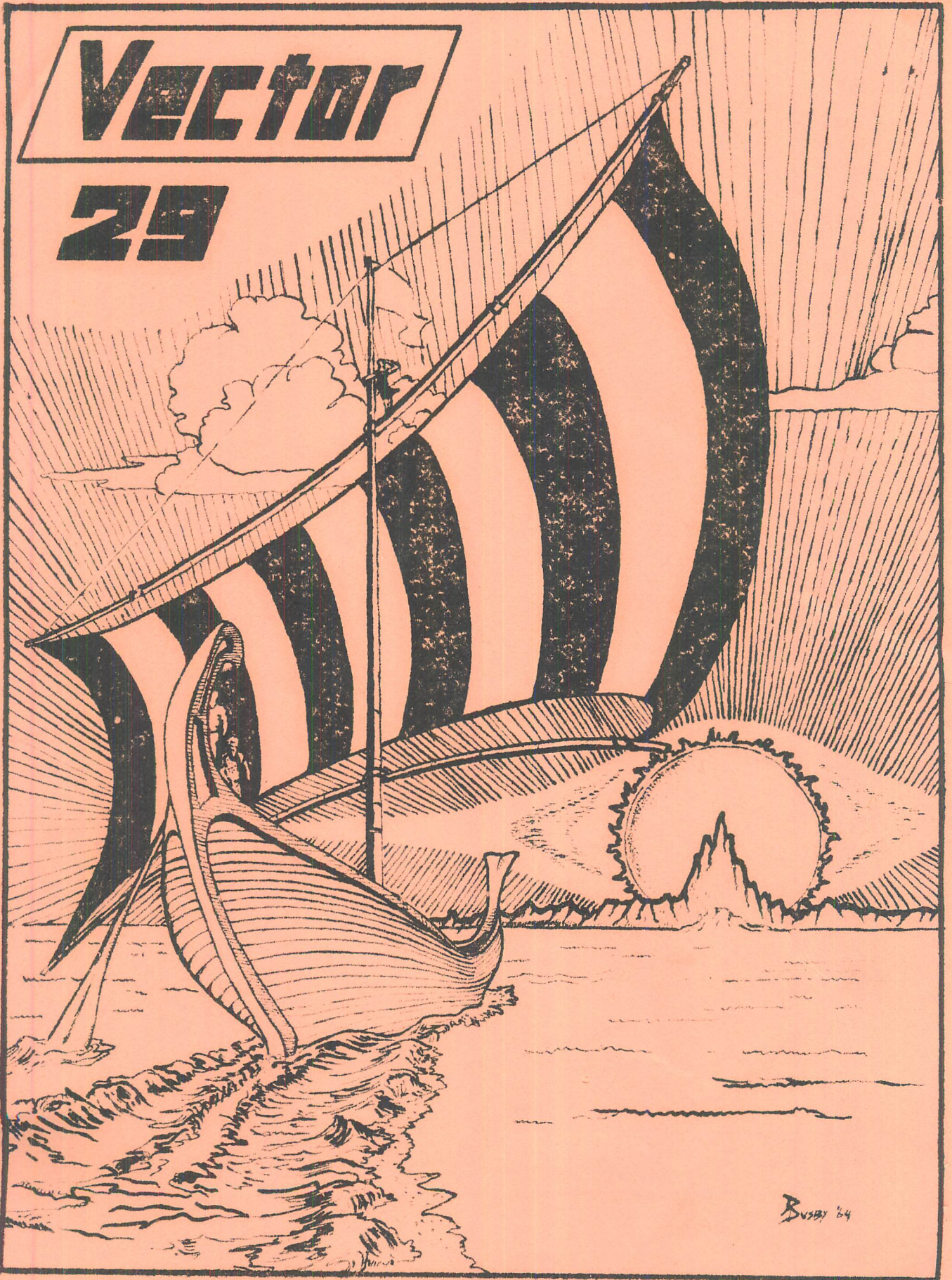


Vector

29



BUSBY '64

VECTOR

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

Number 29

November 1964

President

Chairman

Kenneth M F Cheslin
18 New Farm Road
Stourbridge, Worcs.

Vice-Chairman

Roy Kay
91 Craven Street
Birkenhead, Cheshire

Secretary

Graham J Bullock
14 Crompton Road
Tipton, Staffs.

Treasurer

Charles Winstone
71 George Road
Erdington, Birmingham 23

Publications Officer
and Editor

Roger G Peyton
77 Grayswood Park Road
Quinton, Birmingham 32

Librarian

Joe Navin
77 College Road North
Blundellsands
Liverpool 23

CONTENTS

Page

EDITORIAL 2

BSFA NOTICES. 3

MARQUARTSTEIN EQUILATERAL
by Archie Mercer. 4

A QUESTION OF CHARACTERISATION
by Dave Busby 13

DR PERISTYLE'S COLUMN 25

FOR YOUR INFORMATION by Jim Groves. . . 27

BOOK REVIEWS AND NEWS 29

THE MAIL RESPONSE 41

Art Credits:- Dave Busby (front cover);
John Cocks (back cover); Dick Howett (pg
50); Terry Jeeves (pgs 1,2,4,13,27,41);
Mike Higgs (pg 25); the Editor (cover
lettering, pg 29).

VECTOR is published eight times a year.
It is distributed free to members of the
British Science Fiction Association and
is not available to the general public.

All material, artwork, letters of comment
etc. for or concerning VECTOR should be
addressed to the Editor (address
opposite). Books and magazines for
review should be sent c/o the Librarian
(address opposite).

Copyright 1964 for the BSFA.

Next issue - mid-December. All letters
of comment, reviews, etc. should be sent
to me not later than December 10th.

EDITORIAL

On the contents page of this issue you will notice that no President is mentioned. In actual fact, the BSFA does not have a President at the moment. On his return to this country Brian Aldiss found that he was so out of touch with the BSFA that he thought it best if he resigned. This is an unwelcome blow to the Association as Brian has been a tremendous help to the various committees ever since the BSFA was born in 1958. In gratitude to Brian, the present committee is taking the liberty of making Brian a life member of the BSFA. I only hope that a new President can be found who will benefit the Association as much as Brian has.

You will also note the name and address of the new Secretary on the contents page. Doreen Parker and Charles Platt also offered to take on this post but it was considered an advantage to keep the committee as close to the Birmingham area as possible. Also if Graham gets into difficulties, he is very close to Rod Milner (not that we expect him to get into difficulties!).

There will, unfortunately, be no more Friday night meetings at Ella Parker's flat. The last meeting will be held on Friday, 18th December. A lot of people are going to miss these meetings which Ella has very kindly held at her home but there is a movement at the moment which is hoping to have a permanent place for meetings. More news of this in future issues.

With this issue you will find a copy of the new Constitution. In it you will find details of the new subscription rates. These increases have been found necessary in order that the BSFA can expand and have more publications and activities. The cash for producing bigger and, we hope, better VECTORS has got to come from somewhere! The Treasurer is now taking subscriptions for 1965 so will you please make sure that you send the correct amount. This affects all members up to and including member 519.

Last issue saw the last in the series MAGIC MOMENTS IN SF. If any members have ideas for this series, will they please send them to Phil Harbottle, 27 Cheshire Gardens, Wallsend-on-Tyne, Northumberland. Phil wants to continue this series, so if you have any punch-lines send them to Phil to fit the drawings to.

If you have any articles, stories or artwork - please send them to me. I've got a little thing called VECTOR to turn out and funnily enough I need something to put in future issues. So please let me have anything you've got - especially illos suitable for front and back covers. If I can get together about a dozen large illos (about two-thirds quarto size) it may be possible to produce a BSFA calendar, having a different illo for each month on stiff coloured card. So...artists - it's up to you.

Rog Peyton

I M P O R T A N T

Included with this issue of VECTOR you will find a form which we are asking all BSFA members, old and new, to complete. Why? These forms are now being sent to every new applicant for membership in the BSFA and we would like very much to be able to build up a complete reference file of these forms. They will help us considerably in finding out more about you, the individual member, and will, we hope, point the way for new ideas, new projects that will increase the value of your BSFA membership. In the future, we hope to bring about changes, introduce many improvements that we feel sure you will welcome. We can do this....BUT ONLY WITH YOUR CO-OPERATION AND YOUR SUPPORT. Please help us by filling out this form - skipping the sections that do not apply to you - and by posting it back to us. This makes little demand on your time, and the results can only benefit the BSFA as a whole. Please send your completed form to:-

BSFA MEMBERSHIP FORM, Roy Kay, 91 Craven Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire, England,

LIBRARY SERVICE - CHRISTMAS 1964

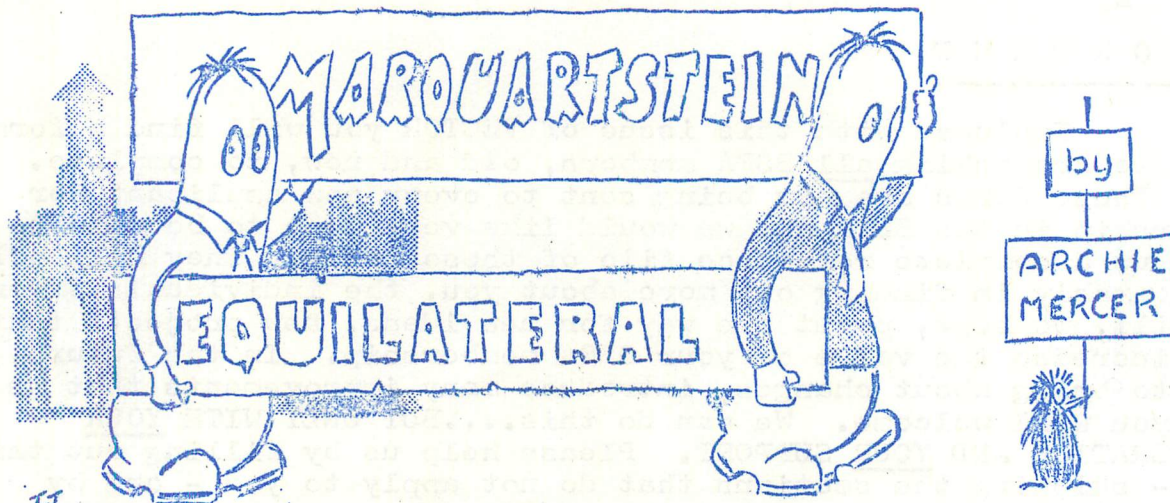
- 1) All requests for books for the Holiday should reach me by 16th December.
- 2) Please give alternative choices.
- 3) The Library Service will be suspended from 19th December to 29th December inclusive.

Joe Navin, Hon. Librarian.

WELCOMMITTEE

Attention Letter Writers! If you enjoy writing letters, the following will interest you. We need more members for the BSFA Welcomittee. All you are required to do is write friendly welcome letters to new members as they join the Association. It's not hard work; you'll seldom need to write more than a couple of letters in any one week. Your help would be appreciated in writing these letters and helping to make new members feel more at home. Contact Welco Chairman, Roy Kay at 91 Craven Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire.

A reminder that the Annual Science Fiction Convention will be held in Birmingham in 1965. Place - Imperial Hotel. Time - Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the Easter Holiday. Registration fee is 5/- which should be sent to Ken Cheslin, 18 New Farm Road, Stourbridge, Worcs. This entitles you to all literature issued prior to the Con and also the Convention Programme.



Thursday afternoon at the Ritterburg (or Knight's Castle - not to be confused with a soap of almost the same name), Marquartstein. A procession of assorted German and Austrian SF fans is toiling up the grand staircase carrying bits of bed. Jazzy music is coming over the loudspeaker, and half-way up the stairs some fan or other, a spring mattress balanced precariously on top of his head, is gaily twirling round and round in time to the music.

The above scene, from my first day there, epitomises for me the spirit of the Castlecon, 1964. Everybody friendly, everybody happy and plenty of science fiction lurking in the background for future reference. (Actually, I felt a trifle guilty at the time, because I was just on my way out to enjoy an afternoon lazing by and in the local river with two Germans and a Swedish girl - which is also typical of the Castlecon).

The Castle at Marquartstein, situated right on the edge of the Bavarian Alps overlooking the village, makes a perfect setting for a convention. Besides the great hall and the open courtyard, there is a plethora of large rooms that can be utilised in various ways. The castle (a genuine thousand-year-old relic, though with running water and electricity) normally functions as a hotel in a small way, but the rooms on the upper floors had been opened up and furnished with camp beds for sleeping 'semi-rough' for the occasion. In addition, a good many of the attendees (all who wanted it, in fact) were billeted in more formal-type lodgings in the village. The castle's proprietor was usually half drunk and very easy-going, which also helped. The setting combined with the friendliness of the convention-goers to produce a convention that will long be remembered.

For one thing, the Castlecon was a truly international convention. The 104 listed attendees came mainly from Western Germany (all parts) and Austria, but included representatives from Switzerland and Sweden besides sixteen adult British and three Americans. The latter trio included author George O Smith and his wife. The British contingent included such well-known BSFA personalities as Ethel Lindsay, Norman and Ina Shorrocks, Tony and Simone Walsh and Peter Mabey, besides artist Eddie Jones. The German contingent included a number of well-known German professionals such as Walter Ernsting and Helmut Mommers.

The more formal proceedings were conducted mainly in German and were therefore confined in effect to those who spoke the language. They included the annual business meetings of both the SF Club of Germany and of "Eurotopia", the latter a federation of German-language clubs. According to my local spy "Umlaut", the "Eurotopia" meeting discussed what to do with a financial surplus whilst the German club was more preoccupied with the problem of making their existing finances travel further. "Eurotopia" also decided to hold the 1965 German-speaking convention at Oberursel, near Frankfurt, either a week before or a week after the hoped-for London Worldcon, and the 1966 one in Vienna. The results of the local annual poll were announced, with van Vogt's WAR AGAINST THE RULL as the most popular foreign novel and THE BIRDS as the most popular film.

From "Umlaut" I also learn that German author Richard Koch, president of "Eurotopia", gave the opening speech on the subject of the extent to which automation and roboisation may well be carried, and foresaw possible dangers in the process. Dr Herbert W Francke, another German author, spoke later about the way in which non-specialised critics tend to treat SF, and found plenty of room for improvement. This speech was climaxed by the announcement that artist Mario Kwiat (to whom congratulations) had that day become the father of a baby girl.

