



new idea in it, as you say, and the hints dropped throughout the story as to future conditions were in Heinlein's best style. But the story failed to click with me. The theme seemed to have been dragged in at the last minute; it surely was not prepared for by the beginning. The unexplained "shysters" had me fairly curious. General picture: a crazy quilt of small, well-constructed ideas about the future.

FRAPPE. Your terse style and direct attack is well appreciated, Virginia. Thanks for the information on the coming A. Bertram Chandler story.

PLENUM A handbook for prospective convention planners, at least!

TANGENTS From your report, author Heard would seem to take a darkly pessimistic view of human progress, in that he resorts to a paternalistic, fascist society in which to apply psychology to government. A much more obvious way of utilizing psychology, or psychiatry if you please, is to teach it to kids in school and let things take their natural course. Show them the mechanisms of neuroses, for example.

FANDANGO The Fapa troubles were interesting.

HALF-LENGTH ARTICLES #1 The conversation attributed to Perdue & wife was a good example of a common type of word exchange. The drunk conversation was convincing, too.

GRULZAK A fine cover design. Artwork and mimeographing of a uniformly excellent quality. ... I don't know just how the Amazing Stories quotation given in And Never the Twain appeared, but it surely sums up the ugly doctrines of that magazine.

Tell Alpaugh to stop worrying. The Turno--the only stop watch with a built-in slide rule--is easily explained. It's not a ten-inch linear slide rule as might have been imagined, but a circular slide rule. I saw one. Like an ordinary wrist watch, except that it has two calibrated circular scales around the face that form the slide rule. The outer scale is rotated by gripping a projecting edge around the outside of the dial. Object is, of course, to compute

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Speed in sports events, etc.

The John W. Campbell's Soups story hit me right in the funny bone. Clover.

PHANTEUR Well written and interesting throughout, Don. Your theory of TWS acting as a receptacle for unsuccessful slick-aimed stf seems very probable.

FLANOMENA Does "The Eugenic Fan" start a Smith-Keller feud? Keller really struck in new literary directions there! At least, it was a good fan story; and he apparently has us well analysed. ... The account of the Philcon was good, but could have been even more detailed. What was Tucker's one-finger concerto like? Sounds a la Chico Marx.

ATOTE Haven't finished reading this issue yet. This deadline snuck up on me...

MOONSHINE I understand Moffatt has quit the Fapa.

GLOM The FFoundation certainly could use those file cards Bailey speaks of! By the way, who did the quaint drawing on the first page, Hoffman?

FAPA FLYPAPER #0. Not much here to comment on.  
ELMURMURS BRIEFLY The Major Disaster Plan has evoked some discussion around school. What does the city plan to do for a really major disaster, like a-bombs or gorms?

SLITHY TOVES Give us more nextime, Gus.

OOOooooo.....

A FAPAN'S BOOKSHELF

I like to think I have a plastic philosophy, if any at all, and am pleased to find books contributing toward a modern outlook. ("Modern" because it seems increasingly obvious that modern scientific theories are making our old ideas, our classic philosophies, very very obsolete. Any opinions among you to the

contrary?) A recent book in this line of thought is physicist Erwin Schroedinger's "What is Life?", a thin little book apologetically voyaging into the fundamental problems of biology--written for laymen. (I can guarantee this last, for when it comes to biology, I'm very much of a layman!) Schroedinger is not concerned with details here. Speaking on very general levels, he manages to be very provocative. The book contains, in fact, some of the damndest hints. It ties up genetics and quantum mechanics; it seems the two sciences arose independently of each other and received their fullest development about the same time (soon after 1900), but it is only recently that geneticists are realizing that they must climb down to the quantum level of events in order to explore the elusive structure of the gene. There is a distastefully theological speculation in the last chapter, but the book as a whole is guaranteed to offer you something new.

Mention of Korzybski would be appropriate here. His system of general semantics, as you probably know, has attempted to formulate a practical everyday "philosophy of life" in terms of the techniques of modern science. Rothman did such a good job of writing on Korzybski in his several articles in Plenum that we'll tie in general semantics with a discussion of that magazine below.

#### PLENUM, A FANZINE WITH A DIFFERENT SLANT

Recently perusing Rothman's output of Plenum's, I found many of the discussions therein very stimulating. The second issue, July 1946, contains a good introductory description of general semantics. It was followed by a second article (Plenum #3) which went into more detail in an effort to present Korzybski's methods. It was excellent, but did not go far enough, as Speer pointed out later. Many vital factors in the non-aristotelian system constructed in Science and Sanity, relations, role of structure, non-elementalism, action by contact, undefined terms, etc., were omitted. In Plenum #4 Rothman airs a feeling disillusionment or something akin to it. Looks more like he has applied general semantics methods and resulted in a decision to use more caution in discussing general semantics. Is that right, Milt? If so, what a strange, circular situation!

