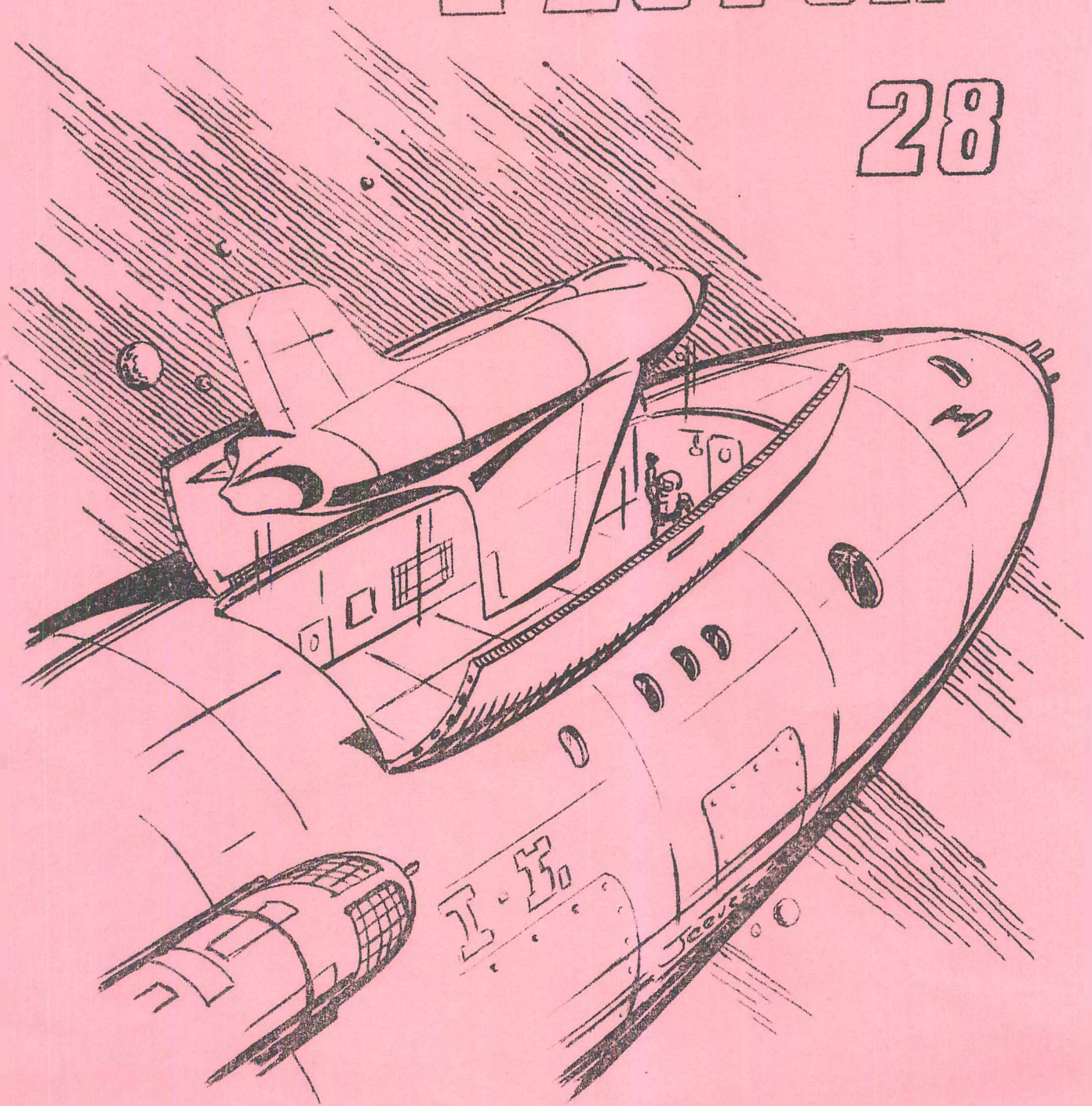


# ~~VECTOR~~

28





# VECTOR

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Number 28

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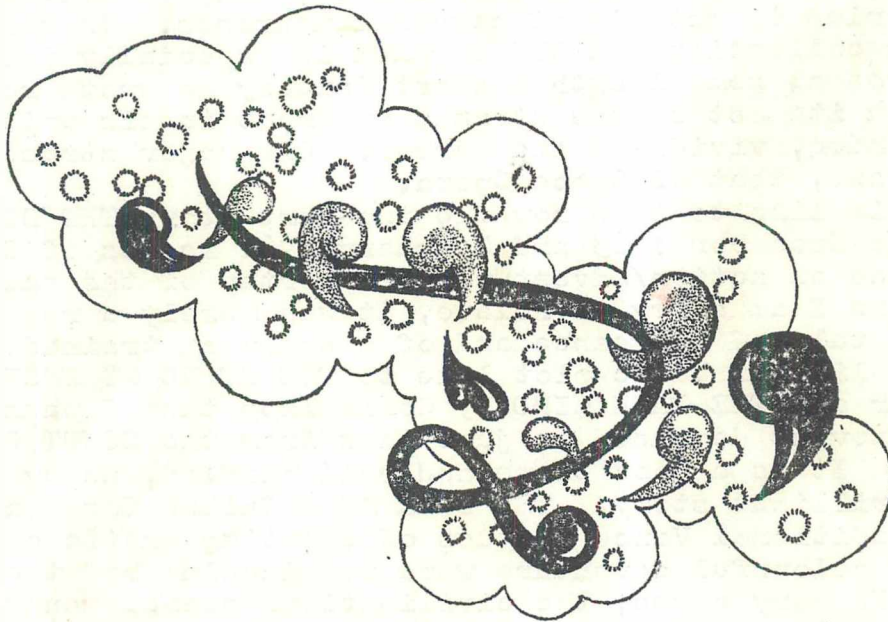
Jack Vance is one of the most entertaining and literate of modern SF writers although his output has never been high and he has received little attention. Recently however, his short novel, "The Dragon Masters" was awarded a Hugo at the last World Con and in 1962 he was Guest of Honour at the Westcoast SF Convention, which all seems to indicate that at last he is receiving recognition from the SF world.

In a rather dull contemporary scene Vance sparkles like melting ice in a bleak forest of pine whose dull monotony of form reflect the unoriginality of much SF. Take, for example, his short story "Green Magic" which appeared in the June 1963 issue of Fantasy and Science Fiction. This has qualities of delicacy and visual beauty in description which of SF writers only Ray Bradbury could touch. Vance does not fall into the trap of using long 'purple passages' but contents himself with single sentences and occasional adjectives to convey a richly impressionistic picture of the land of "Green Magic".

"At times he would watch the sprites (in the gossamer forms natural to them) at play among the pearl petals, or twining like quick flashes of music through the forests of pink spirals."

Odd phrases, adjectives, words all build up an impressionistic picture of a world we only hear faint echoes of;

"weaving tinkling fragments of various magics into a warp of shining long splines."



Sam McLean  
64

"A field of mothing mosaics", "a rain of stinging metal crystals", "where a hundred symbol flakes (each flitting spot of delicate iridescence) might be displayed in a single whirl of import"; all these tantalising glimpses are building up impressions without choking us in saccharine soaked prose as many other writers would have done.

But while we must allow that Mr Vance is here excelling himself there are unfortunate aspects to his writing. This is not in the field of technique where his competency cannot be questioned but in attitude. The hero of the story, Howard Fair, having gained admission into the land of "Green Magic" is disgusted by his human grossness and the grossness of the world.

"He forced himself to the consumption of what he thought of as fried animal tissue, the hypertrophied sexual organs of plants."

It would, of course, be wrong to assume the disgust of Fair for humanity is anyway a reflection of Vance's own attitudes, but the repeated theme of horror in many of his fantasies arouses this suspicion. Naturally this is not a fault in the writing, for Fair's reaction on his return from fairyland is one of contempt for the squalor in which man lives, and the force of his writing is conveyed in "The air was impregnated with organic smells." or "everywhere he looked he saw slipshod disorder, primitive filth."

A long while ago in VECTOR 12, Mr G D Doherty accused Theodore Sturgeon of having a nasty mind on the basis of his collection E PLURIBUS UNICORN and I saw his point. Now it was a brave thing to do in view of the libel laws and the high opinion of

Theodore Sturgeon held by most SF fans. I have no intention of following his lead in any comment I make on Jack Vance, but as Brian Aldiss suggested in "The Author's Lot", many SF writers do use fantasy stories to get rid of personal neuroses. In this connection, his collection *THE DYING EARTH* is especially important. I have considered at some length a short fantasy he wrote recently because I saw in it most of the strands inherent in his writings, strangeness, wonder, vividness and horror. One major strand has yet to be analysed, that of Space Opera.

I would like to take now the two-part story *THE STAR KING* published in the December 1963 and February 1964 issues of *Galaxy Magazine*. It was an action/adventure yarn worthy of the name 'space opera' and I am sorry to relate, it was merely a readable one at that. A tale of vengeance and of a superman trained to kill which seemed so like in basic plot line to *THE STARS MY DESTINATION* by Alfred Bester and *THE DARK MIND* by Colin Kopp that I paused to think how many novels depended on just this from the *COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO* onwards. It is a good theme and well handled, as by Bester, it can make a brilliant story. *THE STAR KING* failed for many reasons, the traditional Vance virtues of creating exotic cultures, strange men and colourful adventure were not lacking but they seemed faded. In many cases, the civilisations seemed gaudy backdrops likely to fall apart at the least hint of incongruity like a sash cord window which the hero breaks open! The choice of names 'Demon-Kings', 'Grendel, the Monster' (a la "Beowulf"?) seem tiredly melodramatic as the characters themselves are, together with much of the horror which one normally associates with Mr Vance. Hildemar Dasce, the one really horrendous if ineffectual villain (despite many ingenious ways of dealing with death), is a character who may be remembered for a cover illustration by Ed Emshwiller which, though true to Vance's description, makes him look more like a Gilbert and Sullivan performer than an obscene killer. Technically, much of the story is poorly contrived with only one notable caricature in the form of Dasce; the hero is faceless as ever. Vance sets the scene using short paragraphs at the start of each chapter taken from some fictitious source and uses those to set the scene, explain an institution or situation and generally get the writer over the hump of lecturing his readership in the middle of a novel without them becoming restless. Technically, a useful device which Asimov exploited in the "Foundation" series but in *THE STAR KING* they are too abstruse and involved. The story degenerates into a poor detective story with three suspects, one of which gives himself away in a manner which indicates the IQ of Mankind and 'Star Kings' has been steadily declining over the aeons.

This is Vance producing a mediocre item for a commercial sale as he did for *Standard Magazines* in the early fifties. The hero, whose label is 'Gerson' has a motive and apparently emotions, though for all he displays of them he might be one of Asimov's robots, to wit R Daneel Olivaw, without the latter's intellect.

It is unfortunate that even in the field of names, at which Vance usually excels, a lack of imagination is shown. The villain's hideout is 'Thumbnail Gulch' which further suggests that, despite H L Gold's famous advertisement, Space Opera is gracing the



pages of Galaxy. At this point it would be legitimate to enquire whether Vance is a mediocre writer who has occasional stories with a claim to literacy or a good writer who has on occasion written a novel for a quick sale. I feel that the latter must be the case as most of his work is greatly superior to "The Star King", and while the author is capable of 'Thumbnail Gulch' he has also created such evocative names as 'Cape of Sad Remembrance' and 'Valley of Graven Images'.

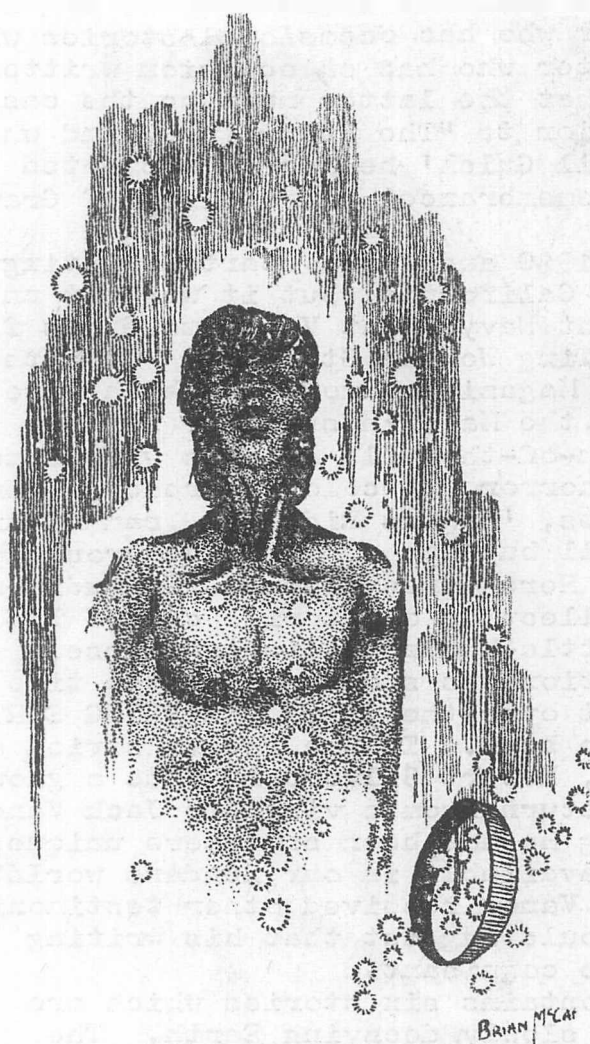
Jack Vance was born in 1920 and first started writing while attending the University of California, but it was not until 1945, while serving in the Merchant Navy, that Vance made his first sale ("The World Thinker" - Thrilling Wonder Stories). From then on he made many sales to Standard Magazines, most of which were Space Opera true to the policy of the Magazines. They were, however, well above the normal run-of-the-mill stories with some of the distinctive Vance touches of horror and colour already apparent. His first and, to date, only series, 'Magnus Ridolph', ran to nine stories between 1948 and 1952. All but one of these humorous space operas ran in Startling Stories. Here Vance learned the rudiments of writing and in 1950 a small collection of stories called THE DYING EARTH was published by a little-known publishing house, Hillman Periodicals Inc. The edition was small and at the time the event passed almost unnoticed, but over the years THE DYING EARTH has become a much-praised and rare book. In the recent series of Guest Editorials in New Worlds SF, Robert Silverberg made a glowing reference to it; "who could not return from a visit to Jack Vance's THE DYING EARTH....without feeling he had been somewhere unique, that he had experienced things unavailable in our mundane world?" In the same series of Editorials, Vance received other testimonials from professional writers which would suggest that his writing abilities are recognised among the cognisant.

