inigo Pendragon" carries a punchline that deserves a far better vehicle and stands as a first-class aphorism in its own right.

For the rest, ICARUS is neatly laid-out, with good spelling and grammar, and a scattering of artwork that isn't at all bad. If GREEN ONIONS is anything like as good, it should be worth watching for.

GALAXY: A CHECKLIST OF COVER ARTWORK. Prepared by Peter H. Weston,
9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31. Eight quarto pages,
duplicated. No price listed.

This is a chronological list of all the cover illustrations to the magazine "Galaxy" up to and including the December 1950 issue. It is intended as a companion volume to the B.S.F.A.'s "Galaxy" checklist.

THE VISUAL SIDE OF THINGS

The First Men in the Moon is now being completed by the makers of Jason and the Argonauts in the same process, ie, "Superdynamation". Stars Lionel Jeffries and Edward Judd.

Vengeance, which is now doing the rounds, is an adaptation of Donovan's Brain by Curt Siodmak.

Brave New World is to be filmed in Spain by Samuel Bronson (the El Cid man).

Children of the Damned, a sort of sequel to Village of the Damned out of The Witchamoores, is now being completed. Stars Inn Hendy and Alan Badel.

The Mind of Mr. Soames by Charles Eric Raine is a project that has been named for future production some time.

There is a strong rumour that the French director Francois Truffaut is going to New York to direct Fahrenheit 451.

The Velvet is to form one part of an evening's performance at the Aldwych Theatre some time in the future. (Bradbury yarn ex The Illustrated Man.)

And finally: Perelandra, by C.S. Lewis, is to be made into an opera.

VICTOR HALLSTRT

SMALL-ADS FREE TO MEMBERS

SMALL-ADS FREE TO MEMBERS

SMALL-ADS FREE TO

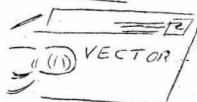
CONVENTION EASTER 1964. There is still time to get in on this, and attend the Annual General Meeting of the B.S.F.A. while you're about it. 5/- to Tony Walsh, 38 Saxon Road, Bridgwater, Somerset, brings you full details and future bulletins etc - and counts towards attendance fees if you attend. The location is the Pull Hotel, Peterborough, the occasion the whole Easter week-end. A record attendance is understood to be expected. Help make it bigger still.

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

1. A CHECKLIST & HISTORY OF "NEW WORLDS" (A B.S.F.A. Publication)
2. A CHECKLIST OF BRITISH SF & FANTASY, Part One (and Part Two, if it exists) by E. Dentcliffe
3. A CHECKLIST OF THE STORIES OF E.C. TUDR, BRIAN ALDISS & FRANCIS G. RAYE IN BRITISH SF MAGAZINES by D. Burgess

Also any checklist of the late "AUTHENTIC SF" and "SCIENCE FANTASY". I would be interested in any such, and personal bibliographies of any British Sf writers (excluding the recent Aldiss Bibliography, Item 43.) such as James White, Phil High, Bob Crosslie, John Drummer, Kenneth Lumber, J.G. Ballard, E.H. Jones, etc. Please contact David Dusby, 33 Rances Lane, Wokingham, Berks.

The



Mail Response

J. KEMP
20 Waverton Road
Ellesmere Port
WIRRAL
Cheshire

I was immediately attracted to the Barsoomian article, being at one time a fan of E.R.B. This article was first rate as it was written in such a way as to give the author's faults and virtues the right perspective.

Whatever E.R.B. may be said to be, he was certainly an entertaining writer and his ability to start the book with several plots and gradually knit them together was remarkable.

My own favourite was (is) Synthetic Men of Mars which was the first one I read but Gods of Mars is a close second. What I would like to know however is if E.R.B. ever wrote any short stories (SF) that did not include Carter, Kaplor or Tarzan. If so, what are they like? Maybe the underworked Dr. Peristyle could answer this one.

Sheila Pinnington's letter in VECTOR 24 was interesting in that while I was at school a few of us used to write stories very much like the one about Space Travel with the emphasis on nonsense words. Half a page of exercise book paper would be devoted to a story. The idea was to amuse ourselves but we concocted some really weird aliens in doing so; e.g., the yellow throgged radger which inhabits the gripple belt on Svall.

