





# ANCA LAGON

Mark III

# 2

April, 1961



## APRIL MEETINGS:

The formal meeting will be held on the 14th at the Central YMCA, Room 203 at 8:00 P M. The program will be the sound film, "Shadow of a Soldier" -- on General Grant and the Civil War.

On Saturday the 15th, weather permitting, there will be a trip to the Philadelphia Zoo for those interested. Exact time and meeting place will be decided Friday but a good guess is 2:00 P M at the zoo.

The informal meeting will be held at the Gilded Cage, 261 South 21st Street, on Friday the 28th at 8:00 P M.

Like this should have come earlier, but all this is in the interests of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, may its shadow never decrease. Our meetings are open and visitors are welcome.

FOLK MUSIC AROUND TOWN this month includes the Philadelphia Folk Song Society Concert at the University Museum Auditorium, 33rd & Spruce, Saturday the 15th at 8:15 P M. Esther Halpern & Gordon Bok, Bill Vanaver, Don Paulin & Audrey Bookspan, and The Shanties Boys. Tickets \$1.90 at the Gilded Cage or from me. Folk music disc show on WHAT-FM, 96.5, every Sunday at 10:00 P M.

100 YEARS AGO the rebel guns opened a 32 hour bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 14th and began the Civil War, a pleasant background to the church services in Charleston that Sunday. Virginia, Arkansas, and Tennessee seceded from the Union. On April 25 Major G. H. Thomas of the 2nd Cavalry was promoted to Lt. Colonel to take the place of Lt. Col. R. E. Lee, Resigned (Major B. F. Cheatham, the senior major of the regiment, also having resigned.) On May 3, Thomas was again promoted in place of Colonel A. S. Johnston, Resigned.

"....the ultimate completist who is collecting every autograph Forry Ackerman ever signed."

Bonnie Dobson will be at the Second Fret for a week starting April 12. A really great singer!



# THE REVERBERATORY

like letters !

Here are some more titles in the Fantasy-Adventure genre you should know:

Poul Anderson "The Valor of Cappen Varra" (Fantastic Universe S F, Jan. 1957)

Clifford Ball "The Thief of Forthe" (Weird Tales, July 1937)

"Duar the Accursed" (Weird Tales, May 1937)

"The Goddess Awakes" (Weird Tales, Feb. 1938)

Henry Kuttner "Ragnarok" (Weird Tales, June 1937)

"The Jest of Droom Avista" (Weird Tales, Aug. 1937)

"Thunder in the Dawn" (Weird Tales, May-June 1938)

"Spawn of Dagon" (Weird Tales, Jul. 1938)

"Beyond the Phoenix" (Weird Tales, Oct. 1938)

"Cursed Be the City" (Strange Stories, March 1939)

"The Citadel of Darkness" (Startling Stories, Aug. 1939)

C. H. Mackintosh "Melchior Makes Magic" (Weird Tales, May 1928)

L SPRAGUE DE CAMP  
"Ogresden"  
Wallingford,  
Penna.

"On Fantasy-Adventure" was quite absorbing, mainly because before this I hadn't realized that f-a is a separate, special area of fantasy. By the way, I must give my vote to "fantasy-adventure" as a name for this literary division; I can't imag-

ine what possible better name the Hyborian Legion could have thought they would find.

A few bone-pickings concerning your article, however. First, I don't think you have defined f-a at all in your article; you have merely described those things that characterize it, and as you certainly know, definition and description of something are two clearly separate things. A definition of f-a would include all the necessary qualities which comprise it, and it would exclude everything else.

I am not going to define f-a because I don't think that I can, but I would like to question some of the qualities which you think add up to this literary form.

For one thing, must the culture level be pre-gunpowder? I wouldn't think so. For instance, if the Orcs in The Lord of the Rings had happened to be equipped with metal rods which shot pellets through the air through the application of fire to a special "secret powder" at the bottom of the rods, would this make the LOTR something other than fantasy-adventure? (I describe guns in this manner because that is probably the way Tolkien would have done it if he had introduced guns into his epic.) I think not. The fact that if this had been true, it would have been merely an incidental fact to the whole fabric of the story, would seem to indicate that the LOTR would still fit the f-a classification.

In other words, if a post-gunpowder manifestation is incorporated into the imaginary culture, but is explained in non-scientific terms, then I think the story could still be called a fantasy adventure.

