

FANTASY COMMENTATOR

Far Future Calling

Olaf Stapledon

Edited by SAM MOSKOWITZ
with a new authorized biography

Lindsay

THE HAUNTED WOMAN

STANISLAW LEM
RETURN FROM
THE STARS

Al Morgan

The Essential Man

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Voyagers through Eternity

A History of Science-Fiction

From the Beginnings to H. G. Wells

by *SAM MOSKOWITZ*

Part I

I

HOMER AND THE GRECIAN SCHOOL OF SCIENCE-FICTION WRITERS

Science-fiction, which today is everywhere accepted by the thinking world, is frequently regarded as a modern outgrowth of the age of technology, with its roots in the pulp magazines and comic books, and its blossoming following the atom bomb and the first lunar landing. The average citizen is finally willing to grant it respectability, but only because he is now convinced he can relegate it to the pleasant realm of nostalgia. The feeling that reality has caught up with science-fiction is prevalent. It is therefore safe to accept, because its themes and premises no longer appear far-fetched and incredible, and there is no onus attached to reading or enjoying it.

It is true that the world we live in today is the world of science-fiction. The technologically advanced nations with their glass-walled skyscrapers, overseas airliners, instant planet-wide television by communication satellites, power from atomic energy, moon exploration, space probes, computers that perform the functions of a thousand men in minutes—all these were entirely science-fiction fifty, forty, thirty, twenty and even ten years ago.

It is also true that science-fiction forced itself upon the attention of the masses through the pulp magazines, comics, moving pictures and television. But it certainly is not true that it started or even was popularized there. It is even less true that the genre will be relegated to the form of a collector's entertainment, and that it has little left with which to amaze, astound and arouse a sense of wonder. For science-fiction is at once the literary expression of the dreams and aspirations of man, his dissatisfaction with the world as it is, his desire to explore and discover, and at the same time a reflection of his fear of change and his distrust of the new.

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These conflicting qualities are part of man, and because of that science fiction has a long and distinguished past and an unquestionably bright future. Its origins can be found in mythology, the ancient travel tale, and early Greek literature. The transitional author who spanned the centuries to light the spark that would ignite a continuous tradition of science-fiction up to the works we know today was a famed lecturer named Lucian, born about the year 120 A.D. in the town of Samosata, Syria. At the age of about forty-five, made wealthy by his rhetorical eloquence, he settled down for roughly a decade as a full-time writer, penning a series of satirical works, some of them science-fiction and fantasy.

Though born of a working-class family, he disdained training as a stone cutter and left his home. He wandered across the then-civilized world, indoctrinated himself in Greek literature, and through his pungently satirical phrases became a well-paid speaker. Two of his literary idols were Plato and Homer. From the former he copied the method of presenting material in the form of a dialogue; from the latter, a colorful and exotic narrative drive.

These two authors themselves represent two fundamental types of science fiction of the period. In his *Timaeus* and *Critias* Plato created the legend of Atlantis and laid the foundation of later Utopias. Homer, in *The Odyssey*, reached the high-water mark of the fantastic story; in fact, in terms of the knowledge of the times, that epic can be called true science-fiction.

The Odyssey takes Ulysses and his crew to the land of the Lotus-Eaters, where narcotic blossoms impart a lethargy that almost kills their desire to leave. This concept has been used in modern times by Weinbaum, Daniels and other writers of the genre. (1)* After extricating his crew from this trap, Ulysses lands on the island of Cyclops, where a tremendous giant with a single eye dwells. Giants have also become very common characters in modern science-fiction. (2) Leaving the island of Aeolus, Ulysses takes with him a huge bag of air which can be regulated to blow against the sails of his ships and keep them moving when his vessel is becalmed. (In his *L'Autre Monde; ou, Les Etats et Empires de la Lune*, which we shall deal with in detail in chapter III, Cyrano de Bergerac has moving cities propelled by wind from a giant bellows blown on their sails.) The man-eating giants of Laestrygonia are scarcely a novelty in fiction, let alone science-fiction. The experience of Ulysses' men on the island of Circe, where they are turned into swine by a drug, is reversed in H. G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, where through surgery animals are turned into creatures resembling men. The lure the sirens held for Ulysses and his men can be equated to hypnotism, but the theme of the literal power of song to influence men's actions has appeared recently. (3) The battle with the six-headed Scylla, though no different than an encounter with any of science-fiction's interminable monsters, has also been explicitly utilized in modern times, (4) as has the episode where Ulysses is first offered and then denied immortality by the nymph Calypso. (5)

Thus we can see that even if one were to argue that *The Odyssey* is indeed not science-fiction, it clearly has been one of the most influential works on the genre ever written. The pervasiveness of its elements make it impossible to ignore. As to Homer himself, it has been questioned whether there ever was such a man, or whether his epic travel poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* might be composite works completed by a number of poets. Even the precise dates of the writing or the completion of *The Odyssey* have never been established, these being estimated as from 850 to 1200 B.C.

The travel tale was the most popular form of fiction extant in the Mediterranean basin during the period in which Lucian lived. A large part of these tales were, in the purest sense, what we today would term science-fiction. The world outside this area was unexplored. The extent of the continents and the oceans

*Footnotes for this article begin on page 192.

were unknown. All an author had to do to create the atmosphere for imaginative romance was to embark by ocean or trek by land just a few hundred miles beyond the boundaries of the cradle of civilization and *anything* was possible. Apparently one of the most avid fans of the travel tale was the Emperor Tiberius of Rome (42 B.C.—27 A.D.). Edgar Saltus in his popular work *Imperial Purple* (1892) states not only that fact but gives a fascinating list of authors and titles of such works. These include Hecataeus, who told of a land where people lived forever and killed themselves because of boredom; Theopompus, who described a continent with stupendous cities beyond the oceans; Iambulus, who imaginatively found islands where men had elastic bones and bifurcated tongues and who, when aged, committed euthanasia in a perfumed grass; Evhemerus, who survives with the title *Sacred History*, about an island where a somewhat communistic society was set up; Arimaspi, who pictured a race that fought griffons in the dark; and Isogonous, who knew of another wild tribe of men whose feet turned inwards instead of outwards. Saltus lists many other titles to indicate that the quantity of such narratives must have been considerable. It should be noted that there was a publishing industry at the time, for scribes, many of them slaves, copied works on scrolls for people who demanded them. Libraries existed, and it was thus possible for certain titles to have wide circulation.

The foregoing brief descriptions confirm that two basic types of science fiction were being produced at the time. One was straightforward fantastic adventure; the other, Utopian.

With so vast a surface of the earth unexplored, leaving the face of our planet was completely extraneous when it came to the exercise of the human imagination. There may have been a number of stories about trips to the moon before Lucian's day, but record of only one has been found. That is said to have been included in a collection of travel stories written somewhere between 412 and 323 B.C. by the Greek philosopher Antonius Diogenes (yes, the famed searcher with the lamp for an honest man!) and titled *Of Wonderful Things Beyond Thule*. A trip to the moon there was accomplished simply by walking northwards. It is this very *walk* which emphasizes the fact that the later interplanetary voyage is merely an imaginative extension of the travel tale, with another globe instead of unexplored terrestrial areas of sea or land as the locale. In this sense, the ancestry of the interplanetary story makes it one of the oldest of all literary themes!

This also underscores the dramatic departure of Lucian from the old travel story. He wrote two interplanetary pieces, one entitled *The True History* and the other *Icaro-Menippus*. His methods of reaching the moon are far more believable than that of Diogenes. In *The True History*, a whirlwind seizes a ship and blows it to the moon. In *Icaro-Menippus* his character flies there (and later to other worlds) with wings cut off an eagle and a vulture. *The True History* is a sharp satire, which when read in a modern translation (6) remains amusing and still displays narrative verve. The work is a farce, yet it contains certain devices of later science-fiction, such as giant ants, man-carrying birds, dog-faced men, (7) Moonmen who are all one sex (thus twitting the proclivity for homosexuality among the Greeks of his time), and a variety of creatures from other planets entering into a war on the moon.

The True History was a deliberate burlesque of the wild exaggerations in current travel tales, but it was also aimed at philosophers, whom Lucian believed hypocritical because what they wrote and how they lived were highly disparate. In *The Classical Background of English Literature* (1948) James Alexander Ken Thomson states he believes that Lucian specifically had Diogenes' work in mind when he wrote *The True History*. In his introduction Lucian writes:

Ctesias of Cnidus, the son of Ctessiochus, has written things about India and Indians that he neither saw himself nor heard from anyone who had any respect for the truth. Iambulus has

written a lot of unbelievable stuff about the ocean; everyone knows he made it all up, yet, for all that he has put together an amusing account. Lots of other writers have shown a preference for the same technique: under the guise of reporting their travels abroad they spin yarns of huge monsters, savage tribes, and strange ways of life. The arch-exponent of, and model for, this sort of tomfoolery is Homer's Odysseus telling the court of Alcinous about a bag with winds in it, one-eyed giants, cannibals, savages, even many-headed monsters and magic drugs that change shipmates into swine—with one such story after another he had all those simple-minded Phaenicians goggle-eyed.

Now, I've read all the practitioners of this art and I've never been very hard on them for not telling the truth—not when I see how common this failing is even among those who profess to be writing philosophy. What I have wondered at, though, is the way they're convinced they can write pure fable and get away with it. Since I'm vain enough myself to want to leave something behind to posterity, and since I have nothing true to record—I never had any experiences worth talking about—in order not to be the only writer without a stake in the right to make up tall tales, I, too, have turned to lying—but a much more honest lying than all the others. The one and only truth you'll hear from me is that I *am* lying; by frankly admitting that there isn't a word of truth in what I say, I feel I'm avoiding the possibility of attack from any quarter.

Well, then, I'm writing about things I neither saw nor heard of from another soul, things which don't exist and couldn't possibly exist. So all readers beware: don't believe any of it.

The foregoing disposes of any possibility that Lucian was an isolated writer who didn't know he was writing science-fiction. He was one of a *school* of science-fiction writers, of which the greatest was Homer. He was also probably the first to take his characters to another world by a means more imaginative than walking or dreaming.

Lucian's second interplanetary story, *Icaro-Menippus*, derives its title and leading character from a Syrian philosopher named Menippus, famed for his cutting remarks concerning neighbors and his highly cynical philosophy. He had risen from slave to rich money-lender and feared philosopher, and eventually killed himself when tricked out of his wealth. *Icaro-Menippus* is written in dialogue, and is noteworthy inasmuch as it discusses the failure of Daedalus to fly successfully and the measures taken to correct his errors. Even though the point of the piece is an attack on philosophers, the descriptions of the early experiments in flight before the big launch to the moon are especially convincing.

II

THE UNBROKEN LINK BETWEEN LUCIAN AND KEPLER

Readers and critics tend to chaff impatiently when Lucian is mentioned as an early exponent of the moon voyage. "What has he to do with today's science fiction?" they ask. "Isn't there a gap of 1400 years between his stories and the earliest British and French interplanetaries?"

The answer is that there is and there isn't. For a good deal of the period from its formation to the Seventeenth Century Christian philosophy was opposed to the concept of life on other worlds, because it conflicted with the doctrine that heaven was in the skies. The writings of Thomas Aquinas succeeded in changing the attitude of the church on this point in the thirteenth century, but old ideas die hard, and there was scarcely any science-fiction (let alone interplanetary stories) in the intervening period.

The church ban was ironical, because it was Lucian's savage satirical attacks on ancient religions that helped destroy them through logic and ridicule and pave the way for Christianity. Before he died at about the age of ninety, Lucian had cordons of enemies for this reason, but was protected by the friendship of men in high places, even including for a period Emperor Commodus, who had appointed him to a high government position in Egypt during his reign.

Lucian's reappraisal was begun in the sixteenth century by Erasmus. Regarded as a leader in learning in Renaissance northern Europe, and a great theological scholar who edited the New Testament in Greek and produced a Latin translation, his knowledge of Greek led him to Lucian. Erasmus translated many of Lucian's works, including the moon stories, into Latin. His *In Praise of Folly* shows the influence of Lucian. Sir Thomas Moore, a close friend of Erasmus, also translated Lucian into Latin, and even adopted many of the techniques and ideas in the moon stories for his own *Utopia*, published in 1516. This was the first of the modern utopias that became a great tributary feeding into the mainstream of science-fiction. It was followed by *The New Atlantis* by Francis Bacon which appeared more than a century later in 1627, and *Civitas Solis (The City of the Sun)* by Tommaso Campanella, written 1623 but not published until 1637. It is fascinating to see that a science-fiction satire began the tide of serious Utopias.

Even more important, the great astronomer Johannes Kepler also was familiar with Lucian, and he too translated his moon stories into Latin. As early as 1609 he had completed at least the first draft of a manuscript about a trip to the moon in a dream which he titled *Somnium*. (It may or may not be a coincidence that one of Lucian's most famous speeches also bore that title.) In his introduction to *Somnium* Kepler states: (8)

I chanced upon the two books of Lucian's *True Story*, written in Greek. I selected those books as a means of learning the language. I was aided by the enjoyment of his very lively tale, which nevertheless gave some hint of the nature of the whole universe, as Lucian himself points out in the preface. Lucian, too, makes a voyage beyond the Pillars of Hercules into the ocean and is snatched aloft, ship and all, by a whirlwind that carries him to the moon. These were my first steps in the trip to the moon which I pursued at a later time.

Kepler began to circulate his moon story in manuscript. The entire work is actually a short story, with footnotes added to explain the science. These footnotes are literally longer than the story itself. In the early part of the text, Kepler states that the visitors to the moon are put into a dream-like state by narcotics to ease the four-hour transition through space. The journey is accomplished partially through the moon's attraction, partially through the aid of daemons, and partially through exercise of will power. As a pivotal character in the story Kepler includes his mother as a seller of charms, asserting she has friendships with "spirits" that can whisk her anywhere in the world at a moment's notice. After performing various rites, his mother conjures up for him a spirit that is capable of imparting the secret of transportation to the moon. "Especially suited are dried-up old crones, who since childhood have ridden over great stretches of the earth in tattered cloaks on goats or pitchforks," says Kepler.

Kepler's mother was a hot-tempered, stubborn woman who at one time got into a ferocious row in which she sued one of the other parties for slander. Using *Somnium* as evidence, they brought counter-charges against her for being a witch, and therefore being responsible for a long list of afflictions of local townspeople. Kepler himself was accused of practicing forbidden arts. He was also unpopular with the clergy, since he persisted in supporting the theory of Copernicus that the sun was the center of the solar system. After years of travail, during which his mother was maligned, imprisoned and threatened with torture, he secured her freedom, only to have her die from the ordeal shortly afterwards.

The persecution of Kepler's mother, which had begun in 1616, ended with her release and death in 1621, but *Somnium* remained an unpublished manuscript. After this period Kepler began to write the long notes explaining the scientific meaning of his "fantasy." These interpretations created the third basic category of science-fiction, the science story—a work where the primary emphasis was on the scientific and not the adventurous or sociological aspects of the tale. In a letter to Matthias Bernegger dated December 4, 1623 there is a hint Kepler intended to include sociological criticism but thought better of it. "Neither More in *Utopia* nor Erasmus in *In Praise of Folly* was safe," he wrote, alluding to the fact that neither disguise as fiction in the first case nor satire in the second had saved these authors from unpleasant reactions to their works. "Therefore, let us dismiss this political muck entirely and remain in the charming groves of philosophy." (9)

Kepler had set six pages of *Somnium* in type by the end of 1629, but finding his funds tied up, he travelled to Ratisbon with the hope of appearing before the German Reichstag for permission to sell some Austrian bonds whose conversion had been legally frozen. There he came down with pneumonia and died on November 15, 1630 without completing his objective.