(Seeing as how the underworked Dr. P. is now overworked, I'll see what I can do about your E.R.B. query myself. Burroughs didn't go in much for the short story as a form - his typical work was either a complete novel or a series of three or four "novellettes" which together added up to a complete novel. A few of these shorter works are "independent" - possibly because he never got round to writing the companion-pieces. Whereas, furthermore, the majority of his material is interlinked - it is categorically stated that Tarzan and Barsoom co-exist in the same continuum. for instance - certain items appear to belong to entirely different continua. The best example I can give is The Lost Continent (original title Beyond Thirty), recently published in America by Ace Books, which is a first-class "post-catastrophe" story. AMX)

PHILIP HARGRETT
27 Cheshire Gardens
WALSSEND ON TYNE
Northumberland

My congratulations to Brian Kells for his ERB article; a good job, very nicely written and illustrated. My only quibble is on story evaluation - which is as it should be. Personally, I found Easter Wind of Mars quite unreadable, and think Chessmen of Mars his most brilliant

book. To those who accuse ERB of writing only crud, how is it that his books have always been in print, selling in thousands, year after year? (Sorry to interrupt, Phil, and I'm on your side in this, but could it be that the majority of people like crud? Ah!)

Be prepared, Brian. Next lettered you might have to read such invidious drivel as "What about ERB's Martian vocabulary appendix...the Moon stories... Beyond Thirty...Rolls certainly blundered by failing to mention the Pellucidar series...What about Invisible Men of Mars in Oct 1941 "Amazing"? - etc." The Mit-Pickers, who never write anything themselves, will try to tell you where you went wrong - but say nothing of where you were right.

I only hope you are made of sterner stuff than I am; will be able to ignore invalid criticism, and give us more articles of similar scope and standard. Some of us just can't take it any more.

There will now be one minute's silence, wild cheering or sneering, or perhaps a visit to the lavatory with VECTORS 16, 17, 18, 21 & 23 (just in case the roll gives out) as I make an announcement.

I shall not submit any written articles to VECTOR for six months, to date from my reading of Peter White's letter on February 7th.

It is quite true, Mr. White, that I failed to mention Dark Universe, Hot-house and Star Wormwood. This fact elicited from you a sneer at the editorial phrase "heavily researched". I'll tell you how and why these "startling omissions" occurred. Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin.

My method of writing articles is to do a first draft in long hand, entirely from memory - without reference to actual books or magazines. Just me, chair, table, pencil and paper. In this way I include stories which have genuinely impressed me, relevant to a particular subject. The completed draft is then typed out, with the stories mentioned to hand, for precise dating and verbatim quotation. It is, in this form, twice the length of the completed article you read in VECTOR. I then rewrite and shorten it to meet the length requirements of VECTOR. I've had to cut out, reluctantly, Asinov's Tale, etc.

I do not "research" what other people have written about books I have not read. My articles are based purely on my own reading. I think this is the only genuine way to write them. My reading is pretty wide, but obviously I cannot cover the whole field. Here and there I am bound to omit a story you would have included - but have you read all the stories I mentioned? What if you had written the article, and I wrote a sneering letter saying "hasn't White read The Monstrosity of Evolution, etc?"

But it is not just this point that got my goat; there is more. It so happens that in order to keep abreast of the field as best I can, I joined the SF Book Club. Consequently I do not buy new 15/- hard covers, because I know darn well the Club will issue the best of them for 7/-. I first saw copies of Hot-house and Dark Universe in November and December 1963 when they were issued by the Club as numbers 79 & 80. March of the Mutants was written in 1962 - one year earlier.

As to why Star Wormwood wasn't mentioned, not to put too fine a point on it, I've never heard of it. I have never seen reference to this story in all the many years I've been reading SF. As I never knew it existed, I've made no effort to try and read it. The very fact that Peter White recommends it is enough for me to determine that I will never want to read it, either. I do know of a Wells story called Star Beotten, in which Earth is bombarded with strange rays to shape human embryos into new super-beings. What's more, it's generally held to be a lousy story. I toyed the idea of discussing the mutants in The Time Machine, but most fans will have read this anyway.

Other White points are somewhat brown (a dose of his Epsom Salts no doubt) and I just cannot be bothered with them.

A final point: why "strike" for six months? Why not for good? Who knows? If we get a more perceptive editor, like Mr. White, I may vanish from VECTOR indefinitely. Even as it is, under "Print-any-old-rubbish" Mercier, I've had to struggle to make the grade. The six months?

That's how long it took me to write my articles.

(I have published this letter in full because Phil's feelings are hard to bottle up. I will just say this - that I have found Phil very co-operative over the matter of re-writing things, and what he terms VECTOR's "length requirements" are somewhat more elastic than his wording might lead one to suppose. AM)

KEITH OTTER
149 High Road
Willesden Green
LONDON NW.10

I find that I am stirred (Those Epsom Salts again? AM) to leap to the defence of Philip Harbottle's recent article. In discussing this article Peter White claims that "a mutation is a random genetic variation, not an evolutionary change."

