# Alien Culture

April 1949

# A L I E N  C U L T U R E

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editor and publisher
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* the 3 starred items courtesy NFFF Manuscript Bureau.

Alien Culture is an amateur publication for fans of the field of fantastic literature inclusive of fantasy, science-fiction, and wierd fiction. The price is: 15¢ per copy; 4 issues, 50¢. It is published irregularly by the editor at his address which is 4718 Forest Hills Road, Rockford, Illinois. All communications, material, etc. are to be sent to this address. Material of all types is welcomed as are letters.... Opinions expressed herein are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor.

CULTURAL COMMENTS: A DEPARTMENT
The editorial.

Well, here we are with the second issue of Alien Culture. To start off with, perhaps we'd better say a few words about some of the material in this issue, so we'll start with.....

Evan H. Appelman's article in this issue is the first of a series of such "Probability Zero" type items. He sent us quite a list, and we discussed some of the possibilities when we saw him awhile back, and there's some interesting material coming up -- but we'll let you see for yourself. As for the second article of this type, J. C. May's little gem, it is to quote may, "the more or less veracious account of a revolutionary new development in electronics....." Now, while this item is for kicks only, Appelman's series (particularly items such as the space ship, etc.) will be done in a more or less straight manner.

While we think of it, our thanks to the N3F Manuscript Bureau for the material which they sent us.

The Rotsler and Cockroft pics appearing herein, were laboriously put onto stencils by none other than ourself, to which fact you can attribute any drop in quality from the fellow's usual work. And while we're on the subject, any among you hod'd like to do some illustrations for this magazine, write to us and if your proof work is good, we'll send you the stencils and the items needed for the cutting thereof.

As you've perhaps noticed by now, this magazine has two page 11s, and no page 19. For this fact, we can only apoligize, inasmuch as page 11 was twins, and page 19 was squeezed out by pages 18 and 20, who "vanted to be alone"...

Now..... the future. If, as, and when Alien Culture has 500 subscribers, the magazine will probably go lithiograph. For the present, however, our small circulation does not warrant such a change. Another thing is the fact that we need a lot more material than we're getting. At the present time, we constantly have to worry about whether we'll have enough material to issue on time, or whether we'll have to delay publication a month or two. Especially needed are articles dealing with the field of fantasy or segemnts thereof, poetry, pictures on stencils, and short stories in about that order. Well, how about it?

The "Dreamland Opinionator Poll" arrived here last month, and was sent back, after being filled out. The results should be interesting.... especially that worst fan division. (Nasty thought wasn't it?)

We wonder how many of you are going to the Cinvention this summer. The first report, "The Cincy Report -- 'Fraternal Behavior in the American Fan'" has arrived, and things look interesting. If you want to join, or find out more, the address is: Don Ford, 129 Maple Ave., Sharonville, Ohio. Membership is a buck.

Joe Baker's reviews are, alas, no more. However, when we saw him last, we finagled some poetry out of him, so he'll be around awhile.

We've been unable to answer correspondence properly, and therefore, letters to the editor, while we're glad to get them and will publish some like Cox's letter in this issue, will probably not be answered. Our own personal correspondence is at a sad level, and we hereby apologize to all our friends for our seeming neglect. We can only say, college and a fanzine don't make for much spare time. Gosh, wonder what the fellow whose unanswered letter is dated 11/48 thinks? Hmm! Perhaps we'd better not go to the Cinvention -- reasons of health, you know.

There's a very fine story by Keller coming in the next issue, and some other items which we're sure you don't want to miss. Be seein' ya then!

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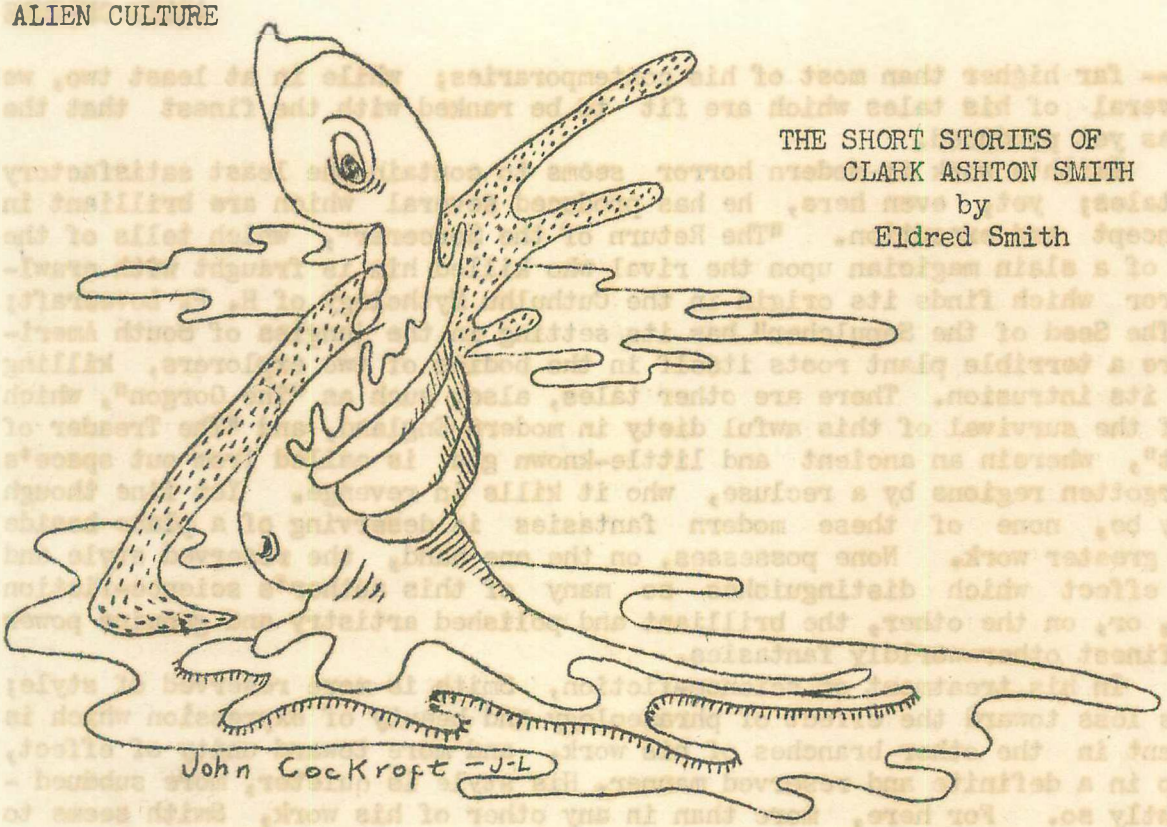



# THE SHORT STORIES OF CLARK ASHTON SMITH

by

Eldred Smith

I can think of no satisfactory -- or for that matter, even plausible reason for Clark Ashton Smith's literary obscurity. Certainly his work is of the first order, original in both story and presentation, and of a quality which makes its bid for fame far more than sheer originality. However, he chose fantasy rather than realism as the vehicle for his work, and in a world where realism rules supreme, this seems to be the gravest of all errors that an author can commit. His genius -- everything about his work that makes it great -- is overlooked; and readers and reviewers alike seem to see only this one factor (I most certainly cannot say fault); and the golden words, the jeweled sentences, are brushed aside with something bordering on contempt.

