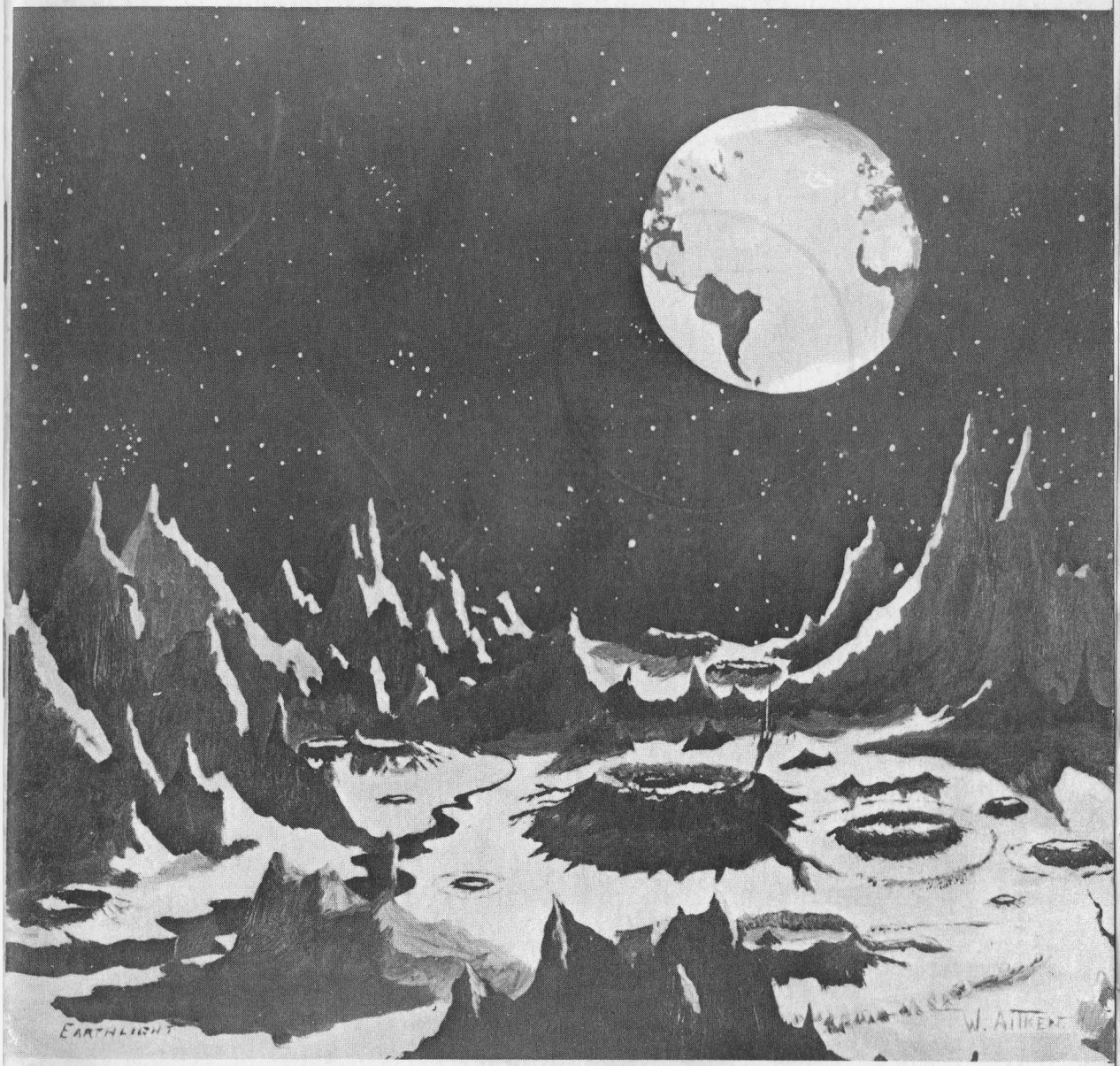
VECTOR



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Plagiarism in SF

William F Temple

"No bird has ever uttered note
That was not in some first bird's throat;
Since Eden's freshness and man's fall
No rose has been original."

Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

There was this interview with John Wyndham in the SUN the other day. He had an acute case of "writer's block" and no-one who's never suffered from this psychological affliction can imagine what an ordeal it can be. You're hiking happily along the road of narrative. Then the road begins to wind uphill. The gradient becomes tougher, your progress slower. Presently, you're labouring under the delusion (if it is a delusion) that the hill is growing higher even as you're scaling it.

You give yourself a shot of adrenalin and climb grimly to the top.

And discover that the far side of the hill doesn't exist. The road ends abruptly at the crest and drops a perpendicular: you're on the brink of a sheer cliff.

Now you need to make a leap of faith with a parachute woven of confidence. These damn parachute packs have a way of getting lost just when you most need them.

Wyndham has been blocked in the middle of a new novel for all of two years now. His publishers keep hoping to feature it in their autumn list. Last year (1964) they had to remain satisfied with re-issuing the TRIFFIDS, KRAKEN and CHRYSALIDS as a Wyndham Omnibus.

The rest of us, also awaiting another smooth, convincing adventure from this gifted story-teller, wonder what's caused the block.

More than one writer has stymied himself by a too drastic change in his climate of living. A northern novelist who's made his name by realistic depiction of life in the Black country moves to London, believing it to be the heart of things. And finds himself rootless and lost in the prattle and pretence of Chelsea (as was - now Islington) and dries up. For the Black country was the true heart of his work.

Wyndham spent all of his writing life, i.e., from the early 'thirties, in sophisticated Bloomsbury, until a couple of years ago he moved to a cottage in a village deep in Wiltshire. Other authors seeking peace to write have done likewise, vegetated and quietly wilted away from lack of mental stimulation. Bright "with it" people, intellectuals or pseudos, can be irritants or bores, yet also they can stir up your ideas. If you've been used to mixing with them, you're apt to miss their stimulus.

But if Wyndham wilts in Wilts, I doubt if the reason is as simple as that. In summer he holidayed much in the country and was familiar with the climate. The cause is more likely to be internal. Even before he moved he told us of a fear that he was drying up creatively. This is an occupational obsession with many writers, which worsens with age. You begin to feel you've mined out your particular lode, and you are only rewriting yourself, as Rider Haggard did in his later works (QUEEN SHEBA'S RING, THE PEOPLE OF THE MIST, etc.).

It may be that Wyndham puts his own finger on it in the SUN interview: "The problem is not to plagiarise myself."

Sometimes I regret once accusing him of continually rewriting THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. That is, harping on the theme of the break-up of ordinary, everyday life by the eruption of monsters in some shape or form, be they the "Invisible Monsters" of a short story of his way back in the 'thirties, or the Kraken, or the little horrors of Midwich, or the famous Triffids themselves.

I didn't really mean it seriously, because, of course, he'd written about many other concepts too, including the notable CHRYSALIDS. Later, though, I wondered if he had taken it seriously, for he remarked in company: "Bill here says I'm always rewriting THE WAR OF THE WORLDS."

Now, his new novel concerns a desert island where spiders are (so to speak) top dog and their leaving the island to try to conquer man. Unlike ordinary spiders they act together in packs, similar to ants.

One's triggered reaction is: "Wells-inspired again. "Valley of Spiders" crossed with "The Empire of the Ants"."

