

Wells, and getting back eventually, via many distinguished ancestors, to Plato and his Atlantis. Writers of prefaces to anthologies, she said, tended to call it an "ancient, honourable genre" or something of the sort. She believed that it was essentially a product of this century ("the most astounding century ever inflicted on people who like a quiet life") as a result of the new attitude of the reader. Readers, she maintained, had never been so passionately interested in the future before. The two wars had produced young people who were no longer interested in yesterday. The literature which had always been thought so secure now held no interest for millions of intelligent people.

The reader was asked to make a great act of faith. He had to accept space travel, telepathy and other marvellous developments as actual fact. "Then the writer gets going", and the stories, she said emphatically "have become so good". Nowadays, there was hardly a science fiction magazine that did not produce in each issue at least one, if not two or three, really first-rate stories—stories that were so brilliant that they could hold their own with anything that was being written at the present time.

"All is grist to this extraordinary mill," she said in conclusion. The range of the writer of science fiction was enormous. Apart from sociology, he found scope for humour, satire, burlesque. In every direction present-day thought and speech were caught like butterflies and put under the glass.

#### DETAIL

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# SCIENCE FICTION NEWS



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*The Current Choice is*

## THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE

By A. E. Van Vogt

(Grayson & Grayson 8/6; SFBC 6/-)

### Herbert Jones writes:

If—and it's still a mighty big if, in spite of everything that has taken place in recent years—if man ever conquers space, truth will reveal itself as a much stranger thing than any science fiction. Meanwhile there is Van Vogt.

*The Voyage of the Space Beagle* derives its title, of course, from Charles Darwin's century-old classic *Journal of Researches into the Geology and Natural History of the various countries visited during the voyage of Her Majesty's Ship Beagle round the World*—one of the most instructive books of its kind ever written.

*Beagle*, a ten-gun Brig using sail and capable of making a few knots an hour, left Devonport on December 27th, 1831, and on the 2nd of October, 1836, Darwin relates "We made