His son-in-law, in order to help Kepler's widow and children, arranged for publication of the manuscript with additional notes in 1634. There is no indication that his hope of raising money was particularly successful.

It is evident that, even before its publication, *Somnium* had a considerable and at times turbulent impact on writers concerned with science-fiction. The appearance of the book in Latin made it more generally available, but its direct influence was obviously limited since no translation occurred until a German edition of 1898, and the first translation into English appeared as recently as 1950, when the American Everett F. Bleiler performed the task for August Derleth's anthology *Beyond Time and Space*.

The vogue in English for science-fiction in general and for the interplanetary story in particular appears to stem from the first translation of Lucian's moon voyages into that tongue by Francis Hickes; this appeared as *Certain Select Dialogues of Lucian, Together with His True Historie*, published in Oxford in 1634.

A work which appeared four years later, Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone: or a Discourse of a Voyage Thither by Domingo Gonsales*, may actually owe its genesis to one of Lucian's Latin translations, for its author was a prominent clergyman of the Anglican church. It was published some five years after the death of the author, and there has been much speculation as to when it was actually written. Since the story is told in the past tense, it was probably after the date of the adventure given in the text, 1599. The book also strongly backs the Copernican theories, which received a strong boost after Galileo's telescopic observations in 1609, so there is reason to believe it was written after that date.

Why is the date of writing this book so important? Because *The Man in the Moone* is one of the most influential books in the history of science-fiction. It was translated into three languages—French (1648), Dutch (1651) and German

(1659)—and appeared in some twenty-five editions between 1638 and 1768. It has been the disposition of modern critics and historians to treat the title with a piteous contempt, quite possibly because they have not carefully read the text and are framing their judgment on the oft-reprinted illustration of ten birds bearing Domingo Gonsales aloft (actually the text claims there were twenty-five) in a combination harness and cradle called an "engine." Such a method of transport to the moon appears to them so ridiculous as to place it beyond discussion.

In reality it is far from that. Francis Godwin's work is charming and quite readable even today. It is obvious that it must have strongly influenced such later writers as Daniel Defoe in its desert island aspect and method of narration. Put ashore on the island of "S. Hellens" because of illness, together with his Negro servant, Gonsales devises an apparatus by which the tame swans on the island can bear him aloft, first testing his device on a lamb. The ship on which he is returning home is attacked, and he utilizes his invention to escape capture or death. But he did not know that his birds migrate annually to the moon, and soon finds himself ascending to heights greater than those man had ever before achieved.

At this point the author's scientific knowledge is abruptly brought into play. The tired birds rest by permitting themselves to revolve in an orbit around the earth until they are ready for the next lap. As they move further out, weightlessness begins to set in. At the point where they are attracted equally by the earth and the moon they are barely able to progress. (10) While they are "floating" there Godwin begins a lesson on astronomy and gravity, following Copernican lines, which may have been a major reason why he did not permit publication of the book during his lifetime.

There are two things in *The Man in the Moone* which appear to link it to Lucian and Kepler. On page 60 of the first edition Godwin refers to the work as a "History," seemingly connecting it to Lucian's *True History*. And computations on the mileage covered between the Earth and the moon give the figure 50,000, which is the same as Kepler's—except that Kepler meant German miles (which are considerably longer than English miles).

On the moon, because of lesser gravitational pull, Gonsales can easily leap into the air and by manipulation of fans convey himself anywhere he wishes to go. There is a delightful description of the Lunar civilization, where things are on a much bigger scale than on earth, and because Domingo is short he is regarded, though not unkindly, as of rather inferior standing. There are a number of elements in this account of the Lunarians which, it should be noted, precede similar ones in *Gulliver's Travels*.

Having lost some of his birds on the moon, (11) Domingo finds when returning that as he nears the earth the remnants of his flock are not strong enough to slow his descent adequately. However, the Lunarians have given him a stone which, when placed close to the flesh, counteracts gravity, and this lightens him enough to slow the fall. (If desired, the stone can also increase his weight.)

When captured by the Chinese, he uses this stone like a Buck Rogers jumping-belt, since it can make him light enough to leap great distances and thereby almost make good an escape. Two other stones he obtained from the Lunarians also have unique properties. One can generate perpetual heat, even great enough to melt metal. The other can radiate light bright enough to illuminate a room. Neither has any apparent power source.

A direct relationship between the appearance of Godwin's work and *A Discourse Concerning a New World and Another Planet* by John Wilkins, which was published in the same year, has been established. It is possible that the popular circulation of the English translation of Lucian in 1634 encouraged the appearance of both. Wilkins did write a brief sequel to his own account after reading Godwin's. Wilkins's work is important because he was a highly respected scientific

man, and his primary purpose was not to entertain but to educate. The moon, he stressed, was another world, hopefully like the earth. It was one of many such worlds and might conceivably be inhabited. More important, he maintained that some day science might advance to the point where man could build a "chariot" capable of ascending there.

Yet as late as 1823 a prestigious journal subjected Wilkins to the most intense ridicule for saying "that it is possible for some of our posterity to find out a conveyance to this other world; and if there be inhabitants there, to have commerce with them." (12) He was taken to task for wrestling with solutions to the problems of overcoming gravity, breathing at great heights and carrying enough sustenance for the journey, but most particularly for stating:

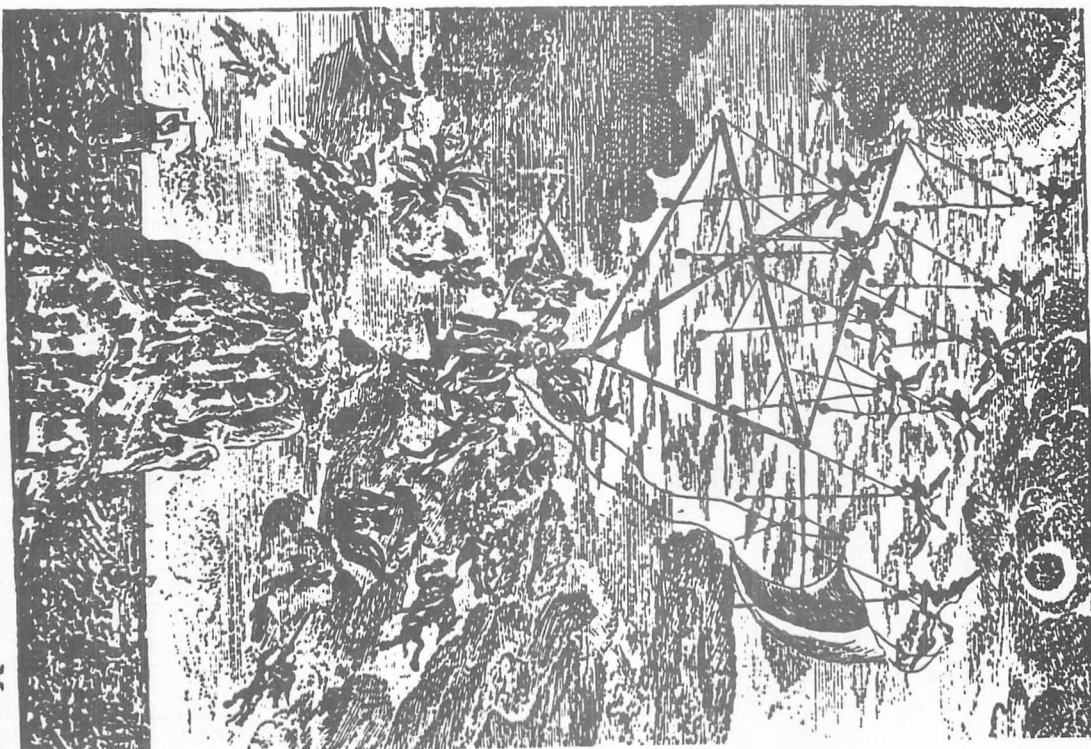
Yet I do seriously, and upon good grounds, affirm it possible to make a flying chariot, in which a man may sit, and give such motion unto it, as shall convey him through the air. And this perhaps might be made large enough to carry divers men at the same time, together with food for their *viaticum*, and commodities for traffic. It is not the bigness of any thing in this kind, that can hinder its motion, if the motive faculty be anserable thereunto . . . I conceive it were no difficult matter (if a man had leisure) to shew more particularly the means of composing it.

In a statement dripping with sarcasm, the anonymous reviewer commented:

We have thought it right, in these times of ingenuity and re-research once more to direct the attention of such projectors as may have less of common sense than of leisure and money, to a scheme, which a hundred and fifty years ago seemed very promising, but which has latterly fallen into unmerited oblivion. We beg it may be observed, that our duty is now discharged; and that if a passage to the moon is not speedily discovered by some aerial Parry, no blame can, in common justice, be attached either to Bishop Wilkins or *The Retrospective Review*.

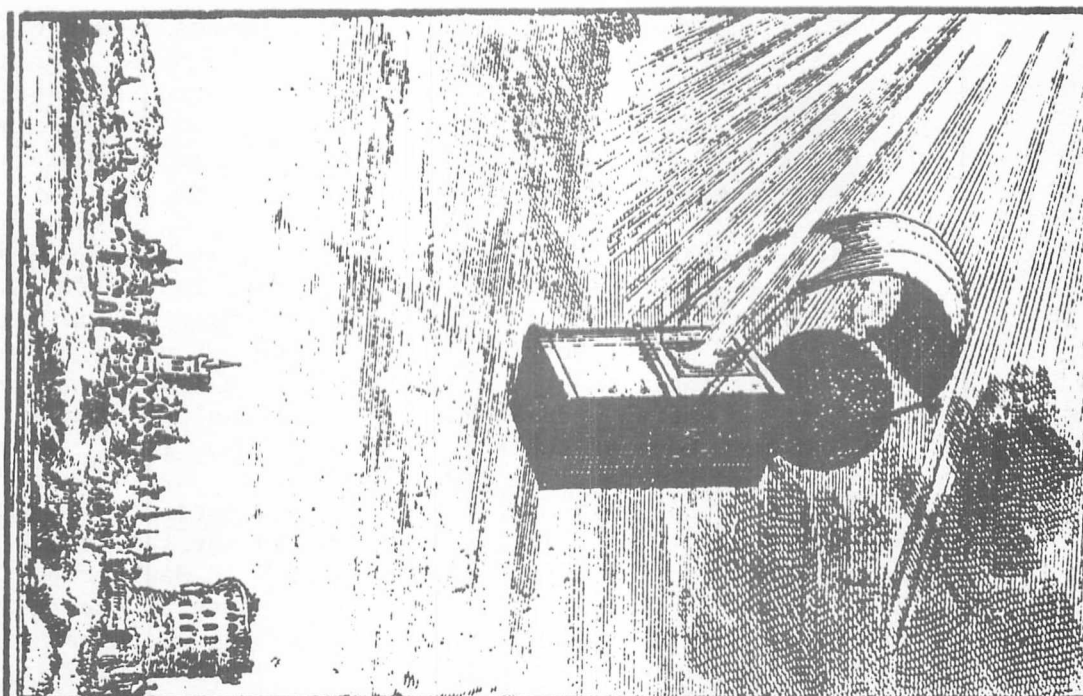
Although Wilkins was not in a class with Godwin as a story-teller, the intellectual content of the volume scored. There was a second printing the year of its appearance. For a new edition in 1640 he added another chapter. It was this, titled "A Discourse Concerning the Possibility of a Passage Thither," which contained the controversial speculations about building a space chariot, and was unquestionably an intellectual reply to Godwin's overly simplistic device of having swans carry him to the moon. Here Wilkins made the point that the further one got from the earth, the weaker its attraction would become. Therefore the higher one ascended, the easier it would be to break free from the planet. He also suggested that if a hole could be drilled through the earth, anything at its exact center would be weightless. The book ended with the inspirational lines: "So that notwithstanding all these seeming impossibilities, 'tis likely enough that there may be a meanes invented of journeying to the Moone; and how happy shall they be, that are first sucessfull in this attempt?"

A small segment of Ludovico Ariosto's great narrative poem *Orlando Furioso*, first published in Italy in 1516, is frequently referred to as a precursor of the later interplanetary tales. The segment involved is canto 34, in which Astolpho, after making a brief tour through Hell under the aegis of St. John (still alive in an earthly mountain paradise), is carried by chariot and four flaming red horses to the moon. Orlando, the hero of the epic, has lost his mind and become hopelessly irrational. On the moon are stored all lost things, including wasted time and common sense. Astolpho goes to the moon to retrieve the awareness of Or-



THE "LITTLE SPANIARD'S" TRIP TO THE MOON

Above left: Domingo Gonsales leaving the earth in Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*; above right: the ramjet-like device from de Bergerac's *Voyage to the Sun* (which is described on page 140).



THE AUTHOR'S FLYING MACHINE

lando, which is stored in a vial. He finds there part of his own rationality, lost and different moments in his life, and restores himself to full potential. On the moon are the old women known as The Fates, and they are spinning the skein of lives on earth. Astolpho returns as he has come, restoring sanity to Orlando and permitting his adventures to continue.

Orlando Furioso is no stepping-stone of science-fiction. Despite the fact that it deals with a trip to the moon, it does so in the form of a myth, and not in any sense that of science. No influence on the science-fiction that followed can be traced to it, though it did have a substantial influence on general literature, most notably on Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. *Orlando Furioso* is not a landmark in the genre, nor science-fiction itself. Ariosto quite probably read Lucian, since he made a special study of Greek literature. He was taken into the household of the duke Alfonso d'Este, and soon found himself a diplomat and local governor. He spent most of his life polishing his masterpiece, which was based on the incomplete *Orlando Innamorato* by the d'Este court poet Matteo Maria Boiardo. This in turn was based on heroic legends deriving from the exploits of Charlemagne, which had formed an obsession with Renaissance writers in France and Italy and gave rise to an entire literary corpus, ever elaborated and embroidered upon, until Ariosto's work emerged as the supreme masterpiece of its type and a melding of the finest of the legends. To retain literary perspective it is important to remember that *Orlando Furioso* is the culmination of three centuries of glorification of the noble and spiritual qualities of the followers of Charlemagne and not in any sense the inspiration for a new period of development in science-fiction.

III

CYRANO DE BERGERAC, THE FRENCH CONNECTION

The mounting and cumulative intellectual impact of these extraterrestrial hits, beginning with Lucian and continuing with Kepler, Godwin and Wilkins, was felt in France generally, and specifically in the work of the legendary bigger-than-life personality of Cyrano de Bergerac. Some legends have such grandiose color and appeal that it is hard to believe they could be based on fact. Cyrano de Bergerac's is a case in point. For almost a hundred years the reprinting of his books *Voyages to the Moon* and *Voyages to the Sun* (the first in an unauthorized edition in 1650 and the second in 1662) kept his reputation alive among intellectuals. Then for nearly a century his books were out of print, and a fascination with the legend of the man himself kept his name remembered. Accepting no responsibility for the accuracy of the stories passed down about him, I present here the "facts" and the "legend." He was born Savinien de Bergerac II on March 6, 1619 in Paris, the son of Abel de Cyrano and Espérance Bellenger. There were six children, of which he was the oldest surviving. While he was young, his family was still well to do, having inherited the estate of Savinien I de Cyrano of Sardinia, who had got his start as a fish-peddler and risen to considerable affluence. The de Bergerac name had once been of noble origin, but three later attempts by the family in Cyrano's generation to claim pedigreed lineage were discredited by the courts, and fines were actually imposed for misrepresentation.

