

ANCALAGON

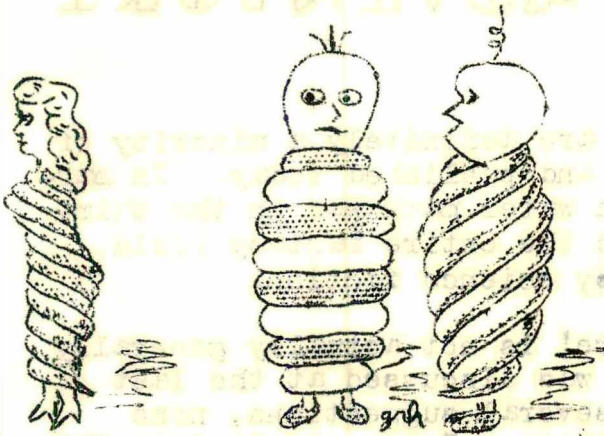


AN CALAGON!

Mark III

1

March, 1961



"She's just not my type!"

Still somewhat surprised by the wonder of it all, I am opening a new series of bulletins published in the interest of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society. It is numbered Mark III as it is a direct lineal descendant of my Science Fiction VIEWSLETTER (Mark II) and in turn of Harold Lynch's original Science Fiction VIEWSLETTER (Mark I).

The name change?....Well it's to make it sound a little less like a strictly personal opinion sheet; mostly in the hopes of luring in more outside material. Obviously I can't go on like this alone! So it's back to the old coverless, two page format next month. Don't say I didn't warn you.

I?....My name it is ~~Sam Hall~~ George R Heap, now entering my seventh year as Secretary to the PSFS with somewhat more satisfaction than in years past.

MARCH MEETINGS:

The formal meeting will be held in Room 203 at the Central YMCA, 1421 Arch Street at 8:00 P M on the 10th. I suppose the major business on hand is the completion of the election of officers. We still need a President and a Treasurer.

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ON FANTASY-ADVENTURE

Fantasy-adventure stories are definitely a minority of the imaginative fiction written and published today. In magazine fiction at least, the high water mark was in the thirties. After that it, along with the entire fantasy field, was pushed into the background by science fiction.

The term 'fantasy-adventure' is not actually generally accepted. A better description was discussed at the last Hyborian Legion muster, but of several suggestions, none seemed to be completely satisfactory. I propose to describe the field, give some examples, and show how it differs from the rest of fantasy writing.

Fantasy-adventure is a branch of fantasy which, in turn, is part what L. Sprague de Camp calls (in his Science-Fiction Handbook) imaginative, as opposed to realistic, fiction. This general class also includes science fiction. I would like to start off with a few intuitive exclusions; what adventure fantasy is not.

It is, first of all, not the traditional stories of ghosts, werewolves, pacts-with-the-devil, etc. laid in the world as we, or our ancestors, know it. Possibly stories laid in remote historical times would fit the category, but the few that I am familiar with do not.

Neither does it include the lost race fantasies without supernatural elements, thus excluding most of H. R. Maggard's fantasies. It is not supernatural horror a la H. P. Lovecraft. It is not stories of quasi-real lands such as Islandia or Graustarkian romances as The Prisoner of Zenda (by some accounts these last are not fantasies at all.)

In particular, I would exclude the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs; not with any malice or distaste....they just do not fit the fantasy-adventure class. Of Burroughs' four major series; the Martian, Venus, and Pellucidar stories are science fiction; the Tarzan books are a blend of lost race fantasy and real-world adventure.

Then what is fantasy-adventure? Well let us begin

with the fantasy element itself. There should be a strong element of the supernatural....spells, wizardry, and tokens of magic power...as an essential part of the story. The literary quality of the story is much improved if there is some effective limit to the supernatural forces; either a defence as Prince Vakar's iron sword in The Tritonian Ring, or a distribution of magic powers on both sides of a conflict as between Sauron, Saruman, Gandalf, the High Elves, and others in The Lord of the Rings.

The question sometimes comes up as to whether certain plot elements are actually supernatural, or are really to be considered as a form of science. To me, the only observable criterion is the subjective one: what do you as the reader think the author was trying to do? Thus, to me, The Dying Earth is fantasy regardless of the mathematical trap-pings Jack Vance gives to his spells; and "The Weakling" in the February, 1961 Analog, in spite of the use of such 'supernatural' devices as psionics, is science fiction.