I quote from the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (the one with only 2,515 pages): "Mutation: Used (as opposed to variation) in biology for the kind of change which results in the production of a new species." Either Peter White or the Oxford University Press is wrong.

PETER WHITE
75 Ashley Road
EPSOM
Surrey

VECTOR 24 illustrated the sad malaise that hangs about the association journal these days. The Marsden article proved very interesting, even to one uninterested in E.R.D. as a writer. Dr. Peristyle was, as usual, witty and informed. However, the visual impact of the magazine was depressingly claustrophobic, a heavy mass of typing.

The problem could be solved by having two editors, one to select material, another to arrange layout. Surely someone could be found to deal excitingly with the aesthetics of interior layout, the relative masses of print and margin, the placing of illustrations; just as the general editor deals with the aesthetics of content.

(This is a very good point, and I am very much aware of the problem. The trouble with a two-editor lark would be that the resulting postal frustrations would make it even more difficult than it is to hold VECTOR to a regular schedule. This is the main reason why, while I'm editor, I like to keep as much of the work in my own hands as I feel capable of handling at least reasonably efficiently. Two people living in the same town - or the same house even - might be a better proposition - or having somebody like Terry Jeeves, who is equally capable in both departments, as editor.

Another thing - my layout is designed, in the main, to cram as much material into as little space as possible. I try not to overdo this, but within the obvious limits I'd sooner edit material than space. AM)

VIC HALLETT
2 Westfield Place
DOWIL
Somerset

I work in a bookshop and I have been worrying the life out of our Panther rep. about why they haven't published Second Foundation. It seems others have been yelling for it as well because the subject was raised at the last sales conference. If you could shove a note in VECTOR to the effect that any Ashov fans who want to get hold of a copy should go and ask their booksellers to tell their Panther reps that it is in demand, one day it might appear. (Now then, you panthans... AM)

A.G. MYERS
12 High Street
Hampstead
LONDON NW.3

Ewan Hedger's letter (V24) shouldn't be the last word on Russian S.F. His strictures are justified only if one takes into account the stuff translated. Since 1961 the genre has boomed fantastically and more and more really adult stuff is being published. Criticism is now, I'd say, somewhat in

advance of ours.

Most Soviet S.F. readers until 1960 had heard of only the following Western stories:-

Fahrenheit 451 - Bradbury

Star Kings - Hamilton

Once on Mercury - Simak

THAT'S ALL !

Now many Bradbury stories have been published. Two of A.C. Clarke's, one of Murray Leinster's, and next year I Robot will be published. Their influence must be felt. So don't despair. I'll get round to doing a translation for VECTOR soon, and show you what I mean. (Incidentally the recent stories of the Polish writer Stanislaw Lem are the equal of anything in Anglo-American S.F.)

(According to a report in "The Times" published only the other day (mid-February), sf is indeed booming in Russia. The local product seems to be receiving official encouragement for ideological and practical reasons - ie, to stimulate interest in the Official Communist Future and in scientific research. But there are also, according to "The Times's" correspondent "Monitor", a lot of sf clubs "where authors engage in debate with their admirers". These tend to worry the authorities, in case speculation gets out of control. AM)

JEAN GRAMAN
7 Wayside
East Sheen
LONDON SW.14

I speak Italian and German as well, so if anybody wants a write-up on Italian or German SF and sends me the book I can do it. Actually I have a rather interesting German one On Two Planets by Kurd Lasswitz, very old, written before the North Pole was discovered - and that's where the Martians landed!

It is much better than the modern Russian one, though of course that is not saying much. Seen any good moonshots lately?

DON R. SMITH
228 Highams Lane
MUNEATON
Warwickshire

No nominations for the Committee - an ominous sign. Excellent news of the Convention - much better, though hardly of personal interest to my unsociable self. Everybody had a good word for Dr. Peristyle - you agree me. A startling idea that members under 21 should be eligible for serving on the Committee - startling to me only because in my time, we had, the age limit was more like 14. That wasn't my anonymous letter. My signed letters are frequently quite scurrilous; one I haven't sign would really be a collector's piece.

Murrah for Larsoon. So badly was I infected when of a tender age that I still reply to the conventional "How are you?" with "I still live" or even "Still living" - a foolish reply to an asinine question. EKD was quite a dab hand at what Tennyson called "fairy tales of science" - with the accent on the fairytales.

Encore the cartoonist.