Because he thought more of his art than monetary gain or notoriety, publication in the big, so called "quality" magazines was denied to Smith, and his work found its market in the fantasy "pulps" which began to flourish about 1925 or 30. Weird Tales was the first publication to feature any of his prose -- apart from a few pieces, published twenty years before in the Black Cat and Overland Monthly magazines. But before many years had passed Smith's stories were being featured in Astounding Stories, Wonder Stories, Strange Tales, and others of their genre which had suddenly become so popular. And as the genre prospered, so did Smith.

Within a few years, he had become -- together with H. P. Lovecraft -- one of the leading authors of the supernatural in America. Many other writers flourished about this time, writers with great followings, but it seems fairly safe to say that Smith and Lovecraft are the only two to bet on for future fame. Each was an artist -- genuinely and sincerely; and the work of each shows this above all else.

The bulk of Clark Ashton Smith's prose seems to fall into three distinct classifications: modern horror, science-fiction, and "otherworldly" fantasy. In each of these catagories, he managed to achieve a high degree of art-

istry -- far higher than most of his contemporaries; while in at least two, we find several of his tales which are fit to be ranked with the finest that the genre has yet produced.

Smith's work in modern horror seems to contain the least satisfactory of his tales; yet, even here, he has produced several which are brilliant in both concept and execution. "The Return of the Sorcerer", which tells of the revenge of a slain magician upon the rival who killed him is fraught with crawling horror which finds its origin in the Cuthulhu Mythology of H. P. Lovecraft; while "The Seed of the Sepulcher" has its setting in the jungles of South America, where a terrible plant roots itself in the bodies of two explorers, killing them by its intrusion. There are other tales, also; such as "The Gorgon", which tells of the survival of this awful diety in modern England, and "The Treader of the Dust", wherein an ancient and little-known god is called from out space's far, forgotten regions by a recluse, who it kills in revenge. Yet fine though they may be, none of these modern fantasies is deserving of a place beside Smith's greater work. None possesses, on the one hand, the reserved style and subtile effect which distinguishes so many of this author's science-fiction efforts, or, on the other, the brilliant and polished artistry and genuine power of his finest other-worldly fantasies.

In his treatment of science-fiction, Smith is more reserved of style; he tends less toward the effect of phraseology and beauty of expression which is so evident in the other branches of his work, and more toward unity of effect, built up in a definite and reserved manner. His style is quieter, more subdued - and rightly so. For here, more than in any other of his work, Smith seems to desire credulity, And here he does more to achieve it.

Clark Ashton Smith has written a number of science-fiction short stories which are distinguished for their originality and effectiveness. Such tales as "The City of the Singing Flame", "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis", "The Master of the Asteroid", etc., are thoroughly brilliant achievements -- hallmarks upon science-fiction's upward road. Yet it would seem that there is one story of even greater stature than these, a little noticed tale of man's inability to alter his future. Its title is "The Plutonian Drug".

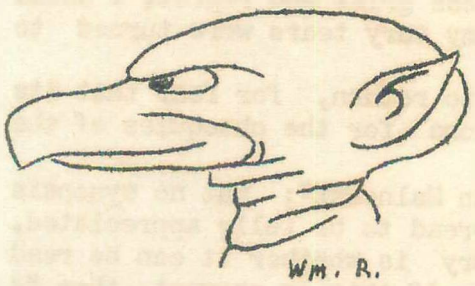
Opening leisurely, with a discussion between a doctor Manners, and Rupert Balcoth, a sculptor, the tale quickly develops -- without the slightest evidence of strain -- toward its dramatic ending. Principally, it deals with a certain drug, by which its taster is able to read the next few hours of his immediate future. After some discussion, Balcoth takes a measure of this drug, but it does not have the forseen effect -- it goes but a part of the desired distance. When Balcoth awakens and tells Manners this, the doctor seems worried. He warns the sculptor against returning to his house by the route of his vision, but Balcoth ignores this advice. And on his way home, he is killed, "sandbaged, very quietly and effectively, by a twenty-first century thug. The blow was fatal; and time, so far as Balcoth was concerned, had come to an end."

Smith has written other science-fiction stories, also. And pre-eminent among them is "The Letter of Mohoun-Los", an odyssey of time and space which takes its modern voyager from the planet Earth to far-off Mohoun-Los, where he dwells as a god among its machine-worshiping inhabitants. But "The Plutonian Drug" must surely stand as this author's masterpiece, and, more than any other story, it shall do more to secure his place upon the topmost rung of this comparatively new literature.

But fine though his work in science-fiction may be, it is in his tales of other-worldly fantasy and horror that Smith truly comes into his own. Here, with a background of what H. P. Lovecraft has called "a universe of remote and paralyzing fright", he has created a group of short stories which must stand as

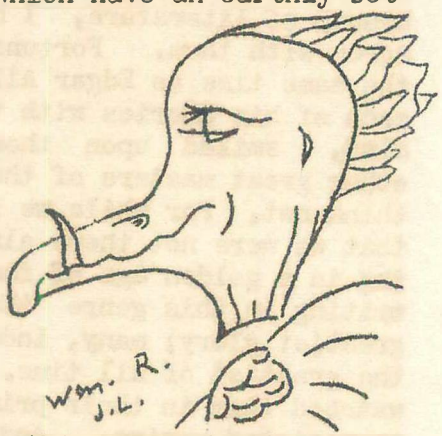
classics of their type so long as this literature endures.

Many are the worlds of his creation; and their names alone must inspire wonder from even the dullest and most unimaginative amongst us. Hyperboria, Atlantis, Zothique, Lophai, that strange unnamed world which lies upon the borderland of our own in "The Light From Beyond", Phandiom, and countless others, each with their own strange and exotic features. One shall always remember the world of Lophai, where flowers rule under the directions of Voorqual, the flower god, and where the human inhabitants serve them. Nor would one forget the gazolba bird or the many adventures with the unknown that King Euvoran courted in his "The Voyage of King Euvoran"; or the planet Xiccarph, where Maal Dweb rules, omnipotent, in his impenetrable palace surrounded by "a bottomless swamp wherein no reptile dwelt and where no dragon descended; but where the pitch-black ooze was alive with incessant heavings."




Atlantis, a world of past ages about which many authors -- great and small -- have written many thousand words lives again for Clark Ashton Smith and his readers. Here, Malygris, the magician, is all-powerful. Here, in "The Last Incantation", one of Smith's finest short stories, he dreams of his youthful love; and here too he slays his greatist enemies, though he, himself, has lain dead for an entire year, untouched by the worm. And it is from here that the two scientists, Hotar and Evidon, make their voyage to the planet Saturn, only to die there. It is in Atlantis, also, that the most terrible demon from out of space's furthermost reaches, the Double Shadow, overtakes and slays Avyctes and his pupil in their wizard's tower.