Cyrano de Bergerac was well educated, but as the family inheritance was dissipated his father sold his interests in properties in Mauvrières, and Bergerac and moved the family back to Paris. Cyrano arrived there at the age of eighteen and fell in with wild company. Already he was a brilliant swordsman with a literary bent, and the gigantic nose was very much in evidence. A dislike for his instructor had instilled in him detestation of theology and a ferocious hatred of those who set extraordinary emphasis upon trivial points in the arts and magnified the pursuit of such inconsequentialities to epitomize knowledge and scholarship.

It was after he became a member of the guard that legends began to grow. The assertions were made that he had killed ten men in duels because they commented or looked awry at his nose, and that he had acted as second in about a hundred more during an age when seconds also fought. The apparently reliably authenticated story that he routed a hundred swordsmen to save the life of his friend Le Bret had its genesis at the time. The incidents where he repeatedly drove from the stage an actor he abhorred seem also to be factual. His heroism on the battlefield was verified; he was shot during a siege at Mouzon by the Croatian army and a sword driven through his throat during the siege of Arras in 1640. These injuries forced him to leave the army. He then returned to complete his education, involving himself with some of the greatest scholars of his time. So hungry for knowledge was he that legend says he forced his way into the lectures of Pierre Gassendi at sword-point. Gassendi was a friend and an adherent of the great astronomers of the day; he was also a personal friend of Galileo and Kepler, and the biographer of Tycho Brahe and Copernicus. He was the font from which de Bergerac drank in the ideas that turned his mind towards interplanetary locales for his strange adventures. At these meetings it is believed that Cyrano met that great French playwright Jean Baptiste Poquelin, who wrote under the name Molière. Later Molière was to lift a section of one of de Bergerac's plays verbatim and incorporate it into one of his own.

Following the death of his father in 1648, Cyrano, in order to survive, accepted the patronage of the Duc d'Arjapon, who arranged to publish two outstanding plays, *The Death of Agrippina* and *The Pedant Outwitted*, as well as his *Letters* (two volumes, 1654). Because of its anti-Christian and blasphemous content, *The Death of Agrippina* achieved considerable notoriety. This very success led to pressures on the Duc d'Arjapon, which resulted in his dropping his patronage.

Cyrano de Bergerac's most famous work, *Voyages to the Moon*, was well known long before the date of its first authorized publication in France in 1656. This has been credited to circulation of the story in manuscript. The truth is that the work first appeared in book form in an unauthorized edition in 1650, and was undoubtedly passed around, read by intellectuals, and to that extent influential.

There had been a few French works, predominately Utopias, which could make some claim to infringing on the periphery of what today is regarded as science-fiction. Sir John Mandeville (believed by some to be a pen name) collected a series of adventures in 1356 which became known as *Mandeville's Travels*. Chapter thirty-one in this is titled "The Blessed Isles of Prester John," and may have accelerated the popularization of the character Prester John, which has served as the inspiration for many novels and short stories even in modern times.⁽¹³⁾ Here the author describes the island of Pytan, whose pigmies live on the smell of wild apples. A nearby isle has another race which is feathered, and lives on raw meat and fish. Stories are told of the special fruit of trees on that island which, when eaten regularly, extends the life-span to 400 years. The name Prester John was said to have been chosen by the emperor of these marvellous isles when on a visit to Egypt he observed the sacraments of the religious orders. He called himself "Prester" after "priest", and "John" after the name of the first priest that came to these bizarre lands and introduced a strange sort of Christianity.

Far better known than Mandeville was François Rabelais, from whose name comes the word Rabelaisian, denoting the coarse and often bawdy humor characteristic of his fiction. Two of his works greatly influenced French literature and, in a limited sense, French science-fiction and Utopias. The first was *Gargantua*, published in 1533 under the pen name Alcofribas Nasier (an anagram of François Rabelais). This contains a frequently reprinted sequence titled "The Abbey of Thelème," which presents the author's concept of the ideal community. The intelligent, talented and gifted people of the world live there without laws, religion, politics or money. They need no direction because they themselves, better than

any, know what must be done. The second, *Pantagruel* (1535), actually begun earlier than *Gargantua* and published in sections, takes the reader over distant seas to strange, grotesque and fantastic lands rendered joyous by ribald humor. It has been claimed that this work captured the true spirit of science-fiction, containing ingredients later common in the genre. It seems to have been strongly influenced by the racy satire of Lucian, and actually owes even more to Giovanni Boccaccio, author of *The Decameron*. The protagonist, Pantagruel, was born a superman of gigantic size and strength. He acquired complete knowledge of every language, the sciences, religion and law, and his observations in travel were lusty enough to be denounced as obscene.

Rabelais was actually parodying the "true" stories of travel that had become the rage in France. It was only a relatively short time past that Christopher Columbus had awakened Europe to the reality of the North and South American continents. The Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci, after a series of voyages to the New World from 1497 to 1507, had gained sufficient attention through accounts of his discoveries to have these continents named after him. From that point on, everyone who had ever travelled beyond the horizon began to write accounts of their journeys, and when they ran out of facts simply invented some sufficiently thrilling to hold the attention of their readers. Just as Lucian gained immortality by satirizing the fantastic travel tales of his day, so did Rabelais gain even greater stature by satirizing those of his own period.

Charles Sorel, like Rabelais, attempted a parody on the exploration stories in his *Comical History of Frangion*. It was originally published in French in 1622. Like Rabelais, Sorel mentioned the possibility of moon voyages in several segments. His major contribution was suggesting the potentiality of an unspecified type of engine as the power-base for such a voyage.

At this point we must underscore an important point. Certain enthusiastic critics—particularly (and understandably) those in France—have a habit of citing long lists of stories that are actually simply travel tales or purely political Utopias, quoting out of context from them isolated portions which *might* relate to a supramundane event, and then asserting they are science-fiction. Since most of these works are not generally accessible *in toto* because of age, scarcity and the language barrier, there has arisen the false impression that a much larger body of early French science-fiction exists than actually does. Were a similar methodology applied to classifying stories in the English language, a bibliography probably too vast to be printed economically could readily be compiled.

In the Eighteenth Century prior to the French revolution, many protests disguised as Utopias surfaced as a symptom of the unrest which eventually led to Bastille Day. Only by special dispensation can these qualify as science-fiction. Even though the Utopian element has always been a strong part of science-fiction, the great majority of English Utopias are peripheral to the field. In the United States, particularly during the Nineteenth Century, scores of experimental communities—little Utopias—actually came into existence. Indeed, entire books have been written on this subject. (14) When a *fictional* Utopia turns out to be far less imaginative than an actual, coeval communal experiment, the justification for including it in the canon of science-fiction becomes slim. In the modern novels *Finnley Wren* and *Night Unto Night* Philip Wylie has his characters stop in the middle of the action to tell or read a brief science-fiction piece. Taken out of context these pieces are science-fiction, but the rest of the works are not. This is also true of Rabelais, Sorel and a hundred more who follow.

The value in referring to them rests predominately in the fact that the seedlings of ideas sprinkled throughout their works permitted later important French writers in the genre to enrich their works. This is particularly true for Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyages to the Moon*. He himself says as much in the text of the work, even listing his various sources. Among them was *The City of the Sun*, a Utopia written while he was imprisoned by the Italian scholar and revolutionary

Thomas Campanella. Although the work originally appeared in Latin in 1623 and elicited considerable interest, its first appearance in English was a truncated version produced by Thomas W. Halliday for inclusion in the anthology *Ideal Commonwealths*, edited by Henry Morley, Professor of English at University College, London, and published in 1901. Excised then was a portion of *The City of the Sun* dealing with the sex life of this Utopia. The format of the work was a combination of questions and answers and dialogue. De Bergerac was so delighted with it that he made Campanella one of the actual characters in his own *Voyages to the Sun*. In the opening pages of *Voyages to the Moon* he refers to the inspiration of *De Subtilitate Rerum* by Giralamo Cardan, an Italian scholar, physician, astrologer and all-around Renaissance man. It appeared in 1551, and discussed the arrival in a savant's room of two visitors who after a dialogue reveal they have come from the moon, which accounts for their unusual viewpoints.

Before Cyrano de Bergerac, the French had produced imaginative adventure, Utopias and satire, but only fragments from these could be construed as science-fiction. De Bergerac succeeded in writing what is probably the first complete work in the genre, one planned deliberately to be an interplanetary adventure, and in which scientific explanations for technical wonders are introduced. He amalgamated the three basic forms of science-fiction existent at his time into a single unit: the travel tale or fantastic adventure (like *The Odyssey* of Homer), the Utopia (like Plato's *Republic*), and the science story (like those of Kepler, Godwin and Wilkins). Only Godwin had done this before, and in acknowledgement of that fact de Bergerac made Domingo Gonsales, the hero of *The Man in the Moone*, one of his characters in *Voyage to the Sun*.

Cyrano was to become the great popularizer of science-fiction. Since the Golden Age of the Greeks, he was probably, with the exception of Rabelais, the finest literary stylist to attempt it. Nine editions of his works were published in France, and there were two translations into English, the first by Theodore St. Serf in 1659 and the second by A. Lovell in 1687, as readers were entranced by the story's ingenuity and satiric bite.

Some of the methods for reaching the moon suggested or utilized in the story are obviously untenable. These include attaching vials of dew to the waist, so that the sun would draw the wearer upwards; standing on an iron plate and then throwing a horseshoe into the air, which would draw the plate and its passenger upwards; and rubbing the body with bone-marrow, which the sun attracted, causing the greased individual to rise with it. Other methods were valid, or at least not without some merit. Among these were a mechanical grasshopper, propelled by an internal combustion machine that utilized saltpetre for fuel; a gas-filled balloon; and most important of all a wooden wagon with attached rockets which were fired in planned stages.

In the history of science-fiction, Cyrano de Bergerac ranks as the first man to conceive the idea of using rockets for space travel—and that in 1650! It has been asserted that his use of them was mere happenstance, an inadvertance conferring undeserved credit, and that he did not fully understand the implications of what he had proposed. To support this claim, critics point out that when the rockets burn out a purely superstitious device (the use of bone-marrow already alluded to) is needed to complete the journey. But the text of *Voyage to the Moon* refutes this quite clearly:

You must know then that the flame had no sooner consumed one line of rockets (for they had placed them in sixes by means of which a fuse which ran along each half-dozen), when another set caught fire and then another, so that the blazing powder delayed my peril by increasing it.

The principle that when one set of rockets was exhausted another set ignited and gave the vehicle further propulsion is set forth explicitly. This step-firing is

of course a harbinger of the multi-staged rockets utilized in space exploration today. De Bergerac did not forecast the detachable stages now used, but may have anticipated their need.

Further evidence that his use of rockets was not adventitious is found in *Voyage to the Sun*. Here he returns again, for some length, to the rocket principle. When a friend sees Cyrano after the moon trip, he embraces him and cries,

"And they vowed you were so completely consumed that when the machine fell back only a few of your ashes were found."

"Those ashes," I replied, "sir, were those of the fireworks themselves, for the fire did not hurt me in the least. The rockets were fastened on outside and consequently their heat could not trouble me. You know that as soon as the powder was exhausted, the swift ascent of the rockets ceased to raise the machine, which then fell to the ground. I saw it fall and when I expected nothing but to fall with it, I was surprised to feel myself rising towards the Moon."

In *Voyage to the Sun* de Bergerac proposes yet a fourth method of interplanetary transport. This has been described by Arthur C. Clarke as the earliest delineation of the ramjet principle yet discovered in science-fiction. In this novel Cyrano builds a machine six feet high and three feet wide.

This box had holes in the bottom, and over the roof, which was also pierced, I placed a crystal vessel with similar holes made globe shape but very large, whose neck terminated exactly at and fitted in the opening I had made in the top. The vessel was expressly made with several angles, in the shape of an icosahedron, so that as each facet was convex and concave my globe produced the effect of a burning mirror.... When the Sun emerged from the clouds and began to shine on my machine the transparent icosahedron received the treasures of the sun through its facets.... I had foreseen that the void which would occur in the icosahedron through the Sun's rays uniting by way of the concave glasses would attract a furious abundance of air to fill it, which would lift up my box, and in proportion as I rose up the horrible wind which rushed through the hole could not reach the roof except by passing furiously through the machine and thereby lifting it up.

It seems obvious that Cyrano de Bergerac understood the principle of reaction propulsion thoroughly, and that his inclusion of the method was a deliberate act.

There are strong dystopian elements in Cyrano's adventures on the moon, but what makes them science-fiction is the degree of imagination and invention they display. Alien creatures are described as running on all fours and having the bodies of hairy animals but the faces of humans; further, these creatures are credited with having been the origin of the myths of fauns, satyrs, genii and other legendary beings. The idea has been commonly found in science-fiction since; it plays a significant role in *The Mightiest Machine* (1934-35) by John W. Campbell, Jr., (15a) *Childhood's End* (1953) by Arthur C. Clarke, (15b) and in a long list of other stories.

Cyrano is technically inventive. In *Voyage to the Moon* he postulates "ambulatory" and "sedentary" towns. The moving towns are set on four giant wheels and have sails. Eight gigantic bellows in towers blow on these sails so that the town may be kept constantly in fair weather. A successful novel was only recently written on exactly this theme by Christopher Priest. (16) In "sedentary" towns the houses are equipped with giant mechanical screws, which lower them into the depths of the earth when the weather is extreme, and bring it back if it is good.

One of Cyrano's most startling predictions is "a strange and wonderful book made wholly for the ears, and not for the eyes. So that when any body has a mind to read in it, he winds up that machine with a great many springs; then he turns the hand to the chapter which he desires to hear, and straight, as from the mouth of man, or a musical instrument, proceed all the distinct and different sounds...." An earlier generation might have called this a prediction of a phonograph, but own own sees it as much closer to a tape recorder.

There is also artificial light on the moon. Energy is concentrated into globes, which emit endless cold light. From all these things it can be seen that Cyrano is no ordinary teller of tall tales or self-conscious satirist, but an author who has made a pivotal contribution to the direction of science-fiction.

The cause of his death has not been ascertained with certainty. Some assert that he died of venereal disease. The most popular account is that sometime in early 1654 he was struck on the head by a falling or deliberately dropped beam. He did not die immediately, but in constantly failing health was finally, at his own pleading, taken to the home of a cousin, Pierre de Cyrano, in June of 1655. There he expired the following July 28th after agreeing to convert to Christianity upon the urgings of his life-long friend Le Bret and his sister, who was a nun.