I like the hypothesis. Fan mags should be full of fascinating articles about the latest scientific developments such as this one. I can see immediate applications of this sensational discovery to many of the most pressing problems of the day. This is the sort of serious educational matter that should be filling your pages.

Dook reviews are my favourite dish.

(Re the Committee nominations - things are beginning to seethe nicely, and the A.G.F. should be well worth a visit. Well, of course if you'd come forth before and said that Dr. Peristyle wasn't your cup of fish, then perhaps

he wouldn't have developed such a swelled head. (Never mind, Doc - most of 'em love you as badly as ever.) I could tell you what my favourite dish is - but I won't. (You listening, Darling? Not you, Spithy, you clot.) And now spring is (almost) upon us and Don R. Smith is awake, I expect we'll be hearing from Dennis Tucker any month now. AM))

IAN MCALUAY Not by any stretch of the imagination could I be considered as a fan of Edgar Rice Burroughs and I hope that we are not about to suffer an interminable series of articles dealing with his works. Providence protect us from ghosts and ghoulies and things that may go Barsoom in future issues of VECTOR. Including even any vast hordes of mindless banths that may be on the editorial staff.

Which brings me to that well-known idiot savant, Dr. Peristyle.

First, this question of circulation figures. All American periodicals are required by law to publish their circulation figures every year. The average figures (which includes complimentary copies) for the magazines I read are as follows, the date after each title being the date when the magazine published the figures.

"Analog" December 1963.....	81,940 (average for 12 months)
"Galaxy" April 1963.....	92,000 (av. for 12 months before Oct 62)
"Fantasy & SF" January 1964.....	52,267 (av. for 12 months before Oct 63)
"Fantastic" January 1964.....	33,192 (av. for 12 months before Oct 63)
"Amazing" January 1964.....	44,554 (av. for 12 months before Oct 63)

Second, I suggest that Dr. Peristyle should consult some reasonable work on popularised science before venturing his opinions on subjects like Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. This principle states that h, Planck's Constant, represents an absolute limit to the precision of the simultaneous measurement of position and momentum. This doesn't mean that you cannot measure both; it merely sets a limit to the precision of measurement. The relation also holds for other pairs of conjugated variables, energy and time for example. I hope I came across Peristyle at the Convention, anyway. I'd like to see if he impresses me more in person than he does in his comments on science or fiction.

(Perhaps this Irish bloke can even tell us what a vector is, Doc. Not that either of us'd be able to understand him, of course, even if we did dig the Gaelic. AM))

CHARLES PLATT Right; I am now certain Peristyle is alias Mercer (or vice versa). Evidence: first, your initial answer to my question, as you wrote it in a letter to me; 'I don't know what he'll reply, but I shouldn't be surprised if he says his real name is Dr. Peristyle.' (The Doc ducked that one.

AM)) Second, the lack of an answer to my question until it had been posed twice. Then, much more important, the sentence structure and tone of Peristyle's column is very similar to your letters; I read Peristyle and try to ignore the meaning of the words, concentrating on their structure, and it's just like reading one of your letters. (I don't mean your letters are meaningless; just their structure is the same.) Then lastly, and most damning of all, that 'evil platt' joke. You've used that one before, and it's typical Mercer, anyway. Am I right? Probably not, but I don't know who else would write such a thing! (This is known as a process of elimination, and I'm not playing. AM))

I'd like to comment on the letter column first because I have suddenly decided that the VECTOR letters are the only ones in any fanzine I have so far seen (including BEYOND) that are interesting to read. I don't know quite why this is; either the people who write to VECTOR are interesting, or you get a

lot of letters and select them well. Or you make very good cuts. But the net result is very readable indeed.

My only criticism is that you made no room a bit hard on Phil's mutants.

I don't know whether Phil Harbottle's Magic Moments illo/cartoon was meant to be funny, (huh? Ah!) but I thought it was. And more because of the characters than the comments. Especially that ridiculous Saturnian. But could we have some indication as to which book this came from? And the lettering is a bit ragged (although I realise this is difficult on stencil). More of these to come, I hope?

Dr. Peristyle is a good feature, whoever he is. He'll last some time before becoming boring.

The Hypotheson was all-right-but. It almost came off, but didn't quite get away from the atmosphere of a scientist having a bit of fun and amusing himself greatly in the process. It wasn't quite original enough; there have been a lot of other articles like this; but in spite of this it was quite amusing.

The Terry Jeeves (TJ) review was very good, and could be read as an article on its own and not just as a review plain and simple. The Burroughs article didn't particularly appeal to me, since to a reader of Burroughs it adds nothing whereas to a non-reader of Burroughs it is not particularly interesting and may be even confusing.