There are other worlds also -- many of them which have an earthly setting, such as the werewolf-ridden forest of Averoigne, in Medieval France, where Azedarac gave Brother Ambrose the draught that banished him, forever, from the world of man, and where Luc de Chaudronnier met and conquered the daemon-driven "Beast of Averoigne".But it is in an even stranger world, a "misty mid-region" of the tortured mind that we find the most powerful of Clark Ashton Smith's short stories. The title of this tale is "A Night in Malneant", and in it we find Smith's artistry raised to its highest level. Here a mood is set with the first paragraph, and slowly intensified, word by word, without a single faultering of sentence or phrase until the last. Beyond any doubt, this story is the greatist weird tale to be penned in America since the death of Edgar Allan Poe, and in many respects, it surpasses even the best of this great artisan.




At the outset, we find a lost, grief stricken wanderer stumbling aimlessly along an unknown road that leads to he knows not where. In a thick shroud of mist, he hears the deep, "mortuary tolling of many bells" and is lured to the "dim environs" of Malneant. Entering the city, he begins to wander about within it, searching for "wine and other agents of oblivion." But instead he finds constant reminders of his suffering.

Imagine, if you will, a dim and grief stricken wanderer plodding aimlessly through a dark and silent city with the deep reverberations of funeral bells ringing in his eary, reminding him of the death of her he so loved. And all about him, the thick, swirling white mist against the blackness of the night..

Then, he comes upon several of the city's inhabitants, and questions them regarding wine and a place to sleep; but they only answer, "We cannot tell you. We are shroud-weavers, and we have been busy making a shroud for the lady Marial." Such is the answer that he recieves everywhere -- only the occupations of those questioned causes a slight difference in the reply. And now the grief is upon him with ten-fold violence, for he realizes that the name of his mourned sweetheart is also Marial.

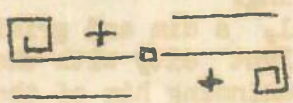
So, at last, the wanderer (whose name is never given) approaches the mausoleum wherein the body of the lady Marial lies in state; and, approaching the bier upon which she lies, he discovers that she is, indeed, the same Marial who he loved.

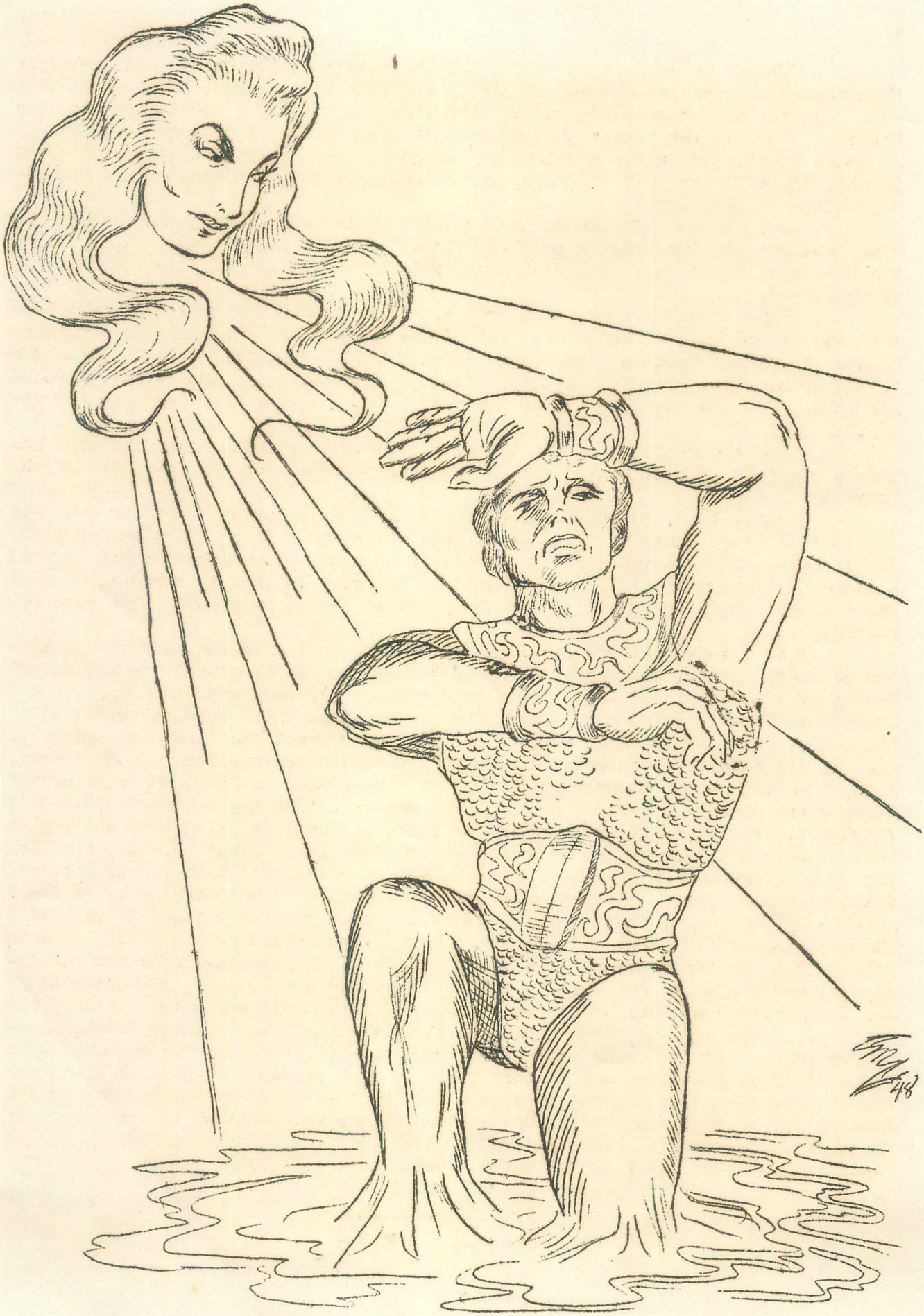
"The tides of time," he writes, "were frozen in their flowing; and that was or had been or could be, all of the world that existed aside from her, became as fading shadows; and even as once before (was it aeons or instants ago?), my soul was locked in a marble hell of hopeless grief and regret. I could not move, I could not cry out or even weep, for my very tears were turned to ice."

And the wanderer flees the city, never to return, for fear that its people might be "still busied with their preparations for the obsequies of the lady Marial."

This, then, is the outline of "A Night in Malneant"; but no synopsis can do this story justice. It must be read and re-read to be fully appreciated. It has been said that the mark of a truly great story is whether it can be read a score of times without losing its initial charm. If this is correct, then "A Night in Malneant" is surely one of the greatist for it only gains with each re-reading.