All fantasy adventures must necessarily be placed in a world, variant on our own, I'll agree essentially with your statement. I wouldn't except The Broken Sword, either, although the story takes place in a definite historic era in an environment which once existed on earth, the inclusion of the profuse supernatural elements makes it a definite variant world. (Using this criterion as a basis, I wonder if some of the Scandinavian myths could be classified as f-a, dealing as they do with external conditions which we know could not have existed, like Valhalla.)

I was also wondering that if an author were to create a new background culture which contained fantastic elements and was non-scientifically explained (all fitting the requirements for a f-a), but did not include the true elements of adventure, could it still be classified as a f-a?



For example, if Tolkien had used Middle-earth purely as a setting for a story about Hobbit life in the Shire, showing the inter-relationships of a particular Hobbit family with their neighbors and such, but containing no action in the sense of adventure. In other words, a variant culture slice-of-life story, pure and simple. This has never been done before in imaginative literature, to the best of my knowledge, probably because after an author goes to the great trouble of creating a social milieu, he's not going to use it as the basis for a domestic story. Still, I think such a story would be absorbing, if only because of its uniqueness, and I still wonder if it could be classified as f-a, providing the background culture fits the requirements otherwise.

(Damn! After all that, I see that I err in the statement: Never done before in imaginative literature." Heinlein, of course, has created a future human relations sans-adventure-tale in "The Menace From Earth" in F&SF a few years back. A few others of his Future History series fit this grouping too. Still haven't thought of anything by anyone in that sense that would fit the fantasy-adventure requirement though, have you?)

After all that digression, I would like to differ with your article regarding the quality level of f-a. I don't feel that this field (now that you have pointed it out to me) could be called particularly distinctive in terms of quality of writing. With the exception of Tolkien, Leiber, Pratt, and Kuttner, I would call the level rather low as regards literary merit. The fact that the ideas and background of such stories are so rich may color your opinion of their value otherwise. For example, I think Robert E. Howard was an abominable writer ~~in~~ Hersey! in terms of his development of plot and characterization. (Please, Hyborians. I'm too young!) That, also, is your opinion. Aside from the mentioned exceptions, none of the authors would seem to have produced any fantastic literature which would be called exemplary writing; their backgrounds and heavy action content obscure this.

I can't understand anyone not being able to identify with the Hobbits. To me, they are the most endearing creatures ever produced in all of fantasy-adventure. The fact of their physical differences shouldn't interfere with full empathy; the very humanity of their actions (and that is not a contradiction) should override their size and other differences from the human norm. Tolkien deserves all the praise possible to bestow for the fact that he extended his creation of a new world to devising a new creature, and as his hero at that.



GARY DEINDORFER  
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"MOSE TSHOMBE FOR TAFF!"  
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Well first off, I feel that I gave a passable definition of the descriptive type, i.e.: "There exists a group of objects, commonly called X's, which it is convenient to consider as a natural class, and which are distinguished by possessing most or all of the following common attributes...." (Quoted material from L. Sprague de Camp's Science-Fiction Handbook - a very usefull volume indeed - page 21.) Gary's idea of a definition is the legalistic and exclusive one, perfectly valid of course but I preferred the other.

I can think of a couple of places where gunpowder, or a reasonable facsimile, were used in fantasy-adventure. The first is the blasting fire used by the Uruk-hai at the Hornburg to batter through stone wall and castle-gate. Immediately I wonder why Saruman's forces ever bothered with battering rams, and why the weapon was not later used by Saruman to defend Isengard from the Ents. (TLotR)

In "The Stronger Spell", one of the short stories in de Camp's Tritonian Ring, an actual bronze-age 'musket' employing a "secret powder" is used. This is, however, a very recent invention and still secret. At the end of the story, the inventor is dead and the offending weapon is chucked into the Bay of Kernê by an armorer who suspects its use would damage his business.

I feel that the introduction of gunpowder weapons has several undesirable consequences. One is that the side that possesses them would be well nigh invincible and the plot would have to be stretched a good deal to provide any conflict. Again, secrets of this type have not (in real history at any rate) been kept to well. Hence in a few generations, both sides would be blazing away with muskets, cannon, and various other explosive devices. Now this may be only a personal opinion, but there seems to be a definite incongruity between the fantasy elements of spell and magic and anything resembling science or scientific weapons. Lastly, where the fantasy-adventure is laid in the pre-history of the earth, the use of gunpowder introduces the problem of why such a universally usefull material was forgotten and had to be rediscovered in the 13th Century.