The scheduled Guest of Honour, Polish author Stanislaw Lem, failed to turn up - whether due to lack of cooperation from the Polish or the West German government, or both, is not entirely clear. The featured film, the Czech IKARIE XB 1 (from a story by Lem), which drew much praise at last year's Triestival, did turn up, but not until after the convention had officially ended, when its arrival at the Munich customs was reported. A number of short films were shown, including American documentaries with a space-bias and a couple of jazz films for variety. There was also a slide-show of scenes from previous British conventions, with a bilingual commentary.

Although the bulk of the programme outlined above was, as I said, mostly for the German-speakers, a large number of the Continentals present spoke good English and the social and extra-curricular side of the convention gave occasion for some very enjoyable international conversations and discussions. There was a certain amount of linguistic confusion of course, some of it deliberate ("May I have your Autobahn?" - John Roles), but it only added to the fun. Many of those present expressed interest in attending the 1965 World Convention if London (as is hoped) gets it, which should make it the most genuinely 'World' Convention yet.

On various nights there was dancing in the courtyard and in the great hall, the latter being a fancy-dress affair with extra costumes provided from the local carnival wardrobe (I had a Viking helmet and a real axe.) A hoard of fireworks had been discovered somewhere in the remoter fastnesses of the castle, and George O Smith, who's about as technically versatile as his typical leading characters, pronounced them fit for use. At midnight on the fancy-dress night he started setting them off, with spectacular effect. Inasmuch as the occasion was a serious science fiction convention, I can only conclude that he was making a serious attempt to put

Marquartstein Castle into orbit. This eminently responsible undertaking was unfortunately foiled by the local constabulary, who stormed the fortifications to bring the unwelcome news that Bavaria had a law against putting castles into orbit except on New Year's Eve, so the attempt had to be abandoned.

The official programme lasted over the weekend - August Bank Holiday weekend over here - but many of the German speaking attendees stopped for a week or more. The bulk of the British contingent left early in the second week because of the travel-routine, taking with us memories of a really enjoyable international gathering. We only hope that next year we can come somewhere near matching it.

Archie Mercer

GUIDE TO PHOTO SUPPLEMENT

Page 1 - scenes of Marquartstein Castle.

Page 2 - top line; Axel Melhard (prominent fan from Vienna and editor of the semi-professional fanzine PIONEER), Hagen Zboron, Waldemar Kumming (President of the SCIENCE FICTION CLUB DEUTSCHLAND and editor of MUNICH ROUND UP), Engelbert Botschen, Mrs Franke, Dr Herbert W Franke (considered the best German SF author), Walter Ernsting: centre; Heinrich Arenz, Gary Klüpfel, Richard Koch (SF author and former President of the EUROTO-PIA): bottom; Winfried Scholz (SF author and former secretary of EUROTO-PIA), Juergen vom Scheidt (SF author and critic), Helmut Kaiser, Dr Karlheinz Paech, Hubert Strassl.

Page 3 - top line; the band playing during the fan-dress-party, Sigrid Schuhboeck: centre; Sonja Smerdel and Axel Melhard, Eddie Jones (as the monster with 1000 arms!), Gary Kluepfel: bottom; Annelies Mueller and Waldemar Kleinmair, Mario Kwiat (fan-artist) with Olga.

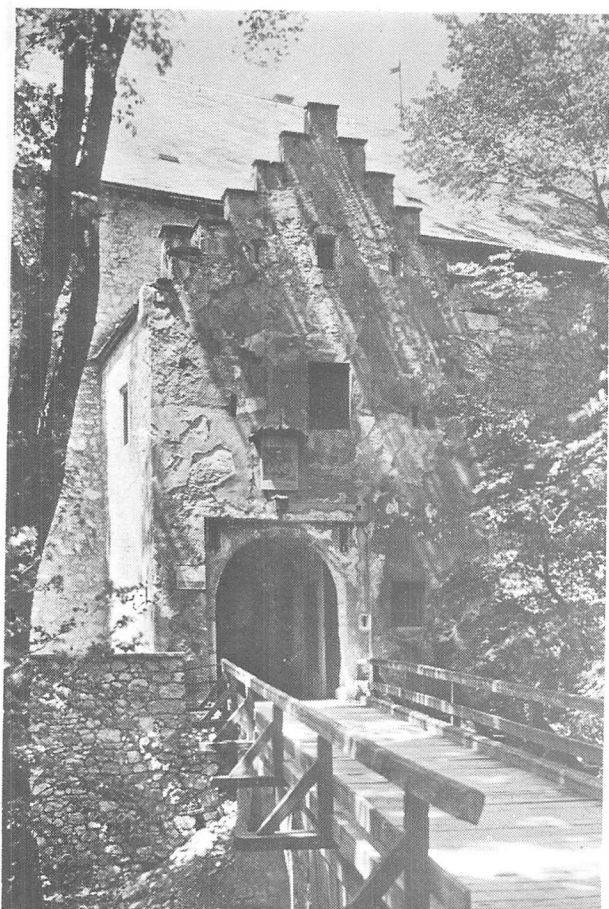
Page 4 - top line; Ursula Ernsting, Arthur Fulle: centre; Inge Raguse: bottom; Franz Ettl (organiser of the convention), Hubert Strassl, Axel Melhard, Eckhard Marwitz, Mrs Mueller, Mrs Arenz.

Page 5 - top line; Archie Mercer, the group from Beatlepool, Brian Burgess: centre; George O Smith (American SF author), Ethel Lindsay, Eddie Jones: bottom; John Roles, Tom Schlueck (organiser of the excursion of British fandom to Bavarian Hinterlands), Norman Shorrocks.

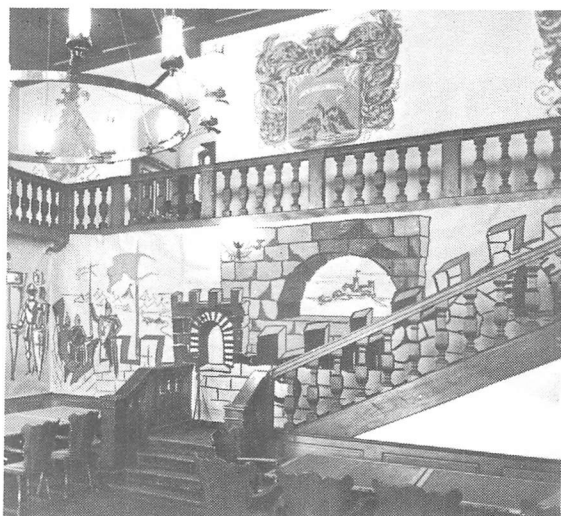
Photo credits to SPHAERENSTUDIO 238.

Design of the title page was by Klausgerd Berger and Tom Schlueck.

Thanks also to Waldemar Kumming for arranging the production of the Photo Supplement.



BURG CON

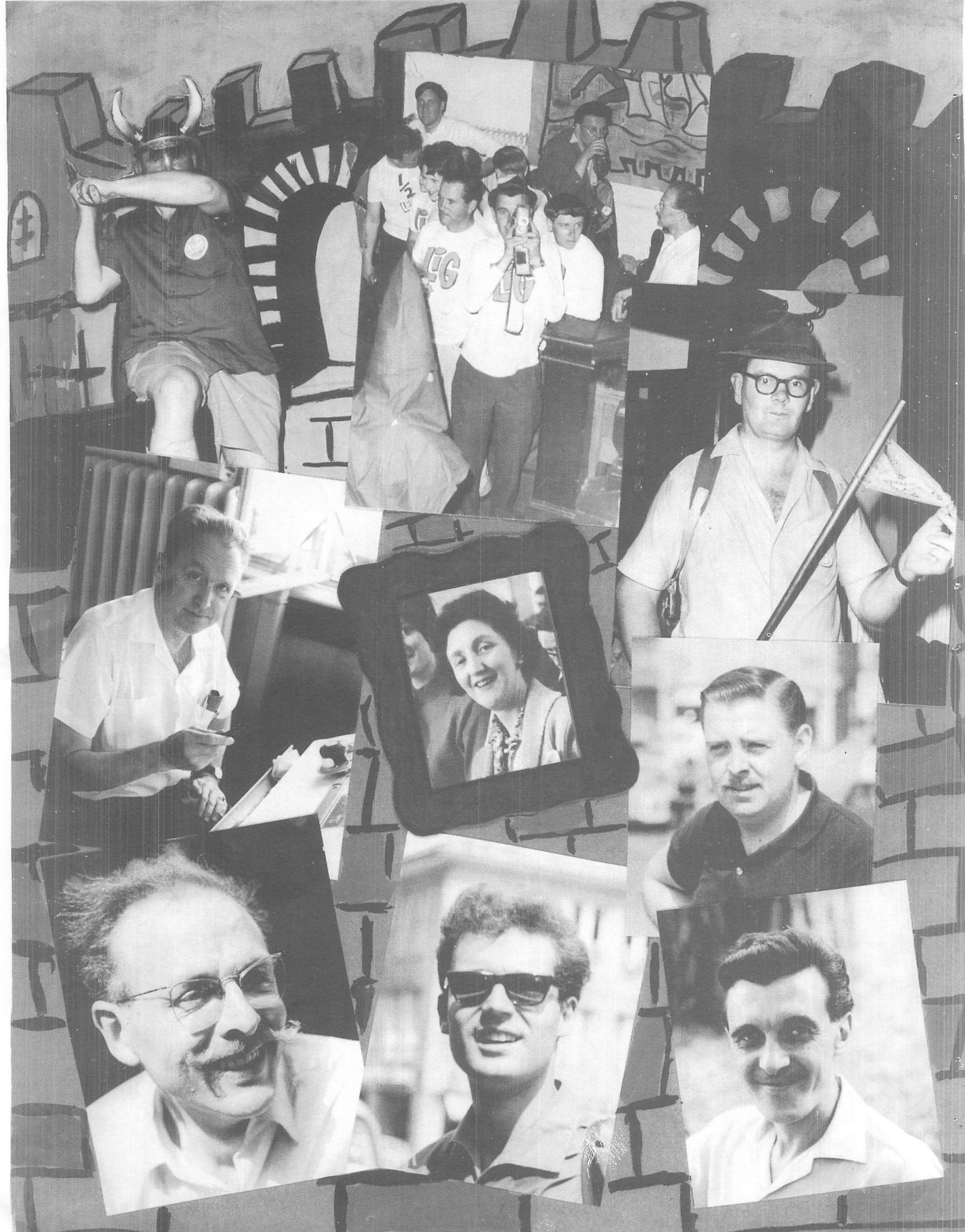


Europa - Con
1964
in
Marquartstein









A QUESTION OF CHARACTERISATION

by
DAVE BUSBY

Someone, not a hardened adherent of SF but an irregular and well-informed reader of the genre, was once asked what he thought one of the most significant things about SF was. The answer came unhesitatingly: "Its lack, on every level of the whole field, of any credible characterisation."

No self-respecting literary critic should ever deliver huge generalisations on any entire genre, though in point of fact they often do. Generalisation is something all branches of fiction that are minorities in a literary sense universally suffer from. Writers of romantic fiction desperately try to live down the 'maid meets duke equals wedding bells' image that the romantic story almost automatically conjures up while British Western writers crave the attention of the bookish establishment in the form of reviews in BOOKS AND BOOKMEN and so on. One of the most common and bitter complaints of the deeply committed SF reader is that the medium is too often the target of generalisations even from informed and friendly critical quarters. Yet even so more often than not the most case-hardened fan is perfectly willing to accept the statement that all SF lacks characterisations barring the inevitable exceptions. It is a rather unnerving experience to be given by a fan, an example of what he thinks is an exception to the rule - an example of well-characterised SF; the end result is that one concludes that many fans don't know good characterisation when they see it, that they don't even really know what characterisation is.

Most people, I feel, will admit that the generalisation that SF contains hardly any characterisation is more or less an adequate one, onerous though acceptance may be. Yet on the other hand many of the self same fans - those who would like to see their heroes come leaping to glowing, three-dimensional life, are quite willing to work the generalisation the other way. Some people, who desire to see a great development of character, feel that it is possible for the whole field, but one only has to examine the facts and the structure of SF to deny the possibilities of any such 'instant characterisation'.

A vast proportion of SF written is in the short story medium, yet still some people expect real, thinking and living

characters in them: "the only things lacking in this story were people" which comes from a fanzine review of magazine stories. Usually only a really good writer, writing ONLY about people in a short story, can make his characters credible in the restricting length of the average short story. For the SF writer, the problem would be many times worse, because he can't just write about people but has to squeeze in many, and often highly complex, elements to make his story SF. In the science fiction short story there isn't room for people and plot. Thus it can be said that some 65% of SF cannot contain any characterisation.

Having isolated an interesting phenomena, the next obvious step is to examine its cause - SF's lack of characterisation is certainly an interesting phenomena, but its cause even more so. Whatever one's position, either for or against, it is readily obvious that this 'lack' is something which is fundamental in character, an integral part of the whole structure of science fiction as we have accepted it for the last three and a half decades or so. To find the cause it is necessary to retrace our steps and enter into that murky region wherein lie the massed corps of definitions - definitions of what SF is. There can be little doubt that this ungeographical area is indeed murky, most assuredly dangerous, and into it we go armed with a map that only shows that 'here be Dragons'!

The most fierce dragon of all is, of course, that one which demands of the unwary traveller that terrible riddle: "What is SF?". No one has yet answered to the beast's satisfaction. However, my own definition won't be the answer to what it is but what I think SF believes itself to be. Thus, SF is 'The Uncommitted Fiction Field'. At least this is what we readers and fans fancy it to be.

SF deals in objectivity, (indeed it is objectivity), it hauls itself aloft and looks down and across the patterns below, and 'sees' them in their entirety. SF deals with Universes, with races and worlds, with societies and civilisations and the social mechanisms that create, run and destroy them. It 'sees' the whole picture, not just a part, but by this very distance and isolation from the subject it cannot hope to examine the detail that lies there - the individual, the things that power him/her. At most SF can only catch and hold the strongest and consequently the most crude emotions. Is it surprising that SF's interpretations of individual people are so naive and clumsy when it has only that vaporous wisps of data to work on? Should we expect more? Are we stupid if we do? Superficially, at least, the only thing the SF writer can do is create symbolic relationships - what Edmund Crispin calls 'matchstick men'. Here, the author is saying "These are us, as near as I can manage to make them". As individuals we are not supposed to take them seriously. Brett Young, All-American sociologist sweating out a native problem and member of the Intergalactic Organisation for Primitive Sentient Life, or Mark Bond, larconic agent for Solar Intelligence: we know that the sociologist isn't really Brett Young, or the spy Mark Bond - they are the cardboard creation that supply the dramatic incidence in a story of a genre that is devoted to the ideal of the Concept and Idea, rather than the mapping of the individual.