A second point of definition is the culture-level of the story; in particular as to the weapons and transportation used. I am stressing the word 'story' as I believe that where the hero and his friends (or the villain for that matter) is allowed to settle crucial points with rifle or raygun, with spaceship or submarine; that a science fictional element has been introduced....and that the character of the story is changed to something else. The general cultural level then, defined in terms of our time-line, should be pre-gunpowder medieval or earlier.

At the Hyborian Legion muster, the idea of a single strong hero came up in discussion, with a certain amount of disagreement. Of the eleven stories or series I list below, four (The Broken Sword, The Hyborian Age, "The Dark World", and The Ship of Ishtar) have heroes of this type. Two more have single heroes who are just too human to live among the classic examples above (The Tritonian Ring and The Well of the Unicorn). The remaining five do not have one single hero. This question involves reader identification with the character. At the Legion muster, it was said of The Lord of the Rings; "I can't identify with a hairy footed creature, four feet high!" (Frodo or Bilbo). One answer is to try Aragorn but this is, for me, beside the point. However much I do identify while reading other stories, I do not seem to in this case.

I feel that the lack or presence of a single hero may

make the difference between an enjoyable story and a dull one, to some readers, but that this is not a criterion which distinguishes fantasy-adventure from the other forms of fantasy.

Third and last is the thing that to me, at least, is the most important: the world-background of the story. It may well be the most difficult thing for the author of such stories to create convincingly. The contradictory requirements are that it be both alien and familiar....or is it familiar, with a difference? The main thing to the familiarity portion is that it be a human background. I am stretching the term 'human' to include Hobbits, Elves, and Demons....as long as they are given human emotions and motivations and more-or-less human shapes. Stories where magic occurs in an entirely alien setting, as some of C. L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry stories, seem somehow discordant. Somehow magic seems to be part of a human culture.

Then how is the background to be alien? The eleven story-groups in the bibliography include five different ways. The Hyborian Age, The Tritonian Ring, and The Hobbit & The Lord of the Rings are laid in the far distant past of Earth. "The Dark World" and The Ship of Ishtar are laid in present time in worlds somehow parallel to ours. The Dying Earth is laid on an Earth so far in the future that science has been almost completely forgotten and the arts of magic have been rediscovered. The Broken Sword is laid in England, Ireland, and the Scandinavian lands of the first millenium. If this were all, I doubt it would seem like a true fantasy world but overlaying the real world are the dwellings of the Elves, Trolls, and Goblins...."halfway between this world and another;". The other four stories are laid on other worlds unconnected to Earth save spiritually. The Worm Ouroboros on Mercury (but hardly the Mercury of science fiction); The Zimiamvian Trilogy in Zimiamvia on a world unnamed (it could be the Mercury of the Worm); Two Sought Adventure on Nehwon; and The Well of the Unicorn on a planet described only as "the world of The Well".

With the possible exception of The Broken Sword, all of the stories take the reader where everything is new; the histories of the kingdoms, the legends of the peoples, politics, customs, weapons, the very face of the land. The author has millenia of history at his disposal to remake a world. I think that this sense of novelty casts a greater spell over the reader than the magic itself. It is something that requires novel length to fully develope.

Of my examples, only one is novella length and that is the least well developed background of the group....still, it's enough to make the story interesting. The others range from a paperback, four single hardcovers, two hardcovers plus additional short stories published only in magazine form, a trilogy, a tetralogy, and a heptology.

At this point, we can look at the list of books under discussion. I've read them all, enjoyed them all, and recommend them all; some less highly than others but all are worth at least a single reading.

- Anderson, Poul The Broken Sword, Abelard-Schuman.
- de Camp, L. Sprague The Tritonian Ring, Twayne.
 "The Hungry Hercynian", Universe
 Science Fiction, Dec., 1953.
 "Ka the Apalling", Fantastic Universe,
 Aug., 1958.
- Eddison, E. R. The Worm Ouroboros, Dutton.
- Eddison, E. R. The Zimiamvian Trilogy (1)
 The Mezentian Gate, The Curwen Press;
 A Fish Dinner in Memison, Dutton. (2)
 Mistress of Mistresses, Dutton.
- Howard, Robert E. The Hyborian Age (1)
 The Coming of Conan.
 Conan the Barbarian.
 Tales of Conan, (in collaboration with
 L. Sprague de Camp, this book
 overlaps the first two chrono-
 logically).
 The Sword of Conan.
 King Conan.
 Conan the Conqueror.
 The Return of Conan, (by Björn Nyberg
 in collaboration with L. Sprague
 de Camp.)