The fear of self plagiarism arises, I suspect, from the employment of the Monster Menace theme yet again wedded to the group-mind idea, which John has used at least once (the children of Midwich) and which Stapledon used before him and Dr. David Keller before Stapledon ("The Human Termites").

However, I think he's being over-scrupulous.

When I was younger I had a horror of plagiarism and regarded stealing ideas as a crime. I prized originality and thought it the hallmark of genius. What I didn't realise then is that

ideas are common property, free as the air around us, which we breathe communally.

I forget who said: "Originality is the sign of the second-rate writer." That seemed to me nonsense once, but not now.

Everyone plagiarises, consciously or not. Even the greatest. Shakespeare and Brahms did it consciously and didn't care a fig. They knew a good thing (be it Marlowe's or Bach's) when they saw it and delighted to play their own variations on it. The creation of the variation, often making a silk purse from a sow's ear, was their own personal achievement and justification.

Despite my respect for originality, I have plagiarised, too, though not always knowingly. I remember being well satisfied about my first published short story, which concerned an animated and perambulating tree, a sort of early Triffid. I thought it original until I re-read a story of Ambrose Bierce's and saw with a nasty little shock that quite unconsciously I'd lifted the pivotal idea from it.

So let us take the afore-mentioned "Valley of the Spiders", which I had imagined had sprung, like all the Wells's works, new-born from its creator's brow. In a recent (1962) book, H.G.WELLS and HIS CRITICS by Ingvald Baknem, a Norwegian, I find a long chapter about Wells being accused of plagiarism. Says the author: "..."Valley of the Spiders" is another story in which the critics discovered traces of Kipling." And goes on to show that in general idea, plan, and atmosphere it could be regarded as a re-telling of the adventure of Morrowbie Jukes.

And, obviously, "The Flying Man" owes much to Kiplings's "The Man Who Would be King". Also instanced is a parallel I had noticed myself: the chapter, "The Saying of the Law", in THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU, was clearly inspired by Kipling's "The Law of the Jungle" from the SECOND JUNGLE BOOK.

"The Country of the Blind" is remarkably similar to Remy de Gourmont's "D'un Pays Lointain", a fact which critic Edward Shanks had earlier drawn attention to. "The Star" is almost a condensation of the astronomer Flammarion's novel THE END OF THE WORLD - and Baknem claims: "Wells alludes to things he could have found only in Flammarion's book."

Wells has also been accused of plagiarising Verne. The early chapters of THE FOOD OF THE GODS are remarkably akin to DR. OX'S EXPERIMENT. And Baknem implies that the short story, "In the Abyss", could be an amalgam of ideas from 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA and Poe's CITY OF THE SEA.

THE TIME MACHINE is regarded as Wells's most truly original story. It's the father of all time-travelling yarns. But even here one of its most memorable incidents (the escape of the hero, via the 4th Dimension, from the hollow Sphinx) was anticipated by one of H.G.'s contemporaries, Oscar Wilde, in THE CANTERVILLE GHOST. The Ghost, similarly being crowded by a mob, employs the 4th Dimension to escape through walls.

Whether that was conscious borrowing or not, Wells did admit that he had lifted some of his characters from other people's works, including one rounded and complete from Mrs. Humphry Ward's MARCELLA.

Maupassant's LA HORLA, about an invisible creature, may have had something to do with the genesis of THE INVISIBLE MAN, but Wells himself said it was owed to - of all things - W.S. Gilbert's BAB BALLADS, humorous verses, in particular a couple of lines from one called "The Perils of Invisibility":

Old Peter vanished like a shot,
But then - his suit of clothes did not.

Previously, in fairy tales and legends, the invisible prince (or whatever) was totally invisible, clothes and all. Wells reflected: supposing only flesh and blood were rendered invisible, while the clothing remained unaffected?

So he wrote the most famous ever story of invisibility. Its success arose, not from the basic idea, but from the convincing treatment of it. For treatment is more important than originality. The real magic lies in the art of persuading the reader to adopt a 'willing suspension of disbelief'. This is the trick which Wyndham can pull off better than most living SF authors and, additionally, in an admirable prose style (TROUBLE WITH LICHEN was beautifully written).

As Carlyle said in HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP: "The merit of originality is not novelty: it is sincerity. The believing man is the original man".

So it were best if John Wyndham forgot about plagiarism, self or otherwise, and concentrated on sincerity and style.

John Christopher is another with this gift of making something fresh from something well-worn. I hear that two American (B-type, unfortunately) companies are bidding for the rights of his latest novel, THE POSSESSORS. The story is about a take-over bid for Earth by creatures from space infiltrating into men's minds...Echoes of Wells again: "Star-begotten"? And hasn't this theme already been tackled successfully in a film: INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS?

No matter. Christopher's variation can only be a personal one, pure Christopher, and generate new magic from old ideas.

For there is no new thing under the sun.

William F. Temple.

contd. on page 8.....

THE SF SCENE IN RUSSIA

ALAN G MYERS

The present boom in SF in the USSR is remarkable in that it has been, up to now, a purely native product. Outside influences in the shape of translated literature have been almost negligible. Up to 1959, apart from Ray Bradbury's FAHRENHEIT 451, no work of any stature in modern SF was known over there (I refer to the post-1945 period only). Verne and Wells were well known and extensively translated, but the influence of the latter on actual writing was virtually nil.

It is the legacy of Verne as well as the political and economic conditions prevailing at the time which accounts for the state of Soviet SF in the immediate post-war years. We find then, a small group of writers, mainly scientists, writing stories set in the present or the very near future and dealing with new technological advances. Professor Efremov, for instance, wrote a story called "The Diamond Tube" which successfully predicted the discovery of diamonds in certain areas of Siberia. Other tales involved the exploitation of new energy sources: from volcanoes, for instance, ("Hot Earth", 1951). In the prevailing literary climate, any kind of fantasy writing had to be pretty firmly anchored to reality. There were no Aliens and no excursions into the future of Mankind. These stories tended to contain a good deal of technical information for the less knowledgeable reader both in the body of the text and in the form of footnotes, explaining which of the terms the author had used were 'fantastic' and which were real. Most of the writers had the young in mind, and the 'tasks' of SF as a branch of literature included the encouraging of young people to take up a career in science. Nemtsov, one of this older generation of SF writers, frankly used his stories to preach moral principles to the younger generation, prompting the jibe in the press that: "...it's better to have narrow trousers than a narrow mind". For press comment on SF as a whole was beginning to hot up. There was a general feeling that all was not well with the genre, though no-one could agree on exactly what to do about it.

The great controversy in the '50s which raged in the columns of the literary gazette and elsewhere was between 'near' and 'far' fantasy. Should SF concentrate on the next decade or so, as hitherto, or could a case be made for setting the action centuries ahead? What was the use of the latter? Efremov's view was that the general lines of the development of human society had been accurately predicted by Marx, but that occasional anomalies and twists in the spiral of progress would be much more likely to distort the view of the 'near' writer than the 'far'. "To predict a thousand years from now is easier than to

say what'll happen in ten years' time", he wrote. Younger writers were now appearing and taking the 'far' line - Valentina Zhuravleva, for instance, from Baku.

The break came in 1959 with the publication of Efremov's ANDROMEDA. Critics who had hitherto treated SF as a second rate literature close to the popular scientific essay suddenly found themselves having to deal with the first communist utopia written since the heady days of the '20s. Though the book doesn't contain much to startle the blase western reader, certain ideas in it, the "Island of Misfits", for instance, raised a storm of controversy in the USSR and Efremov's romantic handling of certain episodes made a big impression on the general reader. The first three chapters, describing a spaceship in trouble in the gravitational field of a star, and later the adventures of the heroes on an unfriendly planet of that star, have had, I think, a liberating influence on younger writers. From now on the 'near' and 'far' fantasy question is ignored and writers start to range more and more widely for their material.