On the use of a fantasy-mileau for human relations stories; somewhere, very dimmly, I remember reading chil-



dren's stories of this type....about elves, brownies or such. Could have been a comic strip even. Without the adventure, it couldn't really be fantasy-adventure. It really seems to me that children's stories might be the only place in the fantasy field that it would go over. I'd like to see Tolkien try it of course but I doubt if I'd be interested unless I was already familiar with the background of the story. The Heinlein story Gary mentions (F&SF August, 1957) is laid in Luna City in a type of background that is pretty much old hat to sf fans and at that is more of a juvenile than an adult level story (Not that Heinlein's juveniles aren't better than some of the adult sf at that.)

On literary quality: I never mentioned the animal in the general sense. I feel that all of the stories listed are good; meaning readable, enjoyable, and memorable. I grant that these qualities are subjective in that they may not apply to other readers' judgement but I'm inclined to stress the entertainment value of fiction rather than the deeper literary qualities. Howard's ability to realistically describe unreal situations plus the ability to simply tell a good yarn have kept his stories alive for thirty years now. Lovecraft is the only other writer of the old Weird Tales era whose original stories are read as much today.

grh

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ANCALAGON looks nice, especially the cover (where the art seems nicely gaged to the method of reproduction) and the article on fantasy-adventure-- a field which I feel more certain than ever should be called the sword-and-sorcery story. This accurately describes the points of culture-level and supernatural element and also immediately distinguishes it from the cloak-and-sword (historical adventure) story---and (quite incidentally) from the cloak-and-dagger (international espionage) story too! The word sorcery implies something more and other than historical human witchcraft, so even the element of an alien-yet-human world background is hinted at.

At any rate I'll use sword-and-sorcery as a good popular catchphrase for the field. It won't interfere with the use of a more formal designation of the field (such as the "non-historical fantasy adventure" which Sprague once suggested in a review of Smith's Abominations of Yondre in AMRA) when one comes along or is finally settled on.

Of course there will always be wide fringes of borderland around a story-area like this, and too-carefull efforts at placing any single story or sets of stories may result in a sort of nonsense. For instance Burrough's John Carter stories have so much the feel of sword-and-sorcery (rather



than science fiction) that one immediately wants at least a new category for them--- sword-and-superscience? To me, Burroughs' Mars stories are Atlantis-on-Mars and no more science fiction than Smith's Clark Ashton stories of Atlantis --or no less science fiction... Ah well.

About my own stories. The one you're missing is "When the Sea King's Away" from the May 1960 Fantastic. And the short novel Adept's Gambit from my Arkham House book, Night's Black Agents---though that tale rouses all sorts of problems, as Fafhrd and the Mouser are presented most anachronistically in Asia of the Seleucid Dynasty. Perhaps I'll someday transfer that tale to Lankmar or (more likely) provide a time-travel link to justify it.

But the best news (I certainly think) is that the May Fantastic, out in a month, will carry a 23,500-word novelet of the Twain called "Scylla's Daughter". The story is laid in Nehwon and Lankmar, I hasten to say, and yet the classical allusion of the title is fully justified. This is a story I've been meaning to write for 25 years and it's good to have it done--or rather begun, as there'll be room for sequels. If people really like it I'm hoping a few of them will drop Fantastic a line to that effect, as editors are influenced by mail they get and it's good (nay, rather, amazing) to have a magazine once more a bit interested in this sort of story.

FRITZ LEIBER  
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Enjoyed your article on fantasy-adventure far more than I usually enjoy this type of story, though with increased leisure time (spelled backwards that means I'm unemployed right now) I've actually sat down to read The Lord of the Rings bit (four books--this is a bit?) and find I enjoy it summat more than the usual run of this sort of thing.

Hal on organizations of clubs hits a good point but also probably a sore one with many clubac types (myself included) who remember with awe and dread the activities (wrong term but wot the hell) of Good Old Orville Mosher /whohe? Eney sayeth nought, alphabetically at least./ along this line some years back and the mess he made of it. The idea is good however, though where I get off talking about it I don't know. Though I have attended a goodly number of meetings I have yet to join either of the two local clubs. Certainly PSFS, LASFS, the Nameless Ones, the Mitkey Mice, the Futurians, the Elves, Gnomes, etc. and the English clubs

have great gulfs between them but could also certainly offer a lot to each other in exchanges of information.

The bit on Tarzan is only one of the myriad bits of illogical nonsense Burroughs couldn't really be expected to cover, cranking out books the way he did. Though come to think of it, why not? There have been greater hacks before and since and I never heard of Frederic Faust, Max Brand to the non-afficianados, making such supreme boobies. Actually, a goodly number of words Burroughs uses are actually in use in various African tribes--the same holds true for Kipling's Jungle Book stuff. --much of the verbiage and names are for real in India and are pertinent referentials.

