

TYNDALLITE

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intended for the July 2001 mailing of the
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Mailing comments page 834

To update a comment on page 822 of the
Feb 2001 *Tyndallite* Sourdough Jackson
is no longer editing *DASFax*.

The New Port News #197 May 2001 –
Ned Brooks

p. 2 I'm with you in feeling that
Ward Moore's *Greener Than You Think*
was disappointing compared to his
"Bring the Jubilee", *F&SF* Nov 1952.
People who've read both the magazine
and book versions of BTJ say that the
magazine version is preferable. "One of
these days" perhaps I'll read all of his
science-fiction and see what my reaction
will be. I was disappointed by many of
his stories, they promised far more than
they delivered.

No, I'm not trying to require
"impeccable" science in science-fiction.
But such basic errors as Herbert G.
Wells made in *The Invisible Man* put the
story outside the pale. Without some
sort of extrapolation it wouldn't be
science-fiction, but rather a laboratory
report.

You wonder if the users of the
spy satellite data would publicize the
existence of a relict civilization. Since
the 1993 de-classification I see no reason

that they'd withhold the information.
They've been quite forthcoming.
Furthermore with the Russian, French
and private satellite competition
somebody would have publicized any
relict culture. And part of it goes to
where on Earth they could possibly be.

You say, "... a truly advanced
culture might not leave any traces." This
is going beyond "relict cultures" into the
realm of science-fiction or mysticism.

Variations on a Theme #6 Apr-May
2001 – Rich Lynch

p. 3 To quote you ostensibly
quoting me from *Tyndallite* Feb 2001,
page 821:

"You mention that "there are
some errors in SaM's [sic] published
works, most made by his editors and
typesetters," but SaM was certainly not
immune to errors of fact, just like every
other fan historian from time to time.
He was an important chronicler of the
history of science fiction fandom, but
infallible he was not."

Now for what I actually said:

"A lot of challenges to Sam
Moskowitz' statements are by people
who are annoyed that he was correct.
However, there are some errors in his
published works, most made by his
editors and typesetters. Sam wasn't
infallible, but he was intellectually
honest."

Do you see the discrepancies?

Your quotation from a David A.
Kyle article citing Mark Blackman about
Sam Moskowitz being wrong about the

beginnings of the Lunarians may or may not be accurate.

I've been publishing corrections to Sam's statements since 197. However, he's appreciated my comments, instead of attacking me.

In the material of his that I published I corrected mistakes and added material to strengthen his. He approved of these when he proofread them and told me that I was doing what an editor should be doing.

For example his article "How Science Fiction Got Its Name" *F&SF* Feb 197 gave a specific date for *Astounding Science-Fiction* dropping the hyphen. I glanced at my shelves and saw that it was incorrect. I therefore deduced that Sam's *ASF* were bound (which he later confirmed to me). I went through the magazine and listed the dates they dropped the hyphen from the spine, cover (the date Sam gave in the article), the title-page splash, the indicia and the running heads. Editor "Anthony Boucher" of *F&SF* told me that Sam had been specific but that he'd edited it out as irrelevant and now that I'd brought it up he felt embarrassed.

In *Explorers of the Infinite* Sam said that "Bernarr Macfadden" never gained control of *Amazing Stories* and *Amazing Stories Quarterly*. I published proof that Sam was wrong. His response was to research an article on "Macfadden"'s career with details about his involvement with science-fiction which A. Langley Searles serialized in *Fantasy Commentator*.

Over the years I've published extensive commentaries on Sam's articles with praise, additions and corrections. He and his often publisher

A. Langley Searles have been appreciative.

As for revising Robert C. Peterson's off-the-cuff history of Denver fandom, yes I should get to that in a few months. Pete says that he'll send my revisions to his mailing list.

p. 4 Regarding the Hugos you say that they are:

"...an Award that honors the 'Best' rather than the 'Most Deserving'. (Actually what we have now is an Award that honors the 'Favorite' or 'Most Visible' but that's probably a discussion for another time.)"

Well, let us begin. Harry B./P. Warner, Jr. has been making the same comment for years. It's obvious that some of the best stories never get nominated and the best nominees often lose out to inferior works.