A sequel to his first book appeared posthumously. Believed to have been heavily censored by Le Bret, *Voyage to the Sun* was not published in France until 1662. It starts where *Voyage to the Moon* ends, with the descent of Cyrano to the earth. Instead of being admired for his remarkable feat, he finds that he is suspected of sorcery and involvement with the supernatural. To forestall the intentions of the townsfolk, he bribes a jailor to put him in prison. While incarcerated he builds the space ship which is to take him to the sun. On the sun the fruit of a tree takes the form of a tiny man, who is soon joined by many companions in order to ease communication with their visitor. They can also coalesce into a single mass which takes the form of a full-sized man, and are even capable of assuming the shape of birds, so as to range over greater areas and assemble information. The plot-device of alien creatures capable of rearranging their cellular structure so as to simulate other life-forms is common today. Here are a few examples of the many variants employed: Spiro, the alien sent to spy upon the earth in Eric Frank Russell's "I Spy" (17a) takes the form of sheep, dogs, cats, men and other creatures to accomplish its purpose. Alyx is the name of a living entity that encapsulates an entire world in "The Lonely Planet" by Murray Leinster, (17b) and has the capability of creating forests and other life forms to cover its surface. Allied to Leinster's work is the well known novel *Solaris* (1961) of Stanislaw Lem; this deals with a living, intelligent ocean which synthesizes human beings based on the thought-patterns it reads in the minds of those men who have landed on the surface of its globe.

On entering the land of the birds on the sun Cyrano is captured by them and tried as an inferior creature that should be put to death and eaten. In defense he says that he is not a man but a monkey who has been captured by men and forced to assume their abominable characteristics for survival. (In the style of his satire here de Bergerac clearly anticipates Jonathon Swift, who is known to have been influenced by him.) Cyrano also travels to the land of talking trees, and after passing that meets personally with Thomas Campanella, author of *The City of the Sun*. Campanella is thoroughly familiar with the local geography, and imparts his information to Cyrano. As the book rather abruptly terminates, the philosopher Descartes is brought into the action. The ending of the story seems to have been lost or destroyed. Cyrano is known to have written a third work, *The Secret of the Spark*, but no manuscript of it has ever been found and its content can only be guessed at.

IV THE TRAVEL TALE AND DANIEL DEFOE

The discovery of the North and South American continents in the 1490's and the realization that other unknown land-masses might exist fired the European imagination. Books on travel to far places became the rage. To ensure readership, their authors never hesitated to exaggerate a bit if it made for excitement. Gradually it got to the point where readers did not know if a volume were fact, fiction or a combination of both. To confound them further, the authors strove for an aura of authenticity, even when their entire accounts were spun out of the whole cloth. Soon, the "explorations" had to become increasingly far-fetched and factual accounts took on the aspect of imaginary voyages. Fundamentally these were taking the direction of the old Greek travel tales, which had reached their greatest peak of artistic development with Homer's *Odyssey* and which had burgeoned with such profusion that, as we have seen, they were satirized by Lucian.

That, precisely, was happening in France in the last part of the Seventeenth Century, and it converted fictional travelogues into science-fiction. Very influential in this new trend was Gabriel de Foigny, an intemperate, woman-chasing Franciscan monk. Since his order was not tolerant of these propensities, he soon found himself making his way elsewhere as a teacher of elementary subjects to young boys. He had a literate turn of mind, and had published an almanac, a grammar and a collection of the Morot and Beza psalms with additional prayers of his own appended. Casting about for a way to make additional money, de Foigny decided to write a travel tale to end all travel tales, and eventually had published in Switzerland in 1676 *Terre Australe Connue*, or (as it is better known under its English translation of 1693) *A New Discovery of Terra Incognita Australis* by Mr. Sadeur. The earlier portions of the novel were merely a series of wild sea adventures and shipwrecks, but by the time the traveller had arrived at Australia de Foigny could speak freely. The people there are hermaphrodites, he assures us. They are virtually immortal, dying only when they eat certain deadly fruits. The Australians are capable of chemically creating life less complex than man; they have the ability to make themselves invisible and to magnetize water. Their science has made it possible to level all mountains, and socially—granting their eight-foot height and bisexuality—they enjoy extraordinarily harmonious relationships. They have enemies—gigantic birds called Urgs, not dissimilar to the legendary rocs—who attack them frequently.

Terre Australe Connue represents the re-entry of the travel tale into the mainstream of science-fiction. The truly fantastic creatures discovered (including a race part-man and part-tiger), the unusual and very specific depiction of scientific progress, and the satiric thrust of the Utopian aspects, all clearly display the work's debt to Cyrano de Bergerac. De Foigny had taken the more sensational aspects of de Bergerac's moon voyage and blended it with an account of travel and adventure.

Terre Australe Connue belongs to the canon of science-fiction, but *The History of the Sevarites or Severambi*, also dealing with shipwrecks and exploration of the same area, scarcely qualifies at all except for the fact that a "lost race" is discovered. Although written by a French author, Denis Vairasse D'Alais, it appeared first in English in 1665 and then in French two years later. It enjoyed phenomenal popularity and was subsequently translated into several languages but is simply another satiric version of an ideal state. Its first publication in English represented a spillover of the French Utopia-travel tale into England. It was inevitable that the impending flood of French Utopias, which would culminate in the bloody French Revolution, would infect other countries. Particularly important in this respect was *Fables, Dialogues des Morts, Abrégé des Vies des Anciens Philosophes, Télémaque* (*The Adventures of Telemachus*) by Francois de Sali-

gnac de la Mothe Fénelon, published in Paris in 1699. Fénelon, aristocratically born, was to become a priest. His Utopia was a sequel to *The Odyssey* and was subtitled *Son of Ulysses*. The locale of his adventures and ideal state was placed in the past, not in the present or future. Fénelon was a good man, and his Utopias of ancient days were puritanical in their outlook. He believed in commerce, and championed the traditional views of morality. He also hoped for a reconciliation between man and nature.

Such a book was made to order for the American colonists. Highly moral, even puritanical, in tune with the acceptance of the place of business and agriculture, they had no alternative in their vast but sparsely populated land except to commune with nature so they might just as well make a virtue of it. Small wonder, then, that *The Adventures of Telemachus* was translated and reprinted in New York in 1795, making it one of the earliest, if indeed not the earliest, novel-length Utopia from an American press.

In recent years the term "science-fact" has complemented "science-fiction" in pages of fantastic publications. Frequently it refers to concepts as imaginative as those in the fiction, and takes the form of essays or articles. Many such pieces are the raw elements of science-fiction itself, being discussions without plot or story-line. In actuality expositions of this type have been popular for a long time, and have had marked impact on the genre. *A Discourse Concerning a New World and Another Planet* came close to being just such a work. *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Mondes* by Bernard de Fontanelle, published in Paris in 1686 and two years later in England as *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* indeed was such a work. Fontanelle was regarded by his admirer M. De Voltaire as "the most universal genius that the age of Louis XIV has produced." In his early twenties he wrote operas, some of which were successful, which seems particularly fitting since his uncle was the great French dramatist, Peter Cornielle. He was an accomplished writer of verse, served continually as secretary of the Academy of Sciences, and wrote the history of that group. Nevertheless he is best remembered for his *Conversations*, in which he employed the Lucian technique of a dialogue to present in a readily understandable manner the lessons of speculative astronomy. Among the points he stressed were that the earth was a planet which turned on itself and around the sun; that the moon was a habitable world; that life exists in some form everywhere, from the microscopic to the macroscopic (the latter influencing the later writing of Voltaire's *Micromegas*); that all planets were inhabited and every star a sun which diffuses light to its surrounding worlds. The book proved highly popular with women as well as men, truly firing the imagination of the European mind.

And so the world was once again ready to look beyond its own confines for ideal commonwealths, preferably to the moon and sun. In such locales, an author might speak his mind without any risk of exposure by a bonafide global traveller. David Russen, an Englishman, decided to write a critique on Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyage to the Moon*, which he had read in St. Serf's 1659 translation. Russen scientifically evaluated de Bergerac's methods of reaching the moon and rejected them all—to his no great credit. He suggested, instead, using a compressed spring to place a man there, it being slowly released until it had reached its destination and the traveller had ascended. Then it could be pulled back at will, returning him to Earth.

Russen's work was published by J. Nutt in London in 1703, and bore the full title *Inter Lunare: or, a Voyage to the Moon. Considerations on the Nature of That Planet. The Possibility of Getting Thither. With Other Pleasant Conceits about the Inhabitants, their Manners and Customs*. Readers of this volume disagree as to whether the author was a straight-faced wit (writing in the manner of the Baker Street Irregulars, who pretend that Sherlock Holmes is a real person), or whether he was an eccentric who actually took every word of de Bergerac seriously and evaluated him on that basis.

The superb potentialities of using lunar voyages for political satire attracted Daniel Defoe, an author whose name was to become synonymous with popularizing the desert-island voyage in fiction. His *Robinson Crusoe* was published in 1719. Before that, Defoe's career had been a checkered one. He had failed utterly in a variety of businesses, going bankrupt in 1692. His views, liberal for their times, were reflected in his first published work of length, *An Essay Upon Projects* (1697), which evaluated the desirability of road improvements, insurance and income tax. He tried to build a name for himself with the pen, but ran into serious trouble when a political pamphlet he wrote in 1702, *The Shortest Way With Dissenters*, infuriated both the Whigs and the Tories and resulted in pillory and jail. Now convinced of the severe limitations on freedom of speech, he decided he might be better advised to disguise his criticism as a Utopian parable. He therefore selected the earth's satellite as the locale for *The Consolidator, or Memoirs of Sundry Transactions From the World in the Moon* (1705), since it was safely a quarter of a million miles away. The book did not bear his name, but was said to be "Translated from the Lunar Language, By the Author of *The True - Born English Man*." This last title was that of a poem he had written in 1701 extolling the virtues of William III; it had brought him his greatest success to that date.

We know that Defoe had read at least two other moon voyages, for he mentions in context both *A Discourse Concerning a New World in Another Planet* by John Wilkins and *The Man in the Moone* by Francis Godwin. He downgraded the scientific advances of his time by claiming to have visited China where gunpowder, printing, the magnet and the compass had long been known before they were in Europe. He claimed to have read books in Chinese libraries which recorded that during the Biblical deluge the Chinese built 100,000 ships and saved every man, woman and child in their country, which is one of the reasons why they got such a head start on repopulating the world.

China, he reported, also has a machine capable of putting spoken words down in writing, thereby recording speeches or sermons as given. In remote regions of that country telepathy has been achieved and oral speech is not required. Books in libraries are automatically removed from their shelves by signal, and special devices turn instantly to whatever pages are desired for reference.

He found that the Chinese knew of the circulation of the blood in the body "long before King Solomon's allegory of the bucket's going to the well." The Chinese are also capable of grinding a lens that, when turned toward the atmosphere with the help of mathematics, can tell the speed of the winds or the duration and extent of a storm. They knew of the influence of the moon on the tides long before Aristotle.

One of the reasons for all this advanced knowledge is that it was brought to them from the moon. The Chinese built replicas of the space ship of their moon visitors, and these are powered by what seem to be internal combustion engines. Defoe states that of all the inventions he saw none were more pleasing and profitable

...than a certain Engine formed in the shape of a chariot, on the backs of two vast bodies with extended wings, which spread about fifty yards in breadth, composed of feathers so nicely put together, that no air could pass; and as the bodies were made of Lunar Earth which would beare the fire, the cavities were filled with an ambient flame, which fed on certain spirit deposited in a proper quantity to last out the voyage; and this fire so ordered as to move about such springs and wheels as kept the wings in most exact and regular motion, always ascendant; thus the person being placed in this airy chariot drinks a certain dozing draught, that throws him into a gentle slumber, and dreaming all the way, never wakes till he comes to his journey's end.

This description suggests that Defoe had also read Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyage to the Moon*, for there a similarly powered mechanical grasshopper is described.

To assist in criticizing the state of civilization, the moon has telescopes through which cities on other worlds can be seen with utmost clarity. There is also a "cogitator", which prevents a person from redirecting his thoughts away from his immediate problem, thereby assisting him to arrive at the best solution quickly. Another invention, called the "elevator", permits mental conversations with spirits, angels, apparitions and other intangible beings.

The people and conditions on the moon conveniently prove to be identical with those on Earth, giving Defoe excellent opportunities for satire. The book aroused considerable discussion and criticism, which encouraged issuing of another edition in Edinburgh the same year, and caused him to write the lunar pamphlets *A Journey to the World in the Moon*, *A Letter from the Man in the Moon* and *A Second and More Strange Voyage to the World in the Moon*. Defoe had at last found a safe medium through which he could sock away at the Establishment.

As late as 1710 he added two more segments to his moon saga. These appeared in *Review*, a journal devoted to politics and items of public interest which Defoe had published weekly since 1704. They were actually replies to many critical reviews and pastiches of *The Consolidator*. In these later pieces he embroidered still further his description of the lunar civilization, so that for a period of five years the concept of a scientific voyage to the moon played a major role in building Defoe's reputation and keeping the idea in the public eye.

Defoe's *Review* collapsed in 1713, and for the most part his other business ventures also went badly. At the age of sixty, when few men can hope to start over again successfully, he not only was in severe economic difficulties, but had earned a deserved reputation of a habitual liar who was grievously prone to misrepresenting himself and his situation.

But there was one important factor in his favor. Through publication of his *Review* and a lifetime's association with some two dozen other periodicals, he had a professional's feel for what the public might buy. The imaginary voyages we have discussed in this book were among the most popular and widely read works of their time. Defoe of course knew this. And so he went to work on a shipwreck and desert-island story of his own, *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. This was to become one of the literary classics of all time, and has been classed by some as the first true novel in English. At the time of its appearance (April 25, 1719) newspapers rarely printed novels, but the phenomenal hardcover success of *Robinson Crusoe* resulted in its serialization by *The Original London Post*, which was published three times a week, and it was later reprinted by other periodicals as well.

By no stretch of the imagination is *Robinson Crusoe* science-fiction, but many of the literally hundreds of imitations that later poured forth were. A word was even coined for them: "Robinsonades". Inevitably, there have been literary evaluations of this genre. Hermann Ullrich's *Robinson und Robinsonaden* (1898) is a bibliography of these Crusoe-type stories, and W. W. Mann's *Robinson Crusoe en Français* (1916) covers them in France.

The plot of the work is simple. The title character runs away to sea, is shipwrecked on an island, and displays incredible ingenuity in making a comfortable life for himself. He rescues a young native from cannibals, and calls him "Man Friday" after the day of the event; in appreciation, the man becomes his servant.

The success of *Robinson Crusoe* was due to its clean-cut prose and complete believability, and has resulted in the commonly used phrase "Defoe-like verisimilitude". (Edgar Allan Poe would later also use this word, strive for that effect, and, with the attribute of genius, succeed.) Its impact on English, French and German literature was monumental. The French works of Utopian cast and fan-

Sonnets for the Space Age

by *LEE BECKER*

Viking I

The picture relayed back was clear and sharp
And on all sides showed only stony plain;
Toward the horizon a single barren scarp
Alone disturbed monotonous terrain.
All was dead, the instruments declared,
No microscopic life lay dormant there,
Waterless, and for millenia bared,
A sun-scorched soil no longer cloaked by air.
But was it always thus? Might deep below
These sterile, wind-scoured pomegranate sands
Be hidden treasures of times long ago
From strange and vanished Martian wonderlands?
And are the hoary polar caps in truth
But remnants of a planet's cosmic youth?

Mother of Us All*

They found the footsteps on the slope's east side,
Ashed delicately by volcanic dust,
And with close-cradled artifacts for guide
Dated each layer beneath the surface crust.
Four million years ago, these prints attest,
Our earliest ancestress toiled up that hill
And, from clustered marks upon its crest,
We know she paused there, for a time stood still.
Was it to rest? To soothe a crying child?
Did she scent food, fear danger near, or see
Her mate? Sense something strange amid the wild?
Guesses all! But it may simply be
That she was moved to watch the sunset sky,
Stirred by its beauty—even as you and I.