The collection itself contains six stories which are grouped round a central theme - a slowly decaying Earth. The stories are original to the collection and while there is an overlap of ideas and characters, it has not the cohesion of a novel and the climax, if it can be called so, seems artificially contrived to give form to this collection. The collection was recently reprinted by Lancer Books at 75¢ and is generally imported into this country at 3/6.

I have no doubt that as in all of these fantasies a psychiatrist could have a field-day. Sexual symbolism is evident in such things as the 'Live Boots' whose surging pulsating life (shades of D H Lawrence!) in "Mazirian the Magician" become flacid when the object of the chase, a desirable young woman, disappears over the horizon. Some of the detail, which becomes suggestive by its very aimlessness, is repulsive; "A strangled wailing came and presently the Doedand's frame parted. The head shot like a bullet far down the glade; arms, legs, viscera flew in all directions."

The next story which lends itself to psychoanalysis is "Liane the Wayfarer" with the character of 'Chun the Unavoidable' before whom all fall for one purpose, their eyes; "Over his shiny back he wore a robe of eyeballs threaded on silk."

The tension mounts in this story to a horrible pitch with a grim postscript. The plots are nearly always negligible



and always they are an Odyssey of wonders and horrors with an aimless wandering which only the skill of the author and beauty of the prose disguises.

"T'sais" contains a rather sickening description of what was almost a ritual rape where detail is minimised but the selection of detail which verges in my book on obscenity of attitude:

"Tagman being covered with scab and Lasard lacking his teeth and ears-"etc. I am not over-emphasising the horrific-sexual element, it provides much of the plot and the writing is orientated as much toward this as delicate description. The horrors are well drawn and as gripping as one can ask, detail is minutely observed and technically it is Fantasy which few books operating in the Fantasy field can approach for expertise. At the same time, and the early date of its publication bears this out, one feels this was an experiment in writing and

feeling which should have been more developed before being published. This is not to say that the writing does not reach high standards:-

"In the west the sun hung close to old Earth; ruby shafts, heavy and rich as wine, slanted past the gnarled boles of the archaic forest to lay on the turfed forest floor. The sun sank in accordance with the old ritual; latter-day night fell across the forest, a soft warm darkness came swiftly..."

Heavy sensual writing of great quality if a little artificial. Images abound in his writing, marvellously mixed impressions of strange scenes flow before the reader. A rich tapestry which unfortunately is fragmentary but this cannot detract from the wealth of impressions to be found here. THE DYING EARTH is probably among the foremost fantasies ever written and worthy of much greater attention than it has hitherto received.

"We have seen old Thorsingol, and the Sherrit Empire before it, and Golwan Andra before that and the Forty Kades even before. We have seen the war-like green men, and the





knowledgable Pharials and the Clambs who departed Earth for the stars, as did the Merioneth before them and the Gray Sorcerers still earlier. We have seen oceans rise and fall, the mountains crust up, peak and melt in the beat of rain; we have looked on the sun when it glowed hot and full and yellow...."

Like THE LORD OF THE RINGS. THE MOON POOL, THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND and the other fantasies which preceded it, its strength lies in the descriptions and the names and their ability to evoke pictures of another universe.



Space Opera still flowed from his pen and between 1951 and 1954 numerous stories were published in Standard Magazines. I should like to consider "Son of the Tree" (Thrilling Wonder Stories June 1951) and "The Houses of Iszm" (Startling Stories Spring 1954) together as they have been recently reprinted as an Ace Double (F265 - 40¢ with Gaughan as cover illustrator). Their one common element is that the cultures involved are based to some extent on plants. "The Houses of Iszm" concerns a plot to steal a seed of one of the fabulous 'plant-houses' of Iszm. There is commercial skulduggery and a hero who is vaguely aware of some strange impulse outside himself and the usual elements down to a beautiful betrayer. It has Vance dealing with an exotic culture and showing his ability to portray it, but weaknesses of plot and characterisation are unfortunately evident.

"Sun, Earth, the Moon; an archipelago of bright round islands after a long passage through a dark sea. Sun drifted off to one side, Moon slipped away to the other. Earth expanded ahead; gray, green, tan, white, blue - full of clouds and winds, sunburn, frosts, draughts, chills and dust, the navel of the Universe, the depot, terminal, clearing house, which other races visited as provincials."

"Son of the Tree" is slightly more complex; it concerns a world dominated by a tremendous tree whose worship is the only object for living for a great horde of peasantry supporting a comparatively tiny hierarchy of aristocrats and priests. The hero helps to create an air of unreality about the whole thing by his lack of an adequate motive. He is searching for a rival in love so that he may bring him back to Earth in order that his love can choose between them! This may have done in 1954 but the effect of such a plotline ten years later is, I am sorry to report, one of creating frank disbelief. The picture seems ludicrous and the classic elements of Space Opera all tend to underline this. I would not recommend these stories to anyone who is not suffering from a severe attack of nostalgia.

Similarly, "The Planet of the Damned" (Space Stories December 1952), which was later published by Ace Books as SLAVES OF THE KLAU, is very dated. The hero, an Earthman, and his romantic companion are captured by an horrendous race, the Klau, who against all economic sense have an advanced, but slave based economy. The hero escapes from the Klau and after many feats of derring-do and a great deal of hard work manages to escape from the Klau planet, Magarak. There is some excellent writing here and the sulphurous laden atmosphere of Magarak comes to life brilliantly. There are more elements of horror here of the gruesomeness which is so evident in his fantasy writings and the story is not completely lost to Space Opera convention.

"Ikandeli Szet, the sad-eyed musician in the embroidered black and green smock, sat drawing planet vibrations from his string box; beside him squatted the Calbyssinians, blowing windy organ notes through their fingers; Chevr, the hatchet-faced Splang, crouched as near to the fire as possible, mending a tear in his leggings; the light made moving pools of black along his deep-marked face."

Vance's output was, at this time, not restricted to

novellettes orientated toward Space Operatic requirements of Startling Stories. He made sales to Astounding SF, Galaxy, Avon SF and Fantasy Reader and Frederik Pohl's "Star SF" series. I should like to consider five of his short stories which appeared in this period.

"The Potters of Firsk" (Astounding SF May 1950) concerns a people devoted to the production of exquisite ceramics and has a rather gruesome twist in the tail. But while it has these virtues, much of the plotting is on a low plane and the villain, Covill, evokes sympathy which could be better spent on a rather characterless hero. "Penolpan, with its canals softly lit by yellow lanterns, the gardens glowing to candles and rich with the fragrance of night blossoms was a city from fairyland," shows the almost incurably romantic Vance touch.

"Winner Lose All" (Galaxy December 1951) was anthologised in Conklin's OMNIBUS OF SF and one of Vance's truly science fiction stories depending on purely scientific conditions. The strange lifeform called a 'Unigen', dependant on uranium and similar metals for energy, finds itself in competition with Man and there is a mutual retreat occasioned by the contact. A simple story, well written and with the use of constant switches from Unigen to men and back.

In contrast to this there is a BEM story called "Three Legged Joe" (Startling Stories January 1953) which is nowhere near so intelligently written but has a basically similar plotline. This would seem to indicate that Mr Vance can slant his stories to the market requirements.

His versatility can be further observed by the short story "D.P." (Avon SF and Fantasy Reader 1953) which was anthologised in Bleiler & Dikty's BEST SF STORIES: 5TH SERIES. It concerns the reception accorded by Humanity to a race of troglodytes forced to the surface by disasters in their underground realm. A bitter satire on the treatment of refugees and although its form of letters and reports may make some of the satire superficial, the impact of it is still sharp.

"The Devil on Salvation Bluff" (Star SF 3) is an allegorical meeting between Earth's order and the magnificent chaos of the planet Glory. An interesting short story because of the allegorical nature of the story and of the physical description of Glory's anarchy. A really alien environment has seldom been constructed, but here a philosophical and physical anarchy exists.

In 1953 Vance had his first hardcover book published in the Winstone Juvenile Series; VANDALS OF THE VOID was a fast moving interplanetary adventure designed for children.

In the same year, his second paperback was brought out. THE SPACE PIRATE was a retitled of "The Five Gold Bands" (Startling Stories November 1950) under which title it was recently reprinted by Ace Books. Paddy Blackthorn, a stereotyped Irish Picareque hero, accompanied by his light o' love Fay, scoots round the Universe in search of the five keys of interplanetary flight. It has one interesting premise, that as time goes on, Earthmen, who colonise new planets, will evolve under the new environmental conditions. There is good description, fast action and all the elements of successful space opera which Vance had depended upon in this early



stage of his writing.

"The gas ocean showed a queer roiling surface like slow-boiling water. In colour it was the dirty yellow of oily smoke and the yellow light of Alpheratz penetrated only a few feet into the depths. From time to time the wind would scoop up a tall yellow tongue, lift it high, throw it over backwards."

All his many varied talents combined in perhaps the greatest space opera Standard Magazines ever produced - BIG PLANET. While dependant on space opera's conventions, it is still a great fantasy because it gave Vance's talents full rein in describing scenery, cultures and caricatures in all the vividness and glowing colours which permeate BIG PLANET.

"When the story is over, Vance leaves the reader souvenirs of an unforgettable journey - twilight in Tsalombar Forest; the Tree-men and the Beaujolains; the Cossacks and Atman the Scourge; the fortress city of Edelweiss; the Magickers and the false griambot; the Monoline....." - Damon Knight.

A vivid and unforgettable Odyssey across the surface of a huge planet with forty-thousand miles to be covered on foot and hundreds of dangers to be overcome, strange cultures galore to be passed through and a villain (who can't be considered evil) to be contended with. It illustrates Vance's strength and his weakness. His strength lies in the stuff of Fantasy and vivid description and his weakness lies in the realm of mundane literature characterisation. He can draw an attractive caricature (like Atman the Scourge) but as with nearly all SF writers, character eludes him and he dare not try too hard for fear of detracting from the setting.

The publishing history of the novel is interesting. It first appeared in Startling Stories September 1952 and was reprinted by Avalon as a hardback in 1957 and as a paperback from Ace in the same year (D295). Somewhere in the process, the story was censored and the name of one of the chief characters changed. The censorship reached heights of peurility - a reference to rape is deleted, some gruesome bits which left most of the description to the imagination and in general it was prepared for the SF market of Juveniles (?).

"He looked out on a green slope, spangled with yellow and red flowers, which rose to a forest. The gables of a village showed through the foliage - quaint gables of carved dark brown timber. The entire landscape was drenched in a tingling golden white radiance; every colour shone with jewel-like clarity."

Few SF books are so literate or so exciting and original and for this reason BIG PLANET has received a comparatively high position in SF circles.

When Standard Magazines folded, Vance was without a market and the number of his stories fell off considerably although their quality continued to improve.

In 1956 Ballantine published Vance's original novel TO LIVE FOREVER which was a genuine attempt to leave space opera behind and to present a more logical and disciplined future. Set in a society where immortality is possible but impractical due to Malthusian pressures of population on natural resources. A select few however, can become immortal by serving the State and consequently everyone is intent on gaining preferment or 'upping his

slant' on governmental graphs. The hero, for personal reasons, is bent on destroying this system which he does by ingenious and original methods. The book has much originality and the characterisation has become much more mature (though still limited) while the bizarre and strange elements in the culture still attract his pen. It even contains some social comment which shows just how superior this is to, say, THE FIVE GOLD BANDS.

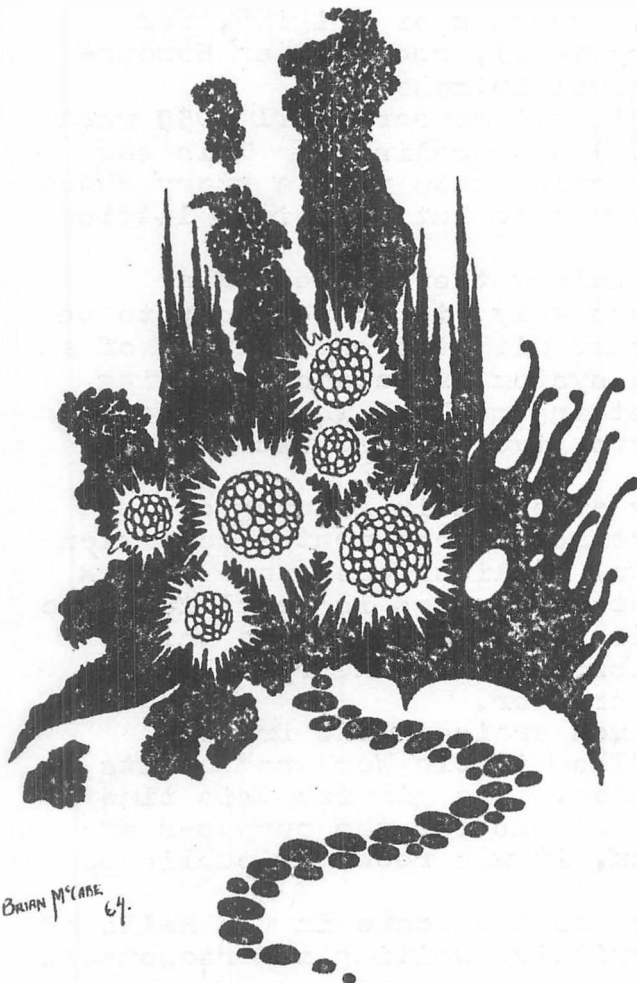
In the same year a novellette was published in Astounding which verified this maturity - "The Gift of Gab", a much anthologised story. It concerns the basic question of what intelligence is and how it can be assessed. The conflict on Sabria between Fletcher, who believed the Dekabrachs to be intelligent, and Chrystal who wanted the Niobium in their bodies, is well balanced and for once the characterisation doesn't fall down. This is excellent SF with the descriptions adding to a most convincing story.