I think that running nominations would help out. I also prefer open nominations. And they would be more meaningful if they were awarded by science-fiction fandom rather than by WorldCon members.

p. You say about Kim S. Robinson's *The Martians*:

"...the best story in the collection, the novella "Green Mars" (which is not the same story as the middle section of the *Mars* trilogy) which I consider one of the ten or fifteen best shorter works of science fiction I've ever read."

I'd better speed up my reading of science-fiction. Let's see, what's the next story after "The Skylark of Space"?

OFFLINE READER v1#22 Apr-May
2001 – Irv Koch

p. [1] The Austronesians reached Madagascar from Taiwan via the Philippines and Borneo about 400 B.C. For details see Peter Bellwood's *Man's Conquest of the Pacific*. While it has some minor errors and probably needs some minor updating to conform to current research it's still a valuable synthesis of ethnography, archaeology, genetics (man, animals and plants), etc. He's anti-Heyerdahl but intellectually honest enough to list points in Heyerdahl's favor.

Derogatory Reference #97 – Arthur D. Hlavaty

p. [1] I like your line:

“Think of *baby shower* as something Charles Fort would write about.”

Thanks to him Edmond Hamilton, Eric F. Russell and probably others were able to fortify their science-fiction.

pp. 5-[6] Thanks for another report on International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts 21-24 Mar 2001 in Fort Lauderdale FL.

Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette
#70 May 2001 – Richard Dengrove

pp. 5-7 Thanks for your interesting review of Joel Achenbach's *Captured By Aliens*. From your review I gather that a more accurate, but less provocative, title would have been *Captivated By Aliens*. It's amazing the

extent that people will deny reality in order to believe nonsense. Raymond A. Palmer went broke trying to exploit such people with Richard S. Shaver, flying saucers, etc.

Of course, the fact that so many Earthlings don't believe in our existence makes World Domination that much easier.

p. 8 As I recall you're close on recalling the title of Hugo Gernsback's fanzine as *Forecasts*. I'm fairly sure that it was titled *Forecast*. When I began corresponding with him in the 1950's he sent me a bundle of back issues and also put me on his mailing list. You're right about them being "...rather heavy on the Wonders of the Future." Frank R. Paul did a nice job of illustrating them.

Tom Feller is quite right about punch-card tabulators existing in the 1930's. The previous incarnation of IBM got into the punch-tabulating business sometime around 1919.

It's been about fifty years since I read Hugo Gernsback's 1911 "novel" *Ralph 124C41+* but I wouldn't be surprised to find computers mentioned. Supposedly someone counted over 600 inventions listed connected by a thin plot and near-zero character development.

And don't forget Charles Babbage's computer designs from the 1800's. The concept of computers was out there.

pp. 8-9 Thanks for tracing radiation sickness back to at least 1400 A.D. You've pitched us a new blend.

p. 9 During his 1902 expedition Robert F. Scott overruled his physician Dr. Reginald Koettlitz who'd been prescribing fresh meat as an anti-

scorbutic and ordered that the expedition members return to eating Admiralty tinned rations. When Scott left for the Polar Plateau Albert Armitage rescinded Scott's order and changed the diet back to fresh meat. Upon his return Scott gave in to the empirical evidence (no scurvy). But he learned nothing from this and on his second expedition condemned the Polar party to death from scurvy by reverting back to deficient rations.

As for my definition of science-fiction here's Tentative Version 1.0: 'a story which could not happen in the here and now without some sort of extrapolated science'. I don't go for the definition of science-fiction as 'any story which could happen here and now without any extrapolation'. That's defining fiction, not science-fiction. If it could happen at any moment but hasn't (for whatever reason) then it's not science-fiction.

I didn't say that *A Journey to the Center of the Earth* isn't science-fiction because it concerns geology. The 'geology' in the story is malarkey. To descend into a volcanic vent in Iceland and be erupted out of another vent in Italy isn't scientific. It's a subterranean travelogue.

You're right that 'pseudo-science' is a better appellation for Nazism than is 'science-fiction'. By accepting various nonsensical ideas and treating them as factual Adolf Hitler caused enormous harm to humanity. The ancillary bogus genetics, bogus cosmology, etc. etc. are disgusting.

Comments #11 23 May 2001 – Steve Hughes

p. [2?] What's your basis for believing that Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* didn't use off-the-shelf technology? Verne documented the details of the *Nautilus*. True, if it had been built at the time it would have been the world's most advanced submarine, but the point is that it could have been built at the time. In typical prototypical fashion it probably would have required debugging. "Nemo" building it on a remote island from parts shipped in from around the world isn't too plausible. ("Oops, I just melted a battery bus. It will be months before a replacement arrives.")