*This poem was suggested by Dr. Mary B. Leakey's announcement that footprints of erect-walking hominids 500,000 years older than any heretofore known had been discovered in Africa at Laetoli, near Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge (see "Footprints in the Ashes of Time," *The National Geographic Magazine* 155, 446-457 [April, 1979]).

Epitaph

His gravestone, one of many near the wall,
Is shadowed all the summer long by elms;
By day they hide the sun with vases tall,
And hide by night the feeble sparks from realms
Where last he drove his tiny craft alone;
Only in winter can a starry eye
Pierce the branches bare to find this stone,
Under which no bones nor coffin lie.

But though his vault is now the deeps of space
Where he had always wished to end at last,
The warm green planet Earth was his birthplace;
So here, to cherish memories held fast
Was this stone set by caring men who sought
To mark the name of one lost astronaut.

Echoes

I plucked with wonder from the shifting sand
That sweeps the desert of this empty world
A single shell and held it in my hand.
I marvelled that its surface should be swirled
As chirally as those I knew from Earth,
Yet show that non-Euclidean veneer
Which told me of its strange and ancient birth,
And tempted me to hold it to my ear.

First there came the melancholy roar
Of seas that once trod fertile continents;
Then by some awful magic I heard more—
The sounds of madness and of war's torments,
A faltering race's tale of tragic death,
Down to the strangling catch of its last breath.

Lost Boundary

Deserted by a race long since extinct,
The crumbling ruin huddled round a square;
And, musing on how history could be linked
With weathered stone, I paused in silence there.
Erect before me stood a metal post,
Ringed, man-high, and in the dying light
Of its far sun a solitary ghost
From eons past before this planet's night.

I thought of Earth's dark ages with closed eyes,
Heard ancient voices shout in ragged choir,
Saw blackened stakes by angry faces rise,
Smelled Salem's smoke, felt flames from Rouen's pyre.
I shuddered, wondering if it could be true—
On other worlds did they burn witches too?

Book Reviews

by A. LANGLEY SEARLES

FAR FUTURE CALLING: Uncollected Science Fiction and Fantasies of Olaf Stapledon. Oswald Train, Publisher, P. O. Box 1891, Philadelphia, Pa. 19105, 1979. 18.1 cm. 275pp. \$12.00.

I first encountered Olaf Stapledon in 1942, and the experience was overwhelming. I felt then (and still do now) that the work, *Odd John*, was the finest exposition of the superman theme that science-fiction had produced. This novel led me to seek out more of his books, whose presence I had of course known about for some time, and later in that same year I managed to procure both *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*. How the present generation reacts to these works I do not know; but to me they established their author as the greatest of all Twentieth Century writers in the genre—an opinion, again, that forty years have not changed.

Publication of this magazine began in 1943, and a half-dozen more of Stapledon's works were published during the next decade. You will find their appearance noted in *Fantasy Commentator*, but only two were actually reviewed here.* Are you surprised? I suspect few were ready to take on the task for the same reason I confess I did not: I simply feared I lacked the ability to convey to others the powerful feelings of wonder, pleasure and satisfaction which Stapledon's prose instilled in me. A shadow of that temerity still remains, but *Far Future Calling* represents one of those rare second chances that life seldom offers, and I cannot let it pass.

First, however, I must give you a measure of my awe and clearly partisan frame of mind. Every Stapledon volume that I acquired after those first overpowering three were read slowly; I deliberately rationed myself to prolong the pleasure—just one chapter a day. It was a difficult regime, but I gave way only once that I can recall, finishing the last fifty pages of *Sirius* in a single evening—the temptation was simply too strong to resist.

And that is how I have approached *Far Future Calling*. Since this is a sheaf of shorter pieces perhaps the method is even more apposite here. Sam Moskowitz sets the tone for them in a helpful introduction which outlines their provenance: they have been collected from obscure sources, and most have never appeared in this country; one is being published for the first time anywhere. This last is "The Man Who Became a Tree," a gentle, moving account of how a man's consciousness gradually becomes that of a solitary beech tree. The transition is managed with the same empathy and effortless conflation that Stapledon has used so successfully in the past to describe otherworldly life-forms. (I think here particularly of *The Flames* and the Martian sequence in *Last and First Men*.)

That talent is even more spectacularly displayed in "A World of Sound," which describes a man's psyche entering and exploring a familiar yet unfathomed dimension of music. It is a wonderful example of his ability to use metaphoric images for making alien concepts seem immediate and real. The story has the same lucid, understated vividness of passages in *Star Maker*. (These two works actually appeared only a year apart, and it is tempting to speculate on connections between them.)

**Death Into Life* by Richard Witter (II, 97 [1947]) and *The Flames* by Sam Moskowitz (II, 157 [1948]).

In "East Is West" a present-day man is projected into an alternate time-stream in which the roles of the leading nations in the world have been exactly reversed. Japan has been the pioneer of mechanical invention, colonization, commercial exploitation and seafaring since the Middle Ages. England, on the other hand, has remained feudal until some Oriental Perry opened it to the East, whereupon mechanization changed it within eighty years to "a modern industrial community of first rank." The alternate world is on the verge of a major war, possibly analogous to our World War I, although the political parallels are not clear, and racial alignments seem of more importance. The story is well written, and I wish only that it were longer to explain in detail the position of the protagonist, who retains his original memories and yet has an instinctual knowledge of the era he visits.

The longest tale is "Arms Out of Hand," about a man with two strongly opposing personalities, each of which controls one of his arms. This plot-variant is to my experience original, and Stapledon depicts the resulting conflict well.

"A Modern Magician" may be familiar to some through its recent appearance in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and of these five stories has the strongest plot. It is a compressed and tragic account of a man with psychokinetic powers who lacks the maturity to use them properly. The development is at once rational and emotionally moving, and the result very satisfying.

The work which gives this collection its name (and isn't it a fine one?) is a play based largely on material in chapter 15 of *Last and First Men*. In his interesting, brief introduction to this Harvey Satty points out that it must have been written at about the same time, certainly before 1931. Although apparently done for the BBC, it was never performed. Its portrayal of Eighteenth Man, the last of *homo sapiens*, is a sensitive and at times an even lustrous one. Today it still reads well, and could, I judge, be readily adapted for television.

Olaf Stapledon's 1948 address to the British Interplanetary Society, "Interplanetary Man," is included in the book as giving what his widow feels is the best exposition of her husband's outlook in the canon. The speech is divided equally between physical predictions and philosophical consequences. Many of both reflect, as might be expected, ideas encountered in his major books. He assumes that, barring nuclear catastrophe, the moon and the planets will be reached "within a few decades." We are unlikely to find life there, even on Mars. And while it would be better for mankind to concentrate first on improving the quality of life on his own planet, it seems probable that we shall be lured on to extra-terrestrial exploration instead. He feels it would soon be possible to make the Moon, Mars, and even Venus habitable by artificial means, and practicable by eugenics to adapt humans to hostile environments which could be changed only partially. He fears, however, that succumbing to the dangers of luxury, an affluence for all, might lead to a hedonistic Utopia where spiritual degradation and intellectual apathy would predominate. There are many other interesting and subtle points which I shall not take space to cite here, but leave for readers to consider on their own.

Two valuable contributions about the author himself round out this excellent collection. One is Sam Moskowitz's searching but affectionate overview of Stapledon's life and work which, it may surprise you to hear, is the only comprehensive biography of the man that has so far appeared. For the benefit of literary scholars Moskowitz cites the earlier writings about him, most of which are tantalizingly brief vignettes. I was interested to see how clearly the passages quoted from Stapledon's own books support the thesis that he, like so many authors, incorporated much of his own life experiences into his fiction. He comes across as decent and humane—these are Moskowitz's adjectives, too—someone you would enjoy spending a companionable evening with, without ever feeling put down by his brilliantly imaginative mind. "Peace and Olaf Stapledon" is an equally absorbing reportorial account of Stapledon's only visit to the United States thirty years ago. Like the biography, it is vintage Moskowitz, chock-full of important facts and incidents nowhere else available, interestingly told.

The book has a colored dust-jacket and and seven attractive interior illustrations in black and white by Stephen Fabian, whose work shows real congeniality for the field. By what I hope is no coincidence it is nostalgically bound in the same magenta-colored cloth that was used fifty years ago on the American edition of *Last and First Men*. Clearly *Far Future Calling* is one of the most important volumes in the genre to appear this year, and has my highest unqualified recommendation.

FUTURE WITHOUT FUTURE by Jacques Sternberg. A Continuum Book. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975. 210 pp. 21.5 cm. \$6.95.

This collection of four short stories and a novella was first published as *Futurs Sans Avenir* in 1971 by Editions Robert Laffont of Paris. Sternberg has been called the Molière of the fantasy field, and a master of black humor; if you read this book you will see how fully deserved this reputation is.

The short stories vary from good to excellent. "Very Sincerely Yours" consists of the correspondence between Monsieur Strigel of Xeriac-sur-Alphe and the secretary of a book club, Claude Gardere. As this progresses, Gardere learns that Strigel is a humanoid inhabitant of Agonese, a planet of another star many light-years away, and that he wishes help in an advertising campaign to reveal its existence. Can Gardere include in the book club's next mailing a tourist brochure describing this extra-terrestrial civilization and its scientific achievements? He can—and in so doing he alters the future of the human race in an unexpected and Swiftian way.

"The Ephemera" tells of a vacationing couple who lose control of their spacecraft and are forced to land on a forbidden planet. Here time, for them, is accelerated, and eventually they die of starvation and thirst, though not before they witness a strange race of beautiful intelligent beings with whom, because of their temporal asynchronism, they cannot communicate. Sternberg's descriptions are vivid, compelling and evocative throughout.

"Vacation" portrays a future where nuclear fission is the chief source of energy. This truly atomic era is an amplification of our own—inflation is rampant, taxes and prices eat up salaries, and conspicuous consumption of all the unnecessary devices spawned by a marriage of computers and advertising has become a sort of *richesse oblige*. Man lives as a beast of electronic burden; workdays are fifteen hours long, but after every five days of work come five of vacation. We follow our Everyman—his name is never stated—to a travel agency where from many possible worlds he chooses planet P.4, whose life-forms resemble somewhat those in "The Ephemera." On the way back from this placid vacation break his spaceship, by a navigational error, is trapped in orbit around another star. But supplies, mail, TV, advertising and all the frenetic artifacts of civilization can still be received, and a highly organized bureaucracy even manages to send trapped vacationers their usual work and all the bills and tax notices they would have received at home.

The title story of the volume extrapolates on the rebellious youth movements in the 1960's, and outlines a history of mankind for the next fifty years. Wars end in 1975 because even career soldiers will not fight, and the munitions industry disappears. The younger generation simply refuses to join in the rat-races of ambition and commercial success. By 1981 cars are being systematically destroyed, and shortly thereafter also the factories that make them. Sabotage of the chemical, metallurgical and electronic industries follows, and then in 1983 all churches are put to the torch. Population declines and life-spans shorten. An agrarian economy prevails as a new shrub, the vefour, proliferates; this yields nutritious, vitamin-rich and slightly euphoric fruit. By the early Twenty-first Century "... the headlong river of the centuries seems to have suddenly emptied into a lake of time, a dead lake, stagnant, where it is pleasant to float under

water, in silence, calmly, in an atmosphere of vacations, of vague vacuity, peace, pacifism and ironic indifference. Such was the state of affairs when, from another galaxy, the Druges landed on earth." They are humanoid, and Earthlings welcome them with warmth and simplicity—and are massacred. Although much of it is already outdated by the years chosen, "Future Without Future" still reads well.

Sternberg's writing is spare, lean, and at first seems simplistic; but the content is too gripping for this impression to remain. Sometimes his style reminds me of David H. Keller's, and as I read I wondered if a kinship between modern French science-fiction writers and Keller (whose work has always been particularly appreciated in France) was too sweeping a hypothesis to invoke. In any event, Keller's darkest themes have none of the pessimism pervading this book.

As can be seen, all the above stories deal with death or truncated futures, but none do so with the compelling totality of "Fin de Siècle" ("End of the Century"). Even in Bierce and Kafka one can find shreds of hope, and both Zamyatin's *We* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are basically optimistic despite their grim endings. But "Fin de Siècle" is 35,000 words of unrelieved gloom.

This novella is told in diary form by a thirty-year-old citizen named Claude in the year 1999. He is numbered 456918101492 (everyone is registered by number rather than name), signifying that he was born April 5, 1969 and lives in Compartment 18, Building 101, on 492nd Street. His city represents the ultimate triumph of regimentation and bureaucracy. The state owns everything, down to the immovable furniture in each citizen's identical apartment. Of the world at large little is known; indeed, reading any foreign printed matter has been forbidden since 1989. The sole bit of freedom left seems to be the privilege of owning and driving cars, which by now have produced innumerable inextricable gridlocks of abandoned and rusting vehicles. Atmospheric pollution has reached such a point that pure air must be piped into buildings (and of course paid for) or gas-masks worn. By rule of the Central Bureau of Urbanism everything is painted black or gray so that effects of smoke and dust cannot be seen; the only visible colors are the red and green traffic signals.

The state is a neo-Christian dictatorship with compulsory daily services and taxes to support them. Drugs and alcoholic beverages are forbidden, and sex is regulated by the Office of Orders and Prohibitions. One may marry, divorce every five years, or have sex outside of marriage—all under restrictions and for a fee. Claude, for example, is provided with a mistress who visits him weekly, and if she is somehow prevented from doing so the Office of Household Supervision allocates him a replacement. (He is dissatisfied with them all, but cannot afford the price of a temporary adultery card from the Office of Sexual Allocation which would allow him to choose a partner himself.)

Our diarist works in a publishing house. Like all enterprises this is municipally owned, and produces one book every week as well as the sole permitted newspaper, *The Quotidian*. These are required reading, and everyone is regularly quizzed on their contents. The Ministry of Leisure supervises all activity outside working hours. Sports are mandatory. Phonographs and telephones are banned. There is one TV station and one radio station, each run by the state. There are only three theaters to serve fifteen million people, and each citizen is entitled to a ticket once a quarter. The films shown last at least four hours, and are strictly educational: *Post Office and Police* (a ruthless investigation leading to the apprehension of an employee who had stolen a dozen stamps), *Identity Card* (the trials of a man who had lost his papers and was attempting to get replacements), and so on. One may visit someone else once a month, and the obligatory two-hour conversation is recorded (Claude on one occasion is sentenced to ten days in prison for mentioning the past and criticizing the food supply.) And on vacations (whose times and places are of course always assigned) one is expected to do "vocational exercises"; Claude writes imaginary addresses on envelopes which are then

opened by other vacationers similarly occupied. As an extra diversion during vacation everyone is allowed one adultery of his or her own choice.