As I look over the majority of the anthologies in the genre, and listen to those discerning readers who look upon the supernatural as a distinct branch of literature, I hear their high praise for long dead authors. And I agree with them. Fortunate indeed must we consider those readers who lived in the same time as Edgar Allan Poe, and were able to greet the first appearance of each of his stories with their all-too-well deserved acclamation. Good fortune, also, smiled upon those many readers who were able to watch the rise of the other great masters of the fantastic. And yet were they any luckier than we? I think not. For while we look upon those lost, golden years with envy and regret that we were not there also, we seem to completely forget that we, too, are living in a golden age of fantastic fiction. Many are the brilliant men of letters, writing in this genre that we have had the pleasure of watching rise to their greatist glory; many, indeed, and a full half-dozen of them fitting to rank with the greatist of all time. Lovecraft, James, and Machen have left us, but we watched them in their prime -- we were the first to recognize their now widely-appreciated genius. And with us yet are Blackwood and Dunsany, the last two of the four British masters of the fantastic and the macabre which this century has produced. And with us also is the truest of the lot, Clark Ashton Smith, whose genius shines like a beacon upon the darkening horizon of our literature -- a giant of whose presence any century could well be proud. We have no cause for regret of past years; our only regret should be that we do not appreciate to the fullest those that are passing now, and show our appreciation by erecting, in fantastic literature's high vaulted hall of fame, a towering monument to the gigantic genius of Clark Ashton Smith, greatist of the great.





## FIRST CLAY BROKEN

by

Genevieve K. Stephens

Not heavy window lifted dusty eyes to look
As Thomas dropped the knocker of a strange design,
The door swung open; carpet, deep and soft as petals,
Met his feet, he walked in squares of blood and wine.
A shadow led him through a maze of rooms
Until he bowed before a withered grotesque crone
Who traces yellow charts of stars and empty seas
With fingers white and fleshless as a bone.
"This man would make a world,
Aspires to be a god,
To be immortal without flesh or soul,
To life inflate the atoms of a clod."
And Thomas shrinks from mockery
More ancient than his kind could know,
Afraid to speak, nods yes,
This mad yet childish thing is so.
"Poor fool," the caricature resumes
"I offer surcease to your curious hand,
It shall make stars and rivers, suns and moons,
Creatures even, at your command."
No ordinary room she takes him to,
But space wherein he does not fall,
This is the work room of a god,
Lacking nothing, containing all.
He would try first, nor sees the angels shudder,
The image of himself, a man,
Lifts down a jar marked "Homo Genus"
And shakes its contents in a shallow pan.
The hand of Thomas sweats and touches
Damp earth that seems to leap beneath his palm,
To ache with urge of form and being,
Mute, beseeching, embryotic psalm.
Too dry, he spits upon the loam,
Too sandy, adds a bit of clay,
Now, last of all a breath of life--
Its eyes stare live and lidless at the day.
A tongueless mouth speaks terror,
Lifts ungainly arms in fright,
Rears back and falls at his creator's feet,
The first clay broken in a godling's sight.

Long, Thomas stared... and lost his thirst
To create worlds and be a god,
How could he bear it when he grieved
For even this first twisted clod?

# COSMIC SEQUEL

by

Jim Leary

Still lays the senescent universe, secure in its vastness;
All action dead.
Contacts grown old have lapsed into dust as has the material of time.
A vast quietude stretching out on a scale so far
So far that its limits are hidden in infinity.

All is without motion;
A darkness as never known prevails with a chill that is absolute.
The cosmos lays in a sleep;
A sleep that is a sleep of finality.

But what of that Consciousness beyond all change?
Beyond all.
That which is of, and yet apart from the universe.
The Unity that is.
Surely, It too must be gone..... and yet,
It alone is eternal.

A tremor ripples through space;
A tremor that starts and ends nowhere.

Slowly It moves;
An awful ponderous motion that is against the very dimensions
Of time and space.
Ever so slowly It moves.

The universal matrix shudders
As a warping wrenching force is exerted;
There is motion.
That once inert seeks the plane where It lies, and forms
A seething mass which swells with yet more mass,
A vast firey whirlpool of incredible span.

It acts:
The mass splits, and the far reaches of curved space are illumed
By firey spheres, as they disperse from the common plane.
Aeons pass.
From the cooling masses, galaxies come into being.

It has but one task left:
Slowly, It divides;
Portions of It float away into immensity
From these shall the cycle be reborn-
From these shall the new spring,
And oblivious climb the stairway of life -- to death.
And again, and again shall this cycle occur.
To what purpose?
Only One knows.....
And It sleeps.

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# IF

by

Walter A. Coslet

Did you ever wonder what might have happened if -- in the field of fantasy? Consider for the moment, some possibilities. They say Black Cat was published from late 1895 to late 1906, then revived for a few months in 1920 -- but in poor shape. If the revival had been handled right, we might have had Black Cat with us to this day, to steal the honors from Weird Tales as the oldest fantasy mag still being published.

Then there's that first of science-fiction magazines -- the Frank Reade Library. Almost 200 issues it ran -- even though they were small sized -- in the 90's. Argosy, which started even before that, continued down, to and through the transfer to Popular Publications. With a broader field, instead of sticking to the one author, Noname, they might well have made a go of it -- popular opinion probably wouldn't have been so censorious if they hadn't been so closely tied in with the dime novels. How far this would have antedated Amazing Stories, we can only guess, for Gernsback started publishing stf in 1911 in his science mags, and if he'd had a successful predecessor in the field, he might even have brought out Amazing Stories before World War I began.

And how about Thrill Book? Would it have been more successful -- so much so that it would have overcome the printer's strike and continued on as a regular magazine when it ended -- if it had stuck to stf and fantasy entirely? Perhaps not, yet who can say for sure?

Weird Tales is next in our lineup. There's lots of ifs here. How would it have fared if it had continued publishing standard sized issues instead of changing to large size? Or what might have been the result if they had published regularly instead of bringing out a giant quarterly first anniversary issue? Then Farnsworth Wright took over. What would another man have made of Weird Tales? Would WT have died the death of all the previous fantasy-stf mags if it had shied away from stf and stuck to strictly weird material?

Then Gernsback brought out Amazing Stories. Would it have been successful if he had discontinued the stf in his science mags, or if he hadn't used thick paper? Skipping ahead aways, what might have been the result if he had decided to issue an annual every year instead of changing it to a quarterly? Or, again, if he had decided instead to change Amazing to a twice a month mag, instead of publishing a quarterly in addition to the monthly.

Ghost Stories appeared on the stands a few months after Amazing. If it had had a wider fantasy field, would we still have it? Would it have been more successful if it had been issued as a pulp instead of a rotogravure type mag? and if it had not changed to a pulp in late 1928, would it have died even sooner. And just what effect did the return to large size have? The mag returned to small pulp size shortly. If one of the changes had not been made would it by any chance have survived the depression?

Not too strictly fantasy was Tales of Magic and Mystery -- nor was it to a very great extent, a magazine of "tales". With more emphasis on fiction, could it have survived? And what would a larger dose of stf have done to the mag?

Chronologically, we next have Amazing Stories slipping from Gernsback's hands and the birth of Wonder, Science and Air, shortly followed by a supplementary Quarterly. How great might have been the effect if Gernsback had never lost Amazing we can hardly guess. Amazing might never have gone small size -- or it might have done so sooner. In fact it might have gone through all the antics Wonder did.

What effect would it have had on the field if Amazing had had a real competitor even sooner than it did? Especially one not following Gernsback's policies.

The "ifs" that can be pondered from here on are truly multitudinous. We'll take tham a mite less detailed so you can do your own wondering on the sidelines.