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Here's a footnote on your article "A Share for a Poor Old Troll." I was surprised, though I shouldn't have been, when the "Anderson" you cited turned out to be Poul - he of course has described some noteworthy trolls.

But my first thought when I encountered an Anderson in an article on trolls was Hans Christian -- several of this earlier one's stories refer to trolls, and spookily imaginative creatures they are, too. These trolls look like ordinary humans from in front, but at the rear are seen to be open and hollow like masks, from head to foot. (Y'know, if Hans Christian Anderson had written in our time he'd never be thought of as exclusively a children's author, but as the earlier Bradbury he is. Some of his grimmer fantasies would have fitted perfectly into Weird Tales or Unknown Worlds.)

Trolls are Scandinavian in origin, and another author from that part of the world has made use of them. Ibsen celebrates trollish goings-on in Peer Gynt, and Grieg's familiar musical composition "In the Hall of The Mountain King" is a troll dance.

A story I still remember fondly from my misspent youth is Oliver Beaupre Miller's The Red Troll. A great story about a red forest troll (no commie orc, but a charming character) who teaches the people of a medieval kingdom, where wood is the only known fuel, the use of coal. And this reminds me that George MacDonald's goblins (of The Princess and The) greatly resemble Tolkien's trolls.



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Miscellany: Notes of encouragement from Les Gerber and Bob Lichtman. Norm Metcalf sent me the title "When the Sea King's Away" plus two issues of his very fine fanzine NEW FRONTIERS (4 issues/\$1.00, irregular, Box 1262, Tyndall AFB, Florida) which I'll review next month, time permitting. Thanks to all, my ego is running high this month!

### 35 YEARS of AMAZING STORIES

The Eastern Science Fiction Association (ESFA) deserves a great deal of credit for their excellent commemorative program. The meeting was held at the Newark YMCA on Sunday, March 12 with over 100 in attendance.

Sam Moskowitz opened the meeting, then Allan Howard took over as Master of Ceremonies. Speakers were Dr. Thomas S. Gardner, fan, collector, and author; Otto Binder, one half of the Eando Binder writing team and now editor of the science fact magazine, Space World; Forrest J. Ackerman, "the world's first professional science fiction fan; Cele Goldsmith, the present editor of Amazing; and Norman Lobsenz, the editorial director of Amazing.

Messages of congratulation were read from Ray Bradbury and P. Schuyler Miller.

Lester del Rey spoke on the early history of Amazing with its stress on heavy science and sense of wonder. He congratulated the magazine on its emergence to adulthood from the adolescence of shaverism and cultism. Mr. del Rey went on to discuss the adolescent nature of the psionics and short-cut-science stories in Analog, Amazing's only contemporary in terms of age.

Sam and Christine Moskowitz presented a slide talk on the history of Amazing in its artwork.

ESFA presented three plaques to:

Michael Michaelson - Amazing Stories' present publisher.

Frank R. Paul - the cover artist for many of the older issues of the magazine.

Hugo Gernsback - the founder of Amazing Stories.

PHILADELPHIA SCIENCE  
FICTION SOCIETY  
% George R Heap  
513 Glen Echo Rd  
Phila 19, Penna.

The program was concluded with the showing of two early science fiction films, presented by Forry Ackerman; "A Trip to the Moon" (1902) and "The Crazy Ray" (1922-1923)

#### FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING:

Ted Johnstone writes that issue # 2 of I PALANTIR will be out shortly. Membership, including subscription is \$2.00, I think that subscriptions may be available for \$1.00 (1503 Rollin St., So. Pasadena, Calif.)

The Season Progress Report # 2 is out. For Season membership send two dollars to:

P.O. Box 1365

Broadway Branch

Seattle 2, Wash.

(Checks payable to Wally Weber or Seattle Science Fiction Club.) JOIN! JOIN! JOIN! JOIN!

Venus Flytrap bulbs are available at 3/\$1.00 from Spencer Gifts, MF-1 Spencer Building, Atlantic City, N. J.

Trina Perlson in Rogue again, the April issue, cover shot as well as inside photos

Civil War fans should catch part 2 of a televised discussion between Field Marshall Montgomery and historian Henry Commager, April 16 at 12:30 on Channel 10 (Philly that is.)

Rick  
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