Pervading this bleak and chilling future are unexpected temporal distortions. At first the reader feels that skipping occasional days or cancellation of Christmas week in 1997 are merely devices calculated to deprive workers of Sundays or vacations by fiat. But gradually Steinberg shows that there is something wrong with the very fabric of time. It may be day in some parts of the city while in others it is still night. Gaps like black holes suddenly come into being, and everyone is catapulted memoryless several hours or even days into the future. And there is the ultimate bureaucracy for dealing with the problem---a Center for the Distribution of Time. This verges into nightmarish fantasy. Time is said to be "wearing out...to be flowing through the pipeworks with more and more difficulty"; when days are lost, their substitutes reach everyone "in rather poor condition...the sound of their passing" being like "the grating of a needle on a badly-made record." Workers deal with time like a material substance, like plumbers trying to repair broken water-mains, and Claude talks of his collection of temporal objects, including a two-hour piece of dead time.

In the final days of the Twentieth Century other frightening distortions are triggered: thought becomes contagious, some people suddenly age a decade in a moment, sound is transformed into light, metals become plastic and flow. Finally, as the Center for the Distribution of Time fails to bring the planet through a temporal incision into the next century everything stops. (I thought here of A. Connell's once well known but now almost forgotten story of the 1930's, "Dream's End," which evokes a similar feeling to this finale, though less powerfully.)

Just as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* owes something to *We*, so does "Fin de Siècle" owe much to Orwell. But it is far from simply imitative, and neither this debt nor a few inconsistencies in the work detract from the overall effect. In one way it is perhaps closer to Zamyatin: *We* was actually intended to be satirically funny, and so, I am sure, is much in Steinberg's novella. But the black humor here is so immediate, so believable, that the work becomes disturbing, and then repellent, and finally horrifying. Up until now I should have rated part II of Stapledon's *Darkness and the Light* as the grimmest dystopia I had ever read, but even this was ameliorated by the alternate optimistic future of man given in part III. No such touch softens the focus of "Fin de Siècle," whose crushing power easily places *Future Without Future* among the outstanding science-fiction books of the 1970's.

Why has a work of this brilliant quality been ignored by contemporary readers? I can assume only that they do not know of its existence, that the world of pocket-books and pulp magazines continues to be their major fare, as it has for over half a century. On checking the Hugo winners for 1975 I found that the award for the best novella had gone to George R. R. Martin's "A Song for Lya." Fortunately my admiration for both this story and its author are already on record. No one may think, therefore, that I am denigrating either when I say that "Fin de Siècle" is several notches better, and that *Future Without Future* is one of those all too rare volumes, a true science-fiction classic.

---oOo---

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BACK ISSUES: #29 and #30 are obtainable from your dealer or from the publisher. A very small supply of a few earlier issues is available; collectors who are interested should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the publisher for a list of numbers and prices.

A Few Thorns

Comments and Opinions

by LINCOLN VAN ROSE

I

Would you like to have a star named after you? A novel scheme that lets you do just that is now being exploited by two mail-order companies. While some of the brighter stars have long had names, most of the 258,997 cited in the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory Star Catalog are known simply by number and letter, which designate their celestial location and type. Any new names attached to these would be completely unofficial. But if you'd like to name a star after aunt Fanny, a favorite book, or the latest flavor from Baskin-Robbins, it'll cost you only \$25 a throw. You could memorialize your dog (there are lots of stars near Sirius), a beloved science-fiction author (I'd pick a red giant close to Alpheratz for Isaac Asimov), or a prominent fan (for example, a white dwarf somewhat south of Betelgeuse for Forrest Ackerman). There are plenty of binaries around, too, so you could even immortalize your wife and yourself at one shot. If you want to know more about this scheme, find the July, 1980 issue of *Centerline*, published by the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, and read the article "Starscam."

II

If you subscribe to *Galileo* magazine you may have spotted in its 1979 combined #11/12 issue (pp. 34-36) Leslie A. Fiedler's article, "Who Was Olaf Stapledon?". My gorge rose as I read it---of the eight Stapledon titles mentioned, three are incorrectly quoted, the year of one is given wrong, and the publication history of two more is sadly garbled. We are also told that Stapledon was rejected by science-fiction fandom, and by 1950 known in America only "as a failed philosopher, one more academic nobody." These and other errors were pointed out (more politely than I should have) by Sam Moskowitz in a follow-up letter to *Galileo* (#14, p. 94).

I shudder to think that solecisms of this sort may be the basis of an entire book on Stapledon that Fiedler is supposedly writing. I shudder also at the editing—or lack of it—at the top desk at *Galileo*. One might better ask here "Who is Charles Ryan?" Is he so uninformed about the works of prominent modern science-fiction writers that he himself can't see blatant gaffes in a manuscript and correct them before they are printed? What are the current qualifications for an editor in the field anyway, Charlie?

There is something else about Fiedler's article that bothers me even more than his not having done his homework and therefore not knowing what he is talking about. This is the air of dismissiveness, the incredibly mean-spirited contempt for his subject. Stapledon is clearly an extraordinarily complex writer and human being, and deserves the insights that only careful research can provide. But Fiedler seems to feel that he needs no background to deal with the man, apparently because he doesn't happen to be a Bertrand Russell (how many are?) and because

he can be equated to science-fiction, a subject long below critical notice. Yet even here the quality of Stapledon's writing cannot be prevented from surfacing. "What moves us in his work, then, is persuasive paranoia..." says Fiedler, "...an ability to render his private hallucinations so vividly that they become our own." If you substitute the word "dedication" for "paranoia", and "imaginings" for "hallucinations"—in other words, if you neutralize Fiedler's obvious emotional bias—you have an accurate critical judgement. You also have a clear insight into the precise reason why Stapledon is a such a superb writer.

Well, here's a consistent postscript to all this. At the July 16-20, 1980 festival marking the fiftieth anniversary of D. H. Lawrence's death Fiedler turned in another minority report. He disagreed with all the rest of the panelists by stating that Lawrence had had no influence whatsoever on the novel and the short story. Has Leslie ever heard, I wonder, the maxim that one hour in the library is worth ten at the typewriter and twenty on the podium?

III

In the early 1950's, the greatest influences on television were cinematic formulas and techniques. Then, as TV gradually replaced Hollywood as the great American teat, the roles of the two reversed. But beginning in the late 1970's, the pendulum began to swing back again. With the financial success of overblown, simplistic movies like *Star Wars*, *The Black Hole* and the like, television also turned to science-fiction, and now you can watch Buck Rogers translated into pabulum in living color every week, as well as inane sitcoms like *Mork and Mindy*. I assume most of my readers are too sophisticated to be interested in stuff of that ilk, so I shall confine my opinions to a few of the one-shot s-f specials that I hoped would be decently entertaining. These often appear as reruns, and if you missed them the first time around you might wish to view them on a second.

On May 27, 1980 CBS presented *The Henderson Monster*. Actually there was no monster shown at all, which probably disappointed horror-movie freaks who read the advertisements and expected an up-dated version of *Frankenstein*. Nor is it more than borderline science-fiction; though one of the characters writes for the genre, he "never made it to *Galaxy*." But similarities with Mary Shelley's best known work are present.

Dr. Henderson, a cocky and arrogant scientific genius played by Jason Miller, is on the verge of some undefined breakthrough in gene-splicing which may win him a second Nobel Prize. He spurns both the philosophical doubts of his beautiful female assistant (Christine Lahti) and the cynicism of her husband (Stephen Collins), and does his best to play down the dangers of his experiments when a public inquiry is convened to evaluate them. A local nuclear scientist (Nehemiah Persoff) joins the fray on the other side, so to speak, because of his own guilt over participating in the Manhattan Project. Politics intervenes, and the whole thing ends in a stand-off as the City Council votes a temporary ban on Henderson's work.

Though Miller, Lahti and Persoff play stock characters they play them very well, and Ernest Kinoy's thoroughly adult script makes more out of the controversy than I expected. (If it were not for Three-Mile Island and Love Canal, however, we would probably have been done in instead of being this well done by.) Anyway, I felt *The Henderson Monster* probed a standard question well, and I ended by enjoying it much more than I expected.

On last March 8th I settled down to watch a TV version of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* with an attitude of mixed curiosity and trepidation. This production was first announced in 1976, and completed in 1978 or 1979. NBC originally planned to show it as a miniseries---two sections of two hours each. This version, however, has been abridged to three hours (including commercial breaks) and jammed into a single evening.

The cutting shows badly. Since I remembered the book I was able to follow the action easily, but viewers who didn't probably had trouble. Early on, for example, there is a critical time-lapse that is poorly indicated. You could miss it entirely, since the same characters who appear before and after look as if they had aged twenty-five days instead of twenty-five years. Some of the lesser transitions are equally abrupt.

But there are worse things to complain about. Take the so-called special effects. These are mostly incessantly flashing colored lights, and they are slathered indiscriminately everywhere. The sets look like *Star Trek* rejects. They consist chiefly of gigantic heavy machinery, ludicrously functionless—but naturally in glorious color. The obligatory electric doors are of course present; I don't happen to find it particularly novel that they slide up and down instead of horizontally. The producers' concept of a pueblo American Indian culture is incredible. We see no pueblos at all, just nondescript dwellings, one of which is a mobile home. Inside, these have panelled wooden doors! (As long as they weren't electric, I suppose no one thought them out of place.)

In case your memory of *Brave New World* is a bit hazy, let me sketch it for you. We are some 600 years in the future, in a united world where everybody is preconditioned, physically and mentally, for the life he is to lead. Conditioning also prepares everyone for death, which occurs suddenly with virtually no visible signs of ageing. Work is easy, leisure plentiful. The religion is a Fordian-Freudian combination of industrialism and psychiatry. Private aircraft are common and passenger rockets link continents. Perhaps for historical reasons there are a few fragments of older cultures still intact, ghettos of self-sufficient primitives who live in their old ways behind electrified fences.

Into one of these savage reservations comes vacationing Bernard Marx. He finds a previous visitor from civilization, Linda, and her son John, who have been trapped there for a quarter of a century, and brings them back with him. John's knowledge of English has come chiefly from reading a copy of Shakespeare's plays, and he often talks in quotations.

The major thrust of Huxley's novel is the contrast between this world of the future and John's—which of course epitomizes our own. Since 1932 this contrast and the verisimilitude of the novel have been enhanced by the realization of many forecasts which originally seemed far out. Synthetic fibers are now indeed cheaper and more common than natural ones. Behavioral conditioning has become a major tool of psychiatry. We have our *somas*: Valium, Quaalude and Equanil, to name just three. Sexual promiscuity seems a norm, and many sociologists think the family will shortly become passé.

But instead of emphasizing such factors, this production emphasizes a number of other devices that Huxley never mentioned—Muzak, calculators, computers and so on. It may be trendy, but it's neither accurate nor needed. I should have supposed, too, that since we live in an era where pornography flourishes unrestricted we might see a franker treatment of the once-controversial moral concepts in *Brave New World*. But no. Sex relations are coyly termed "engaging", religion is simply not mentioned, and politics understated. I don't object to everybody wearing colored tights according to their status—yellow for alphas, orange for betas, blue and purple for deltas and gammas—but I don't expect to see Hopi Indians attired like 1980 migrant farm workers. And so on.

As Huxley wrote it, *Brave New World* is chock full of lively conversation and argument, practically all still eminently quotable. Snatches of these are put into the mouths of the principal characters, but most of the dialog is clotted, banal new material. This has been perpetrated by Robert E. Thompson, whose literary ability seems rather below that of Harold Robbins.

As John Savage, Kristoffer Tabori does his best with this hybrid script, and Keir Dullea handles the supporting part of Thomas, the fussy Director, quite well. As the ambivalent Bernard Marx Bud Cort is the miscasting of the decade,

but the actor who played the Controller, Mustapha Mond—I missed his name—did a fairly good job in a role that Raymond Massey in his prime would have handled perfectly.

Finally, nobody seems quite sure if the overall plan for the thing is supposed to be serious, satirical or just plain funny. Watching it was like reading a poem with alternate lines by T. S. Eliot, Ogden Nash and Edgar Guest. Bring along your Valium if you watch a rerun.

I also watched NBC's six-hour dramatization of *The Martian Chronicles* that was done last January. This was so heavily advertised that few interested in seeing the work are likely to have missed it, so I'll simply say that I liked it, and thought it caught Bradbury's mood fairly well.

All the above are products of commercial television. Educational TV seems no less imitative, however. It has increasingly come to resemble the commercial variety, complete with advertising breaks (disguised, of course, as fund drives or announcements for its own future programs). I've seen two of its recent excursions into science-fiction; one was extremely fine, the other just adequate.

The better of the two was *An Englishman's Castle*, produced by the BBC and presented as a serial in (if I remember correctly) the "Masterpiece Theater" slot. This is genuine stuff—an alternate time story of life in Britain after the Axis Powers win World War II. It was beautifully done with an expert cast that included in the leading role Kenneth More, who played young Jolian some years back in *The Forsyte Saga*. Quality was achieved by understatement and by concentration on interrelationships of the characters in totally believable situations; the futuristic props and glossy hardware, so beloved by U.S. producers, were used sparingly and therefore to greater effect. A wonderful job! In fact, I think I'll go out on a limb and say categorically that *An Englishman's Castle* is the best made-for-TV science-fiction I've ever seen.

On January 9, 1980 I viewed a two-hour adaption of Ursula Le Guin's *The Lathe of Heaven*. The producer-directors, David Laxton of WNET-TV and Frederick Barzyk of WGBH-TV, intended this to be the first in a series of productions in the genre. As most people who have read Le Guin know, this is an atypical work. *The Lathe of Heaven* is technically classifiable as science-fiction because it is set in the future—Portland, Oregon around the next turn of the century—and because of a few new gadgets, notably an "Augmenta," which can control brain waves. But actually it is mostly sheer fantasy, since its chief concern is a man whose dreams actually change the world around him. No matter. I'm always willing to suspend disbelief—especially for this author—but the juxtaposition of hard science and calculated irrationality is an uneasy one. I did enjoy the original novel, however, which is some sort of tribute to Ms. Le Guin, even though her anti-science man vs. machine symbolism is old hat and in spite of her cluttering up the plot with a mad scientist.

The TV adaption cut out a lot of the needed background material. The bureaucratic nature of this future society was nicely pointed, but nobody told the viewer that population pressures were any greater than today's until George Orr, the story's low-key protagonist, was induced to dream he had killed six billion people—whereupon the viewer was involved in mental arithmetic which also reduced the horrific effect. Nor was anything said about the Greenhouse Effect forcing people to stay indoors. The dream-solutions to racism (everybody turning gray), disease (euthanasia) and war (extra-terrestrial invaders force all nations to make peace with each other) were either omitted or treated with oblique brevity.

At first the adapters concentrated on George's "talent" and his relationship with Dr. William Haber, a manipulative psychiatrist. This was the best part of the production. Special effects were introduced sparingly and gradually, and were domesticated well. The futuristic architecture seemed very real—probably because a lot of it was filmed in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas from actual

buildings and wasn't that way out after all. But then the focus shifted to Haber himself, who used the Augmentor to translate his own dreams into reality in a disastrous effort to control the world. Here the fancy effects went wild, overwhelming instead of dazzling, in a vain effort to disguise trite melodrama.

The characters of Orr and Haber were competently if uninspiringly performed by Bruce Davison and Kevin Conway, and the subsidiary role of Heather Lachelle, George's black lawyer/wife, was played by Margaret Avery, who had little to do except look attractive and emote occasionally. The background score by Laurie Spiegel was a puzzling combination of electronic music (sometimes quite effective) and sugary themes reminiscent of pre-World War II movies.

