

TYNDALLITE

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from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 1368,
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Variations on a Theme #19 Feb 2003 –
Rich Lynch

p. 4 Thanks for recommending
among time travel stories John K.
Laumer's *Dinosaur Beach* as "...an easy
entertaining read." Janice Gelb is right
about Poul W. Anderson's Time Patrol
stories being "...*entertaining and thought
provoking*."

Anderson told me that his Space
Patrol series was written to parody
Edward E. Smith's Lensman series.

Isaac Asimov's *The End of
Eternity* is one of Asimov's better
stories, though not top-rank. He did deal
fairly well with time travel.

John S. "Jack" Williamson's
"The Legion of Time" had some good
ideas marred by crude development and
immature writing. Williamson was still
learning to be a great science-fiction
author.

Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette
#81 Mar 2003 – Richard
Dengrove

p. 7 Speaking of anti-matter
have you read John Stewart
Williamson's stories (as by "Will

Stewart") on the subject? They were
"Collision Orbit", *Astounding Science-
Fiction* Jul 1942

"Minus Sign" *ASF* Nov 1942

"Opposites – React!" *ASF* Jan-Feb 1943

"Seetee Shock" *ASF* Feb-Apr 1949

Williamson postulated that the
asteroid belt had been created by an anti-
matter ("seetee/contraterrene") planet
colliding with a planet in orbit between
Mars and Jupiter. Thus some asteroids
were okay, others were seetee. He also
provided political complications with
competing ideologies from Earth and
Mars plus libertarians trying to learn
how to deal with seetee engineering.
The first three stories were pretty good
and were collected as *Seetee Ship*.
"Seetee Shock" was a stinker. The last
installment rated last place in the
readers' vote.

p. 13 Bravo for denouncing
those who use the fallacy of extremes to
find (or invent) a defect in someone so
that they can denigrate them. The notion
that if someone is not 100% perfect that
they are therefore 100% imperfect is
nonsense. But that's been one of the
foundations of the fuggocracy.

p. 14 You're right in saying, "*I
think that the internal logic of a Bond
film depends on what the plot calls for*".
The Bond films have elevated absurdity
into an art form.

SPIRITUS MUNDI #194 Feb-Mar
2003 – Guy H. Lillian III

p. [19?] You mention as an
example of good deep-sea science-
fiction Arthur C. Clarke's *The Deep
Range*. I'll agree with you that it was
good but not great. I think that a much

better such novel is Frank Herbert's "Under Pressure"/*The Dragon In the Sea/21st Century Sub* + whatever other titles it's been issued as in paperback. It's only science-fiction because of the sub's mission; otherwise it's a realistic novel of submarines playing cat and mouse.

p. [20?] You're another one to commend Kevin J. Anderson and Brian Herbert's writing about Dune pre-*Dune*. You say that you like *Children of Dune* better than the original. I presume you mean *Dune*. It was compromised of two serials, "Dune World" and "Prophet of Dune". I thought that "DW" was excellent but that "PoD" was a letdown. Once Paul Atreides realized the nitty-gritty of what was going on from then on it was all downdune. In 1965 Herbert told me that he'd done a newspaper article on the dunes near Florence OR. Then he imagined what an entire world of sand would be like. So he said that he wrote "DW" without any intention of writing a sequel. John W. Campbell, Jr. insisted that he write "PoD". Then an editor at Chilton decided that they should be combined into one book. It was so successful that he developed a bad case of sequelitis.

Harry Warner, Jr. (1922-2003) -
Richard Lynch

May Harry rest in peace.

p. [1] You say that the first issue of Harry B./P. Warner, Jr.'s fanzine *Spaceways* appeared in November 1938. You also say that he persuaded Howard P. Lovecraft to contribute. If I recall correctly Lovecraft died 15 Mar 1937. If Harry published a Lovecraft contribution

it was either a reprint or something of Lovecraft's that hadn't yet seen print.

