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Co-Edited By Rory Faulkner and Alan Hershey

EDITORIAL

Coming to the end of a year is a sort of joyous-sad occasion when everyone counts up their profits and losses on the field of battle and usually make certain resolves for the new year.

But when a year such as our present one begins to sink below the horizon, it is rather difficult to look forward with any sense of the stability of things. We of LASFS like to think that come war or atom bomb, LASFS will still go on turning out the same old crud for their membership to read. The writers might be different, and getting along and together might be harder, but the old do-or-die spirit, reinforced by a tradition of sixteen years in the business, is still there.

The new year will see many changes for the club. Their perennial director will no longer be directing, their perennial secretary will no longer be noting. Some of the membership will probably be scattered hither and thither in a turbulent world. But there are always plenty of new directors and new secretaries and new members, and it is pretty certain that the spirit of the organization will carry on.

Science fiction in many ways is just beginning to grow out of its swaddling clothes and the invidious attraction it offers to its accolytes is certainly here to stay. The joy of turning out a fanzine or getting together with the boys for a good yak session about the latest stories is certainly nothing that will disappear overnite.

This mag has been a proving ground for many a new writer trying to crash the pearly gates of pro writing, and we have every hope that it will continue to fulfill that function in the future. So keep on reading Shaggy, lovely audience, and remember that while it ain't no Astounding or Galaxy, it still has its own peculiar, neurotic charm!

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RUSTIC WITH A COSMIC SENSE

BY

ARTHUR JEAN COX

Simak's lack of single, spectacular stories---"classics"---is to his disadvantage in his appeal to the average magazine buyer; for the casual reader tends to remember authors by individual stories rather than by any characteristic of the author's work as a whole. With the serious reader of science-fiction, however, it is no great drawback, since Simak's work has distinctive qualities which set it off from the material of other contemporary science-fiction writers.

Time Quarry is Simak's first attempt to write a major science-fiction story and although it probably falls short of all that he wanted it to be, he succeeded in his attempt. His other novel, Cosmic Engineers is little more than an outgrowth or continuation of his very early stories in the Gernsback and Clayton magazines, prior to his six year absence from the field; these stories we will ignore.

The stories he wrote upon his return to science-fictio, Rule 18, Reunion on Ganymede, and Hunger Death, although poor when compared to his later writings, did show the developmental beginnings of his present work---and these will be what I mean when I refer to Simak's "early" stories. In this essay we will not be concerned with any particular story of Simak's but with all his work. There are two stories, however, to which the reader's attention will be directed again and again; in both of these, those aspects of Simak's writing which I am emphasizing are most clearly evidenced---although, surprisingly, on two completely different levels.

In Time Quarry we find the fullest expression of a group of connected themes which we first began to notice in Simak's work as early as Hermit of Mars in 1939; and in the novelette Aesop we see that Simak's peculiar traits of style and story construction apparently reached the apex of their development.

Perhaps the most readily noticeable characteristic of Simak's stories is the looseness of their plot structure. The plots and subplots of a Simak piece are like so many loose threads running parallel to each other. At a certain point in the story, the reader sees some obvious way in which these threads can be tied together to form a conclusion to the stoey. Simak, however, gently pairs them together in such a way that he gives us an unexpected ending. Not a surprise ending, for that implies a sense of purpose to the action which Simak seems to lack. There is no emphasis on the ending as such. In fact, his endings are so casual that they seem careless, with many threads left untouched or leading off into uncertainties and vague futures. This type of story construction is strongly present in his first ASF story,

Rule 18; here the termination of the story is surprising, but it is not a surprise ending inthe van Vogtian sense, in which the climax occurs in conjunction with the ending of the story. Hunch, Census, Paradise, and of course, Aesop, all fall well within the defining boundaries of this type of story.

Simak's story construction sometimes gives us a feeling that the story was not completed; or just as likely, that it has wandered past its correct ending; a feeling which is so common that it has inspired several complaints from readers. One very noticeable exception to this generality is Time Quarry, in which a strong ending is not only facilitated but made almost unavoidable by the presence of a strong central character, something which Simak's stories usually do not have.

A second and more important characteristic of Simak's work is his simplicity of writing. This, too, was present in Rule 18, Hunger Death and Reunion on Ganymede as well as other stories of that period, but in a limited form. As more and more of his work appeared in print, this trait became more and more noticeable, as if Simak had discovered in it a potential distinguishing factor of his work and had accentuated it. In Aesop, this simplicity reaches the apex of its development. The prose of this novelette is on a fourth or fifth grade reader level. One almost expects to see it printed in large letters.

This simplicity is no mere authorial or stylistic whim, but serves a very important function in Simak's writings. It grows out of the urgency, the need for self expression which the author apparently feels.