IV

You might also be interested to know that Ursula Le Guin's short story, "Two Delays on the Northern Line," appeared in the November 12, 1979 issue of *The New Yorker* magazine. Be warned, however, that it isn't science-fiction and isn't very interesting. The work starts out as an examination of a tiny flaw in a diamond and ends as a cracked rhinestone, the way so much fiction in this magazine does. I mention it for the sake of Le Guin completists, and also as an excuse to tell the following anecdote, which however apocryphal certainly rings true.

There once was a writer who by all conventional standards would be judged highly successful. His fiction had appeared in *Playboy*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Analog*, *Redbook* and other leading magazines. He had a dozen books to his credit. His ability was widely recognized, his versatility admired. If his name was not exactly a household word, it was certainly well known. But during his solitary moments a disquieting thought often surfaced: no matter how artfully crafted they were, he had never been able to sell his stories to one magazine, *The New Yorker*.

One day over luncheon cocktails he confided this rankling fact to his newly-acquired agent. "No problem at all," said that worthy. "Here's what you do. Write a story you think they ought to buy. Slant it carefully and keep it to the right length. Then shoot it out to me and I'll guarantee to place it there."

The author took this advice, though tacitly without much hope, and in due time finished and sent off his manuscript. Within a week his agent telephoned that *The New Yorker* had accepted it. "My God!" exclaimed the author, "How did you do it?" "Very simple," was the reply. "Before delivering your story I just left off the last two pages."

Tips on Tales

Short Reviews of Books Old and New

Stanislaw Lem's *The Chain of Chance* (1978): Collectors are warned that Lem's suspense thriller, published five years ago in Poland and now appearing here, is only borderline fantasy. At some time in the near future twelve men who have visited certain health spas in Italy unexpectedly die. Inquiry reveals the common denominators: all are foreigners travelling alone, fiftyish, have allergies and bald spots, and apparently underwent bewildering personality changes just before death. Because the ways they died could readily be rationalized, the police feel this pattern is pure coincidence. But a relative of one victim, convinced he was murdered, sets a private investigation in motion. After all leads eventually peter

out, it is decided as a last resort to fit someone who matches all the victims' characteristics with monitored sensors, and have him trace the path they followed.

The man chosen to do this is an ex-astronaut who recounts his experiences in the first person. The action is swiftly paced, the plot has a couple of nice twists, and the solution, which hinges on chemistry, is interesting though improbable. There are also several fine descriptive touches, such as followers of this author have come to expect. But *The Chain of Chance* is neither top-drawer Lem nor a top-drawer detective story. It does not compare well either with *The Investigation*, his own earlier mystery, or with the average productions of, say, Dick Francis or Ross MacDonald (to name two outstanding current practitioners in the field); it is nearer, though above, the John Creasey level.

Furthermore, the novel is too short; the background needs more development. Paradoxically, it is also often loquacious and needs cutting. Finally, some editing is required here and there to smooth out awkwardnesses in translation and to correct occasional outright errors (the word "eighteen" instead of "eight" on page 70, for example). Yet overall the book does read well and certainly holds the reader's attention. Enthusiasts of this author (and I am one) will probably hope, however, that *The Chain of Chance* is no more than a quick excursion into a pleasant backwater that will not detour Stanislaw Lem further from the more serious mainstream of fantasy that he has been exploring so well.

—A. Langley Searles

Stanislaw Lem's *Return from the Stars*: Although published in the United States for the first time in 1980, this novel actually appeared in Poland back in 1961. Its theme—people being plunged into the future—is pretty old stuff. Suspended animation and time-travel have been the standard ways to set up such a situation, but Lem wraps up everything in more modern fashion. He posits astronauts who, by having voyaged at near-light speeds, have aged only ten biological years while 127 chronological years have passed. The choice of astronauts is also purposeful, for it provides a cultural contrast between individualistic pioneers and a society that has become virtually risk-free and stable. That in turn inevitably demands comparison with *Brave New World*, where exactly the same conflict was examined with shattering effect.

Lem comes off rather poorly in this comparison. Like Huxley he concentrates on the reactions of one person, Hal Bregg; but Bregg lacks the depth of Huxley's John Savage, and I never could dismiss this from my mind because the further into the novel that I read the more it reminded me of *Brave New World*. Civilization's goal in both is social stability; in *Return from the Stars* Lem brings this about by a postnatal process called betatrization, while Huxley uses embryonic conditioning plus *soma*. In both a small ruling class is exempt from such treatment. Huxley postulates complete sexual promiscuity, Lem serial marriage punctuated by routine divorce. Both educate by hypnopedia. The differences between the two novels are minor: Lem has robots perform all the manual labor, whereas Huxley relegates the job to humans prenatally programmed for it.

Where has Lem gone wrong? He has bulked his work with too much florid description of the new future world, and put in too little about Hal Bregg's conflict with it, so that his novel becomes a sort of meat loaf extended by soggy bread crumbs. Does the fact that books have become "crystals" that one puts into a reader lend Bregg any dimensionality? Are the people more believable because their clothes are literally sprayed on from cans? Does it even matter, except to a classifier of themes, that gravity has been harnessed as a power source? In small amounts such details may impart reality, but Lem here actually seems to have fallen in love with his own inventions. His prose sometimes gets so lush it reminds me of the feverish, gushy descriptions of C. L. Moore. And to cap all this,

the ending of the novel is vague and wholly unsatisfying. Unlike Huxley, Lem resolves nothing.

The translation by Barbara Marszal and Frank Simpson seems idiomatically smooth, but Alan Henderson's jacket-design is a polychromatic mishmash, and the lettering on the title-page and chapter headings looks positively clumsy. It is hard to realize that this work was written in the same year as *Solaris*. *Return from the Stars* is a period piece, not only published but also written well past its period. This is not an attack on Stanislaw Lem, much of whose work I value highly. But I must be honest: He knows all the tricks of plotting and narrative technique, but here, like his instant plastic garments, they clothe props rather than real people.

—Lincoln Van Rose

David Lindsay's *The Haunted Woman* (1922): This is not as powerful as the author's first novel, *A Voyage to Arcturus* (1920), but it is less confusing and thematically better focused. Isbel Loment and her fiancé accompany an aunt on a visit to Runhill Court, a country house the latter is thinking of buying. Isbel has a psychic experience there, and shortly thereafter learns from another visitor that there is a long-standing superstition connected with the oldest portion of the place. This is called Ulf's Tower, and dates back to the Sixth Century. The house was supposedly built on haunted land, and not long after its erection the entire uppermost story, along with its owner, suddenly disappeared. Local legends say that from time to time people have caught sight of the ancient tower rooms, and that somewhere there is—or there appears—a mysterious staircase which leads up to them.

On subsequent visits Isbel (who appears to be psychically sensitive) sees and climbs these stairs, and with Henry Judge, owner of the place, shares the exploration of the vanished rooms. From windows there they look down not on Runhill's landscaped grounds shrouded in October mist, but on undeveloped country in the sunny bloom of spring, and a Saxon musician playing a haunting melody. Lindsay is apparently attempting here to develop for Henry and Isbel a fated Tristan-and-Isolde relationship, but this never reaches fruition, for although Isbel is willing to renounce her fiancé, Judge prematurely dies of apoplexy.

There are some very effective chapters in *The Haunted Woman*, but much of their power is stifled by an atmosphere of Victorian propriety which pervades the work. It is all very well to domesticate outré happenings with prosaic trappings, but those here—particularly the conversations—are the stilted and formal ones of the 1890's, already a generation out of date when the book appeared. Lindsay never succeeds in convincing the reader that there is an inevitable, interlocking relationship which Isbel, Henry and Runhill Court all share. Another reason for this is the author's own beliefs. It is usually easier for someone who doubts the supernatural to present it as a disturbing artifact intruding on real life. Lindsay has a frank occultist background; and at one point he matter-of-factly resurrects a minor character after death for the sole purpose of furthering a portion of his plot conveniently.

The Haunted Woman was reprinted in England twice (1947 and 1964) after its initial publication there, and is now available in this country as a paperback (1975; volume 4 of the Newcastle Forgotten Fantasy Library). I found it quaint, but of some historical interest.

—Lee Becker

The Best of Roald Dahl (1978) is a paperback selection of twenty-one stories, comprising over half of the total from the author's four previous collections. Virtually all of Dahl's best work is covered: *Kiss Kiss* is here in its entirety, along with eight of the fifteen entries in *Someone Like You*, and one each from

Switch Bitch and *Over to You*. Only two of his fantasy and science-fiction pieces have been omitted, and the most famous ones, like "Lamb to the Slaughter" and "The Landlady" are of course all here. They are tales of horror and of the grotesque, brilliantly original and superbly written, whose suave black humor often outdoes even that of the late John Collier. (The sole exception is "Pig," which reads like self-parody.) For good measure, there is included also an informative introduction by James Cameron, which tells us about Roald Dahl himself, whose life has involved some incidents as harrowing as any he ever wrote about. This is a book that deserves my highest recommendation.

— A. Langley Searles

Al Morgan's *The Essential Man* (1977): It is January 20, 1985—Inauguration Day. Thomas Owens, fortieth president-elect of the United States, collapses while taking the oath of office for his second term. A virus infection, it is announced—but later tests, whose results are never revealed to the public, show that Owen has an inoperable brain tumor and is unlikely ever to regain consciousness. He is whisked to the hospital facility at Camp David, and his staff contemplates the dark at the end of the tunnel: what is sure to happen if Carl Kobin, the alcoholic, partying machine vice-president, or *his* successor, the senile Speaker of the House, takes over the country's top job. Then Presidential Advisor Allen Palmer—the Haldeman of this administration—broaches a plan. Why not substitute for Owens a double who has undergone mental therapy and drug treatments that literally give him the president's personality, memories and outlook?

By this time the pace, excitement and circumstantial detail have you hooked. There are flashes of brittle or raunchy humor to break the tension—like "Anything that lets a congressman have a drink in the afternoon and feel, at the same time, that he's advancing the cause of democracy, has to have a good effect"—but this doesn't stop the momentum from building with the plan's implementation and eventual success. And unlike so many current "catastrophe" novels, which seem to have been written by some smoothly-greased machine in automatic transmission, *The Essential Man* comes to a smashing climax in a rationally satisfying way.

Since so much of the medical basis of this work is unreported and probably under security wraps, it's hard to say how deep a science-fictional cast it has. It's more than a little frightening to think that it may no longer be science-fiction at all.

— Lincoln Van Rose

Stephen King's *The Dead Zone* (1979): At the age of six Johnny Smith had a fall while skating and hit his head hard enough to black out. That was the beginning of his strange talent—the ability to see future events in sudden, unexpected and incomplete flashes. Seventeen years later an auto accident puts him in a coma for four years, and on awakening he finds his talent is altered and magnified; he can bring on visions of other people's lives at will by touching them or their personal possessions. A small part of his brain concerned with memories of geographical locations has been wiped out—it is now a "dead zone"—and another part simultaneously has been activated to replace it. Johnny possesses a new supernormal ability, or perhaps a reawakened primordial one.

King develops this idea quite well, concentrating on Johnny's attempts to live a normal life, but enlivening the story with several powerful and convincing scenes of his uncanny supersightedness. The background is a group of contemporary small New England towns, and since I used to live in one I can testify that they are accurately portrayed. The writing is above average for a "thriller" novel, and a bit better than the author's earlier Gothics.

I find it interesting to see King abandoning an area where he has had moderate success for science-fiction. Is he simply moving with the times, or is it an inevitable consequence of living in a technological age that we feel we must

rationalize the unknown in terms of science? Whatever the reason, this has been done adequately here. There are also references scattered through the text showing that the author has some basic familiarity with the fantasy field—he mentions time machines, Ray Bradbury and stories like "The Monkey's Paw" and "Silent Snow, Secret Snow."

The idea for *The Dead Zone* isn't new, of course, but the treatment of it is competent and enjoyable, and King manages a climax that is unexpected and well handled. It all adds up to an enjoyable, if modest, one-ply novel.

---A. Langley Searles

R. Norman Grisewood's *The Venture: a Story of the Shadow World* (1911): The subtitle of this book and its first few pages would lead the reader to class it as a novel of the supernatural. But actually it is bona fide and unusual science-fiction, written at the same breathless pace as the author's earlier *Zarlah the Martian*.^{*} Grisewood ambitiously sets out to show that occult phenomena—apparitions, spirit-rappings, levitations and all other psychic trappings of the seance—have nothing whatever to do with people who have died, but come from an actual material universe that is separate from our own, yet in some way close to it. A scientist manages to bridge the gap between the two, and sets out with a friend on a trip of exploration.

They find this unknown plane inhabited by two races. One, where the physical body has developed and the brain has not, is composed of aborigines akin to gorillas. These prey upon the other race, which is made up of placid, contemplative creatures with highly developed minds and rudimentary bodies. (Comparison with the Morlocks and the Eloi of *The Time Machine* naturally comes to mind immediately.) Here *The Venture* becomes a rapid-fire adventure story. The explorers are captured, one escapes and returns to our own world, and then goes back to help his friend. The latter is "stuck" between the two worlds, appearing to people as a ghost. There is also a plot by a foreigner to steal the secret of the scientist's discovery, and a love-interest involving (you've guessed it!) the scientist's beautiful daughter.

I find this book particularly notable on two counts. First, it is prototypical of a plot that dominated the science-fiction field in the Gernsback and early post-Gernsback periods: a discovery, some supporting pseudo-scientific patter, a strong and confrontational development based on ensuing complications, and a mild love-interest. Second, it is remarkable for applying science to what was (and often still is) classed as non-scientific phenomena. Grisewood doesn't just rationalize a few aspects of them (as, for example, Hodgson did in *Carnacki the Ghost Finder* and Sloane in *The Edge of Running Water*) but furnishes a "whole-sale" accounting for the entire occult area—just as Campbell's stable of writers tried to do nearly half a century later in *Astounding's* "psi" period.

These things were really novel at that time; to help you establish the perspective, *The New York Times* reviewed a Grisewood book on the very same day it reported that the North Pole had been reached for the first time by Peary! Both *The Venture* and *Zarlah the Martian* preceded Burroughs's Martian tales and most of the more ambitious science-fiction of George Allan England (to each of which they are distinctly similar). In fact, their very newness may account for neither having been serialized in a magazine before book publication; had they appeared just a few years later Grisewood might well have cashed in on Burroughs's popularity. In any event, both surely deserve reprinting in one of the current "classics" series as landmark works in the history of science-fiction.

---A. Langley Searles

^{*}reviewed in *Fantasy Commentator* IV, 31 (Winter 1978-79); see p.187 of this issue for a further note on Grisewood and his writings.

'Plus Ultra'

An Unknown Science-Fiction Utopia

by A. LANGLEY SEARLES

Part II*

III

After completing his pioneering science-fiction novel, *From Beyond the Stars*, Edward Lucas White found that his publisher was not interested in it. At this point he apparently simply set the manuscript aside, and I have no evidence that he ever made any further attempt to market it.

Why was this? Several plausible reasons can be adduced. First of all, he himself recognized that the concept of extrasolar civilizations was not one which the average reader could grasp—let alone empathize with. Second, while the work does stand as a single self-contained unit, it was never intended to be an end in itself, but rather an introduction to a longer and larger picture of the author's Utopia. If it was not presently salable, no matter; in its complete form White was undoubtedly confident that it surely would be.