The most science-fictional connection with the *Nautilus* is that it traveled in time. But Verne had a note to ignore the chronological discrepancies between *In Search of the Castaways/The Children of Captain Grant*, *The Mysterious Island* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Of course, part of the problem is that his publisher had him change "Nemo" from a Polish nobleman taking part in the 1863 revolt against the Russians to an Indian prince who took part in the 1857 Sepoy revolt against the British.

PETER, PAN & MERRY #37 – David Schlosser

p. [1] Apparently when we say 'science-fiction' we're using different definitions. When I say 'science-fiction' I mean literature concerning things which can't now happen but may yet. You seem to be using 'science-fiction' as a trope for anything using fanciful conjectures, regardless of its medium. You say "It's the tales that are told that are SF, not the media it's told in."

I didn't mean that movies could only adapt from fiction but rather that the adaptation is the connection between science-fiction and science-fictional movies.

Your nomination of Rod Serling as a better science-fictional visual artist than Stanley Kubrick has considerable merit. I'd have to see all of both's pertinent work as fast as feasible before I'd make a final choice.

The fact that Jules Verne's *Nautilus* was "built" using off-the-shelf technology certainly precludes it from being science-fiction. It is a high-tech political thriller. Without extrapolation it can't be science-fiction.

REVENANT #6 May 2001 – Sheila J. Strickland

p. 11 Thanks for alerting us that Kaje Baker's Company series is supposed to go on for seven cliffhanging volumes. I hope that the suspense will be worth it.

TENNESSEE TRASH #41 Apr-May 2001 – Gary R. Robe

p. 12 Thanks for your accolades for the TV miniseries adaptation of Frank Herbert's *Dune*.

p. 14 Thanks for another recommendation of Catherine Asaro's work and specifically *Primary Inversion*.

It's obvious that you read John Ringo's *A Hymn Before Battle* and *Gust Front* con mucho gusto, mas o menos.

p. 15 What's the basis for your statement that "... Verne proposed an energy source for the submarine that is

quite close to nuclear power."? Have you been reading one of the defective translations? Verne has a chapter entitled "All By Electricity" wherein he describes how the *Nautilus* is powered. Verne cites the technological background, (which are citations to reality, not fiction). If battery power made the *Nautilus* science-fiction then battery-electric locomotives built between 1835 and 1869 would have been converted from fact to science-fiction.

There's a difference between Herbert G. Wells' *Invisible Man* using chemistry to make himself invisible and faster-than-light ships. The fact that Wells' *Invisible Man* wouldn't be able to see invalidates the story. FTL ships are probably impossible but it's possible that they are possible. Their usage in a story doesn't invalidate such stories. As long as FTL ships are treated in a scientific manner they definitely come under the heading of extrapolated science. Wells simply ignored the basic impossibility of his story, thus rendering it non-science-fiction.

p. 18 Thanks for discussing how the TV show *The Invisible Man* recognized the problem of chemical invisibility with their protagonist being only invisible in the visible light band and having his eyes changed to see in the infrared. You say "It's still a hokey SF premise but at least the show's producers recognized this classic problem and wrote something into the plot to get around it." Good for them.

Avatar Press V2#15 31 May 2001 – Randy B. Cleary

p. 5 No, I'm not trying to define science-fiction so as to include only "hard" science-fiction. But if an author wishes to postulate something I ask that it not be impossible and that they logically apply their own postulates. Science is more of an attitude in trying to explain observations than it is a dogmatic approach as to what is and isn't true.

**"YNGVI IS A LOUSE" AND OTHER
GRAFFITOS #71 May 2001 –
T. K. F. Weisskopf**

pp. 6-9 Charlotte Proctor:
Thanks for the 23rd installment of
"Charlotte's Web". (Appropriately
enough it is printed on white paper.)

p. 6 Thanks for recommending
Kate Wilhelm's *Defense for the Devil*.

pp. 6-7 Your review of Eric
Flint's *1632* about a modern town
transported into the Thirty Year War is
interesting.

***The Sphere* v192#1 – Don Markstein**

p. 5 Thanks for advancing the
probability that the letter I have signed
"Morton Addison Walker" was signed
by a new assistant to Addison Morton
Walker.