It might be said that there are two major ways of expressing the subtle, both ideas and feelings, in prose. One is obscurity of style; by making the reader strain to see the commonplace, he automatically observes the unusual. Or, to state it another way, by describing all things from an unusual angle, all are reduced to the same level of obviousness. This is the method chosen by Frank Belknap Long during what might be called his "middle period"--- To Follow Knowledge, Alias the Living, Filch, Bridgehead and The Trap. The other way is the exact opposite of the above; by reducing things to their simplest terms, one is enabled to see them as if for the first time. This is the procedure employed---though with different aims and results---by Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway, as well as by John Steinbeck. The latter expresses the purpose of this approach to style in his little foreword to Cannery Row:

"How can the poem and the stink and the grating noise---the quality of light, the tone, the habit and the dream---be set down alive? When you collect marine animals there are certain flatworms so delicate that they are impossible to capture whole, for they break and tatter under the touch. You must let them ooze and crawl onto a knife blade and then lift them gently into your bottle of sea water. And perhaps that might be the way to write this book---to open the page and to let the stories crawl in by themselves."

This is the path adopted by Clifford D. Simak---again, with different aims and results. Beside the use of the method in his writing there are several manifest expressions of the purpose of this style in

Simak's stories. One of the clearest of these is in Time Quarry. Asher Sutton, the protagonist, has to write a book, a book on "destiny" which is going to affect not merely the future history of man and android, but every living creature in the galaxy. He thinks[2] :

"I must write it the way I know it ~~is~~, the way I plan to write it. I must be honest... and I must write so well and so simply that all can understand."

As we might suspect, one of Simak's distinguishing talents lays in his ability to handle fragile ideas and themes without breaking them. Such stories as Hunch, Ogre and Huddling Place---Desertion, Paradise and Hobbies---all give ample evidence of this. Once, Campbell replied to a reader who asked why it was that Simak had had no stories published in such a long while by saying that there were certain story ideas with which Simak was concerned but that they had not gelled yet. This brief but incisive response gives us a distinct impression of the slow crystallization of semi-conscious inspiration out of which Simak's stories grow.

Simak constantly impresses us as one who would like to speak without the use of words, as a person who feels held back by them and who would like to break through them into a newer, freer means of expression; in short, he seems to have that intensity of desire to be understood which the stutterer must feel. His simplicity of style probably grows out of this also. In his beautiful short story, Desertion, a vivid image of this tension is evoked by his descriptive phrase on speech[3] :

"...flapping mouths that formed signals others could understand."

And it is in this story that the barrier of words between Fowler and his dog, Towser, is broken down when as Lopers they speak together mind to mind, and know that this is the way that things should be. And again, in Paradise---which is both a sequel to the Clerical Error-Desertion duology and a part of the City Series---we discover that Juwain's philosophy consisted of a means by which a person could make himself completely, wholly understood by others. And, still again, Asher Sutton of Time Quarry had within him a voice which[4] :

"...said no word for there was no word that could frame the thought it formed."

If there is, for Simak, one drawback to this style, it lays in the limitation of characterization which it imposes upon the author. Simak has tried to overcome this limitation by two means. One is a reliance on atmosphere, and the other is present, carnately and carnival-like, in the persons of his various animal characters. The use of animals as principals and sub-principals arises essentially from that same movement toward simplification that his style represents: characterization reduced to its basic elements. One does not have to characterize the bear, the fox or the dog. We are steeped in a traditional mythology which tells us that one is "drowsy but powerful" ; that the second is "sly" and that the third is "faithful". (Aesop is one of the few, if not the only science-fiction tale to ever have as

a title the parablic name of its author.) The use of robots as characters in ten of his important stories is another aspect of this.

Simak has limited himself to two or three types of human relations, the chief of these being a sort of casually accepted dominance-submissiveness relationship : the Master, who has no doubts about his position, and (most often) the Loved Servant Who Has Been In The Family For Generations. This is where the robots come in --- Jenkins, Nellie, Buster; and the dogs---Nathaniel, Towzer, Ebenezer, Homer--- fit into the picture here, too. Man's best friend, or, as Eric Frank Russell has called him, The Follower. And in Ogre we have the Life Blankets which become subservient symbiotes with Man in the latter's Ozish war against the Music Trees and the Encyclopedia.

Many of us who may be too sensitively aware of our cultural problem.of chauvinism—-or as some insist on calling it, "prejudice4'--- and who have some awareness of the relationship between authoritarianism and ethnocentricism, are perhaps disturbed by this. I was rather startled by Nellie's warning in Ogre, "There's a n----- in the wood-pile, somewhere", but was inclined tc pass it off as a characteriza-tion device, although I am.now aware that it has two other meanings, also. Time Quarry, in a negative way, .confirms our impression'that Simak is emotionally involved with chauvinistic feelings, for that novel is obviously a fantasied extrapolation of the author's own con-flicts in that.area; a conflict with which most of us have some fami-liarity. In Time Quarry, we still have a robot, Buster (who has little reality since he is never seen), but the cause of Humanism as shown by humanization has advanced a point by the appearance of the androids, who largely take the place of robots* The androids are distinguished Horn humans only by a mark on the forehead (like the Mark of the xeast) and an inability to reproduce* Sutton has a Messianic mission to accomplish; as mentioned before, he has to write a book entitled "This Is Destiny", which is supposed to give meaning and value not only to the lives of the androids but to all life in the universe; but it is around the androids that Sutton's turbulent emotions are centered. His philosophy tells him that it is not evil but right that a human and an android, should sit down at a table together, and yet he feels self-conscious when he does so—just as do many comparative-ly unprejudiced persons who " have to. " sit down next to. a negro on a streetcar/ In the first installment of the serial, Sutton repri-mands an android for impertinence, and in the third relieves his tensions and hostility by striking the android, Herkimer. But he makes his decision, and it is the humanistic one; or- perhaps it should be called yitalistic rather than humanistic sinceS •

"...it made him akin to something far.-greater than a race of thinking, brawling, ambitious primates. It made him akin to all life."