"A pale constellation appeared in the centre of the screen, separated into a swarm of sparks. They brightened and expanded; behind them appeared the outlines, tall and dim, of coral minarets, towers, spires and spikes."

-I think it is still Jack Vance's best story.

The space opera, which had been the mainstay of Vance's writing, was confined to a few stories, the most notable being "Languages of Pao" (Satellite December 1957) which was reprinted by Avalon in hardback the following year. This was a brave

attempt to inject originality into the space opera field and which failed. Pao was a backward planetary culture with a philosophy akin to the fatalism of China. The basic premise rests on the fact that language reflects philosophy and that by introducing dynamic languages, the fatalism may be overcome. It reminds one of SON OF THE TREE whose people were similarly inert. Having given us a splendid opening, Vance slides back into the old routine, the characters are stereotyped (though better than most) and while moral problems are posed, they are unfortunately stock ones. There is room for good description and details which set it apart, like all Vance stories, from the mediocre; but at the same time it is disappointing.



The next important story by Vance was "The Miracle Workers" (Astounding July 1958). It is a neat 'gimmick' story where the roles of 'magic' and science are reversed in a world half medieval, half modern. The story runs parallel to THE DRAGON MASTERS which I consider a straight adaptation of "The Miracle Workers". Indeed I am surprised the parallel was not immediately observed. This is as good as THE DRAGON MASTERS with characterisation up to a high level and with excellent details and believable BEMs.

The flow of stories from Jack Vance's pen remained small although most were of a high standard. "Worlds of Origin", for example (Super Science Fiction February 1958), received an Honourable Mention in Judith Merrill's 4th Annual Anthology.

The next story of any note did not appear until 1959 when "Dodkin's Job" (Astounding October 1959) was published. This saw Vance adapting himself to Campbell's requirements with a story about beaurocracy gone mad. It was a readable tale but contained little of Vance's own style.

In the August 1961 issue of Galaxy there appeared a novella called "The Moon Moth" which was only his third story to be published there. It was really concerned with the exploration of a strange culture which revolves round a system of taboos involving facial nudity and the use of status setting masks. The culture is ingeniously displayed as a plot of sorts gives us the excuse to explore it.

In August 1962 a short story appeared in Amazing called "Gateway to Strangeness". A space martinet (whose mental condition would today result in his incarceration) bullies some space cadets on a long mission to test them. The story's ethos is repulsive, the fact that a cadet dies on the voyage is just 'one of those things' and the general callousness made me dislike it and Henry Belt, the old spacedog, despite his cardboard character.

In the same month came the much praised "The Dragon Masters". It is directly related to "The Miracle Workers" by its semi-medieval setting and constant action. The gimmick this time is the selective breeding of both men and aliens for the purposes of war. Decorated with a cover by Gaughan, it was recently published by Ace (F185 - 40¢).

Some of the descriptions such as the scene in the Halls of the Sacerdotes was excellent, and descriptive writing and reasonable characterisation were both in evidence.

"Within the dark openings, the naked Sacerdotes worked furiously, thrusting, wedging, the strain of their sinews and hearts and minds communicating itself to every man in the valley. The shaft of milky-blue light sprang forth, but too soon: it melted the rock a hundred yards south of Clynbourne Crevasse, and from the Weaponeer's gun came a splash of orange and green flame."

Vance displays his ability to convey action and movement which so many of his stories depend on.

Jack Vance has not developed his abilities evenly. Technically, he has improved over the years but the recent serial, "The Star King", indicates that he has not finished with space opera. "The Gift of Gab" marked a renaissance in Vance's writing,



his SF became better while his distinctive style retained those features which marked him out as a writer. His output has been comparatively small but it has been of a consistently high standard when compared to SF writing in general. Much of it is merely readable (how much of SF is unreadable!!) but several of his books have reached a very high standard indeed although very little of his work can be called completely satisfactory. "The Star King" is not disappointing in itself but it is poor in comparison with his best work and this must be our standard. Let us hope that Jack Vance's work, not only continues to grace SF magazines but, continues to improve.

Terry Bull

### Bibliographical notes:

Don H Tuck's handbook lists all principle stories up to 1958 but a nearly complete checklist appeared in Zenith 2.

### Biographical notes:

Pseudonyms; John Holbrook.

Mr Vance lives near San Francisco with his wife and 12 year old son. According to the June 1963 edition of Fantasy and Science Fiction, he is in the process of building a houseboat with Poul Anderson and Frank Herbert (unless it has been completed by now) and is aged 44.

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# THE AUTHOR'S LOT

## No. 4.

## Edmond HAMILTON

On the whole, after reading the first three of these "Lots", I find myself much more in agreement with Eric Frank Russell than with Messrs. Aldiss and Harrison. I particular, I don't subscribe to the theory that SF writers turn to imaginary worlds because of some Freudian dissatisfaction with this world.

It's one of those glittering, plausible ideas that is just too pat. The essence of science fiction is differentness; it's the off-ox of literature. I think that those who read and write it are themselves so different that no sweeping generalisations about them are possible.

L Sprague De Camp has long nourished this same theory that SF writers became so because they were lonely, introverted and unhappy as small boys. When he questioned me, I disappointed him by telling him that I was a magnificently normal bad-boy, with no frustrations whatever. When I went on to say that I had been a lonely, introverted adolescent, he brightened up. But, I added, my passionate interest in SF came during my bad-boy phase.

To return to the title of this series....."The Author's Lot" sounds a little forbidding, doesn't it? It has implications of a grim ordeal. And very many of the writers of SF I have known will tell you at length what a tough life a writer's is. But I think they rather overdo it.

Sure, a writer's life can be tough...you can't follow it for over 35 years without finding that out. But I doubt if it's as harrowing as the average businessman's. Perhaps the thing that makes it seem worse is that it's lonelier.

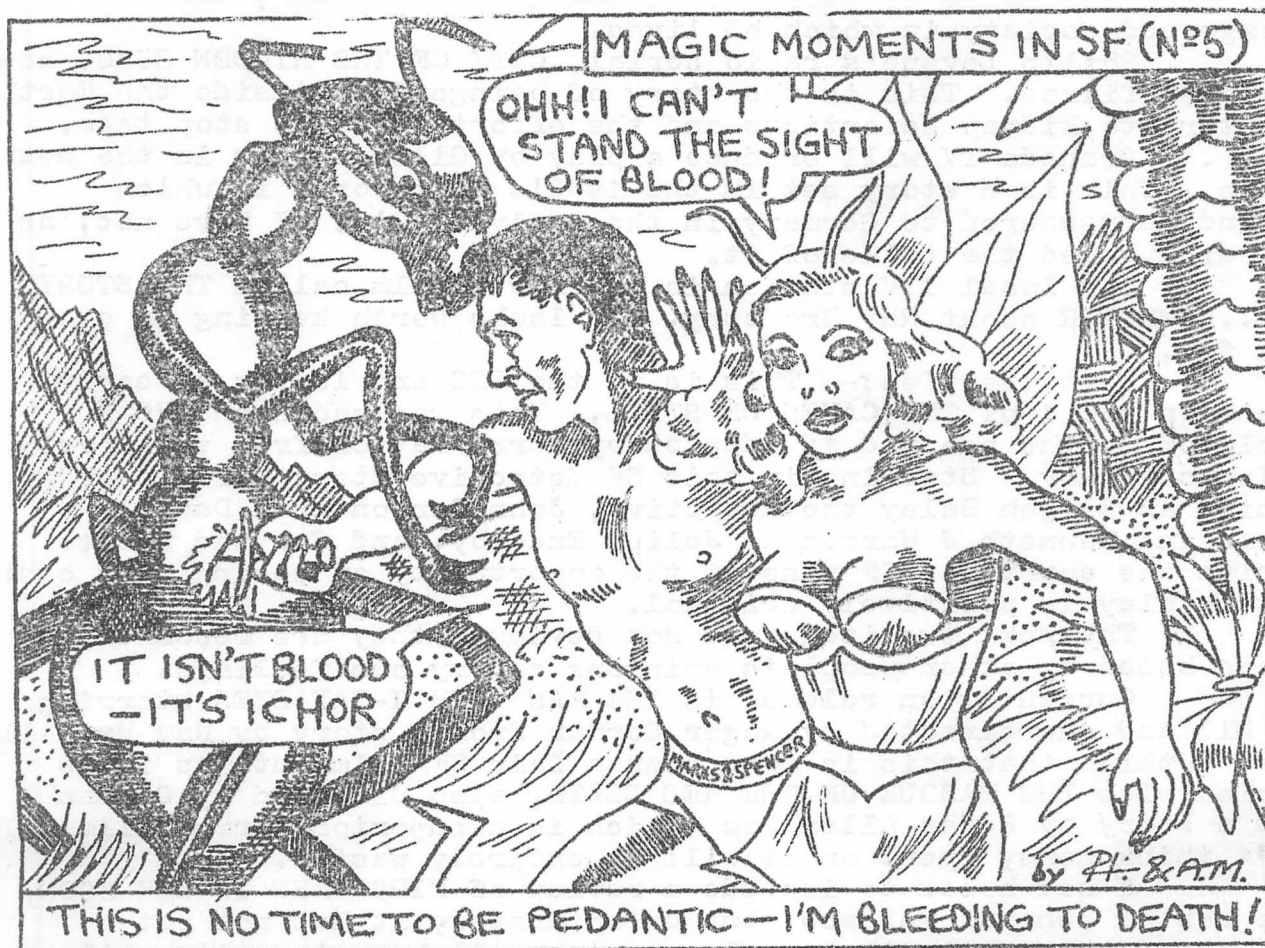
Most writers are manic-depressives....to make one of the sweeping generalisations I have just condemned. I mean, when their stories satisfy them and the financial rewards are good, they stride the earth like conquerors, but when rejections arrive, they mutter about quitting writing and managing a grocery store. But the worst thing is not the rejections, upsetting though they are - it's the times when nothing happens. When you can't hear from an editor or publisher or anybody. When you get a dire feeling that the whole world has forgotten you exist and that you've been erased. That's worse than the nastiest letter.

Of course, if you live in one of the metropolitan centres, as most writers do, you're not that isolated. But that has its drawbacks too. I remember a time many years ago in New York pulp-fiction circles when there was much talk among writers of a telepathy that seemed to operate.....three chaps would start the identical same story at the same time. After a while it was discovered that in convivial writer's meetings, some poor wight would get to babbling about his latest idea, and that when everyone sobered up later, everyone forgot they had heard it told, and conceived they had an inspiration from Allah.

I would say, positively, that the Author's Lot is a good one, if he can make it at all. God knows it's not very good financially, except for a golden few. But there are great rewards from doing a job you honestly like. If it were not so, there wouldn't be so many brilliant youngsters pushing into the writing field.....and, damn it, giving some of us oldtimers the toughest kind of competition.

Edmond Hamilton

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# THE VISUAL SIDE OF THINGS

by VOO HALLEFF

This time the column is taken up with news, a plea and a couple of films now on general release about which I can only guess, having not yet had a chance to see either of them. The news first.

Soon to be made in Spain is a film called CRACK IN THE EARTH, directed by Andrew Marton and starring Dana Andrews, Janette Scott, Alexander Knox and Keiron Moore. It is an original story of the search for new sources of energy, which goes wrong and results in panic.

John Cassavetes is to direct the film of Mordecai Roshwald's book LEVEL 7, in Hollywood. This is the story of the man whose sole job it is to push the button in case of war, and the underground society in which he lives.

Philip Levene's radio serial, CITY OF THE HIDDEN EYES, has just been filmed. This is the story of beings from inside the Earth who start to kidnap scientists and the efforts made to stop them.

Granada TV will produce a play by Giles Cooper in the near future. This is a story set in the 1950's of a world in which England surrendered to Germany in the early 1940's. I have not, as yet, discovered the title of it.

Our local ITV station is to show a film called THE STORY OF....A WRITER about Ray Bradbury. It looks worth keeping an eye open for.

Next the plea:- This is to the BBC and is for an early repeat on BBC 1 of THE CAVES OF STEEL. This was shown on BBC 2 a couple of months ago and is adapted by Terry Nation from the novel by Isaac Asimov. Starring in this SF detective story were Peter Cushing as Elijah Baley the detective, John Carson as R Daneel Olivaw and Kenneth J Warren as Julius Enderby, and for the BBC to deprive the country's SF fans of the opportunity of seeing this cast in this play is positively criminal.

The next two items are not reviews; they are recommendations based on other people's opinions and my own feelings.

Currently on release is THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES starring Ray Milland and directed by Roger Corman from a story by Ray Russell. I don't think that this is more than a fair SF film but, as it is coupled with THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH, also directed by Corman from a story by Edgar Allan Poe (which is a superior horror film), I don't think money spent on it will be entirely wasted.