Basically, it is a case of either having our cake or eating it. Or is it basic?

The problem of enjoying the sight of that cake in front of us and feeling its weight in our stomach seems a very formidable one. The dilemma is rather like the astronomer, whose hobby is biology, wanting to see Arcturian microbes through his 200 inch telescope, yet still wants to be able to see the whole of the star at the same time. Perhaps the analogy is too pessimistic, but the fact is that it seems remarkably hard to see the minute detail without sacrificing the panoramic view of things that might be considered the most fundamental and important part of SF. No-one should be blamed for feeling that if such a sacrifice is made, science fiction will promptly cease to exist.

P Schuyler Miller in a review article ("Formula Stuff" - ANALOG August 1961) brought the whole problem down to essentials. From an interesting article emerged a suggestion, expressed for the first time in black and white, of an idea that has been floating around for years. Miller's 'Law' is really quite simple - and as a 'Law' it seems to have proved itself, so far, pretty constant. Here it is; "The grater complexity of the plot mechanism, of the 'gimmick', of the idea and concept that is represented in the SF elements of a story, the simpler will be the delineation of the human mechanics involved."and vice versa, of course. Van Vogt's 'wheels-within-wheels' stories represented by the Null-A series is a good instance of the workings of this law. These two novels are SF on its highest and most complicated levels of plot and situation complexity, but the characterisation of even the most important protagonist does not appear in any form at all.

On the other hand, as examples of opposites, we can cite Judith Merrill's THE TOMORROW PEOPLE, Wyndham's TROUBLE WITH LICHEN and Christopher's THE DEATH OF GRASS (NO BLADE OF GRASS) which focus on people to the almost complete subordination of the SF elements. In fact, the subordination, I feel, can be considered so complete that the latter two novels, at least, cease to be SF at all, along with such novels as Maine's THE DARKEST OF NIGHTS, THE TIDE WENT OUT, and Aldiss' THE MAIL RESPONSE (which the author doesn't consider SF anyway, though his American publishers did and so do a number of other people).

Brian Aldiss, in the introduction to his collection, THE AIRS OF EARTH, feels that SF is adequately characterised as it is, and the further underlying impression seems to be that any elaboration of the average kind of characterisation in SF is not only impossible, or near to it, but undesirable if it could happen. He states that we should not expect the interplay of human relations, when the main conflict supplied by SF is the interaction between homo saps, as a generalised race, and 'X the unknown'; there can be no room left for complicated character conflict. This, basically, is a restatement of the Law of Characterisation and the 'objective versus subjective' argument, earlier mentioned.

Is this true though? The indications are such from any detailed survey of the field, which the average fan can do unconsciously and as a matter of course. To argue a case against that

brought by Aldiss, demonstrated by the 'Law of Characterisation' and the other theory, one has to look and study the exceptions - and not just the exceptions like borderline and semi-SF novels such as THE TOMORROW PEOPLE, but the even more exceptional exceptions to Miller's Law. In other words, the task we have to set ourselves is to find a novel that is deeply committed science fiction and at the same time has good characterisation. Again it is necessary to ask a question: namely - does such a novel exist? Also, if one or more exists, can they indicate that such novels will only be the rare exceptions, or something that in theory could become a large and interesting feature of the science fiction landscape?

Not one of the most popular, but undoubtedly one of the best authors writing SF nowadays is James Blish. For the most part there is little difficulty in identifying his books, the exception being FALLEN STAR (THE FROZEN YEAR), which Nova's NEW WORLDS' book critic called "a novel of science rather than science fiction" and can probably be labelled what it was labelled - that woolly definition so beloved of timid publishers: a 'contemporary' novel. All his other works are either definately non-SF or safely within that nebulous frontier that separates (if that is the right word) SF from so-called mainstream.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE is, as everyone should know, basically a theological novel, if such a genre exists, and in many respects a distant cousin to the 'first contact' story in that it deals (as it inevitably must in view of its theme) with the possible relationship arising out of a contact between homo saps and a reasoning non-human race. To my mind, and this might be considered irrelevant and incidental, the structure of the book is not very satisfactory as it hinders, rather than helps, a more total realisation of the full potentialities of the theme Blish was presenting. Non the less, no one can doubt the reputation it earned was justified - it stands out as a landmark in science fiction writing.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE is of specific interest to us because of one highly interesting creation - the Jesuit priest, Father Ramon Ruiz-Sanchez. Fundamentally, he is no different from any other reasonably articulate SF protagonist; the 'inner-conflict' which the author supplies is much the same (though the source of those conflicts is what the novel is about, though not even that is unique to this book) and even the effects of the conflict thrust upon the character of the priest do not stray too far from the predictable. Non the less this character somehow is different, for in A CASE OF CONSCIENCE we see into the mind of an imaginary and entirely fictitious character, which separates it from many, many other good SF novels just as surely as cream is sparated from milk. The characterisation is not brilliant - at its best it cannot be described to be more than 'vivid'. We are permitted to see much of the man but he is, as it were, fully clothed. In many cases we have to take the author's word that Sanchez is thinking what he is supposed to be thinking and feeling. Often we must guess and extrapolate, and really there is no revealment in depth. We may catch brief glimpses of his soul, but it is a distorted double reflection, but in the end we can say of Sanchez - "He lived." He was real and that is what really matters.

However, what is important is not that A CASE OF CONSCIENCE

is well and ably characterised, but it is deeply and very fundamentally a science fiction novel and is well characterised. It had a high level of sfictional 'gimmickery'; it is an 'idea' novel, like nearly all SF; the background situation is highly complex - there are interlocking factors that have to be explained, data that must be supplied rationally, and so on. All this sort of thing goes on in the average kind of story, from the average writer. The technical detail is no different from what one would expect of Asimov or Heinlein or any other competent author. The original and motivating 'core' idea is theological: none the less it is just another kind of gimmick, but Blish has a future society to create just as any other SF author has, and yet he manages a reasonably high degree of characterisation. The significance of this is, here there is a contravention of that Law of Characterisation of Miller's - a law that has been proved by the bulk of science fiction. Blish is looking through his telescope and seeing Arcturus and the Arcturian microbe. The images of each aren't too clear, but at least they exist in tandem. He is seeing the wood and the trees, the overall objective pattern and the minute (more or less) detail.

There is only one fly in the ointment. I know from personal experience that not everyone is so impressed with Blish's characterisation. I think the possible answer to that is that most readers are so overawed by the explosive ideas in the novel that they tend to overlook the characters, and of course, strictly speaking, the characterisation is only significant in the context I am using. Blish didn't win a Hugo for the projection of Sanchez and some of the other characters. That helped, of course, because it was an added ingredient that made the book so much the better; but it was the theme, and a controversial one at that, which got him that stainless steel spaceship at the Detroit World Convention in 1959.

This one novel isn't a single example either: several other novels that Blish has produced demonstrate many of the elements of A CASE OF CONSCIENCE. VOR, for instance, was well characterised indeed, and which is a novel that has received undeserved obscurity. Which is certainly what can't be said about the celebrated Okie series and particularly EARTHMEN COME HOME, cited as his best book. Mayor Amalfi emerges as one of the most memorable and real characters in science fiction, more so, by far, than Sanchez, probably because the former is drawn with much greater fondness and because Amalfi is someone we can feel a much greater affinity to. As a study of the Leader and the ruthlessness inherent to that state, it is masterly. Unfortunately, though Amalfi and his satellites might so triumphantly emerge in EARTHMEN COME HOME, they are promptly submerged in its fascinating and irritating sequel, A CLASH OF CYMBALS (THE TRIUMPH OF TIME).

Two oft-mentioned novels in SF circles are Alfred Bester's THE DEMOLISHED MAN and TIGER! TIGER! (THE STARS MY DESTINATION). Both of these have to be approached with caution: both are all too deceptive and therefore it is all too easy to be tempted into that favourite trick of critics - of seeing something that isn't there, though I suppose I might be guilty of that already.

TIGER! TIGER! is perfectly titled. Gully Foyle is the Tiger down to the last detail. There is something very elemental in

men's minds in their conception of that member of the Cat family. The symbol of virility, ruthless power, danger! Danger!...and speed. Gully is the Tiger-figure, the humanised manifestation of the unstoppable power, the irresistible force, the catalyst. With little subtlety he smashes his way to the top; his trail is frantic and frenzied, breathtaking and totally impressive. Here is the Man we all wish we were - The Male Animal (to coin a phrase from an American Men's cosmetic. But the pace is so fast, so dazzling that we only get a sudden momentary impression of Gully, of what he is, as he flashes (or rather Jaunts) past us. True, that momentary impression is awing - a glimpse of that fantastic flaming figure - but Bester didn't aim for any perceptive study of a man under stress, or anything else for that matter. The same is exactly true of THE DEMOLISHED MAN - the two novels are both very much the same. Gully Foyle could be Ben Reich's brother, as well.

Both these novels are 'hard' SF in that they are absolutely gimmick stories. The gimmicks being respectively, telepathy and teleportation ('jaunting' as Bester decides to call the latter in TIGER! TIGER!). From these two concepts he has created a brilliant extrapolation of a telepathic and a teleporting world. It is the two societies, those enormously complex organisms which Bester was writing about - people, in both cases, being secondary. But Bester is a good writer - not only did he write about two ideas that obviously appealed to him, he, in both cases, wrote two very good stories, very dramatic, and because he is a good writer he was not content to let cardboard creation act out the scenes, though the stories themselves were strong enough to make this permissible. We have no feeling of understanding, in depth, for his characters - Ben Reich and Gully Foyle are each uncontrollable images hurled upon society, and we must accept them on that level, but through the successful projection of their roles they transcend the stereotypes they superficially resemble and take on a sort of quasi-life, illusionary depth and profoundness.

Here we have not a violation of Miller's Law, but something which the Law doesn't apply to either. The fantastic complexity of the gimmick should demand a horde of the worst kind of van Vogtian characters - but we don't. Reich and Foyle sparkle with life in comparison to them.

This 'bending' of our pet Law doesn't happen very often. It applies to the above two and to a handful of others. It applied to Gordon R Dickson's THE GENETIC GENERAL, Algis Budrys' ROGUE MOON, Fritz Leiber's THE BIG TIME and even Brian Aldiss' firework display, HOTHOUSE. All these novels represent, between them, with Bester's examples, some of the best SF ever written. Yet none of them represent the successful adaption of characterisation and SF. Blish nearly carried it off in A CASE OF CONSCIENCE and yet didn't quite succeed.

A few other characters do stick in one's memory - idiotic and stubborn. Perhaps they are a subjective experience only, but I think many people will remember the tragic alien, Overlord Karellan, in Arthur C Clarke's CHILDHOOD'S END; the rather impossibly objective Grosvenor of A E van Vogt's THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE; the sad, downtrodden Malachi Constant and the sad/funny Niles Rumfoord of Kurt Vonnegut's THE SIRENS OF TITAN; the puzzling,

enigmatic Dragon Master, Joaz Banbeck, in Jack Vance's surrealist-ically gothic THE DRAGON MASTERS; Harry Harrison's stainless steel rat, in the novel of the same name. None of them are really real characters but, non the less, they tend to be remembered after as people, which is a reasonably basic test. Why they stick out is really impossible to say: neither Clarke nor van Vogt create particularly memorable characters usually. They are of interest because they refused to be overawed or diminished by the circumstances they have been placed in. It can be said of them that they rose to the occasion. For these examples, Miller's Law still holds true, more or less. It hasn't been broken or bent: it is kinked in a few places.

But we are looking for more than the single character, or the symbolic figures like Gully Foyle, Ben Reich or Donal Dorsai.

Frank Herbert's novel, DRAGON IN THE SEA, is surely one of the most remarkable syntheses of two genres in existence. It combines many elements of the 'mainstream' novel and yet indisputably remains science fiction to the core. DRAGON IN THE SEA is the SF of Ballard-land, the freudian lanscape of the unconscious, the Great Deeps of the mind symbolised by the all-important ocean; it is the landscape of the reflex cellular memory and the racial instinct and primal and primeval urges. Like Ballard's THE DROWNED WORLD and various short stories of that author, the whole of Herbert's novel is steeped in the scientific lore of the future, of the Atomic Age, committed in every way to the future - a real future - a slightly alien one, the real extrapolation and not the mere projection of Today into the future.

Herbert's characterisation is brilliantly executed and the characters themselves have been even more brilliantly integrated into the plot, making what is perhaps the most complete SF novel that has yet appeared. The author creates four people and puts them into their tiny steel womb of a nuclear submarine and then puts them under pressure. Under this ever increasing pressure these characters are revealed as people - the relentless machineries of the human mind are suddenly blue-printed as the characters clash, as they live out their lives in their tiny submerged little world, surrounded by the oceans and an oceanful of menacing enemies - not all of them tangible or human.

The interesting thing about these submariners is that they are symbolic and representational (as most SF characters are), but still exist as individuals. People who, one feels, really have lived - that before the book was opened they had lived, and after the last page was turned, read and finished, would yet continue to live.

DRAGON IN THE SEA is, I feel, an effective answer to that question of characterisation. It is proof that people can live in science fictional universes, even highly complex ones.

This article started with a generalisation and it is only fitting that it should conclude on a note of generalisation as a whole. As a generalisation, Miller's Law of plot and character dynamics is remarkably accurate and can be applied safely to nearly all SF written. However, Miller himself did not believe it to be immutable for, on the contrary, he expressed the opinion that

sometime, someone would write a novel that had a high degree of plot complexity and, at the same time, had a high degree of characterisation and character interaction. Blish's A CASE OF CONSCIENCE has much of the former and, in many respects, some of the latter as well. DRAGON IN THE SEA isn't highly complicated, but enough so that it contradicts Miller's Law. In these, and some other examples, there is proof that SF can be deeply characterised; in Blish's novel, the proof is maybe imperfect but it seems likely that someone will take the further step of a highly complex plot with a number of well drawn and interacting characters. When, or who, is a matter for guessing and the possibility might just be forever unfulfilled, but that is not likely.

