

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

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

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.

OOOooooo.....

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 Quote₆

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