I had hoped to include a review of FIRST MEN IN THE MOON, also now on general release, but unfortunately it has not yet arrived at our local cinema. The review will have to wait until next time but, meanwhile, I have no hesitation in saying that it is a film to be seen. It is directed by Nathan Juran with special

effects and models by Ray Harryhausen (who did MYSTERIOUS ISLAND and JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS). The script is adapted from the H G Wells novel by Nigel ('Quatermass') Kneale with Arthur Garrett as the scientific adviser. Last, but certainly not least, the cast has Lionel Jeffries as Professor Cavor, Edward Judd (who starred in THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE), and Martha Hyer as the feminine addition to the plot. With this galaxy of talent working together on it, I am sure the finished film is worth making an effort to see.

Lastly, I have a query from Joe Lynn concerning a sequel to THE TIME MACHINE to be called RETURN OF THE TIME TRAVELLER. Unfortunately, I can find no trace of it so if anyone has any knowledge of it I would be pleased to hear from them (2 Westfield Place, Yeovil, Somerset).

Vic Hallett

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### SMALL ADS (Free to members)

W A N T E D ZENITH 2 and 4 in exchange for BASRA Journal 8 or back issues of ALIEN - Jim England, 64 Ridge Road, Kingswinford, Staffs.

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W A N T E D November 1950 U.S. edition of ASTOUNDING SF. Any reasonable price paid for copy in good condition - Brian Rolls, 18 Elm Road, Charlton, Wantage, Berks.

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Travelling West? Or North? Or just travelling? If you find yourself in the Tewkesbury area, you're welcome to a night's stay at 57 Church Street, Tewkesbury - the harbour of DOUBT. Prior notification appreciated but not essential - Graham Hall.

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# GENERAL CHUNTERING

by

KEN SLATER

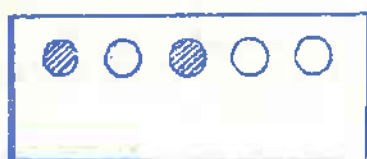
Haven't heard the comments on the first of "The Return of General Chuntering" yet...but at least VECTOR's esteemed editor hasn't written saying he doesn't want the next chunk...so they can't have been too adverse...Harry Harrison tells me that he saw Prexy Brian W Aldiss a few weeks back...Brian was looking all bronzed and thin...and will come back to Britain from Yugoslavia some time in September....also Brian doesn't possess a copy of his first book, THE BRIGHTFOUNT DIARIES...not SF, by the by...this is in print, but I think Brian would like a copy of the first edition, and so if you have one you don't want, I'm in the market on his behalf...Atlas are now importing the American edition of MAG OF F&SF...overprinted 3/-...starting with the July issue...40¢ is the American price, and at the basic rate 3/- is 42¢...so that makes a little more confusion for the "why does it cost?" argument...Peter Campbell, old time fan (he was the original "every issue bigger and better" fanmag publisher is back in the field with HYDRA (incorporating his old fanmag ANDROMEDA)...although not strictly about SF, it contains more on that subject, for its size than do many so-called SF fanmags...how I long for those days when folk like Phil Rasch were writing learned treatises on the sources of Merritt's mythos for fanmags like THE GORGON...still, some of the recent crop show more interest in the subject of Fantasy than most in the last decade...proof copy of Brian Aldiss's GREYBEARD to hand...this will probably be out by the time VECTOR 28 hits the mails...from hothouses to latrines to bathchairs...the idea Brian has used in this book is not new...if you'd like to try an earlier example of the same theme given a different treatment, see if you can dig RED SNOW by F Wright Moxley published about 1930...but the Aldiss treatment is very effective...Dave Busby's article ON 'FIRST CONTACTS' in VECTOR 27 caused a couple of folk to write me asking for stories of this kind...one of them particularly wanted early yarns which dealt with non-humans...there were umpteen, of course, but a couple which I can still recall were P Schuyler Miller's TETRAHEDRA OF SPACE in WONDER STORIES Nov '31...reprinted in STARTLING Sep '48...and A BABY ON NEPTUNE by Clare Winger Harris and Miles J Breuer in AMAZING STORIES Dec '29...reprinted as CHILD OF NEPTUNE in TALES OF WONDER Spring '41...in these stories, naturally, the approach is simple, immediate and personal, without the consideration to cultural implications which the more modern stories give...then if you wish to come still more up-to-date, and follow the growth of yarns of this 'contact' type, there is Raymond Z Gallun's "Old Faithful" and its sequel "Son of Old Faithful" - ASTOUNDING Dec '34 and Jul '35...and don't overlook Stanley G Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey"...by the by, all these have one thing in common...the treatment is sympathetic...I have ignored the stories where man and alien meet, rayguns blasting.....I recently received an invitation to join



the British SFBC...I declined...unfortunately I've always read the books issued...at least once...how many of you are in the same position?...it would be interesting to discover how many members of the BSFA are subscribers to the SFBC.....Burroughs and Kline fans will be interested in the discovery by Richard Lupoff (of Canaveral Press) of the work LIEUT. GULLIVER JONES which has been reprinted under the title GULLIVER OF MARS and is now available in Ace paperbacks...complete with Mr Lupoff's editorial remarks...more or less stating that here is the source material for Burroughs' Mars and indicating PHRA THE PHOENICIAN as the probable source for 'John Carter'...both GULLIVER and PHRA were the work of Edwin Lester Arnold...originally published in London in 1905 and 1890 respectively...I first read these two books when I was about eleven...and even less critical than I am now...the connection had never occurred to me...although possibly I would have seen it today, were it not that until now GULLIVER has been on the list of 'unobtainable books'.....Dave Barber appears to have enjoyed the Schlosscon in Germany...and from his reports so, I guess, did the other British fans who attended...when Dave called on me he had a weeping eye, and I was thinking maybe that German gin was still as lethal as it had been back around the late '40s...some eye lotion fixed his eye up again, tho, so the Great Yarmouth Con is still on for 1966.....NEW WRITINGS IN SF 1 edited by John Carnell was issued on Aug 17th...it will have pb publication in Corgi Books later...Vols. 2 and 3 in the Dobson boards edition will follow in Oct '64 and Jan '65.....L Sprague de Camp recently had burglars...in the style of a character in those heroic fantasies that he too infrequently writes, Sprague firmly grasped the hilt of his Samurai sword...and the intruders fled with Sprague giving chase...I detect an air of regret in the way he comments that they got away.....Al Lewis has published "Index to the Science Fiction Magazines: 1963" as excellent as the previous two issues...the 'Book Review' index which was started in the 1962 issue has been continued, and is an asset...GOLDEN BLOOD by Jack Williamson is the latest Lancer SF Library publication...this was originally published in WEIRD TALES April 1933, with a Brundage cover...pity that Lancer titles are no longer available in the UK...appropos of which, American publishers seem to be somewhat unco-operative on exporting their titles at present...I don't want to use this column to display my private troubles, but it may save me some correspondence if I simply state that in the past six weeks I have written to no less than seven American publishers with enquiries about the supply of their books which are not available in the UK...in each case the publisher has no representative in this country as far as I know...in each case, my enquiry was simple...who was the publisher's representative, if any, and if none, could certain titles be exported direct to me...I have received just one answer...and folks who want hard-covered copies of Heinlein's GLORY ROAD will be pleased to learn that I have hopes...but Lancer are sending their books to the BSFA for review...so presumably they want to sell them over here...and yet????.....American fan Charles M Brown has drawn to my attention a juvenile fantasy writer...er...sorry...writer of juvenile fantasy I've previously overlooked...Nicholas Stuart Gray...with a list of five titles...fantasy lovers who can still appreciate the stories of Nesbit and the 'Narnia' yarns of C S Lewis will probably

find enjoyment in these...I've only glanced at them so far but I think they will repay my closer attention...incidentally, I do not feel it the least bit 'infantile' or 'unhealthy' to find enjoyment in a well-written juvenile 'fairy-story'...although I abhor much of the Victorian 'goody-goody' material which of course is what only too many people mean by the term...anyone care to essay a consideration of 'juvenile heroic fantasy' for the benefit of BSFA members...I feel sure our editor would welcome it, and it would be helpful to those fans who like fantasy (the de Camp-Pratt, Tolkein and Lewis kinds)...but can't afford to invest in 'children's books' without some guidance and probability of pleasurable result...this autumn and winter look promising for SF readers...I've checked off some twenty-six 'probable' titles in the forthcoming books...they include a percentage of 'weird' yarns...such as Dennis Wheatley's 50th novel, THEY USED DARK FORCES, due from Hutchinson in October...and some reprints of previously published yarns...Brian Aldiss, for instance, introduces Charles L. Harness' novel THE PARADOX MEN for Faber, while Edmund Crispin does the same service for Cyril M. Kornbluth's THE SYNDIC (also Faber)...and Gollancz will offer a boards version of Harry Harrison's THE ETHICAL ENGINEERS...there will doubtless be some more under the "Children's Books" classification...so far I've only noted Andre Norton's JUDGEMENT ON JANUS, however...and that is only hard-covered publications...there will doubtless be the usual glut (and I use that word advisedly) of paperbacks...one of the things that puzzle me is the situation where, when the market is flooded with unsold copies of an American paperback, a British publisher brings out a board-bound edition of the same title...admittedly, such cases are not frequent, but whilst a separate market does exist for the sale of pbs and for the sale of board editions, you can't convince me that prior pb sales cannot but adversely influence the bound-boards market.....SF HORIZONS No. 1 is out...you may not find it on your local bookstall...but ask for a copy of it there anyway...this is the Tom Boardman published, Aldiss & Harrison edited, 'little magazine' of reviews and views on SF...important item in this issue is a long analysis of Jack Williamson's THE LEGION OF TIME by Brian Aldiss, who makes the analysis a vehicle for some time-travelling of his own, both into the past of SF, and its possible future...other contributions warrant attention and I commend Geoff Doherty's "The Use of Language in SF" for indicating some essential verbal surgery...at the same time, let us not forget that the prime purpose of the fiction writer is to entertain, and currently, it would seem that Edgar Wallace and Edgar Rice Burroughs are entertaining more readers than are Anthony Trollope and Charles Dickens...I'm not suggesting this is a good thing...but it is not a bad thing, either...simply that a great many of us (humans) for some reason or other have an appreciation for a well-told story, and are not critical of its literary excellence...some (humans) have been trying to educate us (humans) out of this attitude ever since we (humans) started recording our ideas...and not only in the literary field...sort of Strauss versus the Beatles...Contable v. Appleby...KFS v. KFS.

/Incidentally, in case any new members may not know, Ken runs an excellent little book shop (SF of course). He can usually be relied upon to obtain any book not available through normal channels. Write to him: Fantast (Medway) Ltd., 75 Norfolk St., Wisbech, Cambs. - RGP/



FOR YOUR

## INFORMATION

by  
*Jim Groves*

Before I get onto the latest questions there's yet another episode in the "Who is Cordwainer Smith?" saga. This is a communication from Beryl Henley that the editorial notes in Judith Merrill's SEVENTH ANNUAL OF THE YEAR'S BEST SF states that Smith is a professor of Sociology and a State Department adviser.

The main question this time is from John Kemp who wants to know what Dianetics is. Well - Dianetics is the invention (or discovery - depending on how you look at it) of SF writer L Ron Hubbard. It first appeared in the May 1950 issue of Astounding SF and seems to have the dubious distinction of being Campbell's first foray into the 'scientific borderlands'. It postulated the existence of mental blocks called 'engrams' which are the cause of all our troubles and which can be removed, at a price, by Elron and his fellow experts, whereupon one becomes a 'clear' - a sort of superman. Later developments turned Dianetics into the 'science' of Scientology which was so profitable that Elron has stopped writing SF and now concentrates on writing textbooks for his 'Institute of Scientology'. On the face of it, Dianetics is a mixture of unorthodox psychology, Theosophy, various bits and pieces of oriental mythology and god knows what else. My own personal opinion is that it is just another successful crackpot cult - my only regret is that it had to start in our field and so reflect adversely on SF in the public eye. I also regret the loss of Elron's talents as a writer. His Ole Doc Methuselah stories were much more entertaining than Leinster's later Med Corps stories. For more information I suggest that you get hold of that Astounding - it's in the Library. If anyone wants it, I'll get the address of the Scientologists HQ in this country, for them.

Mike Turner wants to know how many 'Dominic Flandry' stories Poul Anderson has written and where they have appeared. Seven stories have appeared to date. They are:-

TIGER BY THE TAIL.....Planet Stories Jan 1951  
 HONORABLE ENEMIES.....Future May 1951  
 (Later expanded and published by Ace Books as WE CLAIM THESE STARS)  
 THE AMBASSADORS OF FLESH.....Planet Stories Sun 1954  
 THE GAME OF GLORY.....Venture Mar 1958  
 A HANDFUL OF STARS.....Amazing Jun 1959



A MESSAGE IN SECRET.....Fantastic Dec 1959  
 (Later expanded and published by Ace Books as MAYDAY ORBIT)  
 A PLAGUE OF MASTERS.....Fantastic Dec 1960 & Jan 1961  
 (Later published by Ace Books as EARTHPAN GO HOME)

And finally two recommendations. First a film. This is THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON. Providing you don't expect a serious presentation, you'll enjoy it. Lionel Jeffries is the best mad scientist I've yet seen anywhere. It's a real romp!

The other matter is the fact that Panther books have produced the three Foundation stories by Asimov in paperback. All three have excellent abstract photographic covers and are well worth the 3/6 each.