Western SF, previously dubbed 'delirious fantasy', began to be translated in quantity. Vance's "Gift of Gab" appeared in 1961 in an adventure almanac, followed by Leinster's "Exploration Team". H Beam Piper's "Universal Language" also came out. Due to the publicist efforts of Efremov and Kazantsev, ASTOUNDING became known. In 1961, the first Soviet magazine to devote a good deal of its space to SF was born. Titled SEEKER, it is still being issued - the last one contained part of "Maigret's Revolver" as well as Heinlein's "Blowups Happen". It's pocketbook size and usually has about 150 pages. Translations from Western SF are fairly frequent in its pages. Van Vogt's "Resurrection" was one. Elsewhere, the magazine devoted to translations, FOREIGN LITERATURE, carried three of Sheckley's best stories, including "The Store of the Worlds".

A yearly collection of the best of Soviet SF began appearing in 1962. The 1965 edition has come out in two parts; testifying to the increasing amount of material from which to choose. Another publishing house started in 1964 to bring out an annual collection significantly entitled SF (i.e. SF) - the term had previously never been used.

These latter editions are in paperback, a form of production coming more into favour as far as I can judge. Normally, Soviet books are hardbacks but as cheap as paperbacks over here, roughly speaking. The readership is varied, with its main strength located in the ranks of the young scientists and technicians. Critics now take NF pretty seriously and books by, say the Strugatsky Brothers, are evaluated as a contribution to serious literature. There is no such thing as organised Fandom but many universities and scientific research centres have NF clubs where the concepts put forward in books are seriously discussed. Most of the writers have a scientific background.

Several books have been published recently in hard covers which greatly enlarge the scope of translated literature. RALPH 124C41+ has appeared, but the two books which have really caused a stir are Asimov's I, ROBOT and RAY BRADBURY'S FANTASY. Bradbury in particular carries all before him. Arthur C. Clarke is high in public esteem, too. Books scheduled for release in the coming year include Clarke's THE DEEP RANGE, Asimov's THE

END OF ETERNITY, Wyndham's THE KRAKEN WAKES and stories by Blish, Pohl, Clement and McIntosh.

However, within the existing framework, there is plenty of scope, as the Strugatskys' work shows, for the investigation of moral dilemmas. While the discipline of cybernetics has fostered the talent of Ilya Varshavsky and the brilliant Polish writer, Stanislav Lem, whose ROBOT FABLES has created a new genre with SF, Lem is the only writer to combine SF consistently with humour and succeed!

Alan G. Myers.

Contd. from page 5...

Excerpt from a letter to Mr. Temple from John Wyndham :-

"It is an excellent article, and I wouldn't change a word of it - except that it is Hants, not Wilts. It is also a most encouraging and consoling article, for which I genuinely thank you.

I think that by self-plagiarism I really was meaning the tendency to harp too much on the old world-menace : it does become monotonous. Perhaps it was depressing to know that I had landed myself with yet another. In fact, that may be the basis of the whole trouble - which began, by the way, about a year before I removed here, so that I think that environment has little to do with it. The chief trouble seems to be now that the thing has become a kind of challenge. Several times I have said to hell with it, and started on something else, only to find that I have later drifted back to it with the feeling that I must get rid of it somehow..... I think I see a way now, and shall plod on.

I was interested in your remarks on origins of ideas - and, of course, you are perfectly right. Something has to trigger them off. The Wells example from the BAB BALLADS is a perfect one. They crop up from the most unexpected places, and from the most improbable seeds, but there does have to be a seed.

Again, many thanks for sending me a copy of your article. It's a pity it is destined for nothing wider than a fan magazine."

John Wyndham.

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Edward Elmer Smith, Ph.D., known familiarly to his friends and readers as 'Doc' Smith, died of a heart attack on August 31st. Born in 1890, 'Doc' sold his first SF story in 1928 and continued writing science fiction right through to 1965. His works included SPACEHOUNDS OF THE IPC, the 'Lensman' series, and the extremely popular 'Skylark' books.

A TRIBUTE TO 'DOC' SMITH

BY EDMOND HAMILTON

Probably no-one in all the field of science fiction will ever be so missed as 'Doc' Smith. He was an assiduous attendant at SF conventions and gatherings, so that almost everyone in the field got to know him and to hold him in deep affection. It is over twenty-five years ago that Bob Heinlein, then a brilliant new star in SF, introduced me to him. I bowed low, declared my admiration for his great stories, and assured him, "Doc, this is like a parish priest meeting the Pope." He gave me his wry grin and retorted, "But which of us, in your opinion, is which?"

He was, indeed, so well known and loved that I hardly need say much about his personality. His fatherliness towards everyone in SF was a tradition, and yet there was an inextinguishable boyishness about him. And on occasion, his eyes could suddenly crackle with frosty lightnings when something aroused his indignation.

It is of his writing that I would like to speak. Too many people offhandedly mention his stories as sweeping space-adventures, without going further. To make my point I shall have to delve into the history of science fiction; and that is not inappropriate since Doc Smith himself was such a large part of that history.

I would say that American science fiction in the last half-century or so has had three distinct periods. The first was, roughly, from about 1910 to 1927. The writers of that period did their stories for a small group of general fiction magazines, mostly published by Munsey. Because the magazines were of general fiction type aimed at the average reader, the fantasy writer of those days had, no matter how far-flung his imaginings, to cast his stories into a form which could be understood and enjoyed by the general public.

The writers who did so succeeded brilliantly. The two most famous of them, Edgar Rice Burroughs and A.Merritt, were only the leaders of a galaxy of imaginative talent that included Homer Eon Flint, George Allan England, Austin Hall, Francis Stevens and many others. One of them, Murray Leinster, has written fine science fiction right down to the present day.

The second period began with the coming of the first science fiction magazines in the late twenties, and the beginning of the old magazine WEIRD TALES a few years before. This period lasted until about 1939 or 1940. Because these magazines were published for the fantasy minded and not for the general fiction public, their stories could go much farther out than had previously been the case. The sky....the sky of distant galaxies....was the limit. Story-form, characterisation, smooth writing, were all secondary considerations and the big new science-fictional idea was the all-important thing.

I think of most of the SF writers of that period, not as fiction writers, but as myth-makers. And the mightiest of those myth-makers was Doc Smith. His sweeping galactic wars and adventures had had predecessors, but none with the carefully-thought-out scientific backgrounds that he put into them. Also, he never wrote as hastily as some others of us did and although his style had always a tinge of the Victorian (a trait he shared with Burroughs) that only seemed to heighten the sensational impact of his material.

But, to my mind, his finest achievements were his exploration of alien mentalities. Hardly anyone except Hal Clement has made an individual non-human and his thought-processes seem so real to me. One of the literary projects he intended to carry out some day was to write the autobiographies of Worsel the Valantian and Nadreck of Palain. This absolutely fascinated me, and I never saw him without devilling him to get going on them. He would always reply good-naturedly that it was not yet time. Now, alas, they will never be written.