The rest of VECTOR, though, was average good. Which really means good.

As a matter of principle I was glad to see 22 pages, although I rather felt that the illo on the right hand side of page 22 was not a very good example of abstract art. It was a better example of doodling, or someone trying to "put over" as abstract art something which lacks form, style or good execution. The takeoff of the rocket on the left of this page was better in that while it was not particularly inspired either it showed artistic skill and trouble that the other was painfully lacking.

I suspect if you went to print any of this it's going to be difficult to cut. Best of luck.

(Actually I cut about a third of it, including the Peristyle questions. Yes, I do cut the letters a lot. Sometimes because different people say more or less the same thing, sometimes because what they have to say is more interest to me than to the membership as a whole, and so on. I try to pick the more interesting bits to use - I'm glad somebody seems to approve of the result. Every letter of comment received in time reckons to get at least a mention. AM)

MARY REED

71 The Fairway
Ruscombe
Banbury
Oxfordshire

Dare I say it? - yes I shall - does 'Ewan' an argument?

Higher Platt (Our Rebel at Letchworth) already knows my views on this type of statement ... come out from under the table, Twish, and tell the nice gentleman ...

Something must Be Done ... Rally round the Keep boys ... come home Gamblers ... on second thoughts, don't - stay and

give 'em a rousing chorus of Keel Row in the middle of Halfway to Paradise or whatever it is ... extend the Wall ... pass me the Stottycake hincey, I'm getting worked up ... if my spelling's gone (No, dear - your punctuation. AM) a bit crazy - I beg your collective pardons, since not a crumb of the "cake" has passed me choppers in months ... alas!

I have a sneaking suspicion that Mr. Hedger may be from around those parts, for as my Russian grandmother used to say: "Only a fool, drunkard or Gorkie dares to criticize Goodieland" ... over to you ...

... and so I go muttering down to the Central Station until the next time ... (Now stand back everybody and watch the Swan cry. AM)

HARRY MADLER
5 South Mesnefield Road
Lower Kersal
SALFORD 7
Lancs

Brian Hollis's END article made really interesting reading. I've only ever read one of the liars series, Chessmen of Liars, and I must confess it held me all the way. From the synopsis lists by Brian, the others sound equally as good, if somewhat along the same plot line. But as you commented on the END article we did in ALIEN, END gets away with it every time.

Somewhat Dr. Peristyle always seems to go around the questioners rather than answering to the point. Magic Moments in SF could be an amusing series, depending on how many magic moments Phil can dream up.

All this complaining about the stock cover for VECTOR...wasn't it certain readers' idea to have it in the first place?

The Hypothesis...Yes! well, that's exactly what I haven't been saying for a long time.

More reviews from Terry like The Green Suns and I'll be buying the books to see if I agree. Nearly did buy this one the other day actually. Mr. Jeeves, you saved me half-a-dollar.

(The business of the stock covers goes back to the days before I was editor as a matter of fact - I'm not sure offhand whose idea it was. And obviously you haven't fathomed Dr. Peristyle's gimmick. What really happens is that he writes the answers first, then I fit them to the most appropriate questions that come in. AE:)

GRAHAM M. HALL
66 Garrant Road
Hilton Manor
near TEWKESBURY
Gloucestershire

Being a new member. I only received my first VECTOR today. My comments:-

Very good, but not enough of it. Double the length, and make us pay for it. If the standard could be maintained, it would be well worth it. It hope it doesn't get too technical or specialized, though I did like A Flight

Across Darsson.

Suggestion: Now that Nova Publications are ceasing, there will be, as has been said, a gap. How about VECTOR (or perhaps another U.S.F.A. sponsored mag) turning into a semi-professional magazine directed at encouraging new, young writers? (Similar to William Crawford's "Marvel Tales" of the early '30s in which Robert Bloch first saw print). A token fee could be paid to contributors, just to give them that feeling of a published story and being paid for it, too! Or wouldn't there be enough support?

Well, it was an idea.

Re Ian Aldridge's suggestion in The Mail Reapopse; I've got an illustration of Cthulhu, but I've mislaid it. If I rediscover it, I'll send it on.

RICHARD GORDON
Patchells
Trinity College
GLENDALF
Perthshire

SF in schools still seems to be in the wind - and the wind of change appears to be blowing here. Brave New World is required reading for at least one 6th form, while another was told by an English master to write him some SF. Other

MSF school denizens have complained of no opportunities to write SF or about it. I wrote an essay on Drawn New World and 1984 in one exam, one on moon bases in a second, and a gruesome about war thing for a French essay exam. I have not yet been expelled for iconoclasm! If that can happen in a school as rigidly Victorian as this, it can happen anywhere!