Extension, the article on complex numbers in Plenum

#5 was a dilly. The language operates on those lower levels of abstraction, feelings and intuitions, a difficult achievement in mathematical writing. In the drawings Rothman really goes all out, surpassing the power of any text-book in directness of expression. Do I sound like a slobbering art critic? If so, it's because I figure that teaching mathematics in this sort of manner is necessary. There really is a lot of intuition needed in mathematics, you know, in spite of the impressions given in stuffy school books, which often neglect the central problem of creating new mathematics. Speaking of illustrations, the roller-coaster on the Bessel function was a natural!

In the epistemological discussion of energy in Plenum #6 it should have been pointed out that energy is a structural aspect of events. It's a compound of relations, motion, electrical stresses, deformations of electric fields, etc. It certainly isn't a "stuff", if there is any such thing as "stuff" in the world at all.

MATHEMATICS CAN BE FUN (AND PROFITABLE) DEPARTMENT

Or how to win at poker with Algebra. What I'm talking about is that amazing book, "A Theory of Games and Economic Behavior" by mathematician von Neumann of Princeton. The author has been working on a theory of games, that is, a theory of strategy and chance governed by sufficiently simple rules, as in card games, chess, etc. This book is an introduction, apparently, to the theory, or represents a juvenilo form of it. If my guess is correct (this is mostly guessing, 'cause I haven't mastered von Neumann's book, not by a long shot) the theory requires some perfection before we can utilize it at the card table. The body of the book is only for the very bold; it reads like, say a calculus text-- in other words you've got to pitch in with a spade. But the introduction and first chapter and descriptive and qualitative, and very interesting by themselves. From what I could gleam, von Neumann's principal achievement is a very successful and well-formulated (using set theory) approach to the analysis of strategy. With it he answers many "unanswerable" questions of economics,

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a complicated game with certain fixed rules (the law), elements of chance, etc. Using the notion of probability, he formulates a numerical theory of "economic value", contrary to the dogma of classical economics. Later in the book he attempts to analyse such games as poker, chess, etc., but I doubt that he goes into them very thoroughly. Someday maybe we can sit down to a card game with paper, pencil, and a handy pocket oniac, and scrape up the dough. There are all sorts of possibilities for a fine ASF yarn in this stuff.

ZOTZ! A HORSEBACK REVIEW

Selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club last year was a fantasy "Zotz!" by Walter Karig; Rinehart & Company, New York and Toronto, c1947. 268pp. Illustrated by the author.

Zotz! is a tale of a Professor of Dead Languages teaching at a theological school who one day acquires the power of killing any living thing by pointing his finger at it and saying "zotz!" The fantasy element is handled dexterously. Being an intelligent and idealistic man, the hero hurries to offer his services to the government during the war. His escapades with an enigmatic brunette somehow linked up with the supernatural power, on the college campus, and his experiences with red tape in Washington, where he attempts to see the President, combine hilarious comedy with forceful satire. If you're in the market for unusual and fantastic entertainment, don't miss this book.

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THE FANTASY FOUNDATION LIBRARY

Since we undertook the job of librarian in the Fantasy Foundation, we've acceded over one thousand items in the records. This counts books, magazines, fanzines, etc. (Etc. in this case includes photographs, microfilms, phonodiscs,...) And the Brandt trunk still stands awaiting. We haven't even looked in it! The library already boasts many fine items. We have an almost exhaustively complete collection of Merritt. Most of the Arkham books, including, of course, The Outsider. The Fantasy Press books, etc. The LASFS card catalog is being adapted to this collection. Accession

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adapted to the collection. Acceding and stamping the books is ONLY the first of many routine tasks that must be done. The situation is mostly due to the little spare time we have had, but also to the happy deluge of books and magazines that has poured into the Foundation. ... We intend to issue a book list soon.

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EPITAPH FOR THE OLD ORIENTATION

"I looked up the 92nd element in my venerable Funk and Wagnalls and read:

Uranium, n. A rare, heavy white metallic element. ... Has no important uses...'

(From a column by Delos Avery in the book section, Chicago Sunday Tribune, August 19, 1945.)"-quoted in turn from Quote<sub>6</sub>

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