The day of the myth-makers faded when just before World War II there was a sudden efflorescence of SF magazines and the appearance of a whole galaxy of fine new writers..... Heinlein, Bradbury, Kuttner, De Camp and a host of others. They, and the readers by then, were less interested in going farther out than they were in making sounder stories out of the materials of science fiction. But Doc Smith, although he admired them, seemed little influenced by them, and it is a testimonial to his fiction that in this day of new styles and standards, he never lost his public.

In closing, I will lapse briefly into the personal. I have been writing science fiction for forty years and the best reward it has brought me has been the friendship of a host of wonderful people....from A.Merritt, one of the finest men I ever met, to youngsters I met only this year. But among them all, Doc Smith will always stand out in memory. He, if anyone was, was Mr. Science Fiction.

Edmond Hamilton.

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MAGAZINES

reviewed by

Graham Hall

MAGAZINES REVIEWED

NEW WORLDS 156
(November)

SCIENCE FANTASY 78
(November)

The November issue of NEW WORLDS is another written predominantly by the younger generation of British SF writers and, for that reason, is disappointing.

Terry Pratchett is the youngest contributor, but his "Night Dweller" shows an encouraging maturity - hardly more than a vignette in its prose-poetic handling of the space-menace-of-the-unknown theme. Richard Gordon's "Time's Fool", dealing as it does with the conveyance of the Marquis de Sade into the future to defend his much-maligned character, is less expert, but demonstrates an admirable knowledge of the misunderstood pervert's life.

Graham Harris gives an old, old gimmick a new twist that doesn't drag it from the mediocre in his first NEW WORLDS story, "50% Me, At Least". And Charles Platt's "Cultural Invasion" is hard to reconcile with the sheer inventive brilliance of "Lone Zone". It is, in short, a tired, strained comedy of what happened the night a Russian space capsule landed in a Hertfordshire village and is oh-so-feeble.

But the issue isn't all of such low calibre. Langdon Jones is one writer who has begun to fulfil his promise - his "The Music Makers" is a magnificent handling of a magnificent idea. It will appeal to any music lover. Mr. Jones has tried to show what the final achievement of perfection in music must mean: why Beethoven and Mahler died before that climactic 10th symphony could flow from their pens.

Colin Hume has a fine fantasy in "Until We Meet". Well worth reading in a throw-away manner.

James Colvin's novel "The Wrecks of Time" starts off promisingly, with a handful of strong characters and an intriguing picture of the fifteen alternate Earths. The ending of the first part seems to intimate that it could be soaring off into the surrealist realms that Colvin is so fond of. Let us hope it is not to be.

Lousy cover but don't let it put you off - Langdon Jones's story is worth far more than 2/6d.

SCIENCE FANTASY 78. Apart from, or perhaps because of, the inexplicable absence of Kyril Bonfiglioli, this is a well-balanced issue.

Comedy? "The Saga of Sid" is a beautiful mixture of Norse legends and straight humour, expertly stirred and compares very favourably indeed with the NEW WORLDS funny-funny.

Poetry? You couldn't come much closer to it in the un-Aldiss Aldiss story "The Day of the Doomed King". Fantasy in its purest and most lyrical sense. And "Beyond Time's Aegis" by Brian Craig is the allegorical wandering of the Firefly in search of the Time-walker and introduces a plethora of unforgettable characters.

Allegory? Josephine Saxton has a beautifully personalised symbolism in her "The Wall", a story of frustrated love with its own wild logic.

Horror? Try Johnny Byrne's "Yesterday's Gardens" for the sheer horror of a tiny girl's reactions to The Nuclear Holocaust. Far more mature than any of Mr. Byrne's many other SCIENCE FANTASY tales.

Classical mythology? Thomas Burnett Swann is doing his best to create such in "The Weirwoods", which concludes in this issue. A flowery, verbose novel of ancient Etruria. You either love Swann or shrink from him in distaste.

And surprise, surprise! Five stories are announced on the cover and <u>all five</u> appear inside.

A feather in Bonfiglioli's cap for this issue, but one wonders if he can possibly keep up the improvement.

Graham Hall.

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THE VISUAL SIDE

VIC HALLETT

I mentioned at the start of my last article that the most promising film on the cinema horizon was Stanley Kubrick's Cinerama production, 2001 : A SPACE ODYSSEY. It becomes more promising with each piece of news that is released and I hope to keep you informed of future developments as I hear of them. The latest is that it takes as its starting point, Arthur C. Clarke's short story "The Sentinel", but that it goes much farther than the story did. Clarke himself is co-author of the screenplay with Kubrick and so far the cast includes Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood as astronauts. Locations are planned for Germany, Switzerland, America and Africa, with studio and process work being done here in Britain.

Those of you who know the story will remember that it concerns an exploration expedition to the Moon who discover that an alien artifact is already there. This is a sentinel or, as Kubrick describes it, an interplanetary burglar-alarm. The film moves on to discover who or what put it there and why, and embarks on a journey through the solar system and, finally, on a light-years long interstellar trip. As one would expect from Clarke, care is being taken to ensure scientific accuracy. Kubrick has so far shown that he is a director of honesty - when he says that the film will be about the majesty of space, then we can be sure that it will look majestic and not studio-bound and cardboard.

The continent is showing an interest in serious SF as well. Prize winner at this year's Trieste SF Film Festival was Jean Luc Godard's ALPHAVILLE. Starting from the unpromising idea of a Lemmy Caution yarn, this French film has achieved the reputation of being one of the most entertaining, and yet serious, SF films for some time. Starring Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina and Akim Tamiroff, it tells of the tough private eye's assignment which takes him to the city state of the title - a city ruled by a robot, Alpha 60. The inhabitants of Alphaville are happy, conforming, mindless zombies who are soon shaken up by the iconoclastic ideas of Caution. This is, of course, an old science fiction theme, but it is some time since we had a serious attempt to put it on screen.

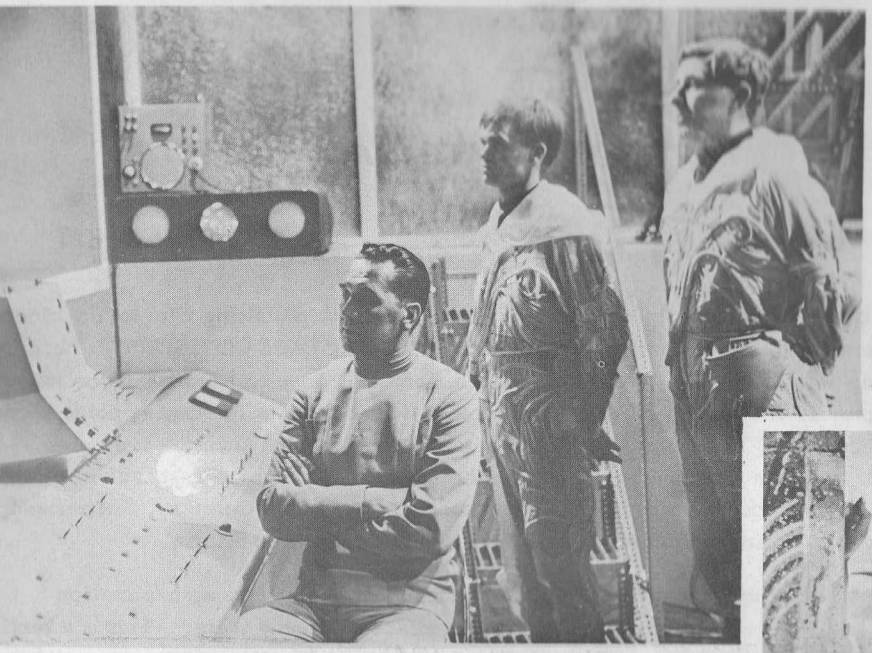
The other big continental film is an Italian Cinemascope and colour production, THE TENTH VICTIM. Set in the 21st Century, it tells of a society where murder hunts are the legal way of getting rid of man's aggressiveness and killer instincts no longer satisfied by war. The tenth victim is the one that brings social status and political power. The film stars Ursula Andress as the American huntress and Marcello Mastroianni as the Italian potential victim who proves harder to get than the girl anticipated. Taken from a short story by Robert Sheckley, the film is directed by Elio Petri.