Jim Groves

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Ron Bennett, now 52 Fairways Drive, Forest Lane, Harrogate, Yorks.  
 Graham Hall, now 57 Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucs.  
 Richard Mann, now c/o Maj. E O Mann, 46th Bomb Sqn., Grand Forkes AFB, North Dakota, USA.  
 Charles Platt, now 18E Fitzjohns Avenue, London NW 3, (Tel: SWI 4573)  
 Brian Rolis, now - ? (Anyone know Brian's new address, please?)  
 Joseph Zajackowski, now 45 Marlborough Road, Beach Hill Estate, Mansfield, Notts.

# BOOK REVIEWS AND NEWS

THE MIND OF MR SOAMES by Charles Eric Maine  
Published by Panther at 3/6. 186 pages

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The psychiatric problems posed by a man being 'born' at the age of thirty form the substance of this novel 'of today'.

Within this striking, if not particularly good, cover, we learn of a thirty-year-old man who has been in a coma since birth. Of course, never having been conscious, he cannot consider how lucky he is getting out of paying for innumerable rounds, etc., but he has also failed to learn to talk, walk, eat, dress or even any of the basic actions - literally a thirty-year-old baby.

After a brilliant brain surgeon has removed the mental blocks, the man, John Soames, gains consciousness, with the consequence of the psychiatrists in charge of him getting a few grey hairs worrying what to teach him first.

Naturally, they want to teach him the elementary things a baby would have to learn, but there is the added problem that a thirty-year-old man has, namely - sex. And how can you teach a baby discipline if he is bigger than you are and can't be spanked?

This plot is extremely original, for which I must congratulate Mr Maine. Unfortunately, he criminally maltreats the poor idea, missing a lot of its important aspects and hence making it trite. The potential for subtle satire of how we cloud our children's minds with untruths is unlimited, yet he misses it completely. Need less to say, the experiment does not work out as expected, providing high drama towards the end.

Mr Maine's characters do not live and neither does most of the scenery.

He has rather a false ending with a Judge summing up all the questions Maine should have posed himself throughout the action, but either forgot to, or is too poor a writer to have done so.

Despite the fact that this book is badly written, and I, personally therefore did not like it, many fans and readers consider the ideas expressed in a book to take pride of place over the literary merit. To those unfortunates, I recommend this book.

Graham Hall

FOUNDATION by Isaac Asimov (183 pages)

FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE by Isaac Asimov (166 pages)

SECOND FOUNDATION by Isaac Asimov (179 pages)

All three published by PANTHER at 3/6 each.

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At last, for the first time in Britain, all three of the 'Foundation' books are available at the same time.

The 'Foundation' trilogy is probably the prime example of 'straight' science fiction published to date. No other book can compare with the magnificent scope that this series offers. For anyone who has not yet read all three parts I heartily recommend them.

Briefly, FOUNDATION tells how Hari Seldon, through his own science of psychohistory, discovers that the Galactic Empire is decaying and that its decline will leave the Galaxy in a state of anarchy for thirty thousand years before another Empire is formed. He sets up two Foundations 'at opposite ends of the Galaxy'; the location of the first being public knowledge, the location of the other, the Second Foundation, being known only to Seldon. Seldon's Plan is that these two Foundations, after a number of crises, will join together to form the Second Empire after a lapse of only one thousand years. FOUNDATION tells of the first two hundred years on the First Foundation.

FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE carries the history forward another hundred years during which time the whole Plan is threatened by The Mule - a being with mutant powers and therefore an unforeseen factor by Seldon. The Mule builds up his army and his Empire over the period of a few years by conquering the remnants of the Old Empire. He finally succeeds in beating the Foundation and Seldon's Plan - now partly ruined - is entirely dependant on the Second Foundation, the existence of which is very doubtful.

In the third and final book, the members of the beaten Foundation carry out their search for the Second Foundation and not until the very last few pages is the location revealed.

Panther have produced these three books in uniform volumes to the other Asimov books they have published recently, the covers of these three, especially the one on FOUNDATION, being even better than any before.

RGF

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON by H G Wells

Published by FONTANA at 3/6. 241 pages

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Almost every authority agrees there's no life on the Moon. No air. No water. No birds, bees or butterflies. Just an arid landscape pocked with craters, and maybe a load of ash. And the latest American Moonshot somewhat abets this opinion.

But they're not kidding me. I've just read this book - and old Bertie knew a thing or two about the Moon among other things. Here's a sample of one of his descriptions of a Lunar



landscape:-

"All about us on the sunlit slopes frothed and swayed the darting shrubs, the swelling cactus, the creeping lichens, and wherever the shade remained the snowdrifts lingered. North, south, east and west spread an identical monotony of unfamiliar forms."

So much for the local flora. In due course, Mooncalves are seen by the two travellers in the story, Mr Cavor and Mr Bedford. Then they contact the Selenites, or Moonies - the huge highly organised insect-men of the Moon. Mr Bedford, the unscrupulous businessman, has a short way with Moonies who try to thwart him - and it is left to the less worldly scientist, Cavor, to make intellectual contact with these creatures.

The account of the initial communications between an Earthman and aliens is one of the most convincing I have read. And what amazing creatures they are - Bertie was not afraid to describe a bug-eyed monster:-

"Everywhere faces stared at me - blank, chitinous gapes and masks, eyes peering over tremendous olfactory developments, eyes beneath monstrous forehead plates; an undergrowth of smaller creatures dodged and yelped, and helmet faces poised on sinuous, long-jointed necks appeared craning over shoulders and beneath armpits."

It is a thrilling story to read, with a lot of truth amid the fantasy - and no lack of humour. But nowhere, unless I inadvertently skipped several pages, is there any mention of the attractive young lady shown on the cover. I'm not grouching, mind. If they want to put pin-up girls on the cover - that's OK by me.

Columbia Pictures, I understand, have recently made a film with the same title. The film I haven't seen but the book is well worth the money.

W T Webb

IT WAS THE DAY OF THE ROBOT by Frank Belknap Long

Published by DOBSON at 15/-.

134 pages

Set three hundred years in the future, this is the story of a man's search for a wife. Denied a Marriage Privilege by the electron-microscopic Roentgen-ray computer, John Tabor decides to obtain a mate illegally, this by having an android custom built. The purchase at an emotional therapy shop is interrupted by a Security Police raid and Tabor and Claire, his android wife, escape to the ruined city which stands close to their settlement's limits. They are pursued by the police and have to resort to mingling with the crowds at the sadistic bicycle races which, as a spectator-participant sport, compare well with the sanguinary contests of the Roman Empire. Tabor is compelled to take part in the games and emerges victorious, eluding the police once again to rejoin Claire in the ruins where he meets an underground organisation which helps him to escape to 'Venus Base'.

There is much which is basically inferior in this novel. The style is a mixture of familiarity and the stilted, for example:-

"Out of the mouths of babes a little wisdom sometimes comes

and it's just as true with the blunt, crudely outspoken types. Purely by accident a man like that can hit the nail so squarely on the head that you have to admire him a little, if only because there is more than a trace of forthright bluntness in all of us that is wholly on the coarse side. It's one way of giving that part of yourself that pat on the back."

The description is vague, particularly in explaining the reasons behind actions and in accounting for the distances between locations. There are also several question marks in the mind of the reader which remain at the end of the novel. Why, for example, doesn't Tabor employ his telepathic powers to discover which of his two female companions is an android? (If I'm giving away the novel's punch line forgive me, but you're hardly going to worry anyway). The characters are as well-drawn as a two year old's house - formal, conventional and utterly cardboard. Indeed, the incidental characters are described by such original and revealing handles as 'Skin-and-Bones', 'Ugly Face' and 'Giant Size'. Also, the American spelling in the book (hardly the fault of the author) does nothing towards endearing me to this novel.

IT WAS THE DAY OF THE ROBOT was expanded from the short story "Made to Order". From the dust jacket's blurb, "Thus begins this major science fiction novel in the tradition of Huxley and Orwell" one is inclined to expect a novel which is worthwhile in every aspect, not the least of which is social commentary. Absolute disappointment results here. I have no recollection of reading any of Long's work previously and I can't forget this one too soon.

Ron Bennett

THE TERMINAL BEACH by J G Ballard

Published by GOLLANCZ at 18/-. 215 pages

"He is one of the brightest new stars in post-war fiction!" This brilliantly original cover-blurb, attributed to Kingsley Amis, doesn't do Ballard justice. Drawing a line through the twelve stories in this collection, he is nearer the supernova class (Frequency of supernovae: less than 1% of all stars). His stories have a high professional polish that not many writers in any field attain. Ballard is evidently primarily interested in the development of ideas and their subsequent effect, for his characters, almost without exception extremely functional and unsympathetic, are subordinated to his themes. His powerful and diverse imagination is given full and uninhibited scope in these stories. No acknowledgements are given.

"A Question of Re-entry" - set against a neatly sketched Amazonian background, this story concerns part of the search for the returned capsule and pilot of a lunar mission. Competently told with a predictable ending.

"The Drowned Giant" - rather a sad commentary on the cruel and blase reaction of homo sapiens to the washed-up body of a giant, whose dimensions I'd venture to say were impossible. Ballard has

said that accuracy is the last refuge of the unimaginative. So that lets him out! His treatment, however, illustrates his point and is, therefore, satisfying.

"End Game" - the NEW WORLDS (Mark 1) story of crime and punishment in a totalitarian state was well worth rereading and points the frightening helplessness of even a powerful individual when pitted against The State.

"The Illuminated Man" - I found this story (latterly expanded into EQUINOX) fascinating, not so much for its basic idea of a crystalline 'death' overtaking the Universe, as for the bewildering variety of images Ballard uses to describe the effects. Reminded me of Ray Bradbury on a binge!

"The Reptile Enclosure" - a nasty little story. Inherited reflexes, perhaps aeons-old, stimulated by infra-red light from an Echo satellite, lead to what might eventually be the destiny of the human race and not merely the fate of a multitude of unlucky sun-seekers.

"The Delta at Sunset" - ye olde eternal triangle; well written but weary tale of three archaeologists, a husband and wife and the male assistant who might or might not be the real snake among all the injured senior archaeologist's hallucinatory ones. Venom anyone?

"The Terminal Beach" - if I could see into Ballard's mind, perhaps I could begin to explain this one. Denied that, all I can say is that the story bored me stiff. I don't pretend to understand it (nor could a few others I know) and I can't do it justice, if it deserves any. A poll on how many readers who did understand it would be illuminating.

"Deep end" - now this I liked, folks. No wall-eyed blocks or flies that make like Hamlet. A pleasant, nostalgic story of Earth when her seas have gone and her children are deserting her for other worlds. Skillfully bought out, among other things, is the mystifying callousness of the young.

"The Volcano Dances" - one of the 'slice-of-life' stories in the collection. Hard to review, this type of story, which is revelatory of some trait in human motivation, as this one certainly is. Read it and enjoy it.

"Billeenium" - an ironical tale of the future, with everyone living in not enough space to swing that ill-used tabby. Those of you who read NEW WORLDS before it fell from grace will know this story. I found the ending still amusing on the re-read.

"The Gioconda of the Twilight Noon" - Ballard explores the realm of the blind in this lovely, evocative story. 'Slice-of-life' again and beautifully done.

"The Lost Leonardo" - the final story deals with an art theft with a difference. To say more would be to spoil it for you. This, with some of the other stories, you'll want to re-read again and that, for me, is the real test of enduring literature.

Buy this one; you'll get fed up borrowing it.

Donald Malcolm



REVOLT IN 2100 by Robert A Heinlein

Published by GOLLANCZ at 16/- . 297 pages

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This volume contains three stories - one novel and two short stories. They are all from Heinlein's earliest and, many would say, best years as a science fiction author. The novel, "If This Goes On - ", pictures the United States of the future under the rule of a religious dictator and deals with the planning and carrying out of a revolution against this regime through the medium of a religious secret society. Heinlein's attention to detail and fast paced narrative carry the reader along so well that it is the sort of story that is usually finished at a sitting. The arguable ethical standards of Heinlein's more recent work are not forced on the reader though with hindsight it is possible to find occasional traces of his later philosophy.

The two short stories are "Coventry" and "Misfit". "Coventry" tells of a citizen who rebels against his safe and sane society and chooses to be sent to Coventry, a region of the United States set aside for such rebels to live as they wish without the security or safeguards of civilisation. Coventry turns out to be quite different from the hero's ideal of a haven for rugged individualists. Also an excellent story.

"Misfit" is the slight story of Libby, a natural mathematician, and how he made good. It is quite readable, though not up to the standard of the other two stories in the book.

All three stories come from Heinlein's 'Future History' series and originally appeared in Astounding SF way back in 1939 and 1940. As I am away from my back-issue files at the moment, I cannot be quite sure, but I think there have been only minor changes made in the stories to modernise the technical terminology.

This is a worthy addition to Gollancz's excellent SF series and I recommend it highly to BSFA members.

Ian McAulay

GOLDEN BLOOD by Jack Williamson

Published by LANCER at 50¢

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The credits on the flyleaf of this book give it as copyright 1933, and that's the sort of taste it has - that of a leftover from the early days of fantasy. And not one of the best either. The setting is the Arabian empty quarter, the Rub' Al Khali, wherein is situated the city of Anz overflowing with gold. Naturally our hero, Price Durand, is after the gold. Mr Durand is, incidentally, badly named - I kept on thinking of him as Prince Durand - a minor irritation no doubt but annoying all the same. Durand is the leader of the Secret Legion composed of World War 1 veterans. Williamson seems rather fond of Legions presumably because it gives him a good excuse for a great deal of mutual slaughter without having to harm any of the major characters.