If Astounding Stories of Super-Science had not dropped all but the first two words of its title, would it have made any difference?

If Miracle Science & Fantasy had got a real start, would it ever have died?

Would Strange Tales have been a success if Clayton Pubs hadn't crashed?

What would Astounding Stories have become if Campbell had taken over immediately instead of Tremaine? Would an Astounding Stories Quarterly have been successful if the publishers could have been persuaded to publish it?

Would Crawford's mags, Marvel Tales and Unusual Stories have caught on if he could have obtained newstand circulation?

If Red Circle's stf ventures, Marvel Science Stories and Dynamic Science Stories have been more successful with a different publisher and policy?

Had there been no World War II, would the flood of stf mags have been able to continue?

Would Unknown have survived the war if they had retained the old name, the old covers, the monthly appearance, or even had never gone large size?

Backtracking for the moment, how different would the field have been if England had produced the first successful stf and fantasy prozines, or if Scoops had been published with a mature policy from the first?

If Tales of Wonder had adapted a progressive stf policy instead of an introductory one, would it have been more popular in England?

If the first British Fantasy had been published in the USA, would it have become one of the most popular stf mags?

Etc., etc.

There are a lot of incidentals: What would science-fiction have become if there had been no John W. Campbell Jr.? Would stf be more popular with the old type covers instead of the pulp type so prevalent today?

What do you think?

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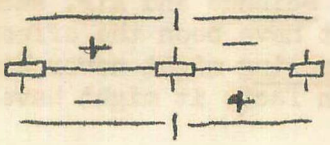
MASS PHILOSOPHY
by
Joseph B. Baker

It is not that we are lazy,
we are just tired.
It is not that we are carefree
instead of inspired
to do great things.
No, it is none of these---
it's just that we don't give a damn!



## SCIENCE FICTION "IMPASSE"

by

R. L. Farnsworth

It has often puzzled me a great deal to note the vast amount of interest which science fiction fans find in the current crop of science fiction stories in the few magazines in this field. The reason I am puzzled is due to the fact that there are only a handful of authors (though the simile would better fit their recompense) who write all of the fiction appearing in these mags today. Even this is not too bad, since most of these few authors are quite good. But there is a much worse feature, with which I am sure the majority of fans are conversant, and this is that the editors of the leading publications write quite a large percentage of the stuff they print. The leading magazine averages perhaps 4½ stories per issue. Coming out twelve times a year, with always at least one serial, and sometimes two in the same issue, it figures out that the editor, under various pen names, is writing nearly a third of the magazine. Such a situation would be suicide for the Sat Eve Post, or any other publication in which a degree of competition exists. The excuse given in the pulps is that they do not have the advertising but must depend on the cheapest possible source of filler.

The fact is that the scroungy science fiction mags which do exist have the finest body of readers and the most most loyal fans of any type of popular reading matter. It is my conviction that the science fiction fan gets the rawest deal of any type of fan in literature, sports or arts. For example; the film fan is fed a constant stream of the pap he likes through a multitude of mags, and his wishes determine editorial policies of the movie mags.

On the other hand, the plaintive pleas of science fiction fans for more authors and more variety in plots, are met with satire, clumsy humour and a "take it or leave it, this is all you get" attitude. This situation will continue until the fans make their wishes known, not to the editors, who have their own financial axes to grind, but to the publishers. It is certainly no secret that the editors of the leading science fiction magazines have sold their publishers on the idea that science fiction fans are a muddled headed lot whom no one else but they know what is best for them. The publisher, never having heard from a science fiction fan, probably agrees somewhat along these lines; "that's right, I guess those guys are a little nuts, you'd better handle the whole thing."

Science fiction fans: you will get the kind of science fiction you want and science fiction will come into its own, when and if, you make your mass wishes known to those who control the purse strings.

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## UNDERGROUND WAVE PROPAGATION ON 80 METERS

by

J. C. May

All of us who listen to the short wave bands, whether on a broadcast radio or ham receiver, get a big boot out of raising a rare foreign station. But it is often too true that scarcely do we have our clamps in a juicy one when the atmospherics snow him under, or he fades out on the skip.

These irregularities take place because normal short wave communication depends on ionospheric propagation -- i.e. reflection of radio waves by ionized levels of the upper atmosphere. Underground propagation functions in a

radically different manner. Here we have the erstwhile "skywave" undergoing semiquaver inversion and radiating downward into the earth, while the "ground wave", being infraceded (as it were) by the grounded skywave, is forced into the troposphere, meteorological conditions permitting. This phenomenon is absent during periods of sunspot minima, in Zone Ø, and in Class A telephony stations controlled by the W.C.T.U.

The inverted skywave, or "scotched-skywave", penetrates into the earth as far as the sub-glacial Silurian strata, there encountering folia of sporadic-Epsilon ionized guelph which form the reflecting layer. The reader can readily appreciate that (barring major terrestrial upheavals and similar seismic catastrophes) these ionized folia present an ideal medium for panendermicly adapted communications.

To test the effects and practicability of underground propagation, a colleague, W9QRM, and I undertook a series of experiments. Tests have proved that best results may be obtained by utilizing Amphenol silicon sesquicentisulfate crystals ground for 3.3535 Mc. This is a good low-drift-type xtal. (Unfortunately, the life of the crystal is short, but discarded ones, hand-painted, make attractive novelty sash weights.) The type of transmitter is optional, but the author obtained excellent results with a WBAM rig, 250% modulation, running 25 watts to a pair of 450TH's in the final. Should the aforementioned triodes be unavailable, we suggest that a couple of old milk bottles will give similar results.

Our antenna was a non-rotating, four element 80M beam, buried under twelve feet of soil and a nasturtium bed. On the afternoon first tested, W9QRM and myself sent out a quick CQ and raised VU9PDQ in India, FB8NG in Madagascar, and three Australians. Of course these results, mediocre as they may seem to the reader, can hardly be called conclusive. On the whole, we found that 80 Meter Underground provided fine static-and FFC-free operation. Readers desiring more detailed information are invited to write to the author.