Net-reviews are fine in their way, but can't we have more of the normal type? Only one pb, a pretty poor one at that, is hopeless.

For goodness sake, no short stories in VECTOR by fans - surely there are plenty of fanzines about for that sort of thing - or you could perhaps start

something beside and separate from VECTOR. Short stories would cut down on the 20 pages - I guess you have to cut down an awful lot as it is. But the idea of extra fiction issues seems OK - or would that put up the fees?

The E.H.A. article was interesting. However, I have never read any E.H.A. except for one Tarzan years ago, and to complete the sacrilege I doubt if I ever will.

Magic Moments in SF was good. More, more!

RODERICK J. HILNEN
44 Sheepwash Lane
Great Bridge
TIPTON
Staffs

Your not-reviews are three, sometimes more, months out of date. Even if you haven't got someone working in a bookshop to let you have information (We're working round to it. At) you can easily get hold of publishers' lists and extract the new stuff from there.

Neil Response is interesting as always. I'm glad to see that Burroughs is conspicuous by his absence.

I don't agree with Archie Potts's idea that extra issues of VECTOR devoted to fiction would help fill the Nova gap. I would suggest that an entirely new magazine be founded under the auspices of the B.S.F.A. devoted to fiction by known and unknown authors. Available through subscription only at first, costs and authors' pay (they can't be expected to write for nothing) to be met from subscription. Publish it four times a year with the best material you can get. I don't think you should limit the possible readership of such a mag by having it available to only B.S.F.A. members; there just aren't enough of us. Advertising of such a mag could be done through fan-zines, editors of which would, I should think, be only too pleased to help.

(I'll answer the above three letters together. There is at present all sorts of talk going the rounds concerning projected semi-pro replacements for the Nova magazines. The trouble is of course that everybody lives at such a distance from everybody else - the B.S.F.A. Committee for instance is spread all over - that the only medium for most of the talk is by post. And anybody who has tried to conduct a multi-voice argument by post will know how slowly things develop. In the mean time, the people with the best ideas are not necessarily in touch with the people with the best organising ability and these in turn are not necessarily in touch with the best resources - financial and mechanical. It is hoped that the entire subject will be thrashed out at - and before - the A.G.M. at Easter, where anybody with any interest in the subject can get at everybody else so interested face to face.

To be specific about one or two of the points that VECTOR's correspondents have raised: a magazine available on subscription to members or non-members indiscriminately might or might not pay for itself - but having it available to members only and publicly known to be available to members only - provided that there was enough big-name material and good material (not necessarily, you'll appreciate, the same thing) to boost the Association's membership more than somewhat. The question of publicising the B.S.F.A. is tied up with this, of course. The suggestion to double the length of VECTOR and make the members pay for it is, I think, impractical. The membership would fall drastically - many people think the subscription's too high as it is.

To turn to the perhaps less thorny problem of the not-reviews: VECTOR is chronically short of space, and there is not enough to review every new book fully. The not-reviews were an attempt to cover the field in minimum space. The response to the not-review appeal has been pretty good; but something rather unlooked-for seems to be going on. Instead of the list being brought right up to date and kept there, the more not-review material that turns up the older it seems to be. We're going, in effect, backwards.

The not-reviews in this issue (free material kindly supplied by John Darfoot, Richard Gordon, Brian Hollis, Torry Hall and Peter White with Alan Davies a latecoming not-runner) represent a mixture of fairly recent and not so recent publications. The future? Suggestions are cordially - and seriously - invited. AM)

PETER MORTON (34 Princess Avenue, Greet Crosby, Liverpool 23) gives three and a half cheers for the idea of printing fiction. I guess he's in favour. DICK HOWETT (94 Ravensbourne Crescent, Harold Wood, Essex) agrees that it would be a help if correspondents' addresses were printed in full. JIM GRANT (7 Sydney Road, Fairmile, Christchurch, Hants) says the same thing, would like to see fiction by members every so often (in VECTOR) and on the whole finds V24 wasn't a bad issue. JIM GOODRICH (5 Brewster Drive, Middletown, N.Y. 10940, U.S.A.) remarks that Doc Peristyle's lectures and SF Writers Anonymous are both extremely humorous features. I think that address should read "Booster Drive" myself - he likes VECTOR. And that seems to be it. AM



MAGIC MOMENTS IN SF (Nº2) by Philip from 1944



THIS IS PROBABLY the last editorial I shall be doing for VECTOR, because I understand that somebody has been found who is prepared to take over from Easter. I've enjoyed doing the job, and if some process could be found by which the amount of free time at my disposal could be approximately doubled, I'd enjoy continuing to do it. And I'm most certainly glad that I've given it a whirl.