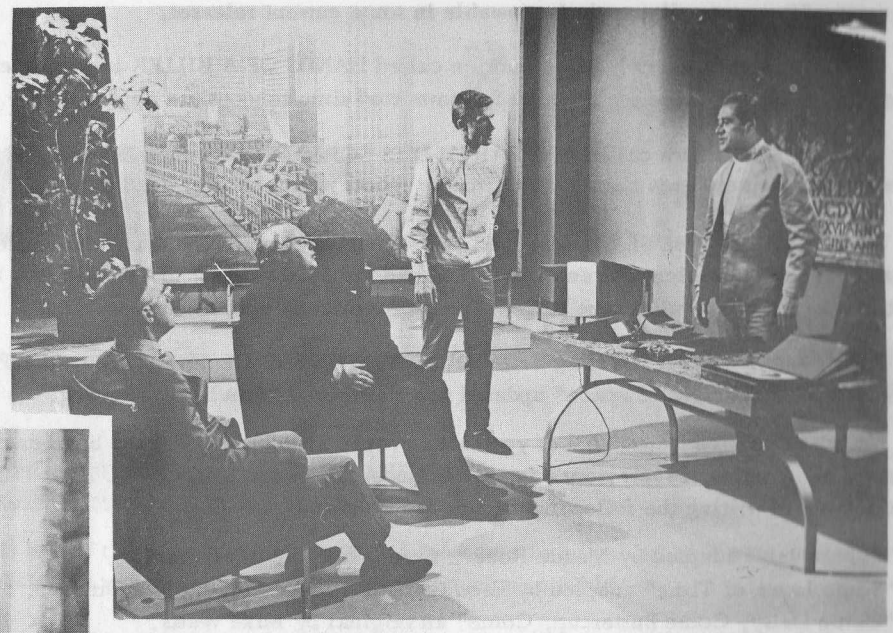
Contd. on page 16....

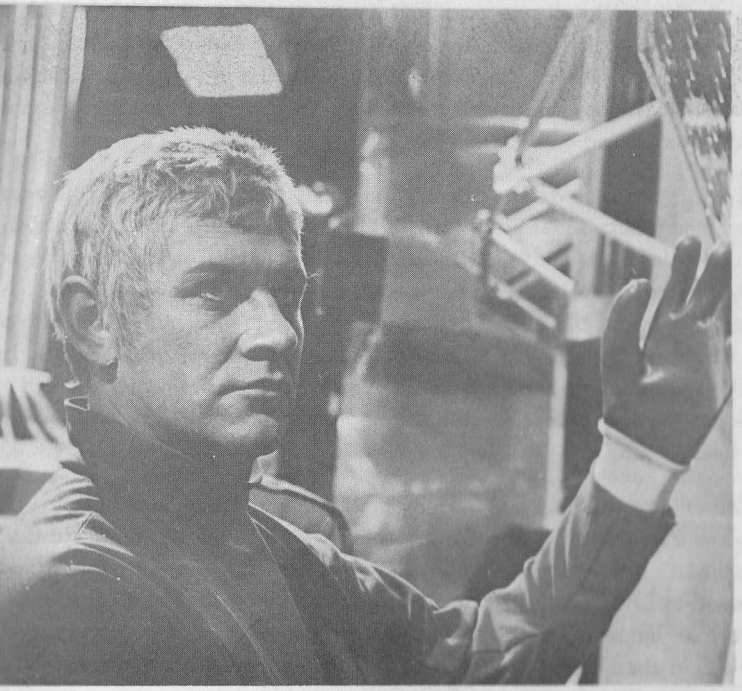
SCENES FROM

OUT OF THE UNKNOWN

BBC 2







SF on a smaller scale is viewable in some current releases.

An Italian-French co-production called HANDS OF A KILLER is concerned with sabotage on a world-wide scale which is committed simultaneously - apparently by one man.

A British film called THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING is another variation on the invasion from outer space theme, this time by robots who take over dead humans.

CITY IN THE SEA is described as a romantic adventure fantasy and concerns an Atlantis-type civilisation between Land's End and the Scilly Isles. This looks like being the first of a series of a similar type to be made by American-International.

They are also releasing THE HOUSE AT THE END OF THE WORLD - H.P. Lovecraft's "Colour Out of Space" updated and transferred to an English setting.

Television News. All of you lucky people with BBC2 will have been enjoying the Monday night series of short story adaptations under the general title of OUT OF THE UNKNOWN. At the time of writing the following are yet to be shown:

1) "Sucker Bait" adapted by Meade Roberts from a story by Isaac Asimov.
2) "Some Lapse of Time" adapted by Leon Griffiths from a story by John Brunner.
3) "Come Daisy, Come Buttercup, Come" an original by Mike Watts.
4) "The Fox and the Forest" adapted by Terry Nation from a story by Ray Bradbury.
5) "Andover and the Android" adapted by Bruce Stewart from a story by Kate Wilhelm.
6) "The Midas Plague" adapted by Troy Kennedy Martin from a story by Frederik Pohl.
7) "Thirteen to Centaurus" adapted by Stanley Miller from a story by J.G. Ballard.

Also, by the time you read this column, you will either be looking forward to, or will have seen, an adaptation of 1984.

Sunday evening viewers can find LOST IN SPACE on ITV. This American film series is the brain-child of Irwin Allen who was responsible for VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

Vic Hallett.

Photos (pages 14 and 15)

TOP LEFT: Scene from "Sucker Bait". L to R - Bill Nagy as the Captain, Clive Endersby as Mark and John Meillon as Dr. Sheffield.

TOP RIGHT: Scene from "The Dead Past". L to R - George Benson as Arnold Potterley, Willoughby Goddard as Ralph Nimmo, James Maxwell as Jonas Foster and David Langton as Thaddeus Araman.

BOTTOM LEFT: Scene from "Time In Advance". Edward Judd as Nicholas Crandall.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Scene from "No Place Like Earth". Terence Morgan as Bert Foster.

CENTRE: Scene from "No Place Like Earth". Hannah Gordon as Zaylo.

Photographs by courtesy of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

BOOKS | Reviews & Future Releases

ANALOG ANTHOLOGY edited by John W. Campbell
Published by DOBSON at 30/- 789 pages.

This is one of the biggest-ever science fiction books to be published in this country - a massive black-bound volume resembling nothing so much as a Bible

Is this resemblance continued throughout, one might ask, considering that not only religion has a 'bible' - other media have, for instance, the Rubber Handbook, or Jane's Book of Ships. Does the ANALOG ANTHOLOGY contain a selection of stories that is utterly fundamental to the science fiction field? The answer is 'no'. Most of the all-time 'greats' of science fiction were written a decade or more ago, while this volume covers mostly the years of the early 'sixties. Very well then, to rephrase our question; does this volume contain a selection of modern science fiction stories that are fundamental to the field? And the answer, this time round, is 'yes'. There are no less than nine stories which I would grade as absolutely first rate in every way. There are eleven stories that I would grade as being well above average and the remaining six are all readable at least, entertaining at best.