Then and Now – mike weber {Jan 2003?}

p. 10 Sodium-mercury batteries aren't like unto cold fusion. They were invented prior to Jules Verne writing *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. They were in commercial production, though apparently this ended with the ban on mercury. For which applications they were advantageous I don't know. Like you, I'm curious about how sodium-mercury batteries work. I called the National Renewable Energy Laboratory but didn't get a complete answer. The person I talked to was only partially familiar with the subject. However, supposedly someone there has been testing them. I was told that the cells produce 2.14 volts, but no amperage was specified. Of course, that should depend upon the amounts of sodium and mercury involved. Also, apparently the sodium and mercury form an amalgam, which interacts with brine. I presume this brine is sodium chloride in solution. The man did say that both fumes from the batteries and the mercury are problems. Jules Verne was aware of this because Nemo said that he periodically surfaced to vent the *Nautilus*. Perhaps some time at the Engineering Library would turn up more details.

p. [11] Thanks for more details on the career of "V. C. Andrews", both before and after her death.

Yes, Edward E. Smith both rewrote and degraded the magazine version of "The Skylark of Space" for hardcovers (Buffalo, Hadley and F.F.F.). I've compared all three hardcovers with

the magazine version. I couldn't find any differences in the hardcovers. I did a casual comparison with the Pyramid paperback and noticed considerable differences. The paperback is basically a synopsis. Smith told me that he deleted all of Lee H. Garby's passages and rewrote and condensed the rest. This may have been partially due to length constraints imposed by Donald R. Bensen, editor at Pyramid. Has anyone done a paperback edition restoring the original text? It would do much to improve Smith's reputation.

pp. [11]-12 Like you I'd like to read both the magazine and book versions of Smith's Lensman series. That's on a list of potential projects when I get everything unpacked and sorted. Several people I've talked to say that the magazine version of "Triplanetary" is much better than the book version wherein Smith converted it from a non-Lensman story to a Lensman story. *First Lensman* was written as a hardcover original for Lloyd A. Eshbach rather than for John W. Campbell, Jr., so that probably made a difference. Therefore the actual Lens stories to be compared comprise "Galactic Patrol", "Gray Lensman", "Second-Stage Lensman" and "Children of the Lens". Smith also said the first portion written was the climax of "Children of the Lens", and so he aimed for that from the beginning of "Galactic Patrol". Edward E. Evans and some of his other fans urged him to convert "Triplanetary", which hadn't been conceived as a Lens story.

pp. 18-19 As for big bookstore chains controlling what gets published you've heard the same stories that I have. There's precedence for this.

Roger P. Graham's science-fiction novel *Frontiers In the Sky* was accepted by Shasta, typeset and reviewed from galleys in Roy A. Squires, Jr.'s fanzine and then not published. Rog told me that the reason was that the military-library purchaser didn't like it. Shasta only published books bought by this purchaser so that their publishing expenses were covered. Sales to bookstores and fans were pure profit.

pp. 21-22 Your description of hack potboiler writing first-draft only explains a bunch of stories. Philip K. Dick told me that his "Impostor" *Astounding Science-Fiction* Jun 1953 had taken three rewrites to satisfy John W. Campbell, Jr. Phil said that as much as he admired Campbell and *Astounding Science-Fiction* that he'd rather write first-drafts at a penny a word than revise. In his case it's surprising that so many of his stories are as good as they are. He also told me that he'd instructed his agent (Scott "Meredith") to cease submitting to Horace L. Gold because Gold was tampering with his stories.

AVATAR PRESS v2#26 27 Mar 2003
- Randy B. Cleary

pp. 2-3 Thanks for reviewing Connie Willis' *To Say Nothing Of the Dog*, James P. Hogan's *The Anguished Dawn* and Frank M. Robinson, Robert E. Weinberg, Randy Broecker and Beatrice L. Bridge's *Art of Imagination: 20th Century Visions of Science Fiction, Horror, and Fantasy*.

p. 11 You mention an unspecified moronic science-fiction story wherein anti-nuke activists kidnap Albert Einstein when he was a child, take him to colonial America and give

him to the Indians whereupon he teaches them to build nuclear weapons, which they use against the Europeans. Your description makes the story seem putrid. But at least we learn the meaning of one smoke signal.

TENNESSEE TRASH #52 Feb-Mar
2003 – Gary R. Robe

pp. 11-12 Thanks for the book reviews.

Your review of Christopher Moore's novel *Lamb* concerning a new Gospel written by Christ's best friend says:

"This book is highly irreverent, funny, and heretical but not blasphemous."

Considering the subject matter that was quite an achievement.