One of the secrets of the city of Anz is a process whereby people may be made immortal by infusing them with a form of volatile

gold. Way back, this had been taken advantage of by a man, Malika, and a woman, Vekyra, and also a snake and a tiger; snake for him and tiger for her. These two had clashed in a very complicated manner with the King of Anz, one Iru and his slave girl-friend Aysa. Iru and Aysa die and Malika and Vekyra settle down to wait and hate each other. As it turns out, Price is the spitting image, and hence the reincarnation of Iru. He rescues an Arab girl called Aysa from a fate worse than something or other at the hands of some of his Legion, and from then on the dustup picks up from where it left off umpteen years ago.

From there on it gets predictable - Numerous Arabs and all the members of the Secret Legion get theirs, including the only other American, one Sam Sorrow, who dies helping Price, of course. In due sequence, Snake, Tiger, Vekyra and Malika also get theirs. Price gets the girl and they exit into the sunset.

It's a great pity Lancer had to pick such third-rate Williamson to reprint when there is so much better stuff to turn to. Don't bother.

Jim Groves

NEW WRITINGS IN SF 1 edited by John Carnell

Published by DOBSON at 16/- . 184 pages

This collection of five stories is the first in a series to be called NEW WRITINGS IN SF. The editor, John Carnell, writes in the foreward, "...is a radical departure in the field of the science fiction short story". In this, the first volume, this aim is not achieved. The stories are new, yes, but the plots and the characters are not. In only one story did the feeling of "I've been here before" leave me.

The first story, "Key to Chaos" by Edward Mackin is a Hek Belov epic, and although the plot is interesting enough, the story jumps about a bit. Hek Belov meets an inventor who claims he has made an 'id-scope'. It turns out that the 'id-scope' is a fake, and so Belov throws together a computer that 'taps the source of all primal matter' (the reviewer's translation). It is a nicely contrived story, but as I have said - I've read it before.

The second story is "Two's Company" by John Rankine. This story is written with much ado about little. The story goes....a man and a beautiful, but cold, woman are in an isolated outpost on a distant planet (they are scientists who control atmosphere-making equipment). The man desires the woman but cannot get her interested. In order to make some repairs to a piece of machinery, they have to go out onto the planet's surface and after a while their helicopter crashes. That is the first part of the story; the other half is spent on their frantic race against the oncoming frigid night.

The best story, the one mentioned above, is Brian Aldiss's "Man on Bridge". It has overtones of Orwell's 1984 but has not got the same impact. This is because the State has not taken over the whole population - it has only put the 'C's' (ie - the Cerebrals) into protective custody. This is to protect them against the 'Proles' (the proletariat). The story is written in a cryptic, first-personal style, in short sentences. It tells of a lobotomy

operation that makes him into a new man - a superman. It eludes me how an operation that removes part of a man, is supposed to more than a man.

. Fourth in this collection is "Haggard Honeymoon" which is written by Joseph Green and James Wellert. The 'Haggard' in the title refers to a meteorite that is being mined for its uranium content. The action of the story takes place on a planet called Canopus, where the meteorite was found. The miners are young newly-weds who are on their honeymoon, picked because young newly-weds are somehow more immune to an alien influence which affects men's minds. After about six months, the men's dreams begin to be invaded by some alien influence which eventually drives the men insane. The build-up to the discovery of how this happens is well done, but the lame, almost apologetic, way in which the Earthmen's problem is solved tends to spoil the whole effect.

One of the easiest stories to write is, I reckon, the sort that takes a mediæval court culture and transfers it to some distant future. There, you embellish it with ray-guns, matter transmitters and the like, throw in the odd court intrigue, and there you have it - a futuristic romance. In the last story of this book, entitled "The Sea's Furthest End" by Damien Broderick, there is just such a plot. It is improved somewhat by the interpolation of some chess moves by some Metaphysical entity, which were, I suppose, meant to be the Being's manipulation of the hero's moves. But they only serve to confuse the issue. The final, unexplainable ending of the story and the story's universe left me wondering 'what the....? What happened?'.

On the whole, I enjoyed reading the book but as I said before, it is NOT a 'radical departure in the field of the science fiction short story'.

Charles Winstone

## MAGAZINE REVIEWS

In the last issue, reviews of the current magazines were printed. Unfortunately, they won't be appearing again. When it was suggested by John Kemp, it seemed a good idea but looking at it now I've had second thoughts. To run reviews of all the current magazines would take up more space than can be afforded (at the present, anyway). It would be unfair to run reviews of only a few of the magazines due to the fact that no publishers send review copies and we have to rely on readers reviewing their own personal copies. It may be possible to obtain review copies of the two British magazines - NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY and if we do, then the reviews will appear in VECTOR.

For those interested, I have some details of the first two issues of the American magazine GAMMA which appeared at the end of last year. This information was supplied by Frank Barron.

GAMMA is a new scientification/fantasy magazine published quarterly by Star Press Inc., 10523 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, California, USA. Editor - Charles E Fritch. Exec. Editor - Jack Matcha. Managing Editor - William F Nolan. Cover art - Morris Scott Dollens. No interior artwork in the first issue but there is a black and white art portfolio by Burt Shomberg in the second issue.



The magazine is size 7.5/8" x 5 1/4" approx. and the interior is vaguely reminiscent of FANTASTIC UNIVERSE magazine of the last decade. Contents of the first issue are:-

"Mourning Song" by Charles Beaumont  
 "Crimes Against Passion" by Fritz Leiber  
 "Time in Thy Flight" by Ray Bradbury  
 "The Vengeance of Mitocris" by Thomas Lanier Williams (reprint from WEIRD TALES August 1928)  
 "Itself!" by A E van Vogt  
 "Venus Plus Three" by Charles E Fritch  
 "A Message from Morj" by Ray Russell  
 "To Serve the Ship" by William F Nolan  
 "The Freeway" by George Clayton Johnson  
 "One Night Stand" by Herbert A Simmons  
 "As Holy and Enchanted" by Kris Neville  
 "Shade of Day" by John Tomerlin  
 "The Girl Who Wasn't There" by Forrest J Ackerman  
 "Death in Mexico" by Ray Bradbury (a poem)  
 "Crescendo" by Richard Matheson  
 "The GAMMA interview" with Rod Serling

The contents of the second issue:-

"The Granny Woman" by Dorothy B Hughes  
 "The Old College Try" by Robert Bloch  
 "Michael" by Francesca Marques  
 "Deux ex Machina" by Richard Matheson  
 "The Kid Learns" by William Faulkner  
 "King's Jester" by Jack Matcha  
 "Here's Sport Indeed!" by William Shakespeare (a poem made up of lines from Shakespeare's works by Ib Melchior)  
 "The Undiscovered Country" by William F Temple  
 "Castaway" by Charles E Fritch  
 "Something in the Earth" by Charles Beaumont  
 "I'm Only Lonesome When I'm Lonely" by William F Nolan  
 "Sombra Y Sol" by Ray Bradbury  
 "The GAMMA interview" with Robert Sheckley

Each issue contains 128 pages and is priced at 50¢. Subscriptions are quoted as \$2.75 for 6 issues or \$5.00 for 12. Anyone interested in further details should write to GAMMA, Star Press Inc., Suite 205, 10523 Burbank Boulevard, North Hollywood, California, USA.

### AMERICAN BOOK RELEASES

ASTOUNDING TALES OF SPACE AND TIME edited by John W Campbell (Berkeley 50¢)  
 SPECTRUM 2 edited by Amis and Conquest (Berkeley 50¢)  
 CLOSE TO CRITICAL - Hal Clement (Ballantine 50¢)  
 PAIL OF AIR - Fritz Leiber (Ballantine 50¢)  
 DAY THE OCEANS OVERFLOWED - Charles L Fontenay (Monarch 40¢)  
 MR GEORGE AND OTHER CDD PERSONS edited by August Derleth (Belmont 50¢)  
 GHOSTS OF MANACLE - Charles G Finney (Pyramid 50¢)  
 TIME TUNNEL - Murray Leinster (Pyramid 50¢)

TOMORROW X 4 edited by Damon Knight (Gold Medal 50¢)  
 200,000,000 AD - A E van Vogt (Paperback Library 50¢)  
 THE NAKED SUN - Isaac Asimov (Lancer 50¢)  
 TRANSIT - Edmund Cooper (Lancer 50¢)  
 WEIRD TALES edited by Leo Margulies (Pyramid 50¢)  
 THE PORT OF PERIL - Otis Adelbert Kline (Ace 40¢)  
 THE WORLD OF NULL-A - A E van Vogt (Ace 40¢)  
 GULLIVER OF MARS - Edwin L Arnold (Ace 40¢)  
 VALLEY OF THE FLAME - Henry Kuttner (Ace 40¢)  
 THE ARSENAL OF MIRACLES - Gardner F Fox/ENDLESS SHADOW - John  
 Brunner (Ace 40¢)  
 THE SIMULCRA - Philip K Dick (Ace 40¢)  
 THE BURNING WORLD - J G Ballard (Berkeley 50¢)  
 BATTLE FOR THE STARS - Edmond Hamilton (Paperback Library 50¢)  
 THE SURLY SULLEN BELL - Eric Frank Russell (Paperback Lib. 50¢)  
 APOLLO AT GO - Jeff Sutton (Popular Library 50¢)  
 FRENCH SF edited by Damon Knight (Bantam 40¢)

### BRITISH BOOK RELEASES

DRUNKARD'S WALK - Frederik Pohl (T&P import, Ballantine 2/6 - Aug)  
 DIMENSION 4 edited by Groff Conklin (T&P imp. Pyramid 2/6 - Aug)  
 BEST FROM F&SF: 9th SERIES edited by R P Mills (Panther 3/6 - Sep)  
 FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON - Jules Verne (Panther 3/6 - Sep)  
 BLACK DIAMONDS - Jules Verne (Panther 3/6 - Sep)  
 AND SO ENDS THE WORLD - Richard Pape (Panther reprint 3/6 - Sep)  
 THE 27TH DAY - John Mantley (Four Square reprint 3/6 - Sep)  
 TIME IS THE SIMPLEST THING - Clifford D Simak (Pan 3/6 - Nov)  
 EIGHT KEYS TO EDEN - Mark Clifton (Pan 3/6 - Jan 65)  
 SPECTRUM 2 edited by Amis & Conquest (Pan 5/- - Jan 65)  
 SATURDAY EVENING POST READER OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION  
 (Souvenir Press 25/-)

### MAGAZINE NEWS

F&SF October issue is an all-star edition - it contains "In What Cavern of the Deep" by Robert F Young, "The Fro" by Edmond Hamilton, "Purple Priestess of the Mad Moon" by Leigh Brackett and "Little Anton" by R Bretnor.  
 WORLDS OF TOMORROW August issue contains a short novel by Avram Davidson titled "Valentine's Planet. In the October issue there is a short novel, "Killer", by Robert Ray, supported by two novellettes - "The Long Way" by A Bertram Chandler and "The Kicksters" by J T McIntosh.  
 GALAXY October issue contains Gordon R Dickson's sequel to DORSAL (THE GENETIC GENERAL) called "Soldier, Ask Not" and also "Children of Night" by Philip K Dick.  
 NEW WORLDS 144 contains Lang Jones' "I Remember, Anita". About this story, the blurb says, "...sure to be one of 1954's most controversial tales...". This is an understatement. It's the most controversial tale - one of the best I've read for years! Incidentally, there is also the welcome return of interior artwork in this issue.

DONALD MALCOLM, 42 Garry Drive,  
Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland.



I was surprised to find my work being mentioned in Dave Busby's article ON 'FIRST CONTACTS'. There are only five PET stories, although THE WINDS OF TRUTH, on the same theme, could be included. Of the six, three had no aliens in them, while another (TWICE BITTEN) sported intelligent bees. In THE WINDS OF TRUTH and YORICK no dramatic 'first contact' takes place. If Dave checks the stories again, he'll see that the aliens are merely part of the background. So: they aren't 'first contact' stories. More of this presently. He says they aren't stories. Each story has a scientific background (which doesn't get in the way) and is a puzzle.

Perhaps Dave takes his tack because so much current SF has no science. The 'slice of life' type is evident, while some of the stories aren't even SF. Both types, with a few minor changes, could easily grace - I use the word loosely - the supposedly superior mainstream publications. Maybe Dave has gotten out of the way of reading science fiction.

He calls my stories "fictional dressing-up of various kinds of scientific oddities and curiosities - interesting maybe to the SF reader...." STOP! He said it himself: the SF reader is exactly the person I've been trying to interest. If I've done that, I'll be pleased and feel that I've contributed something to his entertainment and, perhaps, knowledge. I'm not bothered about any Mainstream Johnnie who, during a blackout, got his eyes unglued from the CORSET OPERA MONTHLY and spotted an SF magazine. As for the ideas being more suited to non-technical treatment (thanks for the compliment, Dave) the four medical subjects would have been beyond my competence, while even a pro astronomer would have had extreme difficulty in developing the astronomical ideas. What I could, and did, do was present the ideas in fictional form. With what measure of success is for others to judge. (I can say in my defence, m'lud, that TWICE BITTEN has been anthologised and that BEYOND THE REACH OF STORMS is going into a Penguin collection.)

I agree that the fiction part of SF is the more important. The trouble is this: I think that too many readers, misled by the SF-must-carry-a-message brigade, have credited the writers with always having Profound Purposes for producing their stories, and have come to expect it. Not me, mate!

I wrote for entertainment. All my stories have this as



their prime motive. However, if anyone wants purpose, I've tried to show, through the PET tales, that such things as laughter, hope and humanity exist. The trend of British SF made me hit the roof sideways (the phrase copyright of my Irish friend, Jim White). I have a deep streak of levity in me, and it had to show. I wasn't going to have my scientists 'scientificking', balling up the story, or kill off any of my characters in passages of purple prose. I intended them to come out on top - as I firmly believe the human race will. Okay, so I'm whistling at a funeral.....