One of the great fears of the reader, writer and fan is that if many attempts are made to create credible and realistic sort of people in the genre, the genre will be unable to survive the change. But the probability of that is very low when one examines the problem. Whatever happens, highly characterised SF will only form a very small part of the whole field. Whatever changes overtake SF, from Ballard's and Aldiss' new and expeditionary fiction to anti-heroes, anti-time novels and anti-novel novels, the great bulk of the genre will remain, for some time to come, untouched and still sacred and virginal. The last great evolution that had any sudden effect on SF was in the late thirties and early forties in ASTOUNDING SF, as is now history, and it seems it will be the last great and dramatic evolutionary movement too. The field was much smaller in those days and, what is more important, vastly more homogenised than it is nowadays. Individual pioneering attempts since then have, are and will take place, but they won't create any general revolution. Their influence will probably be a lot more subtle and long term, helping to create a change in direction rather than anything dramatic or sudden. The changes that do come will be slow, undramatic and, for the most part, unnoticed. More and more stories will be better characterised, but even the writers will probably be unaware of the fact. This much is certain: writers can write about people in SF stories. It isn't easy, as Aldiss pointed out, but it is possible. It isn't always possible nor always desirable; in fact, in some cases it would be positively undesirable. But people and plot can live together in one novel in most situations; all it needs is authors who are willing to try. It is not really adequate either, to say that there are hardly any SF writers who are really capable of doing it. Too many writers seem to have completely underestimated their own abilities - and of course the strict, formalistic approach of most SF does not help to realise the potential of a writer who can only be described as 'competent' when he is really much more. Another thing that does not exactly help is that xenophobic attitude with which many science fictionalists (especially in Britain) view other genres of fiction.

The mention of 'serious' literature and 'Art' (a much and unfairly maligned word) are guaranteed to set many people frothing at the mouth. They insist that SF should be optimistic, cheerful and entertaining (as the average TV western is 'entertaining'?). The facts are that a great deal of SF, even the majority, isn't and never

has been. Their attitude is either that of a very selective memory or just downright ignorance; and while it certainly is not good to be completely overawed and worshipful of the 'mainstream' field, refusing to admit its existence is like burying one's head in the sand. Especially now, when its influence is infiltrating SF quite deeply.

SF is bound to change, like it or not, and the signs are that it is long overdue. The probability is that, unless we are willing to accept stylistic, formalistic and characterisational (ulp!) changes, science fiction will be doomed to extinction. Sure - people have been forecasting SF's impending death for years now, but remember the boy who cried "Wolf!"? Of course, if this is taken too far to the other extreme, killing the interest and entertainment, the result will be the same - an obsession with new styles and forms taken to the point where they lead to obscurity, as they have, unfortunately, in some of Ballard's recent stories which are quite useless.

Some of the changes will shock the hardbitten fan, and SF will undoubtedly lose something in the process, as others claim it has now lost its sense of wonder. But it will gain other things too, and, in the final analysis, surely the only important thing is that we continue to be interested in, and enjoy, the reading of SF.

Dave Busby

SMALL ADS (Free to members)

PADLOCKS for sale! For a copy of this magazine enclose a 3d stamp and apply to Dick Howett, 94 Ravensbourne Crescent, Harold Wood, Essex.

Articles by E C TUBB and others. Don't miss it!

"Dictionary of Fannish Terms" - produced for the benefit of new fans, Price 9d inc. postage. Available from Charles Platt, 18E Fitzjohns Avenue, London N W 3. Three copies for 2/-.

MARY REED, 71 The Fairway, Ruscote Estate, Banbury, Oxon. wishes it to be known that she's got no shekels (and only one evening a week to spare) for letterhacking so she's cutting down and will only be writing to about $\frac{1}{2}$ dozen fans.

GRAND RAFFLE presented by Group 65 of London. Prizes include a year's subscription to NEW WORLDS, original artwork from NEW WORLDS and hardcover books (some autographed). Tickets 1/- each (10 for 7/6 or 15/- (10 for £1). Send your money now (cheque or PO preferred) to Langdon Jones, Group 65, 36 Winscombe Crescent, Ealing, London W 5.

Winning ticket to be drawn at the Easter Convention in Birmingham.

NEW MEMBERS

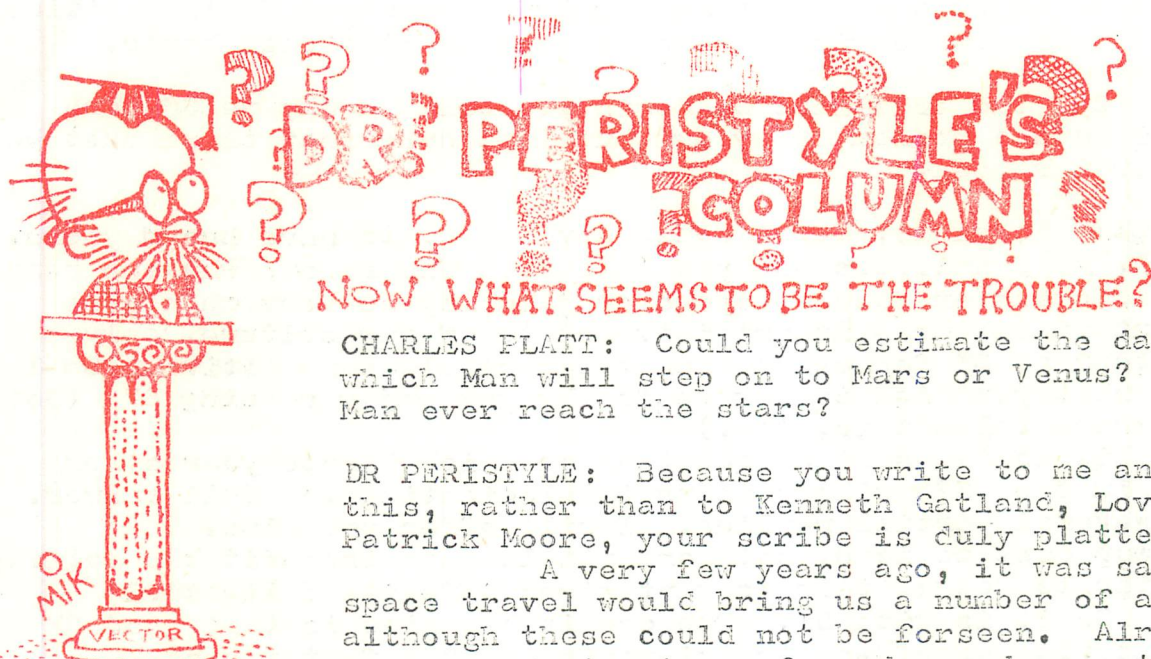
- M 504 MANSON H. 149 McKinley Crescent, Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland.
 M 505 DOHERTY L. 35 Rathkeele Way, Creggan, Derry City, N Ireland.
 M 506 HOUGHTON J.M. 76 Fox Lane, Leyland, Preston, Lancs.
 M 507 WILSON S.B. (Miss) 1 Caithness Drive, Crosby, Liverpool 23.
 M 508 ~~HEATHCOTE F.R.~~ 79 Reddings Road, Mossley, Birmingham 13.
 M 509 MULLIS M.E. 40 Magdalen Green, Thaxted, Dunmow, Essex.
 A 510 DONNELLY A. 6 Edinburgh Close, Netherton, Bootle 10, Lancs.
 M 511 RATHBONE A.R. 155 Gorsedale Road, Wallasey, Cheshire.
 M 512 DANIELS E.J. "Ross-Bec", 34 Ellis Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex.
 M 513 KEDWARDS M. 17 St Peters Drive, Galley Common, Nuneaton, Warks.
 M 514 BAILEY J.N. 33 Belle Vue Street, Healey, Batley, Yorks.
 M 515 COOPER R.L. (Male Staff), Saxondale Hospital, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottingham.
 M 516 WASKETT M.J. 33 St Mary's Road, Ilford, Essex.
 A 517 O'NEILL F.A. 40 Greenfield Crescent, Wishaw, Lanarkshire.
 A 518 VILLARS C.N. 90 Hounslow Road, Feltham, Middlesex.
 M 519 BARTLE J.J. 65 Keir Hardie Ave., South Stanley, Stanley, Co. Durham
 M 520 HART J.A.J. 22 Burlington Gardens, Hadleigh, Essex.
 M 521 BECKETT-TAGG S. (Miss), 25 Waterfield Road, East Sleek Burn, Bedlington, Northumberland.
 M 522 STEELE M.H. (Miss), 355 Durham Road, Low Fell, Gateshead 9, Co Durham.
 M 523 BONFIGLIOLI K. 18 Norham Gardens, Oxford.
 M 524 GRAY D.F. 74 Butneys, Ghyllgrove, Basildon, Essex.
 A 525 HILL B.D. 52D Newhouse Road, Letham, Perth, Scotland.
 A 526 MARSHALL B. 619 Huddersfield Road, Waterhead, Oldham, Lancs.
 M 527 HIGGS M. 138 Barrows Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham 11.
 M 528 ZUARD D.A. 155 Freehold Road, Ipswich, Suffolk.
 A 529 JONES T.A. 27 Lansbury Avenue, Rossington, Doncaster, Yorks.
 M 530 MARTIN A. (Miss), "Ivy Cottage", Kildary, Ross-shire.
 M 531 MATTHEWS S. (Mrs), 13 Somerset Road, Langland, Swansea.
 M 532 4092885 Sgt STODDART W., Sergeant's Mess, RAF Kinloss, Forres, Morayshire.
 M 533 WHEATLEY M.A. 46 Queenhill Road, Selsdon, Surrey.
 M 534 WARBRICK R.T. 35 Kirklandpark Avenue, Strathaven, Lanarkshire.
 M 535 SILVERMAN N.N. 11 Old Hall Road, Broughton Park, Salford 7, Lancs.
 M 536 GATHERCOLE L. 5 Hazlewell Road, Putney, London SW 15.
 M 537 LARDNER G.J. 11 Hillands Drive, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Glos.
 M 538 ASHMORE P.J. 29 Harborough Road, Sale, Cheshire.
 M 539 GUERIN J.A. 5 Les Hurettes Lane, St Martins, Guernsey, Channel Isles
 M 540 BROCKLEBANK M. Lacock Vicarage, Chippenham, Wilts.
 M 541 ROBLIN A. 6 Staple Lodge Road, West Heath, Birmingham 31.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- Brian Rolls now 18 Elm Road, Charlton, Wantage, Berks.
 Brian Allport now 11 Ivernina Road, Liverpool 4. /France.
 Audrey Eversfield now 19 rue du Bouquet de Longchamp, Paris 16e,
 Peter Campbell now 3 Market Place, Cockermouth, Cumb.

 Congratulations to our Chairman on his engagement last month to Wendy Raybould.

Apologies for the error in page numbering (i.e. omission of pages 14 and 15).



NOW WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE?

CHARLES FLATT: Could you estimate the date on which Man will step on to Mars or Venus? And will Man ever reach the stars?

DR PERISTYLE: Because you write to me and ask this, rather than to Kenneth Gatland, Lovell or Patrick Moore, your scribe is duly plattered.

A very few years ago, it was said that space travel would bring us a number of advantages, although these could not be foreseen. Already, when our space-going is as far advanced as a toddler's first clumsy step into mother's arms, we are beginning to receive those advantages. Here are some that I recall off the cuff: new uses of liquid oxygen in surgery, sensory aids to detect irregularities in heart and lung activity, etc., better electric batteries, more efficient use of solar power, heatproof table ware.

Space travel began, as we know, as part of the ideological struggle between two ways of life, the communist and the capitalist ways. Today, mercifully, that motivation is less strong. But it is to be hoped that we have now gone far enough towards space travel proper to realise that the advantages surely lie ahead - and that today's advantages are tomorrow's necessities. Your scribe also believes this: that the 'progress' (as we must call it) of this last hundred years is to some extent a blind force which must continue if the civilisation which has produced it is not to fall back into stagnation or economically-motivated wars.

These two forces, one of reason and one of necessity - and there are others - are enough to keep us moving ever outward. The present seeming lull in space activity is illusory. 1965 and 1966 will see much more success in space, and by March 1971 at the latest, a representative of Earth will stand upon the stony sands of Mars. Venus is more difficult to predict; but certainly before another decade is out we should be on the surface there too.

The result of this will be a cascade of discovery and a five year period when much new knowledge will have to be digested and passed on and down into the arteries of our civilisation. Then we shall go ahead again; and your servant, who is a sober and pessimistic man as well as a righteous one, firmly believes that then, armed with our new knowledge, we shall aim for the stars. He puts the date of the first unmanned star-shot as about 1983, and before the vernal equinox.

Precisely what will happen after that, he will be in a better position to say in the mid-seventies; but he knows that as

the planets of other suns are already within reach of Man's ambition, so they will one day be within reach of his outstretched hands.

JIM GRANT: Can the brilliant Dr Peristyle tell me why we SF fans read SF? I have a reason of my own but I am sure that there must be a more general reason.

DR PERISTYLE: Possibly, but I would have liked to have heard yours. You read SF, Mr Grant, because you like it. The reasons why one reads Tolstoi or Dickens or goes to opera or jazz may be very much more complex; but in the present primitive state of our culture, only sociologists read SF for other than the pure pleasure motive. So I infer that what you wish to ask me is why you enjoy reading SF? (Both my parents were telepathic, too.)

This is the sort of question on which I hope your other classmates in the BSFA will join us in elucidating the full answer. There are several partial replies. I will offer you mine.

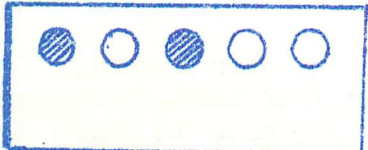
For most actions, both creditable and discreditable motives are never far to seek; this is what gives life its delightful ambiguity. So it is with SF. The creditable side is that good SF provides one with an off-centre viewpoint on the features of existence we would otherwise not question; like life itself, it offers connections where these were not seen to exist before; like love, it helps us to dream creatively. By containing wit and individuality, it fosters these elements in us. The discreditable side is that it often deals in but thinly disguised horrors and sicknesses; often its authors are mental cripples, calling their readers to their own dreary lotus-land. On an impressionable mind, these effects may be the reverse of good. The answer to the question is therefore that you enjoy reading SF either because it is good for you, or because it is bad for you.

SMALL ADS (Free to members)

W A N T E D UNKNOWN and ASTOUNDING (British Editions) - most issues before 1946.
GALAXY October 1950.
ALIENS FOUR by Theodore Sturgeon.
FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE Kuttner's ROBOTS HAVE NO TAILS (Gnome 1st ed.)
- Michael Houghton, 76 Fox Lane, Leyland, Lancs.

W A N T E D Back issues of VECTOR. Recently, many members have asked for back issues which, unfortunately, we haven't got any stocks of. If you have any back issues you don't want, send them to the Treasurer, Charles Winstone, 71 George Road, Erdington, Birmingham 23. We'll even pay for them!