All published by Martin Greenberg of Gnome Press, may Crom honor his name.

- Kuttner, Henry "The Dark World", Startling Stories,
 Summer, 1946.
- Leiber, Fritz Two Sought Adventure, Gnome Press.
 "Lean Times in Lankhmar", Fantastic
 Science Fiction Stories, Nov., 1959.
 /I think there's another magazine short
 story but I can't locate it - grh/

Merritt, A. The Ship of Ishtar, Borden.
Pratt, Fletcher The Well of the Unicorn, Sloan.
(Fletcher, George U.)

Tolkien, J. R. R. The Hobbit.
 The Lord of the Rings (1)
 The Fellowship of the Ring.
 The Two Towers.
 The Return of the King.

Published in the U.S.A. by Houghton
Mifflin Co., in the U.K. by George
Allen & Unwin, Ltd.

Vance, Jack The Dying Earth, Hillman Periodicals,
 Inc. /paperback/.

(1) Not an actual book title, a collective
name for a series.

(2) An error at the top of page 5, I have
not read this book....any copies for
sale? grh.

The above by no means represents a complete list of
all publishings. Almost all of de Camp and Howard and one
of the short stories in the Vance book have seen magazine
publication, some more than once. The Ship of Ishtar has
had at least two paperback editions plus others in hardcover.

The only omissions I'll mention right now are some of
the works of Lord Dunsany and Clark Ashton Smith. I haven't
read either sufficiently to discuss them in print.

Are there flaws in the three point definition I've
set up? A few....some I've mentioned in the preceding
discussion. Others....two of the six short stories compris-
ing The Dying Earth lean a little heavily on science fiction
type gadgets, still the other stories make up for this....
"The Dark World" brings in gunpowder weapons, produced on
the spot it is true, but still a flaw even though they play
a relatively minor part in the story.

This then is fantasy adventure....discussion, definition,
and examples. The stories listed contain some of the best
writing and most carefull craftsmanship in the field of
imaginative fiction.

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"----, ORGANIZE!"

by Harold V. Lynch

Well maybe we shouldn't encourage the formation of any more specialized sub-groups and clubs within fandom because they divide us too much. But I can see usefulness in one more such club --- an association of SF clubs. Among people responsible for membership recruiting, programming, and management in SF clubs across the country, such a group would be helpfull to exchange ideas, information, and encouragement.

All clubs have problems in planning interesting meetings, finding ways to reach new prospects, finding inexpensive places to meet, etc. An association, meeting at least at each worldcon and maybe at some of the regional conferences, could promote some ideas for making clubs better, and there's no reason why it has to be a kind of central government like WSFS, Inc. There may be some who'd say we don't need it, but is there any group or organization set up to do what it could do?

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GOT A LETTER FROM BJO the other day partly concerning the same subject. She suggests a LASFS-PSFS ~~xxx~~ "kultural exchange" for just the same sort of thing that Hal is talking about up top. Any ideas?

Also a notice of The Second Annual Fantasy Art Show to be held at the SEACON. They want material for exhibition on fantasy, fannish, or science fictional themes. Included is an excellent list of exhibition requirements and mailing suggestions. It's too lengthy to copy but I'll be happy to bring it around for anyone who's interested.

She also says, referring to the '63 Con.... "when Philly gets it. They will."....Dick...Bob...are you out there?

MORE FROM THE WEST: Ted Johnstone, editor of I Palantir for The Fellowship of the Ring is looking for material for his next issue. I know some of you Tolkien fans haven't written anything for him yet. How about it? His address is: "Bag End", 1503 Rollin St., South Pasadena, California.

They finally found Lumumba....at the Hotel Leopoldville, on
the menu.

A SHARE FOR A POOR OLD TROLL

"He can spare a share for a poor old troll.
For he don't need his shinbone."

- from The Fellowship of the Ring
by J.R.R. Tolkien.

The first trolls to come into Mr. Tolkien's epic are the three in The Hobbit with the rather unlikely names of William Huggins, Bert, and Tom. They are described as having rather heavy faces, peculiar legs, and no couth whatsoever. Mr. Tolkien draws them as rather square-headed and definitely scaly. This trio are stone-trolls, who are characterized by being turned to stone by the action of sunlight. Even in life, they are practically as hard as stone.