Don't folks, take Dave's advice and even attempt to compare my stories with Joseph Green's, for it must be evident that there is not one solitary point of comparison; not in theme, philosophy, approach, style or anything he cares to name. Green's type of story isn't - and never could be - mine. His 'Refuge' chronicle (to use Dave's description) is truly on a 'first contact' theme.

Why didn't Dave mention the aliens in HOUSE OF LIGHTS, COMPLEX, THE STUFF OF DREAMS or (and what could be more alien?) the Creature from a hundred million years on in THE PATHFINDERS?

I rests me case.

And now to the rest of the issue. The Editor has worked hard and congratulations on a good issue. Ken Slater's column gave a lot of useful information, especially about BM services.

Charlie Platt! - consider yourself belted on the nose! That remark in your Anderson review, "...the more discriminating reader..." doesn't give we Poul Anderson fans any credit for objectivity. As I've remarked before, Anderson is my favourite American author - but I don't think he's God.

/ Don, you're a traitor - I thought we'd agreed that Poul was God!!  
- RGP /

DAVE BUSBY  
33 Rances Lane  
Wokingham  
Berkshire

Sad to say, VECTOR 27 wasn't an issue I will remember for a long time. For a start, it was weak on hard articles - two only and neither of them very long - and long on regular features which, though enjoyable in themselves, shouldn't surely take up the majority of the issue. This isn't a new problem, of course, nearly all past VECTORS that I have read tend to be like this, but the latest issue and the one before that, seemed to be worse than usual. It seems to be a matter of achieving the right balance. Well, anyway, future issues look good.

There isn't even anything much in the Mail Response, usually a real hotbed of conflict or proto-conflict, now quite calm (before the storm, maybe?).

Reviews - so-so. Terry Jeeves was perhaps being too gentle with rubbish like CARDINAL OF THE STARS while NEW WORLDS 143 got flayed unnecessarily hard, I thought, with a review that tended to verge on the totally unfair.

Brian McCabe's cover was good, considerably better than MiK's surprising abomination on V 26, but if the title 'lettering' got any smaller it would have to be read with the aid of a microscope - or vanish altogether.

A quiet issue.

/ Last year, Archie Mercer changed VECTOR from a quarterly 30+ page

magazine to one having 20 pages appearing eight times a year. It is still supposed to have 20 pages. Try to imagine getting everything into that sized magazine. It's impossible - as I've found out. Witness the two issues I have edited to date, 34 and 40 pages respectively. By the time I've typed the Editorial, Mail Response, and the Book Reviews, there are about half a dozen pages left for an article, all the columns, listing of new members, adverts, etc. Therefore, I've resigned myself to spending more time producing a 30+ issue every time. Due to pressures on my spare time, it may be that you'll only get six issues of VECTOR instead of eight.

VECTOR is a journal and not an ordinary fanzine and so, I feel that it should have more departments and regular columns than general articles. It exists to give SF readers news about science fiction and its associated forms. Surely there are enough fanzines of varied policies to provide outlets for the 'hard' articles you talk of, fiction and what have you.

I hope this gives you some idea of my aims as Editor of VECTOR. If you don't like my policy, then I'm sorry, but from letters I've received the majority seem to like it - and this must be my yardstick. - RGP /

GRAHAM M HALL  
57 Church Street  
Tewkesbury  
Gloucestershire

An excellent VECTOR, let me say. Not sure I approve of the typed heading on the cover but I reckon Brian McCabe is Fandom's Hope for artwork. Plenty of meat in it too, so excuse me if I ramble a bit.

Dave Busby's article ON 'FIRST CONTACTS' should have been argument provoking, but it was not so - I agree too much with him. I can't imagine the human race as we know it, not getting awfully violent on our contact with aliens. Nor can I imagine the aliens accepting us - unless their psychology is so alien to absolutely exclude Xenophobia. This could happen quite easily, as far as my limited knowledge of psychology goes, if the aliens were asexual. A race of beings that reproduced singly would have no family/tribe connection and would therefore have a complete lack or minimisation of xenophobic instincts.

The human race is bound by this family/tribe relationship which is forced upon us by our clumsy, fun, heterosexual form of reproduction.

He builds his article well, and his arguments do fall logically into sequence. (I also agree that ANALOG is pretty useless at present).

Vic Hallett's VISION column is rather a contrast - KING KONG V GODZILLA came and went down here about two months ago - at least. Yet the other films he mentions are that unlikely to be seen down here for the next three years, so that the preview notes aren't worth wasting time reading.

GENERAL CHUNTERING makes a welcome return and I hope it continues for a long stretch.

I fail to see what Bert Lewis' article FILMS AND FANDOM has to do with fandom but it's a pretty good resume of SF films down the ages. I can't agree with his extolling THE BLOB while condemning I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE - both were equally laughable.

And I feel that THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS was extremely disappointing - definately not an SF film classic. Yet THE BIRDS is - and no mention whatsoever.

Ah! After Mik's illustration of Doc Peristyle, we know who he is! Quite obviously Archie Mercer with that beard - and that shirt may I add. I hasten to add that Doc was not supposed to take my first law of SF seriously. I copied it out of something called NEW MAPS OF BIRMINGHAM, or something.

Don Malcolm's contributions to the book review column are pretty darn good. Better than some of the reviewers in VECTOR in the past.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION looks like a page out of ZENITH....

/ We seem to be going back to the old, old question - "Who is Dr Peristyle". So far the main contender is Archie Mercer, followed by Jim Groves. As for the beard (and the shirt) - well, you never know, we may be trying to put you off the trail. It could be Archie, it could be Jim, it could be anybody really. I know who it is but I 'ain't sayin' - RGP/

IVOR R S LATTO  
16 Merryton Avenue  
Glasgow W 5

The lead article ON 'FIRST CONTACTS' started off very well and I was becoming quite engrossed when, unfortunately, halfway through he swung off to castigate SF writers for lack of imagination and general pot-boiling. Very

understandable and, I dare say, we all agree with him to some extent but not particularly relevant to this theme alone. His article would, I think, have been improved if he had stuck to his script and resisted the temptation to blast off.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION makes rather acedemic reading but it is the sort of feature which can build up into a very useful reference, and for this reason I hope it will continue.

THE VISUAL SIDE OF THINGS and FILMS AND FANDOM together took up more space than I think is equitable for what must be a minor SF outlet. Bert Lewis mentions a dozen or so films which he thinks are fine contributions to the field of SF in that medium; in how many years? Ten? An average of one point something per year. Even if one widened the field to include weird, occult or fantasy films, we would still have only about half-a-dozen worth seeing. So please, not too much of a good thing. Incidentally, in all this celluloid chat why no mention of the most important fantasy film of the moment - LORD OF THE FLIES.

GENERAL CHUNTERING: very readable, very informative, very welcome - rename it FIVE STAR GENERAL CHUNTERING.

DR PERISTYLE: still too much general waffling - I think he should stick to more matter-of-fact questions, or would that come under FOR YOUR INFORMATION? He was certainly frank enough about John W Campbell, on the current bandwagon - "let's all kick JWC & Analog, lads" - which seems very much virulent to have sprung from its supposed grievances. However, if it's his opinion I would no doubt fight to the death for his right to express it.

BOOK REVIEWS: nine pages is generosity indeed, and I was glad to see the two mags reviewed as well as the fanzines, but why the bumper bundle in this issue and not previously. Goodness knows

there is enough material to be reviewed and from my own experience of fans, no problem in getting someone to express an opinion - you have to fight them off in fact. Or is it more basic - money?

Some general points prompted partly by the letters. I'm glad the NOT-REVIEWS have gone - I'm not-sorry! Please don't include fiction in VECTOR - that's something we're never short of outside its covers. The comparative freedom from artwork in V 27 was welcome, and that which was included was of a somewhat better standard than normal. Forty pages in this issue is more than I'd hoped for - will this continue?

Finally, I would like, respectfully, to suggest that the magazine hasn't yet coalesced under its new editor - there would seem to be too much duplication; two articles on films, two people answering questions, two items (GENERAL CHUNTERING & BOOK RELEASES), dealing with forthcoming publications and of course, too few general articles. I hesitate to make the last point because I recognise that if there is such a deficiency, the fault lies with us; but although I am not averse to putting my pen to paper to produce something, which would no doubt be received with justified hilarity, after reading that Philip Harbottle is producing an eleven-part series on WORLDS OF SF and Jim England a nine-part series on CONCEPTS OF SF, the mind cringes before what could possibly lie outside that to write about.

This seems to have turned into a longer personal declaration than I had intended - no doubt a testimony to the quality of stimulation the mag as a whole evoked. Keep up the good work!

/ Quite a few points here so I'll deal with them in order. First, the two film articles. Being as Vic Hallett's column will be a regular thing, it made no difference which issue I put FILMS AND FANDOM in - there would still be two film features. So I decided to put it with the first VISUAL SIDE column in order to give the film column an extra boost. Also, starting with the next issue, Bert will be doing the film feature with Vic.

Book reviews - it is general practice to review books that have been sent by the publishers only. When I became Editor, I thought there had been a lack of book reviews so I wrote to all the publishers asking for review copies. The response was greater than I expected. I hope they keep on sending them - if they do then they will appear in VECTOR. The more review copies we get, the better it is as the copies, which are sent free incidentally, then go into the Library and this cuts down on expenses of the Library.

As I've just said, I'll try to keep up the 40 pages if I have the spare time.

As for the duplication of articles, well, there will be only one film column in future issues. Doc Peristyle and Jim Goves will continue (I hope) answering questions. Doc giving answers to questions that call for opinions and Jim answering questions that call for an accurate answer.

Those multi-part articles may never appear. Even if they are written there is no guarantee that I will accept them. So you (and anyone else) can still write articles on a not-so-big subject. In one part please!!! - RGP /



CHARLES PLATT  
8 Sollershott West  
Letchworth  
Herts

The cover was certainly an improvement on previous VECTOR covers, nicely cut on to stencil too. Keep after Brian McCabe.

This is just about the best VECTOR I have read. You have managed to do something which ZENITH has so far been on the verge of achieving: you have produced a magazine entirely devoted to SF that is interesting and readable all through; no boring catalogue of authors' work, no lists or not-reviews: honest interesting articles. Of course, a fanzine editor has little chance to select or commission his material; but no doubt the fact that you had taken over VECTOR with new ideas inspired the contributors to write and thus this VECTOR must in part owe its excellent contents to your editorship.

Dave Busby's FIRST CONTACTS article was good. Well written, interesting, detailed but not boring. I wish he'd sent it to me instead of VECTOR!

Of course, we all know that Peristyle is either Jim Groves or Ted Forsyth, now, but his column remains fairly interesting, even without the added interest of guessing who Peristyle is. It's nice to see the Dr giving out with some less guarded opinions though I disagree with him over John W Campbell. It's too easy to take an extremist view of an extremist, and dress it up with a little false psychology. Peristyle is plausible, but a little too pat and cut-and-dried. I prefer to think of Mr Campbell as someone fanatically interested in the betterment and advancement of the human race - along his lines of thought. (Not an unusual or queer characteristic) Mr Campbell happens to be in control of a widely read SF magazine and can therefore do more than most in the way of expounding his views. But just as time and again Lord Beaverbrook failed to affect public opinion with his extremist views in the Daily Express, so Campbell suffers from the fact that, while people read Analog's latest expose with interest, it affects their state of mind hardly at all. Certainly Campbell is to some extent fanatical over his beliefs, but fanatical in a simple way that doesn't need psychological motivations to explain him. He believes many scientific discoveries are every day being lost by mankind through the mechanism of present day scientific method and so he does his best to counteract the trend.

Vic Hallett writes a good film column. This is the sort of thing that VECTOR ought to contain. Ken Slater's chuntering suffers from too many dots, of course. They should be allowed to intrude only between different topics.

It is a shame that, having got review copies of books from publishers, you have to review them all. Four pages of reviews would have been the maximum for me. Perhaps three really good one-page reviews would be ideal; though with your generous margins and expanded type-face, I suppose it would work out at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pages per review. It's a pity your horrible machine wastes so much space.

The letter column remains interesting, as usual.

Well, congratulations on a fault free fanzine. I liked every feature I read.

/ Thanks for the praise, Charles - coming from you it is praise indeed. I only hope the majority of readers are as happy.

Humm? Ted Forsyth as well now. Any more wild guesses as to the identity of Doc. Even Ron Bennett in the latest SKYRACK puts in a new theory when he says "...the latest Dr Peristyle..." - RGP\_/

CLAYTON HAMLIN  
Southwest Harbor  
Maine  
USA

Would it be all right for a free-loader like myself who gets VECTOR without being a member (it's all right, folks, strictly legal) to make some comments on the last issue?

Dave Busby's article ON 'FIRST CONTACTS' makes what seems to be a reasonably valid point. At least, it does until you start examining it more closely. But examine his basic premises and you begin to change your mind. He ignores many a fine story which would invalidate his point. Where, for instance, is Weinbaum, the Martian and Venusian stories? Has he just overlooked Williamson's "With Folded Hands"? Many a van Vogt extravaganza should be considered - first contact stories galore among those. Among the recent ones, why not mention Leiber's THE WANDERER?

Yes, I'll be the first to admit that many a story of this nature is more than a trifle trivial. Even the well-known Leinster named "First Contact" offers the concept, but uses it mostly for a trick ending. It certainly is not examined in any depth. There are also innumerable hack stories better forgotten too. But after all, just try to name ANY basic plot of science fiction that isn't the same. It doesn't seem to stop the more talented author from presenting something new and worthy now and again. Surely Mr Busby doesn't expect a work of sheer genius in EVERY printed story?