F O R S A L E 22 SF mags and 20 SF paperbacks. First not too lousy offer accepted. N F Morton, 34 Princes Ave., Gt Crosby, Liverpool 23.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

by

Jim Groves

There's a fair crop of questions this time round. Before I begin there's a change in the answer service that I'd like to make as of now. As Treasurer of the 23rd World Convention I'm finding my free time getting short, therefore I won't be answering questions by personal letter unless I can't put all the information asked for in this column. And now on to the questions.

Jim Moyles writes about two books by Louis Charbonneau (NO PLACE ON EARTH and THE SENTINEL STARS) in fairly complimentary terms and asks if there is any more information about him available. I have no personal information about Charbonneau and as far as I am aware the only other SF book by him is CORPUS EARTHLING published by Digit Books earlier this year.

Graham Hall asks "is Seabury Quinn a Manley Wade Wellman pen-name? Is Manley Bannister also a Wellman pen-name and has he any other pen-names? Also what 'zines did he write in?" Right, firstly Seabury Quinn is an author in his own right - he wrote mainly for WEIRD TALES. Manley Bannister is also a real person. M W Wellman wrote some stories under the name Gans T Field. He has appeared at one time or another in most of the SF magazines.

Richard Gordon - "What has van Vogt got to do with Dianetics and have the chapter headings and notes in PAWNS OF NULL-A entitled 'Null Abstracts' got anything to do with Dianetics? Or are they just to be taken on the context of the book? And what, for that matter, is General Semantics?"

Van Vogt became interested in Dianetics shortly after Elron invented/discovered it and became Manager of the Los Angeles Department of the Hubbard Dianetics Foundation. For all I know, he is still involved with Dianetics. PAWNS OF NULL-A appeared first as THE PLAYERS OF NULL-A in ASTOUNDING SF in 1948. Since the initial appearance of Dianetics was in 1950, I would think that those headings and notes have nothing to do with Dianetics, unless, of course, van Vogt rewrote it later to include them. As I haven't read PAWNS I can't comment from personal knowledge. Semantics is the study of the meanings of words and sentences - a scientific discipline that got somewhat of a mauling in SF at one time, chiefly from van Vogt. Your local library should have one or more of the standard texts if you wish to find out more.

A R Underwood wants details of fanzines being published

and how to get them. Also data on SF Indexes and Handbooks. On fanzines I could write a lot here but I gather the BSFA Committee is considering a news-sheet on this subject. As a guide to them I'd suggest that you write to Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey and ask to see a copy of her fanzine, HAVERINGS. In HAVERINGS, Ethel reviews all the fanzines she receives and I doubt if you could find a more comprehensive list anywhere. HAVERINGS costs 1/6 for two issues.

Two fanzines I will especially recommend are AMRA and G-2. AMRA is a sword and sorcery buff fanzine which costs 2/- per copy or 8 for 14/-. Sounds steep, I know, but the material and presentation are up to professional standard. British agent for AMRA is Archie Mercer, 70 Worrall Road, Bristol 8. The other, G-2, is available via Colin Freeman, Ward 3, Scotton Banks Hospital, Ripley Road, Knaresborough, Yorks. Cost is 3 for 1/9, 6 for 3/6 or 12 for 7/-. G-2 is sometimes somewhat fannish and sometimes lightheartedly SF orientated.

Checklists - your best source for any of these is Fantast (Medway) Ltd., 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs., run by Ken Slater. The ones to ask for? Well, the following is a short list of some of the good ones.

A HANDBOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY by Don Tuck. This is a listing of people connected with the field, their main works and other notable facts about them. Appendices include pseudonym listings, magazine issue checklists, information on series and such-like.

INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES 1926 to 1950 by Don Day. This is a checklist of the contents of 58 SF magazines for the period 1926 to 1950.

Those two together make up a good start to a shelf of reference books on the SF field. I don't know if they are still available or what prices are at present - best to write to Ken Slater for details if you are interested. There are a series of annual checklists of the SF magazines put out by Al Lewis of Los Angeles which you can also obtain from Ken Slater. Apart from these items I suggest that if you don't already get Ken Slater's catalogue that you write for it at once and keep a lookout for any of the checklists published in the past - they turn up occasionally.

David Moyles wants to know the pseudonyms of J T McIntosh. J T McIntosh is the pseudonym of Scots writer James Murdock MacGregor. He also collaborated with Frank Parnell under the pseudonym of Gregory Francis.

Graham Hall wants to know who Doc Peristyle is. I've been advised to make a noncommittal answer to this question since I am supposed to be one of the main contenders for this somewhat dubious honour. However, I'd hate to have this hanging over my head and anyway Graham should have a signed denial from me from another source long since. Therefore I deny being the author of this column. God forbid that I should perpetrate anything like that! If I had to point the finger I would point it at Archie Mercer....purely on intuition I hasten to add.

Jim Groves

BOOK REVIEWS AND NEWS

THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION: NINTH SERIES Edited by Robert P Mills

Published by PANTHER at 3/6.

199 pages

One often dreams of a perfect anthology. Such a book would contain a number of works of the widest variety, each perfect in its way. There would be fantasy, colour, speculation, poetry, scientific fact, a high literary standard, and above all a wealth of exciting, thought-provoking ideas.

If this anthology, selected from the MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, does not reach perfection, it approaches it very closely. Not one of the sixteen stories is a dud. And for good measure there are eight poems including "Space Burial" by Brian W Aldiss.

The opening opus is "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes. It concerns Charlie Gordon, a mentally subnormal janitor, whose intelligence is raised to that of a superman - with heartrending results. This yarn is such a fine piece of craftsmanship that anything following it, one would imagine, must seem anti-climactic. But this is far from the case. All down the list the same high standard is maintained.

The stories in this collection are as follows:-

- 1) "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes. A science fiction classic.
- 2) "A Different Purpose" by Ken Bennett. Idealism versus materialism in Soviet Russia.
- 3) "Ralph Wollstonecraft Hedge: A Memoir" by Ron Goulart. This concerns one of the more bizarre writers of the Lovecraft School.
- 4) "All You Zombies..." by Robert A Heinlein. A yarn which shows that time travel could be somewhat confusing.
- 5) "Casey Agonistes" by R M McKenna. Grisly high jinks in the Gehenna of a tuberculosis ward.
- 6) "Eastward Ho!" by William Tenn. Atomic war could reverse history and send the paleface eastward, seeking freedom.
- 7) "Soul Mate" by Lee Sutton. Telepathy with an 'X' certificate.
- 8) "What Rough Beast" by Damon Knight. Saviours are usually crucified - in one way or another.
- 9) "Far from Home" by Walter S Tevis. Or How the whale got into the bath.

- 10) "Invasion of the Planet of Love" by George P Elliott. A bitter attack upon intolerance and cruelty.
- 11) "Dagon" by Avram Davidson. A collector's piece as richly ornamented as a Chinese pagoda.
- 12) "Pact" by Winston P Sanders. A devil makes a pact with an astronomer and lives to regret it.
- 13) "No Matter Where You Go" by Joel Townsley Rogers. A wonderful story about a pine-board shack which is really a spaceship fuelled by Infinitum and capable of visiting any world in either bowl of the hourglass Universe.
- 14) "The Willow Tree" by Jane Rice. Witchcraft, Time travel, children, old ladies, peacocks and a willow tree all add up to a truly feminine piece of literary witchery.
- 15) "The Pi Man" by Alfred Bester. An excellent Bester concoction of sadism, statistics, sex and semantics.
- 16) "The Man Who Lost the Sea" by Theodore Sturgeon. The man in the sand becomes a boy again. And the boy has a model machine that carries him far away from the sea.

Bill Webb

TRANSIT by Edmund Cooper

Published by LANCER at 50p

First paperback edition of the new Cooper novel recently published over here by Faber. This edition has an above-average cover by Emsh.

The tale, for those who have read neither the book nor previous reviews, concerns four humans (two of each sex) who are mysteriously abducted from either Hyde Park or Kensington Gardens and transported to Acheron Four, where they are provided with certain equipment and left to get on with it. Although the plot seems mainly concerned with how they conquer their environment and a mysterious group of golden-skinned aliens, the basic purpose is more human - a damn good break-down of the inter-relationships of four characters.

The four people on the planet are really more 'types' than characters - each is fairly predictable from the first encounter. Generally, though, the book is extremely well-written.

Sex is also dealt with in a genuine manner. It is certainly not skipped around.

My only complaint is that Mr Cooper says we, as a race, have "another collective strength, which we inadequately call compassion". Taking a cynical look at the world, I wonder how much compassion would have been shown if the group had consisted of, say, Russian, Chinese, American and English?

Recommended for persuading non-fan friends that SF is something more than BEMs. This is the sort of book one is sorry to finish.

Graham Hall

GREYBEARD by Brian W Aldiss

Published by FABER at 18/-. 231 pages

This is a good book.

In a way I'm tempted to stop right there - after urging you to rush out and buy a copy or two - since it is a pleasure to read and you should waste no more time listening to me tell you that it is a pleasure to read. In a way it is easier to write about a bad book (give me John Lymington and I'll give you copy) having a gay old time banging away at its weak spots. A really good book is more of a challenge because one has to work to find all the sources of that satisfied sensation.

To begin with, GREYBEARD is that SF rarity - a well written and authoritative novel about people and is done with the same sureness of technique one expects only from top-drawer novelists. There is irony in this because, as a novel, it is better written and far more interesting than 95 per cent of the books touted as 'mainstream' literature in review columns. GREYBEARD will not be reviewed in those columns because it is just dirty old SF and therefore beneath their notice, which is their loss and our gain - but Brian Aldiss' loss too; he could use the money from lost sales. Pardon me if I make so much of the point of quality in writing, I stress it only because it is so prominent by its absence in most SF. All signs of authorial competence should be encouraged, all bad writing should be scorned.

So read GREYBEARD for forthright handling of characters and plot, and for its 3-dimensional quality that enables you to effortlessly slide into its scene, a world of the near future where children are no longer being born. This is a chilling concept and it is to the author's unending credit that he has brought it off without mawkishness or sobbing, empty-wombed mothers, and conveys the sensation of this decaying world of oldsters so effectively that it reaches the areas of subjective reality in the mind. I mean by this that after reading the book you will have a memory of an experience that has occurred, not a memory of reading a work of fiction. I know this happened to me because I had a lovely old nightmare a few days after finishing the book, and the material of the dream was obviously taken from GREYBEARD. Now I am not attempting to add a new standard to literary criticism (Did it give you any dreams? Quite! Any book that gives you dreams can't be all bad....) but to register the impact this novel had on one reader. I believe that a book that affects me this way is a powerful work of art. In its entirety GREYBEARD is not doom-ridden, depressing or negative; it is just that sections of the book convey the emotions of the characters so well that I partook of them and made them mine. In truth GREYBEARD might be said to be up-beat in its totality and has a number of moments of the typical Aldiss wit and warmth.

Faults? I can only find one minor one - a single speech by a Washington taxi driver who sounds very little like any American hackie I ever met. This is easily correctable. That is all I am going to say that is negative and I only put it in so I could contrast it to the adult handling of men and women and their sex relations. The relationships are not enlarged upon to show daring or

played down to meet conformity; they are in perfect proportion and this is very hard to do. Not that I am trying to sell this as a dirty book - I would manage to work in a reference to onanism if I was doing that, but I want it realised that this is an adult book. It gave me a great deal of pleasure to read and I shall not wait too long before I read it again.

Harry Harrison

BEYOND THE BARRIER by Damon Knight

Published by GOLLANCZ at 15/- . 178 pages

In 1976, Gordon Naismith finds himself at the scene of a plane crash without any memory of his earlier life. Despite this setback, he manages to reorder his life and is, four years later, lecturing at a Californian university. He is contacted by two aliens from the future who enlist, rather forcedly, his aid and take him with them into the distant future where he is prepared for the task in hand, namely to travel into the even more distant future, beyond a time barrier which he alone can penetrate and kill a mutant monster, the zug. At the last moment it becomes obvious to the aliens that Naismith is not their man and he is deserted by them. With the aid of a second denizen of the future he does, however, penetrate the barrier and solves his problems to his own satisfaction - if not the reader's.

The novel contains too many faults to be worthy of recommendation. In instances like Naismith's early escape from the police, only to surrender himself to them five pages later, there are too many pointless episodes. In his aimless wanderings through the alien's gigantic ship, during which time he apparently exists without eating, and his journey through the earth itself, there is too much evidence of padding; and in affording Naismith with knowledge beyond the barriers of possibility, the author does not play fair with his readers. Take page 181 as a prime example of this last fault; Naismith is examining a complex system of control discs:-

"Some had the death symbol on them, meaning their settings could not be altered without killing the operator.....

Others, of a slightly different color, also bore the death symbol, but in these cases it was a bluff....."

Who, apart from Mr Knight, is there to tell Naismith which of the two series of coloured discs is the true death series? Who can decide, merely by visual inspection, that there is indeed a bluff? Why have different coloured discs? If the answer to this last question is that the series which Naismith decides is the 'bluff' series is not of such fundamental importance as the true death series, then the following sequence is merely laughable:-

".....and Naismith touched them without hesitation. He turned off all the automatic weapons in the city, neutralised the robots....."

Not bad, for a series of controls of mere secondary importance.

Whilst this might be deemed sufficient to condemn the book, it must also be mentioned that BEYOND THE BARRIER contains too many loose strings; what finally happens to Lall and Churan? Why were they not able to use their omniscience to foresee that Naismith would

not fulfil their requirements?

Ever since I read "Cabin Boy" in GALAXY more than a decade ago, I have been under the impression that the author, who was one of the first late-war-time and early postwar fans to turn professional, plots his novels after retiring to bed on a heavy cheese supper. Only recently I read his A FOR ANYTHING which merely reinforced this impression. BEYOND THE BARRIER does absolutely nothing towards dispelling it. Like a Wensleydale-induced nightmare, this novel contains too many plot threads discarded at the author's whim, a central character with whom no sympathy is affected (by page 25 my only concern was to finish the book in order to write this review), and a wispy ending which, whilst being faintly reminiscent of van Vogt's WORLD OF NULL-A, lacks decision and authority.

Lastly, with a spelling bee in my bonnet, may I call attention once again to the fact that here is another British reprint which has, all too casually, retained its American spelling. Quite apart from the word 'color' in the above-quoted extract from page 181, on page 158 we find 'center' and on numerous occasions (i.e. pages 93, 108, 109, 181) the word 'disk'.