In its previous incarnation, ASTOUNDING was always the best of the magazines, and editor Campbell's re-titling was one of the best things that ever happened to it. Although readers made a storm at the time, reflection will make plain that the superbly-handled transition to ANALOG was as inevitable and as necessary as the change of ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE to ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION. Mr. Campbell is an editor with such a record of success that one becomes extremely reluctant to criticise. Almost invariably, what seems at the time to be misguided and mistaken proves, after a year or so of reflection, to be exactly what was demanded by the situation.

In this light, let us look at some of the best and a few of the worst of the stories contained in this volume.

Ralph Williams is an author who makes an appearance once every five years or so. When he does, his stories are worth waiting for. In this volume, he is represented by

"Business as Usual, During Alterations". The story-line is very simple; the matter-transmitter is given to Earth and the resultant problems are solved in the story. Damon Knight handled the same basic theme in A FOR ANYTHING, but while Mr. Knight's book heaped melodrama on violence as the world's economy collapsed, Mr. Williams presents a view of the world's reactions that is much more cheerful, perhaps much more probable. If money can be duplicated, does it really matter? Yes, I thought it would...until I read the story. The treatment is restrained, entertaining, believable. First rate.

Rick Raphael's "A Filbert is a Nut" is, by contrast, one of those silly, pointless sketches that stop dead without an ending. There are no characters, is no plot or explanation. It 'just happens' that a madman can make an atomic bomb out of modelling clay, and can make the Washington Memorial fly away into the sky (that's the punch-line - or apology for one - that this story possesses, by the way). Here I poke one criticism at Mr. Campbell - his interest in the 'psi powers' not only created a mood which encouraged some really fine psi tales, but it encouraged some authors to submit this sort of thing to ANALOG. Mr. Campbell obviously accepted it on a bad day.

H. Beam Piper's "Omnilingual" is already a classic; although published only in 1957, it had by 1960 found its way into Russian translation and is set for many decades' fame. The story concerns the archaeological excavation of a Martian city. Using one unproven assumption as a foundation, that of Martian human life, Mr. Piper has written a careful, logical and interesting story of the uncovering of the 'Rosetta Stone' for the Martian languages. This does not really read like science fiction; the characterisation and the descriptive work make this a story, but otherwise it is exactly the sort of material you would expect to find in a competently-written 'popular' archaeological book or possibly in READER'S DIGEST or NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE. If you don't like fiction that is so realistic it might be true, then this story is not for you.

Although Christopher Anvil is a hack writer, he can usually produce fiction that is entertaining and interesting, sometimes even thought-provoking. Of his three stories in this book, one is interesting and provocative, one is entertaining and one is very poor indeed. The latter is "The Hunch" - a story with no obvious message and no obvious merits. It is not funny, though the slapstickery is painfully contrived. There are no characters, is no atmosphere and the sheer ridiculous improbability of the events described makes the whole thing a waste of space.

To even the balance, Isaac Asimov's classic "Belief" opens the book - one of the first and best of the psi stories. Garrett and Silverberg collaborate satisfyingly, Mack Reynolds pulls a few legs, in company with Gordon R. Dickson, Anvil and Eric Frank Russell, and a mixed bag of other authors completes a gift package that has a lot for everyone who likes science fiction.

I recommend this book....with reservations. Firstly, a regular reader of ANALOG

may like the book on his shelves and to loan to friends as an introduction to SF, but he will (naturally enough) find nothing new here. Second, an advocate of the new 'wishy-washy' school of amorphous story-telling won't like the book at all. 'Science fiction' is now a generic term that refers to a very wide field indeed. ANALOG restricts itself to a particular coverage of that field; which is, of course, as it should be.

Pete Weston.

NIGHT OF MASKS by Andre Norton
Published by GOLLANCZ at 15/-. 183 pages.

Andre Norton, apparently, is something of a favourite among highbrow reviewers; and no doubt many habitual SF readers will find her books tasty fare.

NIGHT OF MASKS, however, is a bit too much of a bad thing for my unsophisticated tastes. Most of the story takes place on Dis, a planet that has everything.

Everything nasty, that is. For a start, the light emitted by its sun is infra-red. In order to see things, even at midday, special goggles are required, and even so, a good deal of the action takes place at midnight, in a series of tunnels. The inhabitants of these tunnels spend their time eating each other and trying to eat the unfortunate hero.

If there is a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Characters, they should investigate the case of this hero right away. With most of his face burnt off before the story opens, he is unable to afford adequate plastic surgery; and without a face he cannot earn a living. So he stays in the Dipple, a sort of compulsory Hell's Kitchen for down-and-outs.

Had he but known - the Dipple was Butlin's Holiday Camp compared with Dis. But, off he blasts to this nightmare planet in the role of a boy's imaginary playmate. To Vandy, the lad in question, he is Hacon, a superman hero complete with fake ray gun.

He is betrayed and imprisoned. Together with Vandy he escapes from the frying-pan of jail into the fire of freedom.

From then on nothing can be relied upon. Nothing is certain. Can he trust Vandy, Captain Leeds, the Patrol, the Guild of Thieves? He doesn't know. Even the fake ray gun turns out to be less of a fake than he thought it was.

The style is that of a poor man's Kafka. It enhances the effect of the claustrophobic setting. The result is a book which makes the reader squirm in his chair and feel he'll be glad when the book is finished, and his ordeal, as well as the hero's, is over. But at the same time he is loth to put it down.

W.T. Webb.

RAIDERS FROM THE RINGS by Alan E. Nourse
Published by FABER at 16/- 199 pages.

This book is competent without saying anything new or exciting. My statement is not asderogatory as it sounds. The bulk of SF being produced today is in the same category. The reasons why this is so are complex and don't yield easily to analysis. Writing is hard work. I - and all other writers - have known this for a long time. But just how hard a task it is has been brought home to me as a result of my attendance at my first convention, Loncon 2, where I had the opportunity to talk to writers vastly better and more experienced than myself. Upon my return, I started a novel, attempting a new style and to crisp up my writing. I'm finding the job twice as hard now but four times as enjoyable.

All writers must, at one time or another, find it necessary to produce a commercial novel and I think Nourse has done this with his present book. The story of the clash between the Spacers and the Earthmen and how the struggle is resolved is written with pace, everything explained and no loose ends. While the story proved to be less shallow than I thought it was going to be, I couldn't work up any enthusiasm for it.

Most SF novels aren't worth 16/- or whatever the price of a particular hardcover happens to be. This one is in the great majority. If you feel like reading it, wait until the paperback is published.

Donald Malcolm.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF 6 edited by John Carnell
Published by DOBSON at 16/-. 184 pages.

The jacket blurb, "....the next step forward in expanding the SF short story from the limitations it has suffered during the past thirty years..." rubbed me the wrong way. WHAT limitations? And anyway, the genre develops gradually, not in hiccups.

Manfully stifling my antagonism to the blurb writer, I tried the first story - "The Inner Wheel" (a 'short' which occupies more than one third of the book). It starts off in the sickening (to me) style which throws everything and the kitchen sink, then rambles all over the place occasionally meeting a story on the way. My worst fears seemed to be realised, until persevering, I reached the half-way mark, where Mr.Roberts hit his stride, chucked out the nouveau rubbische and got up steam.