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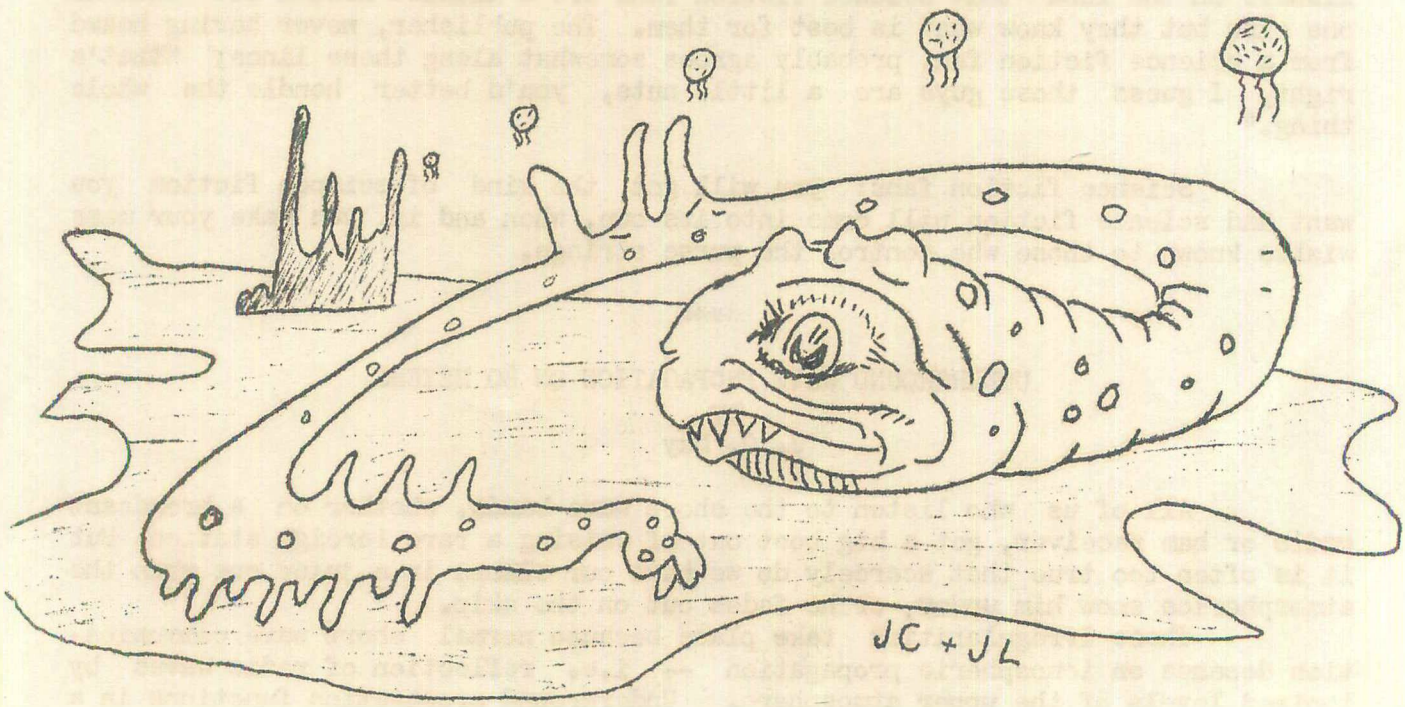

## SHADOWS WEST

by

R. Flavie Carson

A young man sat in sunset light,
Just waiting for the coming night,
When he might try his new-found art,
And make the bones of dead men start
From out their graves beneath the moon
By simply singing one lone tune....
But rubbing first on each headstone
The blood of kittens but half-grown,
Mixed with the boiled fat of a snake
And fresh with fish eggs from the lake.

The sun lay low down in the west
Upon the mountain's wooded crest,
And shadows ran their fingers east
Among the graves, not saved the least
Of them from its tenacious grasp,
But caught each stone in stealthy clasp.

A blood-moon rose in eastern skies,
The wind moaned low with mournful sighs,
And shadows east turned shadows west
As though forgetful of the quest
That set them there to far explore
The twilight zones of earth's cool floor.

The young man rose and licked his lips
And wiped his hands upon his hips;
His deep-set eyes were burning bright
With an unholy devilish light;
His lips were parted in a sneer,
His breath profaned the atmosphere.
From out his shirt he drew a flask
And set about his evil task....
Straight to the tomb of Jenny Kane
To kneel as though it gave him pain;
For Jenny scarce three years ago
Had known and called him as her beau,
And they had walked this very sod
In humble reverence with God,
But Jenny caught a cold and sighed
Her lover's name before she died,
Entreating him to never fail
To save their love from all travail.

The stalwart lad with broken heart
Then set himself from men apart
To delve into forbidden books,
To seek out hidden spots and nooks;
And he acquired many a tome
From ancient Egypt and from Rome,

And studied full the hours away,
Seaking by night as by the day,
Until at last he deemed he knew
The secret of the Devil's brew.

He knelt now o're his true love's grave,
(In honest eyes a scurly knave);
From once pure lips he breathed a curse,
Of all he knew it was the worse;
And crooning forth his chant the while
He pulled the stopper from the vial,
And smeared the potion o're the tomb,
And thrice inhaled its rank perfume,

Then with a roar the wind swept down,
More strongly than of old renown;
The heavens split, the lightning flashed
To there reveal as thunder crashed
Our young man dead on Jenny's stone,
Forever dead, and.... quite alone.

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VISION OF FUTURITY
by
Dale Hart

Last night I had in vision all that
is of pain and joy:
It seemed that I had long been one
with self and sky,
And underfoot I trod the sand where
once was water of a sea.

I knew with pain that flowers were of
dust no longer sweet,
That notes of birds were heard not
since the time of trees,
And, too, I knew that you were dead
in some far place.

I walked in darkness, thinking not
what light could be,
And all was cold, and death had
been a thousand years---
And then I found you, unexpectedly,
and drew you close.

You were forbidden joy that quit
the land but to return,
And we were people meeting when
the earth was young.

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CULTURAL LAG: A DEPARTMENT
Letters from readers.

Dear Mr. Leary,

Apropos of August Derleth's "Author vs. Critic" in the first issue of Alien Culture.

Derleth makes a good stand on his subject, and while his omission of several allied facets may be good politics I believe it might prove interesting to shine a little light on these facets and see how they sparkle. He, Derleth, abnegates the amateur fantasy critic -- and here I speak of the 'fanzine' reviewers, such as Mullen, Boggs, Moskowitz, Laney, Wilson, and perhaps even myself, among others -- to a paragraph of six lines and then totally forgets, or ignores, them. They do not fit into his scheme of things. Anon and now we shall see if this should be so; to open the subject I refer to two statements expressed in the paragraph mentioned that demand contradiction.

One of them is, paraphrased: an amateur reviewer can say whatsoever he chooses without consideration of honesty or discretion. This is rather like saying a person can go to church in the morning and in the afternoon he can kneel before his own private image, and it holds just about as much water.

Before I go further into this I must divide Derleth's 'fan critics' into two groups: the Thrilling Wonder type of letter department critics whom we can dispense with immediately, and the infinitely more serious minded fan whose interest in fantasy fiction goes beyond a desire to enjoy a dubious fame for a year or two before lapsing back into the nothing from which he emerged. This latter group includes devoted readers, collectors, a limited number of professional writers, and, -- believe it or not, Mr. Derleth -- experts on the subject of fantasy. Some of them, perhaps a hundred or less, are quite articulate on the subject; but they are usually the spokesmen for those who listen but seldom say anything themselves and whose ranks are surprisingly legion.

This, then refutes Derleth's statement that the amateur reviewer has no public -- controversily, he has a public which, I feel safe in asserting, determines to a large extent just how long a limited edition book remains in the stockroom. Look at this closely: it is almost paradoxical. It is, admittedly, a product of the times. At this date when serious readers and collectors of fantasy are numbered only among hundreds, editions of books are very small. Usually an edition runs from one to three thousand copies, and even then it sometimes takes several years before it goes out of print. Now, then, suppose the magazine in which the amateur critic is reviewing a book has a circulation of two hundred and fifty (which most don't, but some have circulations of two and four times that). Further, let us suppose that a third of that public is open-minded on the book being reviewed and if they think the reviewer honest, will either buy or not buy that book.