Time Quarry has several flaws. The chief of these is that, its" - major emotional impact rests upon a decision which has to be made by the protagonist, and yet this seemingly is not recognized by the author until the third installment* Yet, the unique maturity of its theme, as well as the simple beauty of its writing,, makes it a story of unusual calibre.,

We have not yet touched upon what is a major aspect, if not the major aspect of Simak's writing. That is the theme which swells in and out of his stories like a symphonic statement in a musical composition.

To put it nakedly, it is what might be termed a philosophic terror, a fear of the vastness and instability of the universe. Phrased in this way, it may sound pretentious or arbitrary, but the theme is so inescapably prevalent in the overwhelming bulk of Simak's work that it must be of major importance to that writer's personal psychology, and is certainly of major motivational importance in his works. This fear of the universe, this sense of things lurking just beyond the pale of Man's campfire, is connected in Simak's writings not with the traditional European-Sylvanian horrors of the past but instead with more modern anxieties; here we find not the peasant's fear born of ignorance but the sophisticate's terror born of the knowledge of ignorance. Certainly, the world was never more stable than when it was flat---and Simak intuitively realizes this; the appearance of the multi-angled asteroid in Time Quarry, where solidity seems poised precariously on the brink of nothingness, is the immediate tip-off that here, tense scenes will take place. Simak's awareness of the too great complexity of the universe forces him to express that anxiety through the medium which most openly recognizes the basis for his anxiety: science-fiction. As far as I know, Simak has never written a fantasy. One of the reasons for this might be expressed stylistically. The nature of fantasy---at least most modern fantasy--- is that a series of whimseys or chain of supernatural events is put forward in a literal fashion; some of the finest fantasy writing depends upon an extreme use of this technique. Simak's stories often depend on the lack of literalness in their presentation, and his whole style trends in that direction. Places, events, passages of time, are used for the atmospheric feelings they produce, rather than in respect to an external-to-the-story validity. He likes to place his stories in the disproportionately remote future or in places of dream-like weirdness, for with such ethereal settings, the incidents which take place are not subject to such a critical and mundane examination as they might otherwise be.

Simak's fear theme is present in practically every story he has written, with the possible exception of Rule 18. This author feels he sees it here also, but won't press the point. It is strongly present in Hermit of Mars, Shadow of Life, Hunch, Ogre, Desertion, Paradise, Hobbies, Aesop, The Call From Beyond, Masquerade, and The Trouble With Ants as well as Time Quarry. In two of these, Shadow of Life and Time Quarry, it is stated openly. The following are the opening paragraphs from Shadow of Life, one of the most fascinating beginnings of any science-fiction story[6] :

"The thing at the control board tittered in sardonic mockery.

"'Your creeds sre all in error,' it said. 'There is nothing left but evil.'

"Stephen Lathrop said wearily : 'I've seen enough.'

"' I've tried to show you the human race is something that should never have been,' declared the thing. 'Maybe an experiment that went sour. By some queer quirk it took the wrong step, followed the wrong path. It became benevolent. There is no room for benevolence in the Universe. It is not the accepted way of life. I think I've proven that.'

"'Why did you bother?' Lathrop demanded.

"The thing regarded him with fishy eyes. 'There was another race. A race that found the answer---'

"'We'll find ours, too' growled the human being. 'By the time they reach us we'll have the answer. We'll fight them in our own way.'

"'You can't fight them' said the thing. 'There is no way to fight universal evil. The best you can do is hide from it.'"

And Lathrop has:

"...memories of alien lands acrawl with loathesomeness and venom. Strange planets that were strange not because they were alien, but because of the abysmal terror in the very souls of them. Memories of shambling things that triumphed over pitiful peoples whose only crime was that they could not fight back.

"...Evil on the move, gobbling up the galaxies, marching down the star streams. Unnatural hungers driving sickening hordes across the gulf of space to raven and to plunder."

And in Time Quarry we see fairly well described the fears that drive one people, or one form of life, to hate all others. In Asher Sutton's world, human life is stretched thin throughout the galaxy and Man is afraid that if he makes one misstep he will go down into the darkness forever. He is afraid that single life forms in the galaxy or all the combined life forms, will destroy him; following the age-old pattern of Man, he reads into the action of every living creature his own motives and values. And so, the status quo has to be preserved at any price and no other creature can take a human life without risk of a horrible cost to its kind.

The major difference between Shadow of Life, 1943, and Time Quarry, 1950, is that in the former, Simak's fear is objectified in typical fantasy manner and is shown as being outside, really present in the universe; while in the latter it is depicted as a fear within human beings and is handled as such. The shift of emphasis illustrates Simak's growing maturity as an artist.