Whilst I haven't, perhaps, been able to make VECTOR quite in to my ideal of what it should be (which is not, you'll appreciate, the same thing as my ideal of what a magazine entirely to suit myself would be), and also whilst I haven't been able to produce reams and reams of miscellaneous publications out of my crash-helmet as I'd vaguely hoped to be able to do, I have played my part in giving you a regular magazine about which virtually everybody who bothers to write in has something good to say. I hope that this happy state of affairs may long continue, and wish my successor every success. In fact, I'll stick my neck out and go on record as hoping that nothing succeeds like my successor.

The main thing I'd like to do now is say a sincere thank-you to everybody who has helped in any way during the past twelve months, especially to the following quartet:

1. Michael Rosenberg. Michael is of course literally the other half of the business, and bears at least an equal share of responsibility for VECTOR's regularity. His job is to run off the stencils, assemble the complete magazine and mail it out - and this he has done in the face of numerous other demands on his time. For just one instance; I had been ill last summer, and was only able to type the final stencils for some issue or other (I forget which) a few days before Michael was due to go on holiday. Though busier than usual at that time, Michael still made time to finish off the issue and get it in the post before he went. To him, then, go my first thanks.

2. Jill Adams. Besides being an efficient treasurer, Jill has time and again gone out of her way to be of assistance in umpteen diffe rent directions. More of this activity goes on behind the scenes than gets into VECTOR - but the Association is certainly the better off for it. I hope to see her in the Chair some day. She'll grace it in more ways than one.

3. Terry Jeeves. Old Faithful Terry has stood by, stylus at the alert position, ready to cut artwork (his own or other people's) on to stencil at a moment's notice. Some of the credit for VECTOR's regularity can thus be laid at his door.

President Brian Aldiss. Brian has helped out not merely with first-class material when required, but with advice as well.

Those four, then, are the priority cases as it were. In addition, though, I should like to thank everybody who contributed material, whether used or not; everybody who cut artwork on to stencil; everybody who wrote letters of comment or advice, even though they may have been slashed to ribbons before being included in The Mail Response; everybody who has offered any form of assistance (most of which has had to be declined owing to VECTOR's tight production schedule); and in fact everybody who has shown any interest in VECTOR at all. (And that certainly includes you, Twisher.)

So thank you.

I will not dwell here on future plans, as they will be the responsibility of the next incumbent. It's nice to be able to go out with a splash like this, and I hope that next year will see even splashier VECTORS.

Just one more thing to say now, I think. I'd like to apologise for the sudden change of type-face. It is due to circumstances beyond my control, and it's only due to the co-operative nature of my boss at work that these final stencils are being typed at all. I'm not sure whether the space-jumping on these pica pages is the machine's fault or mine, but I apologise for that too.

And so, as the saying says, to bed. See you at the Con. AM

JAPANESE SCIENCE FICTION READER wants correspondents. Interested in bibliographies and biographies of British sf writers. "If critics are also welcome." He writes good English, and his name is:

Mr. Hiroya Endo
673 Amanuma 3-Chome
Suginami-Ku
Tokyo
Japan

THE PAST RETURNS TO HAUNT US. VECTORS No. 7 and 8 have recently come to light in hitherto undreamed-of quantities. While stocks last they are available for a quarto-size (approx. 9" x 11") envelope, self-addressed and bearing no worth of stamps. Apply to the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs G.T. Adams, 46 Cobden Avenue, Fitterne Park, Southampton.

THE MAIL RESPONSE ANNEXE

MOIRA READ That cover seems better every time I look at it
 The Bun galows so I won't mind too much if I have to look at it
 Colleton for the next six issues, but interior artwork
 CHULMLEIGH was sadly lacking - whatever happened to it?
 N. Devon Was that Dan Dare in Phil Harbottle's cartoon?
 Looked like him anyway...how dare (!) Phil take
 a rise out of my favourite fab. guy!! - (hold it. I'm only
 kidding!)

Not-reviews are always useful - even the ones that merely say
 'another story in the so-and-so tradition by you-know-who,' which
 isn't a bit of help to anyone who hasn't read any of you-know-who's
 books. Mail Response interesting - but surely more people write
 - or - don't they?

Re, my name - I'm thinking of changing it - be a lot simpler
 all round. Mary; are you, by any chance, a descendant of Mary
 Reed the pirate? There really was such a person - don't know if
 you've ever heard of her. When it comes to Read and Reed, Archie,
 READ is the Somerset spelling - and REED the Devon spelling. I
 can't help it if I live in Devon and have a Somerset name - and
 what's a ReEd doing in Banbury? There is also the Cornish spell-
 ling REID...