On the sacal of ratios this is much the same as a professional book review and a large edition book -- and this is the prime factor that Mr. Derleth has so blithely overlooked. In truth, as things stand now with fantasy's popularity among the average readers at only the beginning a few esteemed amateur reviewers can make or break a new book.

Whence now the weight of Derleth's statements that an amateur critic's opinion is of no worth, that his public is nil, and that he has no necessity of being sincere. Until conditions change, the amateur critic must play a decidedly important role in AD's "Author vs. Critic" and can by no means be relegated as inconsquential. He does have a public, and a large one in ratio, and he most certainly needs to be sincere and unbiased in his opinions for he has the most specialized audience that any form of fiction can command.

The right shoe, which pinched so tightly on the left foot, has been taken off and put back on correctly. So let us pay a passing glance at that left foot; namely, the critic with 'the solid literary reputation' who's word in newspapers and quality magazines (how often does a review of fantasy occur in the latter?) is law -- or, at least, so we are told.

If any of you have ever looked at the excerpts of reviews on the back of many fantasy books' dust/jackets and seen the hodge-podge of superlatives (you know them by heart, and so do I) spread there you will know what I mean when I say if that is representative of the reviewer's total analysis -- and it usually is -- it must be boring indeed.

The professional reviewers who know enough of the inner workings of fantasy fiction, who realize their audience might contain people who want more than movie blurbs, and who even care a hoot in hades about the whole thing, are strictly limited. August Derleth himself, Vincent Starrett, sometimes John Haley and a rare quota of others are the only fantasy reviewers whose reviews are published professionally that can meet the requirements stated at the beginning of this paragraph. I can triple that number among the so-called 'fanzine' critics - and while the majority of them do not possess B. A.s, they can tell an interested reader as much, and often more, of what he wants to know than Derleth's person with the 'solid literary reputation'.

PHILIP GRAY
Ellsworth Falls, Maine.

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INSPIRATION
by
H. T. McAdams

And the night was steeped all in silence,
And events seemed all for the best,
As I gazed off at half-spent Orion,
Reclining way out in the west.

The wind was a whispering prophet,
A rhythm, a slumbering tune,
A gallant and vain serenader,
Who trusted his notes to the moon.

And the heavens were glittering magic!
I yielded myself to the whole:
To the half-revealed secret of living,
To the nourishing light of the soul.

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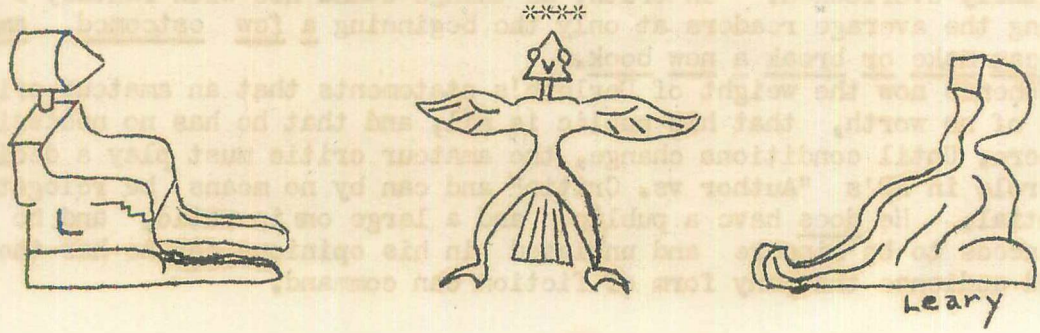

# THE TURBOENCABULATOR

by

Evan H. Appelman

Probably the most controversial subject on the technological stage today is the turboencabulator. Since its existence first came to be known, there have been an endless number of descriptions and explanations of it, each entirely different from any other.

Actually, the turboencabulator has been on the United States Navy's top secret list since its invention in 1939. However, in 1942, by some failure in the cloak of secrecy guarding the invention, some information leaked out and, to the utter astonishment of high Naval officers, a well-known technological magazine featured an article on the subject. It was immediatly apparent to these worthies that to muzzel the magazine would only create more suspicion. However, as the turboencabulator was, and still is, a highly complicated mechanism, a solution offered itself. A number of Naval technicians, under various civilian pseudonyms, wrote highly technical articles dealing with the turboencabulator and managed to get them published. Each article gave an entirely different explanation for the machine. The technology fans and the like read these articles, scratched their heads in bewilderment, and finally let it go as being some new hoax.

But the turboencabulator was not forgotten as the Navy had hoped. No, instead it became a technological myth. Every few months, the subject was bound to pop up in some magazine or other and some went so far as to feature photographs of the 'encabulator. At this rate, it was inevitable that, after a few years, all trace of the original article, which bore at least an inkling of the truth, should have vanished.

Now that the war has been concluded, and the entrance of the atomic age has neutralized to some extent the potency of the turboencabulator, Naval officials have deigned to release the secret to the general public. It is my good fortune to be a close friend of Captain Lawrence Kingston U.S.N., a physicist who has been in charge of turboencabulatric research since the Navy took it over. Therefore, as soon as the ban of secrecy was lifted, I was able to obtain first hand information on the machine. I will here content myself with giving a brief summary of the history and operation of the turboencabulator as I have obtained it from Captain Kingston. For those who are interested in a more technically detailed account, I am certain that numerous such articles will be appearing a few months hence in most leading technological publications.

In 1935 Doctor David Weinstien was working with the possibilities of utilizing the radioactive radiations emitted by radium. He was positive that there was some way by which this infinite supply of energy could be harnessed. However, after ten years of hard work, it seemed as though he would be forced to give it up when, in 1935, George Thompson succeeded in making "kedium" an alloy of lead which was many times as efficient as a radiation shield than was pure lead. This was what Dr. Weinstein had needed. After experimenting for a few months with the new alloy, he found a way by which it could be polished to the extent that it would actually reflect radiation without difussing it.

Dr. Weinstein set to work with renewed zeal and finally came up with a machine that was to develop into the present day turboencabulator. Its basic part was a small quantity of radium in a kedium container, one side of which was polished to reflect the radiation into a kedium tube about an inch in diameter which ran out from it. At points where the tube bent there were, within it, planes of polished kedium which acted as do the prisms in a periscope, reflecting the radiation along its new path.

At the other end of the tube was probably Dr. Weinstein's greatist triumph. It was a radioactive light bulb. In appearance it was similar to any large electric bulb; however, its mechanism differed vastly. From its base protruded a tiny piece of wire coated with phosphorus monoradon solution. Within the base was an intricate fuse mechanism containing, among other materials, bits of sulpher and phosphorus. The rest of the bulb was merely the orthodox tungsten filament in an airtight glass casing.

The bulb was screwed into a bottomless socket to which the kedium tube was attached. When the radiation was run through the tube (Dr. Weinstein made allowances for controlling the flow of radiation by having one of the kedium planes so placed that it could be adjusted at will. By shifting the plane out of line, the flow of radiation through the tube could be halted) it hit the phosphorus monoradon wire and ignited it. This set off the fuse mechanism which, in turn, set off the filament, which the flow of radiation kept burning at the brightness of about a 5000 watt electric bulb. In this arrangement, only the bulb was expendable. The radiation would continue unabated for the radioactive life of the radium which is, theoretically, forever.