How does one deal with a malevolent universe? There are two answers in Simak's writings: Fight it (as Stephen Lathrop would have us do) or hide from it (as the thing at the control board tells us we must do). The theme of hiding and its terrible consequences is repeated, with variations, many times by Simak. There seems to be a morbid preoccupation with the thought that one might give in to the impulse to hide from " the evil of the universe".

The thing at the control board in Shadow of Life was a member of

the long-vanished Martian race; this people had hidden from the universal malevolence by contracting themselves to sub-microscopic size and living on an atom in the bottom of a blue vase. However, by shrinking in three dimensions, they have to enlarge themselves disproportionately in the fourth, so that unknown to themselves a vast, invisible banner is run up showing the deadly races of the universe their location. Or so Lathrop believes. The Martian wished to show Lathrop the evil of the universe so that Lathrop would persuade the Earthmen to hide, too; that is, to become one of the Preachers of Evil, for there are others who have suffered Lathrop's fate. The Martians are so confident in their belief that they have found the right way, the only way, to survive, that they want the only other non-malevolent race to follow their example. Lathrop is so vehement in his rejection of the idea of hiding that he kills two Martians.

In Huddling Place, the sequel to City, we see the situation again, though in a slightly different form. After the disappearance of the cities, men engrew into their farms. Surrounded by their mechanical servants and highly efficient communicative devices, they have no need to leave their rural sanctuaries. And so, an agoraphobic fear of the outside world develops; men not only do not need but are afraid to leave their homes.

Our protagonist, Webster, is a famous brain surgeon with a specialized knowledge of Martian physiology. He learns that his Martian friend, Juwain, has developed a new philosophy which will be a great addition to the cultures of Earth and Mars; but Juwain is dying of a brain tumor and his philosophy will be lost unless he is saved. Only Webster can help him, but he would have to go to Mars, and Webster, as Jenkins, the millenially faithful robot put it, "...never goes any place." And he didn't.

In Desertion, Fowler and his dog Towser, desert the human and canine races to become Lopers in the idyllic fairyland of Jupiter; But Fowler is so conscience-stricken and concerned about the species of which he was once a member that, summoning courage, he returns in Paradise and persuades a huge portion of the human race to join him. In Hobbies, the remainder of the human race after the Paradise exodus hides from life by indulging in numerous and changing fads and hobbies and then, one by one, place themselves into a state of suspended animation in expectation of awakening into the much better world of a hundred or thousand years later.

This pattern, in which refuge, or sanctuary plays such an important role is present in another way in Simak's work, and is revealed by his love of the rural scene. The one safe place in a potentially hostile universe, Simak seems to feel, is "the good Earth". The green vale, the arboreal glen, the family acres---these are the treasured places, and if in any story he is given enough time, Simak will always return to them. It is Simak's love of the rural life and of rustic privacy which made possible the chain of ideas that lead to City. In City, transportation has become so efficient and inexpensive that it is no longer necessary to live in

metropolitan centers and, as Editor Campbell puts it, "...everyone prefers to live in the country." The author of this essay knows at least one person who doesn't; himself, and suspects that there are others---for example, Gilbert Gosseyn, who had some soliloqual remarks to make about cities in the second installment of World of A.

The rural setting is predominant in at least half of Simak's stories. It is present in the entire City series as well as Time Quarry. But his stories, or backgrounds, are not merely rural, they are regional---to be specific, Midwestern.

One of his early and comparatively poor stories, Hunger Death, centers around the trials of Iowan farmers transplanted to Venus. It is filled with Midwestern colloquialisms and personalities as is Reunion on Ganymede, though the latter has it to a lesser degree. In these stories, particularly the first, readres found it easy to excuse the peculiar regional idiom in which Simak expressed himself; but as he extended himself further out into space and time, readers who were following his progress must have been surprised to realize that he did not intend to surrender the language which he liked best for any other. In Hunger Death, people did not squat or crouch; they hunkered down; in Census, people who definitely were not Iowan farmers did likewise---as one reader noted and complained in a letter published in Brass Tacks. A friend recently remarked that he was surprised to find that in Simak's stories, the world is peopled only with Anglo-Saxons, even in Time Quarry. His observation was inadequate, however. Simak's characters are not only Anglo-Saxons, they are Midwesterners of the United States no matter where in the galaxy they may be at the moment; and this exaggeration of stereotypy renders the matter non-objectionable.

This matter of stretching the boundaries of the Midwest out into the galaxy, as in Ogre, this curious conversion of geography into astrography is one of the oddest---and one of the most valuable---aspects of Simak's writing. In the American literary tradition, the Midwest is most often associated with colorlessness, if not with forthright sordidity. Its citizens are supposed to be the small town Babbitt, the country rube; its sub-regional nicknames are the Corn Belt, the Dust Bowl. I am reminded of a passage in Karen Horney's Self-Analysis in which a patient's morbid dream is described, a dream which took place against the background of a small Midwestern town which was to the dreamer the epitomé of drabness and dullness. Perhaps, though, the joining of the Midwestern with the universal won't seem so poetically unfitting if we remember that Kansans find more meteorites than any other regional people in the world; they are able to distinguish between meteoric and similarly appearing terrestrial minerals and know which museums value them most highly.