Ron Bennett

NEW WRITINGS IN SF 2 edited by John Carnell

Published by DOBSON at 16/-. 191 pages

This second volume contains eight stories, which are:-

- "Hell-Planet" by John Rackham
- "The Night-Flame" by Colin Kapp
- "The creators" by Joseph Green
- "Rogue Leonardo" by G L Lack
- "Maiden Voyage" by John Rankine
- "Odd Boy Out" by Dennis Etchison
- "The Eternal Machines" by William Spencer
- "A Round Billiard Table" by Steve Hall

The first story, "Hell-Planet", lives up to the claim made by John Carnell in NEW WRITINGS 1. This story is a radical departure in the field of the science fiction short story. It is a detailed description of an alien race's first contact of the planet Earth. It describes the aliens' confusion at the many contradictory puzzles of the Earth's cultures as presented by the multi-lingual radio and television broadcasts. I won't tell too much of the story, for I don't want to spoil the reader's enjoyment. Suffice it to say that John Rackham has caught very well the aliens' terrible confusion when confronted with the Earth's present day cultures.

Colin Kapp's story tells of the struggle between a laser transmitting station in England and a manned satellite in space. There is a complication in the story, brought about by the presence of a European refugee's cottage being in the proposed path of the laser-beam. While the description of the brief conflict between the station and the satellite is quite graphic, the reader's attention is drawn to the almost resigned attitude of the refugee towards the inevitability of the war, when carried out with such weapons as described in the story.

Another rather original story appears in this book - "The

Creators" by Joseph Green. Although it starts off with the hackneyed situation of alien artifacts being discovered on a dead world, circling a dead sun, the story soon develops along new lines. For one thing, the whole intelligent life of the Galaxy (some fifty different species) forms the expedition to explore this deserted planet. Earthmen are present in this party, of course, and it is one of these that finally unravels the mystery. The fate of the inhabitants of the dead planet is unique in itself!

Of the other five stories, the best is "Maiden Voyage", for although it covers the old story of the first flight of a new spaceship drive that fails, the story is so well written that the reader's interest is sustained to the end. The bulk of this story covers the rescue operations carried out for the ship's survivors. "Rogue Leonardo" supposes that when a society can reproduce old masters' paintings in quantity, then the art itself will stagnate. The 'rogue' in the story is a machine that starts to develop new pictures from the original Mona Lisa. This is regarded as heresy and the machine is destroyed.

Charles Winstone

JUDGMENT ON JANUS by Andre Norton

Published by GOLLANCZ at 13/6. 212 pages

The alliterative title, the coloured jacket, the cover notes and the relatively low price compared to other Gollancz SF titles all suggest that this book is reckoned a good sales proposition aimed at younger readers. Alas, while I have no doubt that Gollancz will clean up nicely on this one, it was not a good sales proposition for me.

Andre Norton uses artistry in her plot, but little feeling appears in the writing style. The descriptions are mechanical, though technically competent and visually evocative, and lacking in emotional communication of any kind. A blue sky is described as blue; none of this 'shimmering, depthless azure' nonsense. When a description of emotion is attempted, it is accomplished only by using a succession of clichés:- clenched fists, tears welling, averted eyes, heart pounding, and the rest.

In spite of this, the book is successful as an adventure novel on the younger level, and it would be missing the point to expect high standards of literary descriptive ability. Though one has the impression that this is just one of an endless chain of such books produced in quick mechanical succession, it is not a bad novel by the most sophisticated SF standards, and for a reader new to the field would be quite a good buy.

The central character is a young person of indeterminate age with whom, presumably, readers from the ages of 8 to 18 are expected to identify. After a dismal upbringing and the death of his - mother? - he signs on as virtually a slave on a frontier world, beating back the jungle. His failure to turn in a portion of illicit 'treasure' - strange, glittering metal - found in the jungle, eventually lands our hero, banished by authority, in the midst of the wilderness, in the body of another creature, 'Ayyar, of the nearly extinct Iftin race'. This is where the story really starts - from

page 59 onwards the plot thickens. Moreover, the ending leaves scope for a sequel.....

I personally found it nearly impossible to get absorbed in this book. I have read 'juvenile' yarns that captured me from the start, but this is not one of them. It is only just science fiction and certainly offers no new ideas: re-reading Asimov's THE CAVES OF STEEL alternately with JUDGMENT ON JANUS made the latter look pretty pale and devoid of originality in comparison. To the younger reader, Andre Norton would be good entertainment, and to the newcomer to SF would be a good introduction. Old hans, however, would find better adventure stories elsewhere.

Charles Platt

THE PARADOX MEN by Charles L Harness

Published by FABER at 18/- . 246 pages

Space-opera can be an entertaining form of science fiction, being an approximate equivalent in the field to the thriller outside it. Rarely is it more than a pleasant hour or two's reading, and it would be unfair to attempt to judge it on any basis other than its ability to entertain.

THE PARADOX MEN is an out-and-out space-opera and a successful one within its limits. The plot, which is not allowed to impede the action, concerns the exploits of the hero, Alar the Thief, while he strives to discover his true identity and to fight against the tyrannical rule of the Imperium. Among the more implausible features are time travel, faster-than-light travel and an episode on the solar surface.

The book also has an introduction by Brian Aldiss, who commends it for its humanistic outlook and lack of materialism. These characteristics are certainly present but, while conceding that they are necessary, I doubt that they are sufficient conditions for good science fiction.

THE PARADOX MEN is a little superior to run-of-the-mill space-opera and, provided it is tackled without over-high expectations, it can be recommended as enjoyable and entertaining reading.

Ian McAulay

A LIFE FOR THE STARS by James Blish

Published by FABER at 15/- . 135 pages

Although meant primarily for older children, this, the second of Blish's 'Flying Cities' tetralogy, is by no means a juvenile book. True, the 'hero' of the story is in his late teens, yet the reader tends to forget this mere detail as the tale unfolds.

Crispin DeFord, the central character ('hero' is rather too magnificent a term for him), is watching the city of Scranton, from what he considers to be a safe distance, as it prepares to leave Earth. Unfortunately, Chris is discovered and impressed - quite legally - into the population of the city. Here, as the city begins

its nomad life (known as 'Going Okie'), he must justify his worth to the City Manager. His endeavours in this respect, though aided by a kind-hearted official, break down when the City Manager makes a deal with a far larger city, involving an exchange of people for equipment.

Chris is transferred, and finds himself in New York, N.Y., one of the largest cities ever to take to space. Here he is given the choice between becoming a Passenger or a Citizen, and learns that all Citizens lead indefinitely prolonged lives, through the use of Anti-agathic drugs. The way to Citizenship is long and wearing, involving the use of 'accelerated schooling', but Chris chooses it in the hope that, by living long, he will eventually be able to return to Earth. How he attains Citizenship and a place in the Okie life makes an excellent ending to the story.

Throughout the book, the rather strange Okie way of life, with its hidden phobias and very real-sounding legends, is put over in a way that differs from that of the other books in the series only in that the problems and satisfactions of Okie life are viewed from the eye of a newcomer. As the author says, "A LIFE FOR THE STARS is, I hope, a sufficient key to admit anyone into the world of the inter-stellar wanderers."

The other three books in the series are, of course:- THEY SHALL HAVE STARS (YEAR 2018), EARTHMAN, COME HOME, A CLASH OF CYMBALS (THE TRIUMPH OF TIME).

Mike Turner

TIME AND STARS by Poul Anderson

Published by GOLLANCZ at 16/-. 206 pages

I'm not going to waste time repeating superlatives about Poul Anderson. In this collection of five stories, ranging from the philosophical to the hilarious, there is something for everyone.

Anderson has Clarke's poetical touch and attention to scientific detail, but his characters are meatier than Clarke's underplayed English (not British) types.

"No Truce With Kings" is 1964's Hugo Award winner. It's much more than the straight adventure-type yarn it appears to be at first reading (the military parts kept reminding me of the American Civil War). The Hellbombs have devastated the world and America has sundered into many small states. A successful 'coup d'etat' is aimed at re-unifying the country and a father finds himself opposed to his son-in-law - a situation common in the Civil War.

Standing aloof from the war are the Espers. Their powers really derive, From Above, by the use of special machines. During the course of the fighting, the machines belonging to an Esper group are discovered and it is realised that the myth of their superior powers is exploded. The Espers try to counteract the spreading of this revelation. Eventually they are defeated. The galactic aliens are unmasked and Mankind has demonstrated that he can shift for himself, without alien interference.

"Turning Point" is a clever story about a new race that learns far too quickly and too well and it is feared that Earth's civilisation will be submerged. The dilemma is posed: should the planet be wiped out or should Earthmen take their chances?

"Escape From Orbit" deals with efforts to rescue three astronauts trapped in a capsule in a Lunar orbit. This is a theme that Clarke might have used but, for the reasons already mentioned, I think Anderson has done a taut, exciting job on it, with a scientifically accurate solution.

"Epilogue" is a beautiful story (my favourite in the book) and no description of mine could do it justice. Briefly, a ship returns to Earth after many ages have passed to find the planet chrystalline and populated by weird life-forms that live on energy. Various adventures befall the crew and the story has to be read in order to appreciate Anderson's encompassing skill and imagination. This is SF at its very best.

The final story, "The Critique of Impure Reason", must have given the author a lot of fun in the writing; for it certainly amused me in the reading. A robot designed to mine rhenium from Mercury's dayside, accidentally reads a magazine of literary criticism and promptly fancies ~~itself~~ as a critic.

This is a book you'll enjoy again and again. Me? I'm GREEN.....

Don Malcolm

SCAVENGERS IN SPACE by Alan E Nourse

Published by FABER at 15/-. 163 pages

While not specifically a juvenile, this novel seems to have been written with the younger reader in mind. The action takes place on Mars and in the Asteroid Belt, with an overcrowded Earth in the background, and hopes of galactic colonisation ahead.

It concerns the twin sons of Roger Hunter - Tom and Gregory. They go out to the Belt to examine a group of asteroids where their father, just before his sudden death, apparently made an important discovery. Questions demanding answers are: did old man Hunter discover an asteroid fabulously rich in minerals; and was his death an accident - or murder? But Tom and Greg, accompanied by their father's old partner, Johnny Coombs are not allowed to investigate without interference. The big prospecting company, Jupiter Equilateral, has an active interest in the dead man's discovery. In the inevitable clash of interests a lot of people get hurt.

The action is swift and wide-ranging. Suspense is maintained to the end. The plot presents several surprises and the characters are vivid enough to make the adventures both plausible and intriguing. Major Briarton of the U.N. Interplanetary Council on Mars is a good example of the better type of military official. And Merrill Tawney, of Jupiter Equilateral, is the sort of villain we all love to hate.

W T Webb

USED POSTAGE STAMPS WANTED FOR CHARITY: send to Dikk Richardson, 9, Rushbrook Grove, King's Norton, Birmingham 30.

AMERICAN BOOK RELEASES

THE BLOODY SUN - Marion Zimmer Bradley (Ace 40¢)
THE RADIO BEASTS - Ralph Milne Farley (Ace 40¢)
ALMURIC - Robert E Howard (Ace 40¢)
THE SECRET OF SINHARAT and PEOPLE OF THE TALISMAN - Leigh Brackett (Ace 45¢)
EARTH'S LAST CITADEL - C L Moore & Henry Kuttner (Ace 40¢)
JUDGMENT ON JANUS - Andre Norton (Ace 40¢)
WARRIOR OF LLARN - Gardner F Fox/EXILES FROM XANADU - Lan Wright
GLORY ROAD - Robert A Heinlein (Avon 75¢) (Ace 45¢)
TIME TWISTERS - J Hunter Holly (Avon 50¢)
LAD AND THE LION - Edgar Rice Burroughs (Ballantine 50¢)
THE OCTOBER COUNTRY - Ray Bradbury (Ballantine reprint 50¢)
REEFS OF SPACE - Frederik Pohl & Jack Williamson (Ballantine 50¢)
DEADLY LITTER - James White (Ballantine 50¢)
DEATHWORLD 2 - Harry Harrison (Bantam 50¢)
PEBBLE IN THE SKY - Isaac Asimov (Bantam reprint 45¢)
PENULTIMATE TRUTH - Philip K Dick (Belmont 50¢)
MASTERS OF SCIENCE FICTION - contains stories by Anderson, Del Rey, Dick, Merwin, Pease, Pohl and Russell (Belmont 50¢)
BIG BOOK OF SF edited by Groff Conklin (Berkeley reprint 50¢)
TRANSFINITE MAN - Colin Kapp (Berkeley 50¢)
CITY AT WORLD'S END - Edmond Hamilton (Crest reprint 45¢)
TIME IS THE SIMPLEST THING - Clifford D Simak (Crest 50¢)
DAY NEW YORK WENT DRY - Charles Einstein (Gold Medal 40¢)
THE REIGN OF WIZARDRY - Jack Williamson (Lancer - no price: October)
DIVIDE AND RULE - L Sprague de Camp (Lancer - no price: November)
YOU SANE MEN - Laurence M Janifer (Lancer - no price: January '65)
THE MAN WHO WANTED STARS - Dean McLaughlin (Lancer - no price: Feb '65)
ALIEN WORLDS edited by Roger Elwood (contains Anderson, Bloch, Brunner, Campbell, Dick, Hamilton, Russell, Sheckley, Simak and Wyndham) (Paperback Library 50¢)
SURLY SULLEN BELL - Russell Kirk not E F Russell as mentioned in VECTOR 28! (Paperback Library 50¢)
ECHO X - Ben Barzman (Paperback Library 50¢)
MUTINY IN SPACE - Avram Davidson (Pyramid 50¢)
VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA - Theodore Sturgeon (Pyramid rep. 50¢)
SEEDLING STARS - James Blish (Signet reprint 50¢)
THE REST OF THE ROBOTS - Isaac Asimov (\$5.95) (contains CAVES OF STEEL, NAKED SUN plus 8 shorts - "Victory Unintentional", "First Law", "Robot A1-76 Goes Astray", "Let's Get Together", "Risk", "Galley Slave", "Lennie" and "Satisfaction Guaranteed". This is also the December selection of the US Book Club at \$1.69)
THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH - Philip K Dick (\$4.95) (Also US Book Club January selection at \$1.00)

BRITISH BOOK RELEASES

SYNTHETIC MEN OF MARS - Edgar Rice Burroughs (Four Square - November)
2nd ASTOUNDING ANTHOLOGY edited by John W Campbell (Four Square)
STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND - Robert A Heinlein (Four Square)
SHADOWS IN THE SUN - Chad Oliver (Four Square; 3/6 - December)

THE EARTH WAR - Mack Reynolds (Four Square))	
OPEN PRISON - James White (Four Square))	
CITY - Clifford D Simak (Four Square))	Publication
THE BIG TIME - Fritz Leiber (Four Square))	dates and
THE AIRS OF EARTH - Brian Aldiss (Four Square))	prices of
TWISTED edited by Groff Conklin (Four Square))	these
MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE - Philip K Dick (Penguin))	titles not
CAT'S CRADLE - Kurt Vonnegut (Penguin))	yet
ALL THE COLOURS OF DARKNESS - Lloyd Biggle Jr (Penguin))	available
MONKEY PLANET - Pierre Boulle (Penguin))	
LAMBDA 1 AND OTHER STORIES edited by John Carnell (Peng))	
GUNNER CADE - Cyril Judd (Penguin))	
MORE THAN HUMAN - Theodore Sturgeon (Penguin))	
A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS - Edgar Pangborn (Penguin))	
THE WEIRD ONES edited by H L Gold (Dobson 15/-)		
SUNDOG - Brian Ball (Dobson 16/-)		
THE UNCENSORED MAN - Arthur Sellings (Dobson 16/-)		
INTRODUCING SF edited by Brian W Aldiss (Faber 18/-)		
EARTHWORKS - Brian W Aldiss (Faber - early '65)		
BEST SF 6 edited by Edmund Crispin (Faber)		
SPECTRUM 4 edited by Amis & Conquest (Gollancz 18/-: early '65)		
TRADER TO THE STARS - Poul Anderson (Gollancz 15/-: early '65)		
A MAN OF DOUBLE DEED - Leonard Daventry (Gollancz 15/-: early '65)		
THE LOAFERS OF REFUGE - Joseph Green (Gollancz 15/-: early '65)		
THE SEVENTH GALAXY READER edited by Frederik Pohl (Gollancz 18/-: '65)		
BEST FROM F&SF: 12th SERIES edited by Robert P Mills (Gollancz - '65)		

MAGAZINE NEWS

F&SF December issue contains "The Fatal Eggs" - a short novel translated from the Russian, "Buffoon" by Edward Wellen and also a \$100 Reader Contest.