You say that S. M. Stirling's *The Peshawar Lancers*' hero is "Athelstane King, a captain in the Peshwar Lancers". Since this is set in an alternate-history 2032 AD India I wonder if he's a descendant of Captain Athelstan King of the Khyber Rifles in "Talbot Mundy"'s novel.

p. 14 Thanks for passing on Harry Turtledove's comments to you about *The Two Georges* – that Richard Dreyfuss did most of the plotting and that Turtledove did most of the writing.

Hello Kitty 40000 28 Mar 2003 -
Jeffrey Copeland

p. 9 Thanks for your favorable review of Neal Stephenson's *Zodiac*.

Home With The Armadillo #57 – Liz
Copeland

pp. [5?-6?] Thanks for reviewing Robert J. Sawyer's *Calculating God* and C. J. "Cherryh"'s Foreigner series.

LETTERS

from: Kevin L. Cook, 53 Oakland
Avenue, Tuckahoe NY 10707
15 Apr 2003 [a different version
of this letter appeared in the Apr
2003 *The Devil's Work*]

Dear Norm:

Thank you for the three packages containing copies of *Tyndallite*, *Resin* and *The Devil's Work*. The most obvious comment that I can make on all the fanzines as a whole is that your topics of interest and comments closely mirror the views you express in *Sulph* for the *Pulp-Era Amateur Press Society*. I am referring to your preference for the works of Alfred E. van Vogt and "Talbot Mundy" in their original magazine appearances, your admiration for the works of Eugene Manlove Rhodes and your pointing out the editorial acumen of John W. Campbell, Jr.

It is always worthwhile to see you correcting obvious errors that appear in other members' contributions, such as Studley Burroughs actually being ERB's nephew rather than his son. You also seemed to spend a great deal of time defending ERB from obviously erroneous charges of racism. Don't these people ever bother actually reading the books they are making statements about?!

There is one more van Vogt short story that I rate highly, that being "Dear Pen Pal", while my favorite Robert A. Heinlein novel would now have to be *The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress*. I have read many of his books twice, and that one held up best to me upon rereading.

Sincerely,
Kevin

from DISTRACTIONS #10 15 Apr 2003, page 4 of William N. Austin, 8517-28th Avenue, NW, Seattle WA 98117-3814

"Something For Norm Metcalf"
[comments upon *Tyndallite*]

So, Damon Knight liked *Sugar In the Air* by E. C. Large. He disliked a lot of things I enjoyed; but I enjoyed reading his reviews and criticisms. His fanzine *Snide* was one of my all-time favorites.

Your writing about "Talbot Mundy" reminds me that a local poet and fan, Phil Garland, always much preferred "Mundy"'s Tros tales to the superhero stories by Robert E. Howard, Conan included.

I remember John Martin Leahy, writer for early *Weird Tales* when he operated a used book stall in the old Security Public Market on Third Avenue, in the mid-'30's. I was hunting for old movie magazines at the time; he had few. Besides, he was pretty weird himself. Years later I acquired a large collection of early *Weird Tales* which I found out later had belonged to Leahy. He ended up a non-social hermit in a lakeside cabin somewhere north of Seattle.

Funny you mentioned movies with soldiers for Alexander the Great revealing wristwatches in the movie version. It was Art Rapp that pointed out that the Sumerian art reliefs that pictured their gods with bracelets that looked liked wristwatches, including the hour figures. (See for yourself... [Bill includes a reproduction of one such.])

Yes, Frank Herbert's serial "Under Pressure" was a real triumph. I remember how excited I was to find that he was a newspaper reporter in Tacoma. I told the Nameless Ones' president about it, suggesting he try getting Herbert here for a meeting, but it did not happen, regretfully. But Herbert later taught here at the University of Washington.

Did George F. Worts write science-fiction? Wasn't it he that wrote "Monster of the Lagoon", serialized in *Argosy* 23 Feb-30 Mar 1935? Jellyfish-like entity, Little Nicobar Island, sneaking inside under the door, digesting victim, leaving the same way. Locked door, of course...

I recently re-read one of my favorite science-fiction novels, read first fifty years ago, and fifty years old when I read it then: *A Honeymoon In Space* by George Griffith. A rich chap builds a spaceship and then takes his new bride for a tour of the solar system. Adventures galore. Nice illos too. This was real competition for Herbert G. Wells.