Bill Blackbeard has pointed out to me a scene in Time Quarry which reveals how closely Simak connects himself with the Midwest. In the opening parts of the portion of the story which takes place in nearly contemporary Wisconsin, 1977, Asher Sutton meets an unnamed Old Timer (who reminds us somewhat of the Gramp characters we

have met in Reunion on Ganymede and City), who sits fishing and spitting in the Wisconsin River. This seedy person is obviously Simak for he mentions that he "...wrote a story about (destiny) once", and that John Sutton and he at one time "...blew up a culvert in Campbell Hollow". As far as I know, this rather gentle self satire is the farthest Simak has ever gone to inject a personal note into his stories.

Simak has brought to science-fiction something which is uniquely his own. He has looked at the universe in a new way and has shown us what he has seen---or at least he has tried to do so. For the most part he has been sincere in his efforts not only to describe but to express, and because of that he has succeeded in rising above the limitations of pulp fiction.

o THE END o

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LABOR DAY WEEKEND-1951

THE INCOMPLETE ECLIPSE

Three scientists - not mad ones - sat on the crowded terrace of a country club just south of St. Louis on the bluffs overlooking the broad Mississippi. It was a warm September evening, and on the terrace there was laughter and music; wine, women and song; dancing and revelry by night. Superbly oblivious to all the commotion about them, the three men sat at a small table, sipping their drinks and gazing abstractedly across the river at the low hills on the Illinois side. The full moon was just rising over these hills, big and blond and dazzlingly beautiful. The night was clear, the air still, and from this vantage point it was like having a ring-side seat at the big show Nature had scheduled for this particular night - a total eclipse of the moon.

A small bite had already been taken out of its lower edge by the time the big disc cleared the hill tops. Little by little the dark shadow crept over that bland pumpkin- face until it was nearly three-quarters obscured.

The three men watched in silence. Finally the youngest of the group, the nuclear physicist, spoke.

"Wouldn't it be a joke," he murmured softly, " if this eclipse should never get a chance to finish?"

"What do you mean, never finish?" demanded the astronomer. "It's like childbirth - no backing out once it's atarted!"

"That isn't what I meant," protested the first. "I mean- wouldn't it be odd if that earth-shadow should suddenly disappear from the face of the moon, in a single second of time?"

The others laughed. "You do come up with the damndest ideas!" said the third man. "As if anything like that could possibly happen!"

Yet, oddly enough, a short five minutes later, when it actually did happen .... not a soul noticed it!

__Rory Faulkner

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ON THE VALUE OF OPINION

BY

ALAN U. HERSHEY

People generally prefer to believe that they are the agents of their own destiny and that their actions have a unique basis, or at the least, an individual slant.

Especially in this country, the feeling of individual liberty and enterprise has been cultivated as a national mannerism. Yet the very fact that it is a mannerism is a strong hint of the actual state of affairs. A national mannerism implies uniformity. Uniformity implies an absence of free will.

Each culture usually presents a pattern within which the decisions of its people are made. When a person decides to do something, it is the sense of values which have been inculcated into him over a lifetime which shape the decision. This decision may be made on the basis of national opinion, religious group opinion, social group opinion, business opinion, and so forth.

Very rarely will a person state to himself: "I am making this decision on the basis of national opinion." Or; "Because the moral system of my country is such and such, I am going to arrive at such and such a decision." Such decisions have become automatic. We are aware of the social demands which are made on us only in an objective way. Our decisions are almost always made subjectively, no matter how objective we may pride ourselves on being.

As long as a person is willing to make his decisions on the basis of his cultural pattern without equivocation or qualms, the culture is healthy and progressive. When a large mass of the people becomes indecisive, it is a sign that the value of opinion, in a cultural sense, is crumbling. When people begin to doubt their own values, which are a reflection of the values of their society, people crumble, too.

They can crumble in various ways, depending on the beckground of the individual. It is not a concern of this article to discuss these paths to perdition. It is not the concern of this article to point up some of the elements of our culture which have come into question in this century. Elements in which the value of opinion has become a hazy never-never land to all of us. It is enough to say that such strongholds of morals and ethics as religion, politics, family, free enterprise and even the value of the eternal dollar are being looked at askance in our day. They are no longer the bulwarks against the pranks of the gods that once they were. Little by little the shift of opinion toward an entirely different set of attitudes is taking place.

This shift is an entirely natural thing, and it might well be that "natural" is the key word of the entire matter. The value of at least part of the world's opinion, when it is our own world, has to be considered. The values of the opinions of many of our best thinkers has to be considered. On every side of us, we are told, the fundamental dichotomy by which Man has lived for two thousand years is being attacked.

This dichotomy has been stated in various w ays. Man has a body which is foul; Man has a spirit which is potentially pure and clean. Man has a brain which is godlike; Man has a body which is animal. The things that can be measured and weighed are the things that are worth while. The intangibles are imponderables, because they cannot be measured and weighed.