Cave-trolls appear in The Fellowship of the Ring. They also are hard....enough so to notch a sword-blade. They are dark green and scaly. They have no toes (stone-trolls do.) They have black blood which smokes in the open. Among their other usefull functions, they do heavy lifting for Orcs.

In The Return of the King mountain-trolls are mentioned briefly, cheerfully wielding a ram for Sauron, against the gates of Minas Tirith. A little later in the story, hill-trolls appear, scaled so heavily that it appears like an armor of mesh. They also are black-blooded. They are noted for administering the coup de grace by biting out their enemies throats. These are probably the Clog-hai, in the Black Speech, as they walk abroad in the sunlight.

Another race of trolls is described by Poul Anderson in The Broken Sword. These are short, shorter than a man, but very broad (Mr. Tolkien's trolls are tall.) They are green and cold and slippery to the touch, evidently they have no scales. In face and form they are hideous and their blood is green. Not only are the male trolls described by Mr. Anderson, but even one troll-woman; Gora, daughter to Illrede Troll-King. She, like most of her race is hairless. Her face is left best undescribed, and her green form, in addition to being squat, is said to be well-muscled. Anderson's trolls, like Mr. Tolkien's, do not like the sunlight, but they do not seem bothered by instant calcification.

And so we end our visit with the pleasant peoples of Trollheim. I am sure that all of you are dissappointed that no more details of their customs can be given here, but the sensibilities of the readership must be considered. Equal time anyone?

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(MARCH MEETINGS - continued from page 1)

Herb Schofield was elected Vice President at the February meeting and I was elected Secretary. The presidential vote was deadlocked on two successive ballots. Candidates are:

PRESIDENT	Ossie Train William J. Jenkins
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TREASURER	Ossie Train
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Program will be a science fiction version of Charades being organized by Chris Jameson.

The informal meeting will be March 24 at The Gilded Cage, 261 South 21st Street, at 8:00 P M.

FSFA FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION presents:

"A Salute to Amazing Stories"

...35 Years of Science Fiction 1926 - 1961...

With guests Hugo Gernsback, Frank R. Paul, Norman Lobsenz, Cele Goldsmith, Lester Del Rey, and Otto Binder... March 12, 2:00 P M, YMCA Building, 600 Broad St., Newark, N. J. Reg... \$1.00.

IN THIS MONTH:

Died in 44 B C, Gaius Julius Caesar on March 15.

Died in 1870, on March 28, George Henry Thomas, the Reck of Chickamauga and the Hammer of Nashville.

"Retreat? This army doesn't retreat. There is no better place to die than right here."

Died in 1950, on March 19 in Tarzana, California, Edgar Rice Burroughs. "In the first place bear in mind that I do not expect you to believe this story...."

100 YEARS AGO:

On March 16, Jefferson Davis called for 100,000 Confederate volunteers. The seizure of Federal property by the South continued. On April 10, Virginia-born Major G. H. Thomas was ordered to conduct the 2d U. S. Cavalry Regt. from New York City to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

The March, 1961 Rogue features West coast fan Trina Castillo as "The Rogue Girl"....in the same issue is "How Did He Know His Name Was Tarzan?" a vaguely sarcastic review of the movie Tarzan. Author Nicholas Breckenridge seems to know that Tarzan means "white-skin" but is puzzled as to the language; "Burroughs....didn't say." Actually Burroughs is quite clear that it was the apes who named him, using their own tongue of course.

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A more interesting conjecture is how Tarzan, who taught himself to read and print English from picture books and primers, and who therefor could not speak the language, was able to print his name.....!

FOLK MUSIC EVENTS:

The Philadelphia Folk Song Society meets Mar. 12 at International House, 15th & Cherry at 8:00 P M. Speaker is Ken Goldstein with tapes & talk on "Folk Songs of Scotland" where Mr. Goldstein did his graduate work.... Esther Halpern at The Gilded Cage every Friday and Saturday night at 10.... The 2nd Fret every night except Monday.

The Franklin Institute is presenting a lecture on Project "OZMA", A Search For Intelligent Life in Outer Space; by Frank D. Drake from the Radio Observatory at Green Bank, W. Va. Mar. 8 at 8:15 P M.

Willy Ley spoke at Temple U. on Space Travel back on March 1. Wish I'd heard earlier.

"You're not going to have a cover and ten pages every month?"

"What are you, some kind of a nut or something?"

E N E Y F O R T A F F !

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