From this point to the end, the book was sheer delight, and the best selection of SF I've read in a long time. Despite the blurb, there is nothing actually new here, but what does appear is many a well executed treatment or twist of an old theme.

Here's a capsuled breakdown:- "The Inner Wheel" (Keith Roberts) is about a village 'controlled' by a gestalt personality. Can the hero elope with one of its segments?

"Horizontal Man" (William Spencer) is the familiar plot of a future generation which lives in illusion machines. This one has a lovely treatment and is nicely horrific. Probably the weakest story in the book is "Day Before Never" (Robert Presslie) which concerns a resistance fighter versus alien invaders. Still good, though. "The Hands" (John Baxter) is a totally gruesome tale of an utterly different sort of gestalt creation. "Seekers" (E.C. Tubb) tells of an alien artifact that is all things to all men. "Atrophy" (E. Hill) tells of a bored button-pusher who gets out of the rut and develops initiative. Finally, in "Advantage" (John Rackham) the leader of a construction team avoids accidents with the help of precognition.

Such bald terms make the plots seem old and corny. Old they may be, and certainly not a 'next step forward', but corny they are not, thanks to the refreshing ways in which they are handled. I can strongly recommend this as well worth the money.

Terry Jeeves.

THE FIRECLOWN by Michael Moorcock
Published by COMPACT F 281. Price 3/6. 185 pages

Michael Moorcock's writing lacks something. It could be time, it could be self-discipline; it certainly isn't potential.

As in most of his writings, THE FIRECLOWN has all the signs that here is a writer who, if he sat down to write, would not only become one of the finest exponents of SF, but could rank with the better mainstream writers.

In THE FIRECLOWN, for example, Moorcock has excellent characterisation; Alan Powys, the hero, is not the clean-cut cardboard hero of so many other books, and the Fireclown himself is a magnificent personality. The plot is smooth and hangs together well - if one overlooks a tendency to fall down at crises. Some of the ideas, especially the Fireclown's philosophy - a sort of wildly extrapolated Logical Positivism — are very good indeed.

But this novel is only good second-rate reading - good enough for a train journey or a day in bed with 'flu - and Moorcock only an excellent and inventive hack. Which is a pity. If he had taken care over writing THE FIRECLOWN, its political intriguery could have compared with such SF classics as THE SPACE MERCHANTS.

Graham Hall.

THE DRAGON MASTERS by Jack Vance
DENNIS DOBSON. Price 13/6. 132 pages.

This novel won the Hugo in 1963 and it is easy to see why. No matter how progressive fen in the singular may be, their collective taste when it comes to voting awards leans towards the tried and true. Here are the stock parts, assembled once again: the cut-off

human colony, the war against the aliens, the wheels-within-wheels plot, the ever-idiotic and ever-revived union of spaceships and swordplay. It is a tribute to Vance's art that the story comes to life and thunders along in a most readable and lively fashion.

Vance does it by writing ability alone. The place names on this planet ring happily in the ear, Banbeck Vale, Clewhaven, the Great Northern Rift, as do the types of dragons that have been bred to aid men in their wars, the rust-red Termagant, the Long-horned Murderer, the Blue Horror and others. These names are repeated, almost too often, until they begin to sound in the ear like a litany with the same affect of producing a suspension of disbelief.

Once again Vance manages to reduce world and galactic events to his own particular and small scale. Only a few square miles of the planet appear to be occupied and the aliens invade cyclically only when their "sun draws near" again. Yet this scale does not offend, it rather allows us to be drawn more fully into the story. And the rewards are satisfying. A very neat plot-twist involving mutation and the true nature of the alien Basics pulls together a number of developments that seemed hopelessly separate.

This is a strange book, a particularly Jack Vance book with the Vance magic that permeates all of his work. It is an enjoyable book, and on that score alone it should be recommended. All of this in spite of the fact that the theme is thin, almost non-existent. It makes one wonder what would happen if Vance found a theme that he could really sink his literary teeth into.

Harry Harrison.

ALSO RECEIVED

THE STARS LIKE DUST by Isaac Asimov (Panther 863, 3/6, 183 pages)

THE END OF ETERNITY by Isaac Asimov (Panther 881, 3/6, 183 pages)

THE NAKED SUN by Isaac Asimov (Panther 1016, 3/6, 196 pages)

AMERICAN BOOK RELEASES

DUNE by Frank Herbert (Chilton $5.95)

TO WORLDS BEYOND by Robert Silverberg (Chilton $3.95)

A NICE DAY FOR SCREAMING by James H. Schmitz (Chilton $3.95)

SEEKERS OF TOMORROW by Sam Moskowitz (World $6.00)

MODERN MASTERPIECES OF SCIENCE FICTION edited by Sam Moskowitz (World $6.00)

BEYOND THE GREAT OBLIVION by George Allan England (Avalon $3.25)

ENSLAVED BRAINS by Eando Binder (Avalon $3.25)

THE MOUTHPIECE OF ZITU by J.U. Giesy (Avalon $3.25)

THE PSEUDO-PEOPLE: ANDROIDS IN SF edited by William F.Nolan (Sherbourne Press $4.50)

TENTH ANNUAL OF THE YEAR'S BEST SF edited by Judith Merril. (Delacorte Press $4.95) due December.

MIND-SWAP by Robert Sheckley (Delacorte Press) due February 1966.

MASTER OF THE WORLD by Jules Verne (Airmont Classics CL73, 50¢)

MYSTERIOUS ISLAND by Jules Verne (Airmont Classics CL77, 60¢)

FIRST MEN IN THE MOON by H.G. Wells (Airmont Classics CL78, 50¢)

AUTUMN PEOPLE by Ray Bradbury (Ballantine U2141, 50¢)

THE CASE AGAINST TOMORROW by Frederik Pohl (Ballantine U2175, 50¢)

RE-BIRTH by John Wyndham (Ballantine U2820, 50¢)

TALE OF TWO CLOCKS by James H. Schmitz (Belmont B50-643, 50¢)

RORK! by Avram Davidson (Berkley F1146, 50¢)

MISSION TO UNIVERSE by Gordon R. Dickson (Berkley F1147, 50¢)

MAGIC MAN AND OTHER SCIENCE FANTASY STORIES by Charles Beaumont (Gold Medal D1586, 50¢)

OSSIAN'S RIDE by Fred Hoyle (Harper P60, 50¢)

JUDGEMENT NIGHT by C.L. Moore (Paperback Library 52-863, 50¢)

THE GREAT TIME MACHINE HOAX by Keith Laumer (Pocket Books 50¢)

GRAY LENSMAN by Edward E. Smith (Pyramid 1245, 50¢)

DAY OF THE STAR CITIES by John Brunner (Ace 40¢)

THE SQUARES OF THE CITY by John Brunner (Ballantine 75¢) due December.

BRITISH BOOK RELEASES

MISSION TO THE HEART STARS by James Blish (Faber 13/6) Nov.11th.

THE LONG RESULT by John Brunner (Faber 18/-) Nov.11th.

BEST SF STORIES OF BRIAN W. ALDISS (Faber 21/-)

FALLEN STAR by James Blish (Faber 18/-) re-issue.

OF WORLDS BEYOND edited by Lloyd Arthur Eshbach (Dobson 13/6) Nov. 8th.