Man has split himself into two parts, says the trend of modern opinion. Man has made an error in doing so. Because of this error he has gained certain materialistic benefits more rapidly than he would have otherwise. But the law of diminishing returns is rapidly overcoming his materialistic advances.

Almost the entire race is perfectly willing to admit that Man is a social animal. individually we amount to nothing and can accomplish very little. Collectively, we can have the stars as long as the stars exist if we can learn to work together. But there is no present way in which we can work together. There is a great deal of talk about one world; and one world there will have to be before we can have the stars. But what kind of a world can that be? How can we arrive at one world when the present one is split up into a hundred dissenting fragments? The consensus of opinion appears to be that only thru violence can the world state come into being. Violence means the atomic bomb and the awful fear exists that the atomic bomb means no world at all. Yes, suddenly, our environment has presented us with a new and awful facet: a destructive weapon which is too destructive. And because of this horrifying , omnipresent fact, the very value of opinion has crumbled. There is a feeling of doom in the air, and even the feeling of guilt in the original sin has faded into insignificance beside it.

Can a man worry about his eternal soul when confronted by the Bomb? Can he survive the experience of being a god and wielding a cosmic cataclysm? Do ideologies really matter when the entire environment is faced by destruction? Opinion has not succeeded in answering these questions. Opinion can only state: "I am confused. I am afraid. I don't quite know which way to turn. And I know that nobody else does, either."

But even here opinion does have a value in a sense. It is a mass opinion, and everybody feels it, although it is not often expressed. All of us know that we have reached a crisis point in history. A crisis point such as Hari Seldon might have predicted in the famous Foundation stories. The whole fate of the race hangs in the balance, and the tiniest, most unimportant incident might be the pivotal point for the final decision.

The very fact that we know that the seeds of final destruction are planted is bound to prove the value of opinion, because Man is not capable of destroying himself. Knowing that self-destruction is implicit in his acts, he has to stop in time because the instinct of self- preservation is paramount, and a nation is nothing but a person in a larger sense.

HOMELAND

In a rosy, dust-blown desert,
By a pale blue water channel,
Stood a villa, wrapt in beauty;
Conjured by a dream of beauty.
Red behind it stretched the desert,
Reaching to the rounded hill tops,
Hill tops weathered by the ages -
By a million years of weather.
Pale before it flowed the water,
Shallow, by a light wind ruffled;
Edged by reeds that stiffly rustled,
Murmured in a dry sussura,
Whispered of a dying planet
And the planet's vanished glory.

Cool and spacious was the villa,
Dusty pink its walls of sandstone;
Wide the windows, curved and arching,
Framed by shutters of dull silver.
Silver, too, the heavy portals
Flung wide open to the night air,
To the fragrance of the garden
Bordering the channeled waters.
In the garden, walled with coral -
Coral from a dead sea basin -
Grew white moon-flowers, luminescent,
Nestling amid leaves of saffron;
And their perfume, oddly haunting,
Lingered round the blue-lit lanterns.

Past the roof of turquoise tiling,
In the space-dark sky above it,
Silently the pale moon Deimos
Paced the sky with stately measure;
While behind her, swiftly climbing,
Overtaking her and passing
As if bent on some great mischief,
Sped the baby moonlet Phobos.
Scarcely brighter were the two moons
Than the planet-star beyond them
Flaring with a fiery beauty --
With a fierce and fiery beauty.
Like a green jewel set in velvet
Gleamed the baleful eye of Terra!

Is it real, or but the fragment
Of a dream, this home unearthly -
Where the twin moons race untiring,
Where the light wind blows unceasing,
Ruffling the canal's blue water,
Whisp'ring secrets to the rushes
Standing silvered in the star-light?
This, I tell you, I remember!
This, I tell you, is my Homeland!
Here on Earth I walk, a stranger
Lost and longing for my homeland -
For that Lovely, dying planet -
Dying, but, forever deathless,
Living in my heart forever!

__Rory Faulkner

THE MCILWRAITH YEARS: A Survey of Weird Tales. 1940-1950

Part II

(NOTE: A month ago, the author was asked to contribute an article to SHANGRI-LA, and the subject indicated in the title above occured to him. Immediately after it was begun, however, problems presented themselves. It was clear to me, after I had engaged in two or three evenings of research and begun the outline of the survey, that the projected work would be a great deal longer than I had initially assumed. It was a choice between saying something at considerable length or or nothing at all in a short article. Inasmuch as I had been allotted only three pages in the last SHANGRI-LA for my article, it was apparent that I would have to divide the survey into parts.

I thought originally of a three part article. But when I negan actual composition, I became aware before I had finished three paragraphs that I could not begin the survey with the death of Weird Tales' earlier editor, Farnsworth Wright, and the ascension to the editorial position of Dorothy McIlwraith of Short Stories. Contrast between the two editors was necessary in order to establish any real point with the article. Unfortunately for the ideal of brevity, the average fan-reader of SHANGRI-LA has, as a result of the death blow dealt Weird Tales years ago by McIlwraith and the fictional cerements and winding-cloth make-up in which the magazine was subsequently presented, almost no general knowledge of the historical background of the oldest fantasy magazine in the field. It would be, I knew, necessary for me to supply some small aspect of that background in the article.