In the end, the good Mr Busby falls into the same old trap. On the basis of insufficient data, especially by leaving out the stories that would make his point seem ridiculous, he reaches a totally unwarranted conclusion about the purposes of SF. How many times have we heard this self same complaint, that the purpose of SF is to present original ideas, examine unique philosophies, and, in essence, supposedly try to solve all the problems of the world. Well, it just isn't so. There may be authors around who have valuable thoughts to present to the readers, sometimes worthy of being said. Many of them also have the ability to say it entertainingly. But really, it doesn't especially matter; the authors don't say what is to be published, the publishers do that. Thank Heavens. They put up the money to print these stories, in magazines or books; by the same token they have the only right to say WHAT to publish. Only right. And they have just one purpose - to make money.

Argue as you will, the readers who pay for these books most often tend to get bored, even antagonistic, when some author tries tries to educate them. Education is fine, of course, if it is done entertainingly enough to make it relatively painless. But generally, the ones they rush to pay their money out for are the ones that give them pure and simple entertainment. It certainly was no accident that the most reprinted writer for years and years was Abe Merritt - he came out in one reissue after another and the end is not yet. But even he took a far distant second place when the enterprising publishers decided that the best way of all to make money and sell books was to give them the old reliable Edgar Rice Burroughs. Go ahead and complain - no one is going to listen.

These writers are much more fun, you see.

It simply would not do, to stop writing without taking a wild swing at Phil Harbottle in his suggestion that one of the big difficulties in getting contributions for VECTOR is because too many people are likely to pick holes in what they write. I suppose it's possible that there are people like that, who would like to insist that you accept what they write as complete and full truth, without question, but from the fans of my own acquaintance most of them are just the opposite. They write things and contribute them to fanzines because of the controversy they stir up, rather than in spite of it. What better way of learning to write competently than to just write and learn what you did wrong by the criticism it brings forth? Oh, you can get published in a fanzine easily enough; there are dozens of them just begging for material and they will accept just about anything. If ogoboo is all you want, no problem at all. Of course, if you are trying to sell it that is a different matter, a certain degree of precision is needed there and one of the best ways of getting it is to listen to your critics.

This is an interesting fanzine, sometimes a worthwhile and valuable one, and I give my thanks to all concerned for sending it.

PS Just incidentally, Dave, are you really sure that human nature makes such drastic changes as you seem to think there. Isn't it really that instead of changing their nature, the actual result is much more likely to be mere exaggeration of certain of those characteristics which are already there? It certainly looks so from here. Go ahead, tell me even one aspect of human nature that was not there, in much the same form too, a couple of thousand years ago. Or, if you prefer, any basic characteristic of those days which we don't have today, probably much the same. To put it simply, what NEW emotions have you heard of lately?

/ I see no reason at all, Clay, why you shouldn't send a letter of comment in. Especially when it's so interesting and readable. We're always glad to know what the N3F thinks of us. - RGP /

DON R SMITH  
228 Highan Lane  
Nuneaton  
Warwickshire

The cover was one of the most charming I've ever seen on a fan mag. The general standard of presentation all through is very high, and I must congratulate you and your assistants on producing an excellent effect. The only thing lacking - and this is something that only a maniac for perfection like Sam Youd was in the days of FANTAST, could find time and patience to produce on a typed stencil - is a straight right-hand edge. I wouldn't wish it on a dog....

I found the article ON 'FIRST CONTACTS' most interesting, and even agreed to some extent with the author's diatribes against SF authors who ignore the effect of an encounter with an extra-terrestrial civilisation on our own. I do not share his optimism in the changeability of human nature, nor agree with his facile extension of the 'Basic Law' that nothing remains static to the emotional characteristics of humanity. One of the more depressing lessons of history appears, to me, to be that human nature is still

as quarrelsome, emotionally unstable, and easily swayed by the shallowest of emotions today as it was in Homer's day. An alien of intelligence great enough to master human psychology could easily produce some apparent, superficial changes - any wartime demagogue has little difficulty in turning the rest of us into murderers and the accomplices of murderers - but I think that the change would only take the form, as in my example, of enlarging one small facet of our personalities at the expense of others.

I wish that Ken Slater hadn't seen fit to produce his often interesting information in the form of a high-pitched gabble that I find wearisome to peruse these days.

Glancing through Dr P, I note with amazement a reference to JWC as a failed SF writer. This is not only blasphemy, it is also not in accordance with the facts. When he stopped writing, Campbell, as Don Stuart, was both popular and to the front in the style of the times. I still think that "Forgetfulness" was a gem of an idea, and well presented in spite of some of the gaucheries towards the end. And even the Penton and Blake series in Thrilling Wonder, light-weight though they were, were eminently entertaining. It is a pity in a sense he became diverted into magazine editing, and even more into supporting lost causes - but he may grow out of the latter.

I note that Jim England is still somewhat sensitive about BASRA. I must tell him sometime that my perverse rejection of that society on the grounds that I was more of a professional than amateur had its justification when I was actually put in charge of the research department at work - and subsequent downfall when, fifteen months later, I was moved off the job! Phil Harbottle seems to be another sensitive soul, rubbing imaginary salt into genuine wounds inflicted by those who differ. I find my sympathy for him changing to impatience with his maudlin self-pity. Why doesn't he - and his correspondent - just throw down the gauntlet, produce more articles in the spirit "now pick holes in that one, if you can, you bastards!".

Enough, I'm getting into one of my moods again.

/ Terry Jeeves thought the only weak point in the issue was the extensive under-inking. Actually, it wasn't the inking that was at fault - it's this queer type-face that doesn't cut the stencils correctly. I'm hoping to get some stencils that are recommended for use with this type-face.

Roger Gilbert wants to know if there are any members living within 20 miles of him. His address is "Kimberley", Four Mile Bridge, Anglesey, N Wales. If there is anyone, perhaps they'd care to drop Roger a line.

Keith Otter has sent a letter continuing the 'dictionary definition' battle which I think is a bit too out-of-date to print.

Ian McAulay has jumped to the defence of his review of BASRA. Again I don't think the general membership is interested.

And finally, David J Orme is waiting for an article entitled 'Why Harry Harrison's "Why Ron Bennett's "Why Harry....." well, you can guess the rest. He'll have to wait for ever - I wouldn't touch an article with a title like that with a 40 foot barge pole!!! - RGP /



# EDITORIAL

This issue of VECTOR is somewhat late (approximately five weeks!). It is also somewhat thicker than intended (I vowed to myself, after the last issue, that this one would be the regulation size but.....) so I hope that I may be forgiven. Thank you. The next issue will (I hope) be slightly smaller - and more punctual.

Is there anyone who would like the job of BSFA Secretary? Unfortunately, the present Secretary, Rod Milner, has had to resign for personal reasons. If anyone would like to take this job on, will they please write to the Chairman, Ken Cheslin. When Rod took over at Easter he had to answer about a dozen enquiries each week. Recently, the BSFA placed an advertisement in the Science Fiction Book Club's monthly newsletter. Within the first three days after the advert appeared, Rod received over 60 enquiries! That was three weeks ago. To date he has had just over 100 enquiries. Because of this glut of enquiries, we have had to put Charles Winstone's address on the advert appearing this week in EXCHANGE & MART. So you can see that it is quite a time-consuming job. If there is anyone who would like this job and he or she is over 18 years of age will they please write to Ken Cheslin immediately.

The revised BSFA Constitution will be mailed out with the next VECTOR (just in case anyone's wondering what has happened to it.)

Joe Navin tells me that he is hoping to get the new Magazine List out shortly. With this he will probably be mailing out an art folio by Eddie Jones, illustrating Brian Aldiss' HCTHOUSE. This will be in the series "As I See It" which have previously appeared in BASTION. It will also contain notes by Brian Aldiss.

In the next VECTOR, there will be a report by Archie Mercer on the recent German Convention. This was intended for this issue but there is a photo-section being prepared by the Germans and unfortunately it will not be ready till the end of September. Beside that, I don't yet know what will be in the next issue as I'm right out of articles again - I haven't yet received any of the parts of the articles from Phil Harbottle or Jim England. So - start writing, please!

While on the subject of writing - letter writing this time - some people may be wondering why they haven't had replies to letters written to me. Sorry, but I haven't had time. As soon as this VECTOR is mailed out I'll get down to answering all the mail that has accumulated.

RGF

STOP PRESS+++STOP PRESS+++STOP PRESS+++STOP PRESS+++STOP PRESS++++++

VECTOR 28 has just been printed. It only awaits to be collated, stapled and mailed out. In the mail this morning I find two bits of news that are too important to wait for the next issue.

The first is that the 23rd World Science Fiction Convention will be held in London in August 1965.

Anyone wishing to join should send 21/- to: Jim Groves, 29 Latham Road, East Ham, London E 6, or they can send 15/- which will register them as members and pay the balance at the Convention. On receiving their money, Jim will send them their membership tickets and a copy of Progress Report No 1 in which they will find a form for booking their rooms at the hotel. All rates quoted on the form should have 10% Service Charge added to arrive at a true price.

Committee for the Convention is:

Chairman	Ella Parker
Secretary	Ethel Lindsay
Treasurer	Jim Groves
Publications	Peter Mabey
Programme	Ron Bennett

Secondly, the Hugo winners awarded at the recent 22nd World SF Convention in Oakland, California.

Best Novel: WAY STATION by Clifford D Simak (Previously appeared in Galaxy as "Here Gather the Stars" - Jun & Aug '63).

Best Short Fiction: "No Truce With Kings" by Poul Anderson (Mag of Fantasy and Science Fiction Jun '63).

Best Professional Magazine: ANALOG.

Best Professional Artist: Ed Emshwiller.

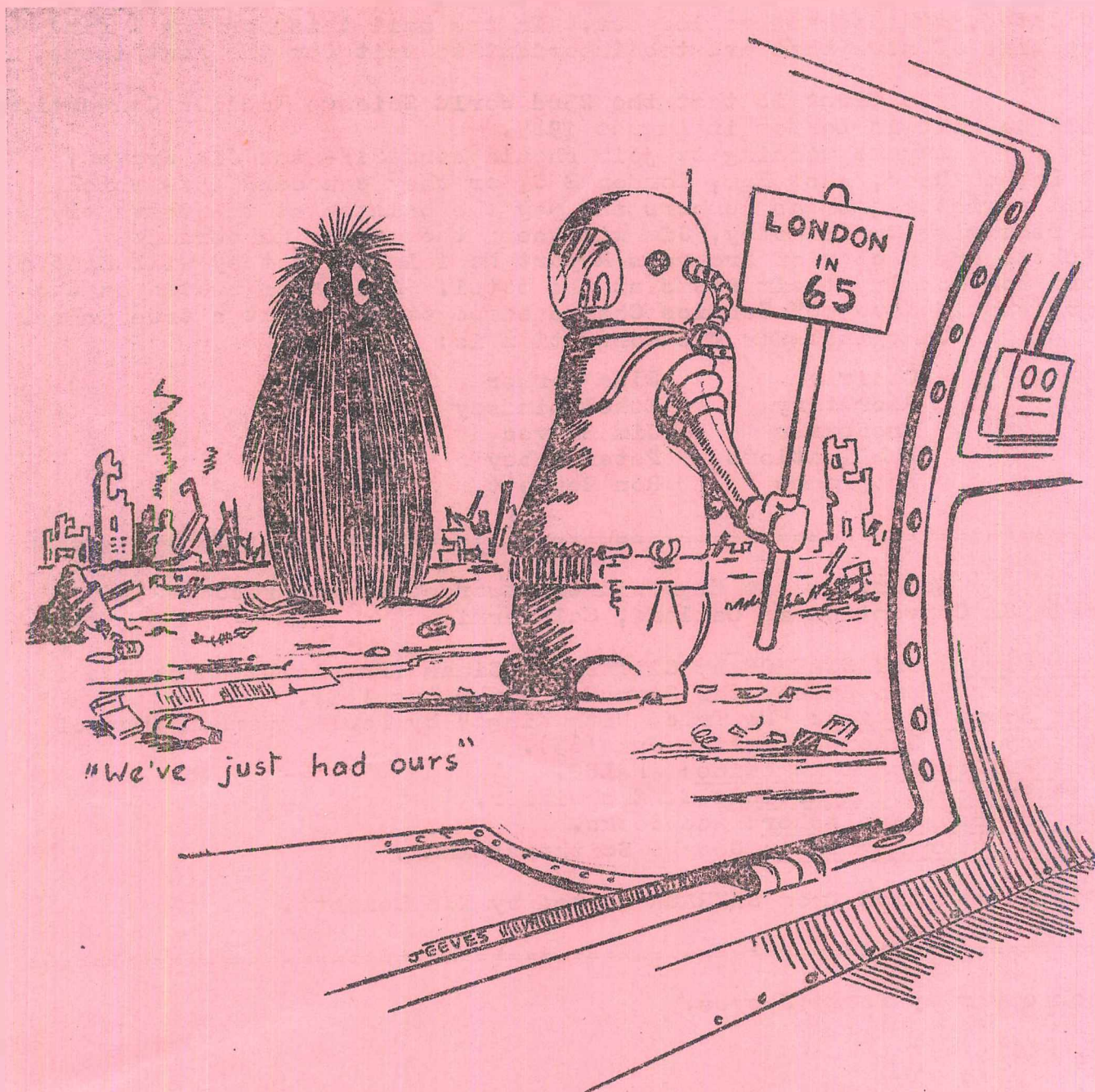
Best SF Book Publisher: Ace Books.

Best Amateur Magazine: George Scithers' AMRA.

This information from SKYRACK edited by Ron Bennett.

Back cover by Terry Jeeves.





"We've just had ours"