(A Symposium, containing essays by John W. Campbell Jr., L. Sprague de Camp, Robert Heinlein, Jack Williamson, A.E. van Vogt, John Taine and Edward E. Smith, with an introduction by John Carnell)

THE SPECIALS by Louis Charbonneau (Herbert Jenkins 15/-)

WITH A STRANGE DEVICE by Eric Frank Russell (Penguin 2358, 3/6) Oct.28th.

NOW THEN by John Brunner (Mayflower 050-6500-8, 3/6) Oct.

THE BEST OF KUTTNER 1 by Henry Kuttner (Mayflower 070-0547-8, 5/-) Nov.

BRAIN WAVE by Poul Anderson (Mayflower 050-0765-8, 3/6) Dec.

THEY CAME, THEY SAW by James R. Hallums (Brown Watson R920, 2/6).

FAR BOUNDARIES edited by August Derleth (Consul 1443, 3/6)

EARTH ABIDES by George R. Stewart (Corgi FS7263, 5/-) re-issue.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF 4 edited by John Carnell (Corgi GS7262, 3/6)

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THE MAIL RESPONSE

David Copping
121 Springfield Park Road
Chelmsford
Essex

Although much of SF may well contain some philosophical concepts, much of which is intentional, I believe that a good proportion is unintentional. This, I base on the words of many authors who accuse critics of searching for and 'reading in' ideas which they have not, consciously at least, employed. The basic purpose of SF is entertainment with a little mental stimulation added. The basic purpose is entertainment. This cannot be stressed too strongly. I read it because it gives me great satisfaction, but I can't share the general enthusiasm for it at present. That is perhaps why I am turning towards writing it myself, for I think that the next logical step from reading is to writing and the satisfaction obtained from writing can become deeper than that of reading.

Richard Gordon mentions, as just one of the examples of the points he is trying to make, the excellent, if not classic, adventure yarn of Eric Frank Russell's - THE GREAT EXPLOSION. I may say that, until Mr. Gordon pointed it out, I had never seen it as it apparently is. A civilisation founded on...."Ghandian concepts of non-resistance and civil disobedience...". I wonder if the author realises?

The particular book was one which I enjoyed as it stood as a humorous and clever yarn. If, though, SF has to contain philosophical concepts, (and this alone is worthy of argument), they should, and indeed in most cases do, take last place to the story. The general reader who, like the average man, is non-existent, misses the concepts underlying the tales he reads. Fans may be more astute and a fan may be said not to miss much, but he might miss the pure enjoyment of a plain and simple story.

(We agree that the basic purpose of SF is entertainment but one grows weary of reading stories that are pure entertainment. Fortunately, SF writers add thought-provoking ideas to their stories. The issue gets fogged though as one can rarely tell whether or not an author actually believes in the concepts he writes about. - RGP.)

Brian Stableford
16 Thompson Road
Denton
Lancs.

Richard Gordon's lead article was fair - he didn't say much, but what he did say was reasonable and he managed to make it interesting, although a little drawn out. He ends on the usual note of hope for the future (can't someone think of another way to end an article?), in this case a hope that authors will continue to insert bits of 'clear and original thinking' into their stories. He manages to give the impression that he thinks this a recent development, although,as far as I can see, authors have been adding odd bits of philosophy, either under the guise of 'alien ways of thought' or simply as the hero's mental meanderings. I can see no reason to think that they might stop doing so, and therefore no real justification for the hope that they will continue to do so.

VECTOR 35

Roje I. Gilbert
92 St. Fabians Drive
Chelmsford
Essex.

Bob Parkinson's article was good, for the simple reason that it provoked interest in Borges. Too often, an article-writer will be nutty about the author he is talking about and tend to get carried away, listing nearly all the stories of the author and all the plots. By the end of an article like that, the reader will be fed up with the adulation and retire to reading his own gods. Bob Parkinson doesn't fall into this trap. He limits the information given, stimulating the reader to want to find out more. He has written in generalities as opposed to specific illustrations, and has suggested that Borges has an unusual style, "so why not go and see for yourself?" VECTOR could do with more articles like this and "The Eroded Landscape" (Bob Parkinson again!) of V/34.

I got lost in David Sparrow's article, with all its 'appears' and 'ifs', and it appeared pointless, if you see what I mean. Having read Einstein's "Theory of Relativity" in combination with a fair knowledge of calculus, I found the Special Theory beautifully simple and clear. The final equations for time-dilation, mass-increase and length-contraction are logically and concisely arrived at and describe the physical effects excellently. After reading David Sparrow's article I'm once again lost in the Outer Darkness.

Oh, those book reviews! They're far too short. How is the reviewer expected to express what he, personally, thinks of the book when he has about half a page to do it in? Couldn't we cut down the number of books reviewed, but increase the length of the review, so that the book may be dissected, analysed, commented on without giving away too much of the plot and then either recommended or not?

No "Mail Response" again. What's wrong, is VECTOR afraid of praise or criticism? I'm convinced that the letter column is one of the more popular features of any journal or magazine. I think a magazine which is not afraid to publish comments on itself will be respected and supported by its readership all the more.

(For comments on the David Sparrow article, see following letter. The book reviews are short in order that more books can be reviewed in the space available. In future, though, there will be at least one book reviewed at considerable length, plus a few reviews of the shorter length. I would have thought that it was impossible to review too many books - the BSFA should attempt to review every SF book published in, or imported into, this country. At the moment, this is impossible as some publishers refuse to co-operate by sending review copies - we're trying to get through to them, though.

"The Mail Response" hasn't appeared in the last couple of issues for the simple reason that there weren't enough letters to make a readable column. I must admit that I've been considering dropping the letter column completely. I've found quite a few members who agree with my own views that it is unnecessary and the worst part of any magazine. There are bound to be two sides to any argument - which side has the majority, though? It's up to you. If you want to save the letter column then let's have some "Response" to this issue. If it's as bad as on the last three issues, though, I can only presume that the majority agree with me. Over to you, then - RGP.)

Steve Oakey
Rectory Lane
Somersham
Huntingdon.

The article "Fiction, Fact or Anachronism" in VECTOR 35 was rubbish. Temporarily I'll ignore the fact that David Sparrow does not use relativity as his main exposition and I'll deal with the inaccuracies.

First, time never reverses according to Einstein.

Second, Einstein stated that the speed of light is constant to the observer.

Third, the photoelectric effect said nothing about the speed of electrons. What it did say, however, was that the amount (or quantum) of energy given out was related to the wavelength of light directed on the plate; a completely different statement.

Lastly, the point I have ignored until now. The whole 'argument' does not take relativity into account. The ageing process does not depend on light waves travelling from here to there. It does depend on the velocity of the traveller.

I think that there are enough incorrect statements pointed out in the author's argument to reject his ideas without going much further into the matter. Please, no more articles like this.

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"SCIENCE FICTION AND BIOLOGY"

Sometime in February next year, Bromley Technical College (Kent) proposes to hold a one day conference on "Science Fiction and Biology". This proposed conference will be part of the Liberal Studies element of a course leading to the award of a Higher National Certificate in Applied Biology.

Mr. John Ford, Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Science at the College, has written to the BSFA in the hope that there may be members who wish to participate by giving a short talk and answering students' questions.

If anyone in the BSFA feels they are qualified to give a talk on this subject will they please contact me as soon as possible.

Roy Kay,

Chairman.

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