By the way, one last query; are we having a CON report for
 people who just can't make it? (namely me).

(If you're going to change your name, Moira, you'd better
 hurry up - this is being typed on February the 29th and it's gone
 8 p.m. already. I had an idea that the spelling "Reid" was
 Scottish rather than Cornish, by the way - and Mary's a Geordie
 which makes it even more confusing. I'm sorry you won't be at
 the Con., and I hope I can persuade the next editor to run a
 report on same. AM)

IVOR R.S. LATTO I'm not convinced of the need to provide
 16 Merryton Avenue budding artists with space in VECTOR to de-
 GLASGOW W.5 velop their talents: they must find space
 somewhere, I dare say, but I don't like them
 aiming at ME, by George. However, that reactionary statement out
 of the way, I found V24 otherwise very stimulating:

A Flight Across Barsom - as an introductory essay to ERB
 this was fine and may well have intrigued some of the younger mem-
 bers to the point of investigating further into his work, even to
 the point of becoming ERBivores, ha, ha. I suppose I could class
 myself as a younger member and indeed I was tempted to try him
 again, but whenever I've done so in the past I inevitably reach
 the point where I can't read for wincing; I'm prepared to grant
 that his books may have a certain charm, but only through the
 eyes of nostalgia, or read as historical curiosities.

Dr. Peristyle - much better this month, due to the quality of
 the questions no doubt.

The Mail Response - Re Harry Nadler: fiction in VECTOR would
 be nice to see, in addition to what we have, not at its expense;
 if I find myself short of reading matter there are plenty of mags
 and books available to correct the lack but there is precious
 little in the way of comment, views and news about SF to keep me
 happy.

Re. Sheila Pinnington: the essay Space Travel was an eye-opener from a thirteen year old. Cool!

As I said, a stimulating issue. More!

(Praise is always welcome. Many thanks. AM)

NEW MEMBERS

- A.434 P. Richardson: 9 Rushbrook Grove, Kings Norton, Birmingham 30
 M.435 M. Fagan (Miss): c/o 77 College Road North, Blundellsands, Liverpool 23
 A.436 G.M. Hall: 86 Carrant Road, Mitton Man or, nr. Tewkesbury, Glos
 M.437 M. Reuter: 1287 Lincoln Rd, Werrington, Peterborough
 M.438 N. Brock: 2 Wingrave Rd, Aston Abbotts, Aylesbury, Bucks
 M.439 J. Kemp: 20 Waverton Rd, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire
 O.440 B. Hillan: 18 Nevitt St, Stafford N.12, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
 M.441 L. Hobbs: 31 Abbey Grove, London SE.2
 M.442 E. McDonnell: 48 Westfield Avenue, Liverpool 14
 O.443 A. Hill (Miss): 463 Park Drive, Boston 15, Mass, U.S.A.
 O.444 J.H. Holmberg: Norrskogsvägen 8, Stockholm K, Sweden
 M.445 I.K. Johnson: 23 Summerfield Rd, Loughton, Essex

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- M.257 N.R. Austin: c/o Falmer House (Union), University of Sussex, Falmer, near Brighton, Sussex
 M.201 D. Barber: 1 Westfield Place, Wisbech, Cambs
 A.429 J. Grant: 7 Sydney Rd, Fairmile, Christchurch, Hants
 M.279 C.R. Marsden: 38 Malvern Rd, London NW.6
 M. 98 M.L.B.R. Sheppard: 163 Headley Rd, Woodley, nr, Reading, Berks
 A.402 A.R. Underwood: 688825 A/A Underwood A.R., E.4, B.Sqd (Band), Wing, R.A.F. Locking, Weston Super Mare, Somerset
 M.238 D.M. Wilson: 24 Davidson Place, Newtown, St. Boswells, Roxburghshire

FAREWELL DEPARTMENT, ANNEX

As Archie has just managed to leave a few lines space, I am taking advantage of it, just to say how much I have enjoyed being active in fandom once again - if only to a slight extent - in the preparation of Vector over the last two years. Like Archie, I must say that more time would have been welcome, and that the time factor has meant that Vector has not perhaps had as much effort put in, as it could have done with, and hence been rather more botched than I would have liked. Archie has been a great pleasure to work with. From the letters I have received it would have been quite possible to have got well into fandom again, but I am so sorry that other activities - and advancing age - prevent.



BRIAN MICHAEL '63