Although IF went monthly in June, there is no September edition. The printers decided that Election publications were more important and IF wasn't printed.

Another mix-up from the GALAXY chain is in the February 1965 GALAXY. Originally there was the sequel to THE STAR KINGS by Jack Vance due to appear, but the paperback publishers of this story have apparently broken their agreement and are planning to issue the book before it was due to appear in GALAXY. In place of this, GALAXY will run a serial which is a sequel to THE REEFS OF SPACE by Pohl & Williamson (the latter being published in IF!!!!??).

Just to annoy everyone further, IF will now cost 50¢ and GALAXY 60¢. WORLDS OF TOMORROW will remain at 50¢. The reason behind this move, I am informed, is that WofT is losing money. Pohl wants to drop WofT and make GALAXY monthly but the publishers won't allow it.

This information supplied by Pete Weston.

HUGO RESULTS

In VECTOR 28 we gave the Hugo winners awarded at the 22nd World SF Convention. Pete Weston has now supplied us with the full results:-

Best Novel

- 1) WAY STATION by Clifford D Simak (Published in England earlier this year by GOLLANCZ at 16/-). 63 votes.
 - 2) (GLORY ROAD by Robert A Heinlein (Unpublished here). 54 votes.
(WITCH WORLD by Andre Norton (Available here in Ace Books) 54 votes
 - 4) DUNE WORLD by Frank Herbert (Unpublished here). 51 votes.
 - 5) CAT'S CRADLE by Kurt Vonnegut (Published here by GOLLANCZ at 18/- 30 votes
- No vote 15. No Award 7.

Best Short Fiction

- 1) NO TRUCE WITH KINGS by Poul Anderson (From F&SF Jun 63) 93 votes
 - 2) CODE 3 by Rick Raphael (From ANALOG Feb 63) 67 votes
 - 3) A ROSE FOR ECCLESIASTES by Roger Zelazny (From F&SF Nov 63) 47 vs.
 - 4) SAVAGE PELLUCIDAR by E R Burroughs (From AMAZING Nov 63) 44 votes
- No vote 21. No Award 2.

Best Magazine

- 1) ANALOG - 90 votes. (2) GALAXY - 55 votes. (3) F&SF - 48 votes.
 - 4) SCIENCE FANTASY - 34 votes. (5) AMAZING - 31 votes.
- No vote 10. No award 6.

Best Amateur Publication

- 1) AMRA - 72 votes. (2) SANDER - 51 votes. (3) STARSPINKLE - 48 vts.
 - 4) ERBDOM - 45 votes
- No vote 52. No award 6.

Best Book Publisher

- 1) ACE - 89 votes. (2) PYRAMID - 61 votes. (3) BALLANTINE - 45 votes
 - 4) DOUBLEDAY - 35 votes.
- No vote 25. No award 11.

Best Artist

- 1) Emsk - 77 votes. (2) Schoenherr - 69 votes. (3) Finlay - 39 votes
 - 4) Frazetta - 34 votes. (5) Krenkel - 29 votes.
- No vote 17. No award 9.

MICHAEL HOUGHTON, 76 Fox Lane,
Leyland, Lancs.



Thanks for VECTOR 28 - the first I've seen since temporarily leaving the fold a couple of years ago.

I was glad to see KFS still chuntering. I always enjoyed this column - long may it continue.

A big difference I notice is in the artwork. The covers always were pretty good and still are, but these new interiors by McCabe are really something - he hit a splendidly Vanceish note. It was good to see the article too. Vance's talent never seems to have achieved the recognition it deserves (at least in the pro-zines) and an intelligent and comprehensive appraisal such as Terry Bull's was long overdue

even before Vance's Hugo. One note in the article jarred with me, though. First, I hardly see that one can question the 'competency of Vance's attitude' as Mr Bull begins to hint on page 3. Surely a great deal of the best, modern SF (or any other conscientious literature) has been concerned with the grossness of humanity, and are not the best of it's writers those who can balance this with an ability to evoke the beauty that remains? Vance, I think, has this ability. Sturgeon excels in this respect, and my second bone of contention concerns the rather glib statement that Sturgeon has a Nasty Mind. It seems sad to me that anyone should consider this a particularly 'brave' remark. What a strange breed we are; Farmer's clinical THE LOVERS disappointed Brian Aldiss because it wasn't treated as a dirty joke, and when Sturgeon tries to imbue similar themes with warmth and tenderness he annoys Mr Doherty for having a nasty mind. To my nasty mind, this is not literary criticism but an attack on an author's sincerity. The former is the critic's job; the latter should be left to the reader to judge. And isn't it dangerous to find too many symbols in any author's writing? After all, a symbol is a means of communication on a conscious or subconscious level, and can only be understood if both sender and receiver are on the same wave-length.

All of which further confuses the Harrison-propounded Mystery of the Missing Potties, Botties, et al (SF HORIZONS). I sympathise with the man. Come on lads, I bet you've all got a pair of Living Boots under the bed, so don't be ashamed to bring 'em out and wear 'em now and again.

Anyway, as I was saying before I started meandering along the paths of madness, the article was much appreciated.

/Welcome back to the BSFA - but why the heck did you leave? Anyway, it's certainly nice to see new members contributing, whether it be by way of artwork, articles, fiction or letters of comment - all are appreciated - RGP_/

ED JAMES
923 Warwick Road
Solihull
Warks

VECTOR has certainly settled down very well now; the last issue was the best I have seen for a long time. There is a nice balance between book reviews, letters and features and the article. Each was just about the right length for my taste. I, of course, agree with those who say

there should be two articles, but not if it means either cutting down the length of both or scrapping things like "General Chuntering" or "Author's Lot", which I always find fascinating. It's most revealing to find out exactly why authors write, and especially why authors write SF. Usually, though, it is fairly obvious from their work itself. It is easily seen, for instance, that Brian Aldiss (VECTOR 19) is writing, for much of the time, for therapeutic reasons - to rid himself of his neuroses. (Some, the more irreverent among us, might add "or to foist them on us".) Likewise it is apparent, in every word he writes, that Eric Frank Russell is writing because he thoroughly enjoys it and because he likes the money. I am glad that Mr Hamilton has seen fit to dispel Mr Aldiss' gloomy picture of half of the SF writers being fraught with neuroses, though unfortunately he has replaced it with an even more disturbing picture - "Most writers are manic depressives". Thank goodness we are all normal healthy citizens this side of the proof-reader! Well, I'm sure most of us are anyway....I mean, I've met one or two who are, I think....

I don't really have any grouses at all, in fact. Not about the contents anyway, but I think you could have done better for the cover. I'm very sorry indeed, Mr Jeeves, sir, (when one is still at school, a deference for all schoolmasters is engrained) but it looked rather like a reject illo from Dan Dare (not the back cover - I liked that). Just compare it to the Brian McCabe cover on VECTOR 27, or 'the forest' inside V28 and you will see what I mean. I hope there will be more of Brian McCabe to come. I particularly liked, also, the title that he did for "The Light Fantastic".

Which brings me on to what I thought was the best part of V28; I don't think many will disagree. Terry Bull picked a much more manageable subject to handle than did Dave Busby in V27. He handled it with great skill, giving very illuminating examples of both the best and the worst of Vance's style. In some points I do tend to disagree but not with the general trend of his argument. For instance, I fail to see how Mr Bull can believe "Gift of Gab" Vance's best story. Although very good, admittedly, it does not have the touch of fantasy, that evocative power which his names have, those "jewels, five words long, that on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkle forever" (with apologies to Alfred, Lord T.) that enrich his writing and make him outstanding in the SF field. "Gift of Gab" is pure (I won't say run-of-the-mill because I know it isn't) science fiction. It is in "The Miracle Workers", "The Moon Moth" and "The Dragon Masters" that is to be found Vance's best work.

/I certainly hope that there will be more McCabe artwork in

future issues up to the very high standard of that on page 7 of V28. Although I can't agree with you about Terry Jeeves' cover. I thought that it was an excellent cover and I hope that Terry comes up with more of the same standard - RGP_/

DICK HOWETT
94 Ravensbourne Crescent
Harold Wood
Essex

I feel I ought to congratulate Brian McCabe on his excellent illustrations to the Jack Vance profile. In particular, the one on page 7 brought back childhood remembrances of school fairy-story books, such was the style and feeling of

this work. Brian is developing his character of pen by his use of fantasy and allied subjects. For the good artist, this field has many sides and indeed, lends itself to art better than does the pure science fiction type art (i.e. rockets, spacesuits, moonscapes, etc.)

Brian is fitted to fantasy for his style is delicate and intricate. His figures; light and fluvial....in direct contrast to the heavy, grotesque monsters required for SF illustration and the like. In fact, I would go so far as to say that SF illustration is easier than Fantasy, just as to write SF is easier (in a broad sense) than fantasy. With no disrespect to Terry Jeeves, anybody could have drawn that rocket on the cover, but I doubt very much whether the same could be applied to Brian's work. I look forward to seeing more of his work in VECTOR and elsewhere. An artist with feeling for his subject is worth praise.

VECTOR 28 in all was a good issue if a little unexciting. As a staple in fandom, we must expect book reviews and general information in this publication so continue this please. Jim Groves and Ken Slater are providing a valuable service to all who are hungry for SF tit-bits, and Vic Hallett continues to scan the film world in completest fashion. As for his plea to BBC TV to repeat CAVES OF STEEL, it would take the combined writing power of fandom to achieve this end. CAVES OF STEEL has already been repeated on BBC 2 and they rarely keep any of their video-tapes more than six months. Even now, the magnet may have jumbled the electronic impulses on that tape into "It's a Square World" or "Meeting Point" or "Dr Who". Such is life....hold it! We may be saved after all. CAVES OF STEEL in fact, was a film recording and thus the said programme is resting in the film vaults at Ealing, gathering dust. So friends, git your pen to paper.....

/ If you are looking for more McCabe artwork, there are one or two excellent illos in Graham Hall's PADSzine, DOUBT - RGP_/

R GILBERT
"Kimberley"
Four Mile Bridge
Nr Holyhead
Anglesey

Supert artwork by Brian McCabe; a great improvement on his previous little creature on V 27's cover. The drawings reflect Terry Bull's phrase "....impressionistic picture of a world we only hear faint echöes of", brilliantly. Please let us have lots more of him. The article itself looked, at first sight, very long and I thought it would soon begin to bore, but once I began to read, I found the end approaching all too soon. Can we expect similar articles of the same length in succeeding VECTORS?

The most amusing part of "Magic Moments in SF" was Marks & Spencer on muscle-man's belt, not the punch line.

Once more, Ken Slater's article looks like morse coding. Can't you put a big, black blob or some similar punctuation between topics. There is so much information rammed rammed into such a monolithic chunk of print that it is very difficult to collate in one's mind. Maybe a few paragraphs would help. I don't know whether I'm being rude here, Ken, or somewhat complimentary, but your column looks like a page of Dickens, less dots of course.

I have the answer to the Peristyle Problem! No-one knows who he is so far, but RGP said he knew, hence he is Dr Peristyle. Obvious, isn't it!!

/ Is it? - RGP _/

GRAHAM HALL
57 Church Street
Tewkesbury
Glous.

Not much in this really. The Terry Bull article is admirably illustrated but, not knowing much about Vance's work, I can't say if it's a fair study or not. It certainly doesn't provoke me into wanting to find out.

In Edmond Hamilton's article, the statement "Most writers are manic-depressives" is possibly true - but certainly the description/reason for his saying it isn't. A manic-depressive has his alternate depressions and elations despite external stimuli - not because of. Just because you feel a bit in the dumps on a Wednesday because you can't raise the price of a pint of beer - yet cheerful on a Friday when you can afford a gallon, doesn't mean you're mentally afflicted or disturbed - apart from being a possible raving alcoholic.

The book reviews vary from the excellent (especially that by W T Webb) to the merely adequate.

I'm afraid Don Malcolm has sunk right down in my estimation (not that it should bother him) with his review of THE TERMINAL BEACH. Despite the fact that, like Moorcock, he appears to worship the most obscure literary talent since Joyce (I don't count William Burroughs as 'talent'), he doesn't give the book - at least story by story - an exceptionally high rating. At least he has the courage to come right out and say he doesn't understand THE TERMINAL BEACH, instead of being one of the cowards who rave over it rather than admit that they failed to grasp it.

Is Doc Peristyle dead? Or am I just hoping?

/ Nope - he ain't dead yet. Very much alive in fact. Last issue was issued just after the August holidays, and if you think back to your school days, all teachers have about a ten week holiday - so why shouldn't the Doc have a rest? - RGP _/

RICHARD GORDON
Cairnfield
Buckie
Banffshire

This last VECTOR was one of the best yet. Re the number of pages: it is surely much more worthwhile having six forty-page issues each year than eight with only twenty pages apiece.