I began the survey, therefore, as readers of the first installment know, with the appearance in 1938 of Weird Tales in the fold of a new publisher, a year or so before the death of Farnsworth Wright--the publisher whose monstrous employee, the Ilsa Koch of fantasy, took over the editorial chair in 1940. The potential length of the projected article by now had exceeded all previous contemplation--the first installment barely covered a quarter of the period prior to the "McIlwraith years" per se. It appeared--and appears--that the article may run into six or seven installments of three or four pages each--I have not the time to write more between issues of SHANGRI-LA. Clearly an article of this nature is rather out of place in this magazine--it has more business in such a periodical as the Rhodomagnetic Digest or Fantasy Commentator. For this reason, I would appreciate fan comment. Do SHANGRI-LA readers want to see this survey continue, or would they prefer it be dropped for too many issues of their magazine are polluted unnecessarily?

--WB

The February, 1939 number of Weird Tales was the first of the large-size 160-page issues that appeared between that date and September, 1939. The new size represented an increase of 30 pages over the previous standard issue of 130 pages. The increase had apparently been motivated partially by a growing comprehension on the part of the magazine's new publisher, Short Stories, Inc.* of the extremely limited newsstand appeal of a weird fiction magazine, always something of a white elephant in any publisher's stable. It was apparently felt that a larger, more flamboyantly-garbed magazine might attract an increased number of casual newsstand browsers; also with an enlarged magazine, more pages proportionately could be devoted to advertisers, just as more advertisers might be attracted to the new, larger, more prosperous-appearing periodical. In this general jazzing-up of the old fantasy magazine, two minor but worthwhile features which had helped distinguish the periodical from the general run of pulps: i.e., the volume and issue number given with the date and title on the spine, and the practice of numbering the pages consecutively from issue to issue until a volume had been completed, were dropped for good. The February issue must have surprised many older readers with the substitution of a sensational blurb, "160 pages of eery fiction" for the standard volume and issue number on the spine, as must the numbering of the pages from 1 to 160, although the issue was the second number of a volume.

It is doubtful that the magazine's editor, took any enthusiastic part in this program; it is more than likely that he opposed it to the extent of his ability to control the magazine's make-up as opposed to its editorial and illustrative contents. He undoubtedly felt that the svelte, slim, aristocratic Weird Tales of old was ideal, and expressed the superior nature of the contents perfectly; the new magazine, on the other hand, was gross in physical appearance, flabby, and, in outward appearance, at least, rather vulgar and trashy. The paper utilized in the issue, as in those issues immediately preceding it and published in New York, was rather cheap in appearance and contrasted garishly with the book-quality paper used in the Indianapolis-published Weird Tales of earlier date. (This paper, however, was vellum, cloth of gold, in comparison to the paper used by McIlwraith in some of the Weird Tales published during the war years--this latter material was apparently identical with that from which filling-station washroom paper towels are made.)

Another motivation for the increase in size was very likely the announcement, late in 1938, by Street and Smith--with Popular Publications its chief rival, the publisher of the most prosperous line of pulps on the market--of a forthcoming fantasy magazine, which was to be a companion publication to the 160-page Astounding Science-Fiction of John W. Campbell. This magazine was to be the same size as Astounding, appear monthly, and would pay top rates in the pulp field for material. For the new publisher of Weird Tales, if not Farnsworth Wright, this was a challange to be met by direct action. To the mind of a pulp publisher, of course, this direct action could only be an increase in the number of pages of his magazine (if not in actual fictional content--it is evident after a little investigation that the increase in content did not

begin to equal proportionately the page increase.) as well as a cheapening of the magazine's appearance to broaden newsstand appeal. It is logical to assume, however, that the introduction into the fantasy field of a new magazine did not unduly alarm Wright--he knew too well how small the fantasy-purchasing market was, knew how the appearance of pseudo-prosperity of Weird Tales in the past had lured rival fantasy magazines into existance, knew how that appearance was maintained by an extremely low ratio of profit, and how often he himself had gone out of pocket so that the magazine might continue to appear regularly; knew how the rival magazines--Strange Tales, Witch's Tales, Thrill Book, Strange Stories--had all gone under because they were published by disinterested publishers on a strict basis of necessary profit--which was not forthcoming. However, neither Wright nor Weird Tales' publisher probably anticipated the one factor on which Campbell was basing the chances for success of Street and Smith's fantasy magazine: the appeal to an established group of Astounding Science-Fiction readers of a type of fantasy deliberately tailored to their interests and tastes. The new magazine--called Unknown initially and later Unknown Worlds --thus was not to be a "rival" to Weird Tales at all, but rather a supplementary magazine to a science-fiction publication, which bridged the gap, in a sense, between science-fiction of the Campbell school and weird fiction of the Lovecraft-Smith-Howard-Machen school. (The derivation of certain types of stories in Unknown from types in Weird Tales and the general literature of weird fiction will be pointed out later.)