The entire mechanism necessary could be piled into a large suitcase and it was little wonder that Dr. Weinstein's head swam with the possibilities of his invention. Already he had developed a powerful portable searchlight with an unlimited power supply. What next? He pictured great plants supplying the world with heat and light from a few pounds of radium.

So Dr. Weinstein continued his experiments. And it was well that he did, for, had he been content with his one invention, the turboencabulator might never have been built. Actually, it was by an accident that Dr. Weinstein created the 'encabulator. He was curious to find out what would happen if he was to run two flows of radiation together. With this end in mind, he set up two radium containers and joined their tubes together. He then lined up the kedium planes and waited. The result was not long in coming. In a moment the lights in his laboratory blinked and went out. He quickly threw the planes back out of line and the lights promptly came on again.

After due experimentation, Dr. Weinstein found that whenever a flow of radiation was allowed to make contact with another flow, it created a force field through which no electric current could penetrate. Realizing that here he had something really big, he immediatly informed the government, in the person of the Navy which happened to have an office in the town where his laboratorywas located. They proceeded to take over the machine.

After that, Doctor Weinstein faded from the turboencabulatric picture. Until his death in 1941 in a laboratory explosion, he had continued to work on further methods of utilizing radiation.

Now, Doctor Weinstein's turboencabulator had a force field with a radius of about 15 feet. The Navy found that four ounces of radium in each container would give the most efficient service, bringing the range up to about twenty feet. Greater or lesser amounts alike brought down this range. However, even twenty feet would be of limited value in modern warfare, which was the principal purpose that the Navy intended it for, and they strove for some way to increase the 'encabulator's range.

At first the Navy had gone about their turboencabulatric experimentation in a haphazard way, with little or no coordination. Now, however, they realized that some form of organization was essential and set apart a special department, with Captain Kingston in charge, to handle all research in the field.

The answer to the problem of range came in 1942, when Doctor George Carp, a civilian physicist who had been working with the Navy, presented his plans for an improved turboencabulator. He had worked the amplification of the

range by means of a turbine which looked much like a sealed-in ferris wheel and was about as large. The turbine was to be about a hundred feet in height and would be spun on a large central power shaft. Kedium tubes, an inch in diameter, would run into the turbine through a hollow stabilizer shaft on the side opposite the power shaft and would conduct radiation into it. It would then be run through two sets of many radial kedium tubes (one flow in each set) which ran out to the hollow rim of the turbine where the two flows of radiation met. Roughly, the formula for the range of the turboencabulator, as increased by the turbine would be:

$$R = hs/50d$$

with R for the range in yards, h for the height of the turbine in feet, s for the speed in revolutions per minute, and d for the diameter of the kedium feed tubes in inches. The latter regulate the "radage" of the flow, equivalent to the electrical voltage, i.e. the pressure of the flow. This formula, of course, is based on a turboencabulator using four ounces of radium in each container.

Fine and dandy -- so far. But there was the little problem of spinning a hundred foot steel turbine at a speed which would give it sufficient range. This one really had the scientists baffled. Doctor Carp, Captain Kingston, and several other Naval physicists went into a huddle and stayed in it for the larger part of a year, after which time they came up with the gravito-maghetic motor. It was an extremely interesting device, with the initial energy consisting of that given off by a gas flame. This flame stimulated a low power thermic generator which sent athermic radiations out through an intricate system of unorthodox coils and condensors. This caused the mechanism to become attuned to the Earth's gravito-magnetic pulse. Once this happened, a tremendous flow of energy was caught by the machine from the Earth's gravito-magnetic field -- in the form of a high voltage gravito-magnetic current, which is somewhat similar to electricity but differs enough to allow it to pass through a turboencabulatric force field. This energy is carried from the mechanism by a set of conductors especially constructed to handle the enormous amounts of power involved. These take it to the gravito-magnetic motor where it runs through a special type of magnetic coil and works the motor much as an electrical current would. The motor spins the power shaft which, in turn, rotates the turbine. Dr. Carp figured that it could do so at about fifty revolutions per minute.

Considering the necessary size of the motor itself which, by the very nature of its work, had to be almost as large as the turbine itself, the Navy decided that it needed more roomy quarters in which to carry on its experiments. For this purpose, they procurred a large tract of land in northern Wisconsin, and proceeded to build a research center.

When it was completed in late 1944, the plant consisted of three buildings set in a row. The center one -- a 130 foot giant towering over its colleagues -- housed the turboencabulator proper. Needless to say, the turbine took up most of the space. It was suspended on two shafts, one of which ran into a wall socket and merely acted as a stabilizer to balance the other which ran out through the opposite wall and into the adjoining building where it was connected to the motor housed therein. It was this latter shaft which turned the turbine.

On either side of the turbine, dwarfed by the great machine, squatted the two radium containers with their kedium tubes pouring radiation into its heart.

The third building, from which the turboencabulator was controlled, was used chiefly for experimental work with the machine.

Of necessity, all three buildings contained, besides the orthodox electric lighting, numerous gas lamps for use when the turboencabulator was on and

all electrical currents were halted.

The Navy moved into the center in early 1945 and began experimenting to find a way to adapt the turboencabulator for warfare. When the Japanese surrendered six months later the Navy's hopes that the turboencabulator could be used during the Second World War were ended. However, they are still experimenting.

You see, there is one little catch which makes it highly improbable that the turboencabulator will become a war machine for quite some time. It would hardly be practical to transport the contents of two twelve story buildings around in a battle. Of course, theoretically, the turbine and generator-motor could be cut down in size without losing any range if the revolution of the turbine was speeded up a bit. But it doesn't quite work out that way in practice.

There would be little trouble to cutting down the size of the turbine to, say, about five feet in height. The natural increase in speed of revolution, due to the weight reduction, plus a slight reduction of the size of the feed tube, would keep the range at statis quo. However, when you try to do the same thing with the generator-motor, particularly the generator, you run into a bit of difficulty. The size of the gravito-magnetic pick-up generator is irrelevant. Once it becomes attuned to the Earth's pulse, it immediatly receives a steady flow of gravito-magnetic energy at a pressure equivelant to approximately a hundred million volts of electricity. With the full-sized generator, the mechanism for carting this away is very complex, and even more bulky. And, at the present, there is no way on Earth of conducting a hundred million volts from a five foot high generator.

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FAR MUSIC
by
Jim Leary

An elder strain comes to my startled ears
A polytonal chant of rhythmic beat
Which tells of those who live on strange black meat
And in it captures all of man's dark fears.
From far beyond a gateway to this world
The pipes bring knowledge of a darkly land
Wherein by archfiend human lives are planned
And from dark tower a man-skin flag is furled.

The gongs call out more wildly to me
The summons written by a demon hand
To come and live there in that foul land
Wherein my soul will rot eternally
And suddenly, I cannot help but wonder
Might joy be mine in that far world of thunder?