Terry Bull's article on Jack Vance was interesting but too long. After six or seven pages, it subsided into cataloguing all Vance's stories without doing much else, which was OK on that level. Also Terry's own attitude to

his favourite writer is fluctuating, to say the least. On the whole, however, I reckon it is an intelligent evaluation of a difficult subject, which could only have done with a little cutting here and there, though since it is a bibliographical type of article, this would have been difficult. The artwork was the best I have ever seen in VECTOR, especially the sketch on page 7 - full of dark and swampy menace! On the whole, the most interesting lead article you have published in a long while.

The main point of the four "Author's Lots" would seem to be that while the post-war SF writers (Aldiss, Harrison, et al) seem to wallow in a Freudian mire of symbolism and repressions, the Grand Old Men of SF, as represented by Russell and Hamilton, just write for the fun of it, without any notions of subconscious compulsion, etc. I'm sure it must be of some significance somewhere, though what, I could not say. Maybe all this Freudian association today in SF is only a subconscious desire to associate with all the sickest (and most successful) mainstream writers?!

Re the Book Reviews...Can anyone explain why the American pb edition of THE TERMINAL BEACH has the same name but entirely different contents, except for the lead story. What IS the American equivalent of the British edition (hardcover) of THE TERMINAL BEACH. All this renaming of the same books and not renaming of different books by the same author makes things confusing in the extreme.... isn't there any law???

/ Unfortunately, I can't help you with this Ballard mix-up. If it had been anyone else but Ballard, I would have probably been able to shed some light on the subject. But....I don't buy Ballard's books any more - not after buying two collections and only being able to finish two stories - RGP_/

IVOR LATTO
16 Merryton Avenue
Glasgow W 5

Terry Bull's eulogy of Jack Vance appeared to be very thorough, but although I'm not very familiar with Vance's work, the article held its interest to the end. This type of enthusiast's bibliography sits very well in the pages of VECTOR. Those familiar with the writer's work would no doubt be interested to read another's views; those ignorant of his work might well be carried away to the extent of actually reading some of it.

Edmond Hamilton's Lot didn't appear to be very burdensomeI had hardly started when it was over. Not a great deal to get one's teeth into, and I thought he finished like a recruiting sergeant or a school's careers officer.

I wonder if Vic Hallett could pas some comments upon those film and TV items he has seen, as well as provide advance information of coming attractions?

The other permanent departments were informative and interesting as usual. I thought that the Mail Response was more than usually entertaining. Although Donald Malcolm may write only for the hardened SF addict, he can only justify such contempt for "Mainstream Johnnie", who during a blackout, got his eyes unglued from the Corset Opera Monthly, and spotted an SF magazine." Dear, dear, such vituperation. Perhaps Mr Malcolm was born an SF fan, with a little

silver propellor on his head. Or is it conceivable that he developed an interest in SF? If the latter, at some time he must have been introduced to the medium. In other words, he himself was in some remote era a 'Mainstream Johnnie'.....even if it was so far back in his life that mainstream consisted of Noddy or Winnie the Pooh. It seems so curious that an SF writer, of all people, should subscribe to this "here's tae us, wha's like us" isolationism. Is SF not secluded enough that we should try to limit it to our cosy group of initiates, keep the newcomer at bay, make no concessions, don't even attempt to attract new blood? Let's not rock the boat chaps!

Charles Platt's comparison of JWC's editorials with those of the "Daily Express" was very apt; the same troglodyte politics, over-argued, ineffectual and desperate. Funnily enough, his readers seem to share his views; I can't remember anyone in "Brass Tacks" telling him that his social-politico-historical arguments are a load of antidiluvian old rubbish!

DAVE BUSBY
33 Rances Lane
Wokingham
Berks

Well, no-one could complain about V28. We have even gone back to the nice sane BIG lettering on the cover. Theinsides too were pretty good. "The Light Fantastic" was particularly good - though in places it seemed that the author didn't know his own position in the arguments he presented; there

is a difference between impartiality and just dithering. The McCabe illos and the heading for the article were superb and so was their production. "The Author's Lot No 4" was pretty disappointing. In general, though, a very good issue indeed - the best for some time.

Now, if the good editor will allow me some space, I should like to answer some of my critics who wrote in the last Mail Response.

Don Malcolm first, I think. For a start, I'm afraid that the fact that two of your stories have been anthologised doesn't alter my opinion that they were bad. I also refuse to climb down over the classification of the stories. To me, they were First Contact; by implication, by definition and by clear common sense. I also see no reason why they shouldn't be compared with Joseph Green's 'Loafer' chronicle. Why didn't I mention various other stories of yours? Simple - I didn't and don't think they were/are relevant.

I fail to see how anyone cannot fail to be irritated by such chilling terms as "supposedly superior mainstream publications" "Mainstream Johnnie who...got his eyes unglued from THE CORSET OPERA MONTHLY", etc., etc. Maybe this was supposed to be funny, but the humour fell rather flat, and if you are serious.....well, I suppose I would say 'poor man'. Come off it! We are all supposed to be adult and intelligent around here. Let's not spoil the image by displaying what verges on the hysterical. I don't know if you are jealous or something, but when I am faced with this sort of thing I am more or less incapable of saying something polite.

Clayton Hamlin was the only person to ask the question that I imaged everyone would be asking: why didn't I include such and such a story by X or Y? I will respectfully say that my article was not very long. Had I started adding examples left, right and centre, it would have ceased being an attempt at criticism and become a check-list. Some of your other points, Clay, are a bit more relevant, though on the novel THE WANDERER, I'll say I have been trying quite

hard to get it and haven't managed it yet, so I think you will forgive me for being rather annoyed - I would like to read it first! That, in a few words, is why I didn't mention THE WANDERER.

You agree with me that an awful lot of trash is written on the First Contact theme, but you further say that it doesn't stop talented writers presenting something good. I agree with that but, in my opinion, no talented (or rather very few) writers have written a First Contact story worthy of their talent, and I cited Donald Malcolm as one such writer. I further didn't leave out stories because they disproved my point. I omitted them because there is little point in criticising the stories that don't need criticism. My point being that an awful lot of trash is being written on First Contacts, and that the percentage is much too high and that there are plenty of possibilities inherent in the theme that have either not been examined at all or examined only imperfectly. Nor do I propose that SF should put right the world - it would have a hard time doing so. Furthermore I see absolutely no reason why SF shouldn't concern itself with unique philosophies and other Profound Subjects if the stories are interesting and well written. A story that bores is a story that fails, but there is no reason why such SF should be boring.

/ Surely, Dave, Don Malcolm is the only person who can say with any certainty, what classification his stories fall into? Or does the phrase 'First Contact' mean something entirely different to you than it does to Don Malcolm? You certainly seem to be reading hidden meanings into Don's letter when you say he is showing 'childish and resentful hate of other fields' with the phrase 'Mainstream Johnnie'. Still, I expect Don Malcolm will have something to say for himself in the next issue - RGP_/_

DON R SMITH
228 Higham Lane
Nuneaton
Warks

Terry Bull's survey of Jack Vance's works seemed to me to be a very workmanlike job and, as far as I could check from my own memories, an accurate assessment of a writer I've always regarded as one who could be relied on to produce an entertaining story, without ever being one of my real favourites. The only snag with my memories is that few stories written after about 1945 seem to have registered deep enough for me to recollect them, even with the most vigorous prompting. I don't think this is entirely due to my having moved into a less impressionable age either. SF writers have improved greatly in competence in post-war years in almost every way, with the result that their styles have become so smooth and proper that they all read the same - and blur into each other. In the old days, writers, who by today's standards were practically illiterate, had oddities of style, some of them quite felicitous, which pinned their products into one's mind. It is a process which is occurring more generally; fewer and fewer people these days seem to have the courage or independence of mind to become eccentrics. Even the lunatic fringe of long-haired youths seem to adopt a conventionalised form of revolt and do as their own particular group does.

Nice to know that Edmond Hamilton is still flourishing. Encouraging to find that he is satisfied with the author's lot, conscious of both its advantages and disadvantages. I thought this

the most sensible of this series of articles.

I enjoyed the book reviews, of course. I may even buy the Ballard collection, in spite of the Kingsley Amis recommendation.

CHARLES PLATT
18E Fitzjohns Avenue
London N W 3

This issue of VECTOR wasn't as good as the last. From cover to cover; I don't know why you chose Terry's rather mediocre but competent work in preference to some of the less-polished but more inspired Howett illos

I saw when at your house. This Jeeves picture is alright, but it's nothing from Terry that I haven't seen in similar form before. The lettering is pretty awful. The ballpoint he's used has smudged.

"The Light Fantastic" is beautifully illustrated, but itself is rather bad. I'm becoming overtired of articles filled with praise for an author without justification. A sentence like "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" is remarkable only for its rather inept overuse of poor adjectives that merely convey to the reader the idea that the writer is nuts over the bloke he's writing about.

Admittedly there are one or two critical passages that are fairly well done, but I feel Terry could have catalogued less, raved less and looked for an overall connecting theme between Vance's works or for an idea of what the man is trying to do, without going to the other extreme of ascribing non-existent motivations and images. The article is, of course, about three pages too long in comparison with its content.

Edmond Hamilton doesn't make very many points of interest in his Author's Lot, which reads more like a rambling letter than an article. Rather disappointing.

Book Reviews: Donald Malcolm falls into the obvious trap of describing all the stories in a collection without giving a proper criticism, which is pretty useless for the reader. The idea of a review, Mr Malcolm, is for it to communicate information to the reader that will guide him in buying the book. You tell me about each story's plot, and whether you liked it or not, but frankly where an author like Ballard is concerned, this is useless. If you told me more about why you didn't like or did like the stories, it might help - and I don't mean by this that I want a report of whether you understood them or not. This seems the most elementary advice to a reviewer. One expects at least that a review should be informative and one hopes that it is entertaining, cleverly written and concise as well. Yours exhibited none of these qualities.

/ Firstly, the cover. I would much prefer to use competent work of mediocre subjects than poorly drawn work - no matter how different the subject matter is.

Secondly, your comments on "The Light Fantastic". Terry Bull (and a lot of other people judging by these letters) thought that there was justification. He obviously doesn't expect everyone to agree about Vance's talents. I'm sorry if you are 'overtired' of this type of article because Terry is working on two more very similar articles - one on Edmond Hamilton and one on Olaf Stapledon.

Thirdly, Don Malcolm's review (or any other review, for that

matter). I'm sure many people would disagree with you about what a review should do. Everyone has got their own ideas on this - I know I have and they are quite different to yours - RGP_/_

BRIAN ROLLS
18 Elm Road
Charlton
Wantage
Berks

I found Terry Bull's article on Jack Vance well researched and thought out. Despite Vance's small output I consider him to be one of the top two or three SF writers of today: in fact, before Terry's article appeared, I was considering writing a similar article myself. In his best writing, Vance's combination of evocative description, finely drawn background and memorable characters make compulsive reading. The reader feels frustrated at hearing so little of the strange characters in, for example, BIG PLANET and THE DYING EARTH instead of feeling fed up with the people half way through - as happens so often in SF. I do disagree with Terry in details, of course: I do not, for instance, find the 'horror' in THE DYING EARTH particularly repulsive, possibly because most of the victims deserve their fates. Instead of the horror element, surely a psychologist might find it more profitable to wonder why Vance is so fond of stages on which Mankind is slowly, and consciously, becoming extinct, (e.g. THE DRAGON MASTERS, and "Soon, when the sun goes out, Man will stare into the eternal night and all will die, and Earth will bear its history, its ruins, the mountains worn to hills - all into infinite dark." - THE DYING EARTH: "T'sais").

Glad to see "General Chuntering" back. Agree with what (I think) he says about the function of the fiction writer being to entertain. I read for what I find entertaining, good plot, real characters, fine writing and so on. If a writer can provide these, or some of them, and suggests that slavery is jolly good gets my money before the lousy writer with the greatest set of ideals in the world.

I agree with Hamlin & Smith (among recent correspondents) about criticism of articles. If you write an article, particularly if you are controversial, you really must expect other people to disagree with you. If you say that writer A loves violence you can hardly complain if someone writes in and says that writer A had a novellette in OBSCURE STORIES of March 1917 expressing an abhorrence of violence. It is unreasonable to be expected to know of every story pertinent to a theme, but you really cannot complain (well, I know you can, but you shouldn't) if someone digs up something you forgot, ignored or never knew about. When I wrote an article on Burroughs recently for VECTOR, I was as balanced about his faults and virtues as possible, but I still expected, and found, that some people disagreed.

About Burroughs, by the way, addicts might be interested in an article on him in TIME (Atlantic Ed.) August 21st on page 59. It contains several errors I bet I'd never have got away with in VECTOR!

JOSEPH ZAJACZKOWSKI
45 Marlborough Road
Beech Hill Estate
Mansfield
Notts

Congratulations for the best issue of VECTOR yet - very much appreciated. The only thing that was lacking in previous issues was the artwork and substance. Fortunately, these have been adequately remedied. It seems

that the membership have had two choices: a typical journal - uninformative, unimaginative and unresponsive to the stimuli of reader's comments; or a near-fanzine vice-versa to the aforementioned. I would much rather have the latter even if the status as a journal was depreciated and the status of the BSFA fall correspondingly.

Brian McCabe's good isn't he - his work cut onto stencil was competent for the difficult repro but electronically produced his artistic ability is accentuated. 'A touch of the Finlays' I think is appropriate in his case.

Vic Hallett's column I won't waste commendable adjectives on because it's so good, if a trifle short. I was surprised to read that one of my favourite books, LEVEL SEVEN is to be made into a film. Anything with a Bertrand Russell quote on it backside must be more than the usual run-of-the-mill stuff.

I certainly hope that the status of the BSFA doesn't fall because of my presentation of VECTOR. Although, at present, the BSFA's status seems to be improving all the time. It's encouraging to find that some of the newer members are writing in as well as older members who don't usually write in. Only one or two of the regulars this time round, which surprised me - RGP_/_

ARCHIE MERCER
70 Worrall Road
Bristol 8

I quite agree with Don R Smith that a straight right-hand edge serves no useful purpose on a dog. And so far as putting it in a fanzine is concerned, now and again some perfectionist does it and I read quite happily through nine-tenths of the issue before I suddenly notice. Which means that it's simply not worth the trouble.

I would suggest that the lost sequel to THE TIME MACHINE be dubbed THE TIME MACHINE MEETS THE INVISIBLE MAN, then everybody'll be happy!