The 160-page size Weird Tales, at any rate, seemed to have proved disastrous economically. Although six monthly issues of the magazine in this large-size format appeared, the issue for July was skipped altogether, and the magazine returned to 130 pages (with, however, a drop in price from 25¢ to 15¢) with the September number. Thus only eleven copies of Weird Tales appeared in 1939, and the total number of pages printed was little more than would have appeared in 12 130-page issues had the magazine not made the ill-considered change. About this, however, more will be said in the ensuing installment.

--William Blackbeard

O! HAPPY LAND!

(a lament)

O! Happy Land!
With trees and grass so green -
O! have I ever seen
A land so fair?

O! Happy Land!
With streams and skies so blue -
Oh where can I find you?
Oh where? Oh where?

They sing of Paradise,
A land of perfect peace,
Where men and women dwell in Harmony;
And I know that I would give
Half my life if I could live
In such a place, if such a place there be!

But when I hear the war-lords shout
'tis then I doubt if I will ever find
A land where love is planned
And hate is banned . . . .
O! Happy Land!
You're just a state of mind!

__Leonardo Diego

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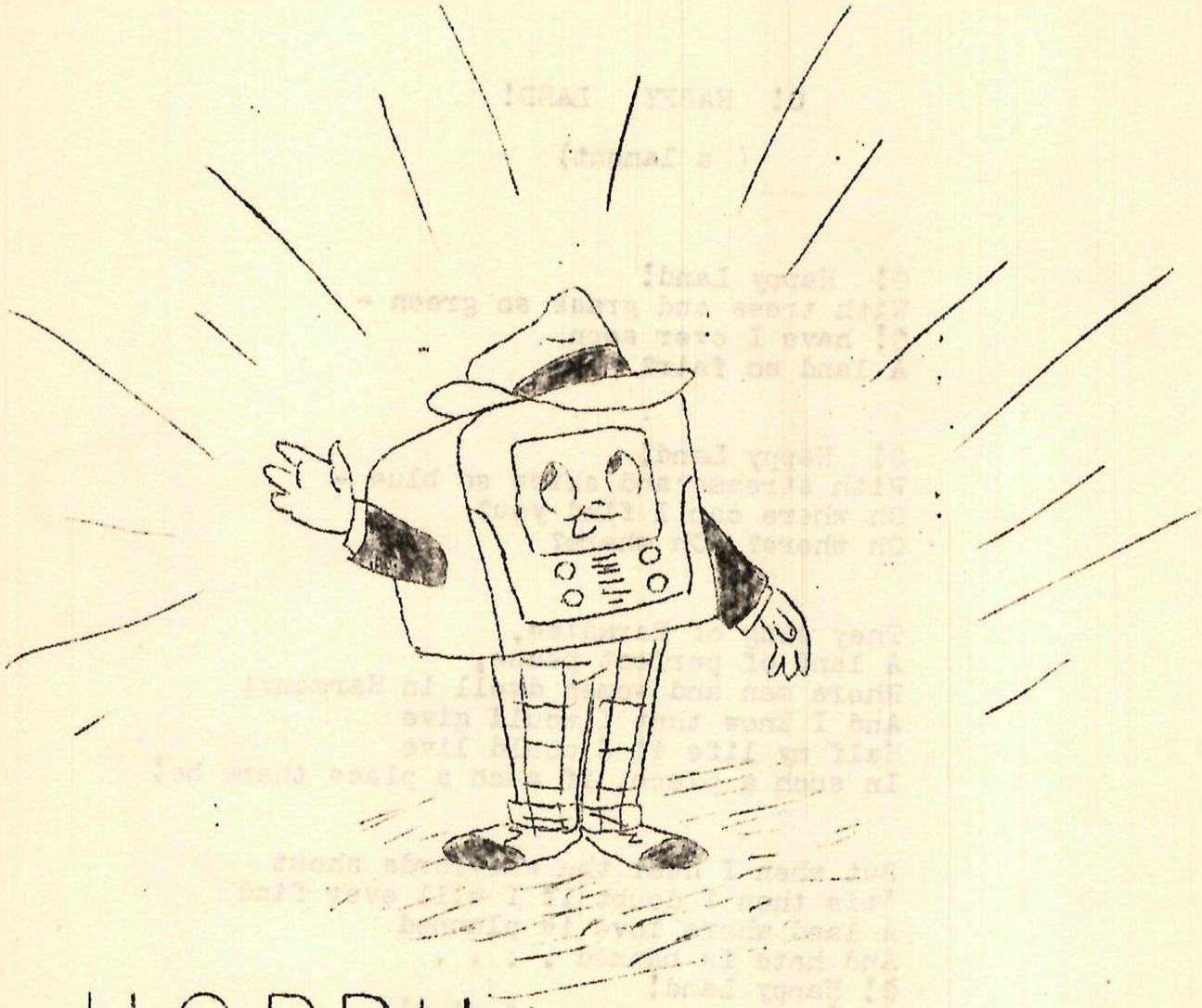
SCIENCE NOTE

Atomic scientists are gravely concerned over the matter of determining the exact amount of uranium 235 necessary to start a chain reaction in bubble gum.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Shangri-LA

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