At the time, furthermore, there was probably no financial reason for pressing the matter. *El Supremo*, his first novel, had been published the year before to critical acclaim and wide popular sales. Royalties were coming in. On the strength of this his second book, *The Unwilling Vestal* (1918), was also selling well, and a book of short stories, *The Song of the Sirens* (1919) had just appeared. So money was not an immediate problem.

Finally, White was busily composing what was to be his fourth book, *Andivius Hedulio*. (He had actually put this aside, about one-third done, to write *From Beyond the Stars* in the summer of 1919.) He was very excited about what he called his "big Roman romance," found "great fun working at it," and even got three additional chapters done after his summer vacation. (24)** By November, 1919 it

*Part I appeared in the previous issue; if your local dealer cannot supply you, it may be obtained from the publisher.

**Footnotes for this article will be found on page 177.

was half finished, and "with the best of luck" he felt he would need only another year to complete it. This picaresque novel appeared on schedule in 1921, and became an immediate best-seller.

Three more books followed in the next six years. Then, in 1927, his wife died. This must have been an unusually severe blow to White; for some thirty-five years she had been an intelligent but approbative critic of his work, and more importantly had typed virtually all his manuscripts—close to a necessity to someone with his visual handicap. From then on, he seemed to look to the past only; if we exclude *Plus Ultra* he wrote no new fiction, and published but a single book, *Matrimony* (1932), an autobiographical account centered on his life with her.

In the Spring of 1928, about my sixty-second birthday, with no other fiction engrossing my imagination, I reflected that if I did not set about *Plus Ultra* it was very likely that it would be still unwritten when I vanished from the world. Its writing took up most of the summers of 1928-1932 inclusive and in the summer of 1933 I finished writing and typewriting it. (9)

I have already summarized the eight chapters which comprise its beginning. White added another which connects these to the main portion of the work:

Chapter 9, "The Man Beyond the Stars"
(written August 16-20, 1928)

At this point a new voice is heard on the Novaresco radiation-recorder. It is that of a man from a planet in a solar system in a galaxy beyond the spiral nebulae, 100,000,000 light-years distant. Life on his planet is exactly equivalent to that expected on Earth in the year 50,000 A.D. All subsequent descriptions of our future in *Plus Ultra* derive from him.

This chapter completes the description of the mechanism by which a possible future for the planet Earth can be presented as a reality. To White this rationalizing is extremely important. The authors of most Utopias usually concern themselves with such things only secondarily, and of course recent science-fiction—say that written since World War II—devotes as little space to it as possible in order to get on with the story. But White's attitude was philosophically more rigorous. He wished to present his world literally "as a reality, existent and contemporary with us." (25) An ancillary motive for doing so might conceivably be the original lack of interest in *From Beyond the Stars*; but the cardinal one, I feel sure, was his own methodical and disciplined mind.

In any event, he was now setting forth on the chief part of his magnum opus. To mark the division, he called chapters one through 9 "Book One," and retained the original title, "From Beyond the Stars." The rest of *Plus Ultra* consists of "Book Two, The Promise of the Future."

Book II is made up of four distinct parts. Chapters 1-15 describe the organization of human life, which enables mankind to achieve and maintain the conceivable acme of universal felicity. Chapters 16-22 limn the appearance of the world as brought to its acme of safety, convenience, comfort and beauty by the cooperation of instinct, good taste and intelligent management. Chapters 23-42 portray the working of society at its acme of individual and collective felicity and chapters 43-59 depict its intellectual, social, aesthetic and emotional conditions. (25)

In this installment I shall deal with the first quarter of "The Promise of the Future," which comes to some 75,000 words.

Chapter 1, "Generalities"
(written July 16-20, 1928)

Although in 50,000 years there has been both sinking and rising of land, alterations of coastlines are, on the whole, slight. Man can modify climate "perceptibly" in terms of temperature and rainfall. There is no control of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and landslips, but their prediction is "commonplace." Glaciated areas are less extensive, chiefly because of "intelligence and concerted human effort." Retardation of erosion is a constant task; it is done mostly by terracing cultivated areas and damming rivers so that practically all of the latter are a series of lakes. Land use is determined by natural deposits and matched to the most suitable vegetation. Cultivation is intensive, and no resources are wasted. Over- and underpopulated areas have been eliminated; the greatest population density is in the great river-basins, the lowest in areas incapable of self-support. These last are termed "exploited" (example: Antarctica, where mining is important) and "posted" (where posts are maintained for the benefit of air-travellers.

Except for a few it seemed advisable to keep, all poisonous and dangerous plant and animal life (including bacteria) have been exterminated. No more wars and fighting trouble the world, either between nations or individuals. Murders are very rare (less than one per million people). Human life-span has increased to 100 years between maturity and senescence. Senility is brief and painless. Customs and habits have become stable. Wherever possible work is done outside in daytime rather than inside at night. Mankind as a whole is "amazingly well off" and the world is wealthy. Nourishing food is plentiful; so is clothing, which varies according to climactic needs, "dignity and adornment." Housing is plentiful, but space and luxury of appointment vary according to class.

Chapter 2, "Achievements"
(written July 24-27, 1928)

This abundance is founded on thrift and discretion. Supplies of oil and coal have long since been exhausted; the sun and the rotation of the earth are now the chief sources of energy. Lumbering and wood are rationed. A careful system of checks and balances controls production and insures equitable distribution. All seas have been completely sounded and charted, and new harbors built as necessary. Perfectly kept roads are everywhere, and millions of miles of footpaths parallel them. There are many motor cars, and plenty of parking for them. Railway trains exist. Every home has space for an "air avion" to land or rise, if only one of the smallest, and there are large "airships" as well; airfields exist in every town, many in each city. Lighthouses for guidance are everywhere, on land and sea. Lack of punctuality is unknown; routines have been arrived at through generations of experience, and are perpetuated almost unconsciously, "more by instinct than intuition."

Sightliness has become as important as durability, and all construction proceeds accordingly. Buildings are no longer monochrome; they are faced in different colored tiles, and mosaics are common. All communities are decorated by life-sized (and larger) porcelainized statues, indoors and out. All stone cliffs are sculptured. Each continent is noted for its individual ornamental structure (example: in China, the pagoda). Public buildings such as amphitheatres and race-tracks outshine palaces of royalty in size and imposition. All territorial boundaries are marked by tremendous walls. "The world's...state...has been attained chiefly because of the slow and gradual but steady and universal improvement in the general disposition and temperament of humanity at large. Every amelioration of living conditions, every material or spiritual betterment, has been brought about through the good old method of trial and error."

Over the centuries the ordinances, sanctions and precepts of religious and governmental codes gradually lost their holds. "Concomitantly the pressure of generally accepted public opinion acquired more and more validity and became more and more potent and effective from age to age. Mankind very slowly and gradually developed a worldwide consensus as to what actions are beneficial to individuals and communities and what actions are harmful. ...insensibly the instinct for just conformity permeated all classes of every part of the world, and has ever since dominated human conduct."

Crime diminished---at first through deterrent effects of the certainty of punishment; later, through elimination of enticement. "Concomitantly mankind developed capacities and instincts for and habits of cooperation, coordination and substitution unimagined, unimaginable and even inconceivable in earlier ages." Independence gradually merged into interdependence. "...each individual's liberty ended where every other individual's liberty began, so that personal freedom survives only where the instinct of conformity does not have precedence."

Chapter 3, "Geographical" (written July 27-August 3, 1928)

The world is divided into five federated continental areas. These, in turn, are divided into 24 subdivisions called empires. Their boundaries generally follow mountain-chains, thus leaving river-basins intact. North America, for instance, consists of five such empires: Cortezia (everything west of the Rocky Mountains and south of the state of Oregon), Oregaska (Alaska plus everything else west of the Rockies), Mississippi (the combined basins of the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers), Atlantis (the Eastern United States seaboard, the Great Lakes and the basin of the St. Lawrence River), and Canada (all north of Mississippi and Atlantis, including Greenland). South America is split into another five called Chibcha, Amazonia, Brazil, Argentina and Andesia. Eurasia is divided into six (see page 166 for a reproduction of White's map), and so on.

The empires are in turn composed of kingdoms, all 186 of which are responsible to a single world government. These kingdoms have their own further divisions, called states.

Chapter 4, "Minor Divisions" (written August 3-10, 1928)

Racial differences are not counted in establishing boundaries of kingdoms. The duties of empires and kingdoms are described here in detail.

Chapter 5, "Federations" (written August 10-11, 1928)

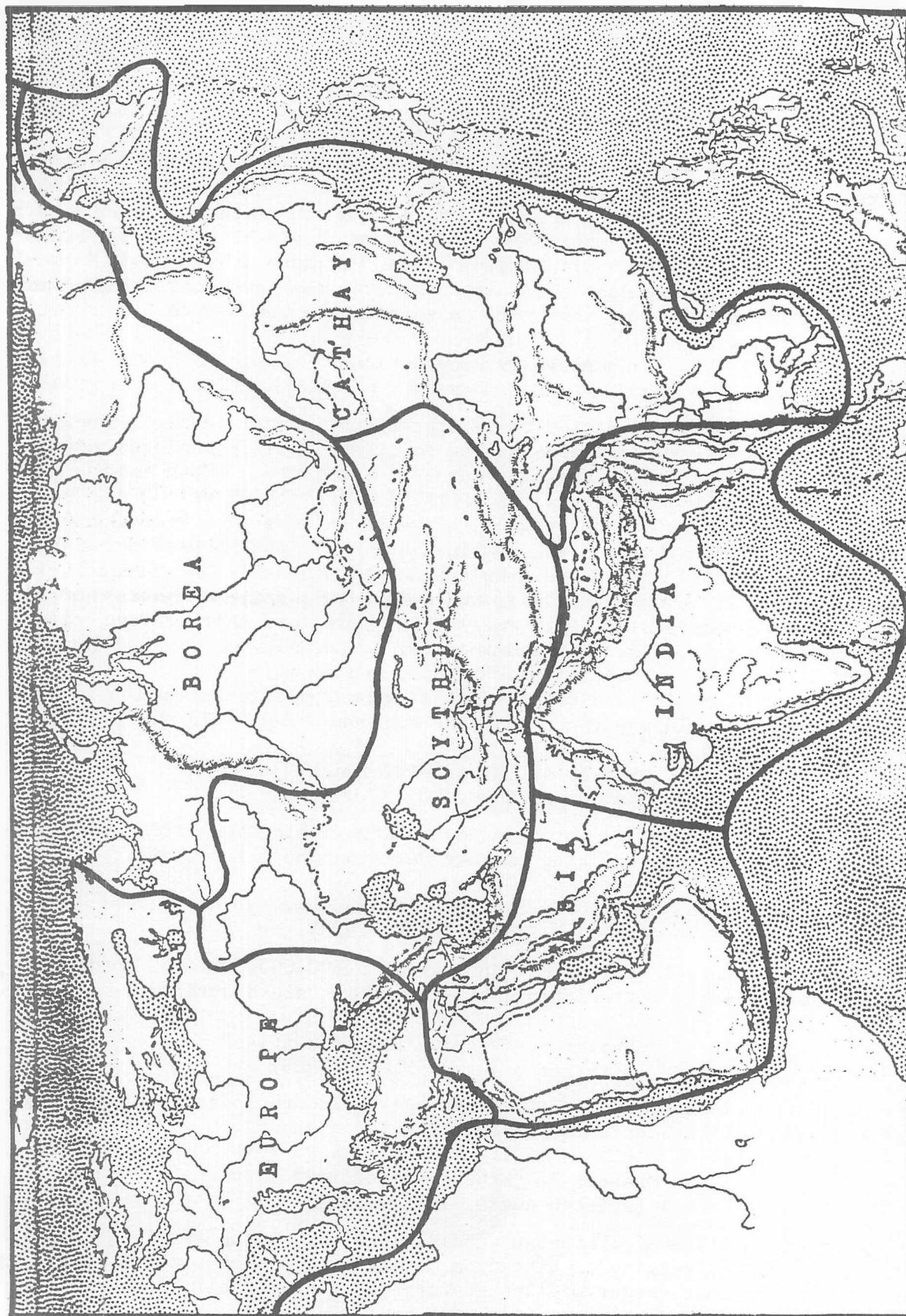
The population of the world is now about 5,600,000,000. The duties, responsibilities and precise jurisdictions of federations are described.

Chapter 6, "Provincial Communities" (written August 11-15, 1928)

Here are described the individual states and their provincial political subdivisions, as well as the sources of revenue.

Chapter 7, "Urban Communities" (written August 13-17, 1928)

A recapitulation of all urban subdivisions for states is given; in all there are ten of these, ranging in size from boroughs to hamlets, which are the smallest. There are nearly four million governmental units of all kinds---one for every 1466 people.



EDWARD LUCAS WHITE'S MAP OF THE EMPIRES OF EURASIA

Chapter 8, "Organizations"
(written August 17-19, 1928)

Non-governmental groups, such as races, religions, classes, associations, guilds, political parties and social clubs also exist. There are six distinct races, largely based on the regions lived in. These are, with their numbers in billions parenthesized: tropical (3.0), north temperate (1.5), south temperate (0.5), cosmopolitan (0.5), mountain (0.05) and arctic (0.05). All are organized into a world league of stocks.

Chapter 9, "Classes"
(written August 20-25, 1928)

"Class distinctions are accounted advantageous, beneficial and valuable." They are conserved "not by the ascendancy of the upper classes, but by the rooted approbation of the mass of mankind. ... The rank and precedence... depend on the relative importance of each and on the relative worth to mankind of its members' contribution to human welfare." Persons are born into a given class, but may retain standing in it only by possessing its needed qualifications ("excellence in physique, health, vigor, intelligence, capacity, ability, integrity and character"). Thus a person can rise from the lowest to the highest class or drop likewise. The highest four classes, numbering four million people, constitute a hereditary aristocracy of talent; the fifth and sixth classes, termed the generalities, include the balance of the population. All of these are summarized below:

class	rank	type	number	function
I Royalty	1	emperors and empresses	58	governmental administration
	2	kings and queens	372	
	3	princes and princesses	19,400	
II Nobles	4	dukes and duchesses	4,800	" "
	5	counts and earls	22,000	
	6	barons and baronesses	200,000	
III Optimates	7	magnates	20,000	administration
	9	thanes	200,000	in positions of
	11	prefects	780,000	lesser authority
IV Personages	8	celebrities	2,000	instructing, serv-
	10	dignitaries	200,000	ing, entertaining
	12	notables	790,000	large multitudes
V Commonalty	13	entendants	36,000,000	minor officials
	14	workers	5,000,000,000	
	15	hands	500,000,000	
VI Abjects	16	peons	53,000,000	described below
	17	slaves	3,000,000	
	18	thralls	2,000,000	

Workers include as subclasses wards and serfs. Wards, because of some physiological or psychological handicap, cannot manage their lives and their incomes normally, and are in charge of their family or clan; they have abridged suffrage rights and cannot hold public office. They number about 50,000,000. Serfs number about 50,000; they include delinquents who require constant surveillance, and are not allowed full freedom. All other workers are persons who can be trusted alone with a job already learned, and perform it promptly and thoroughly. If supervised, hands are good workers, but cannot be trusted alone.

Peons are hands who are also wards. Thralls are those who must be kept under confinement or duress for the sake of humanity at large; they include men-

tal deficient (1,800,000) and criminals who are entitled to live (200,000). In the sense of actual ownership of one human by another, slavery was eliminated from the world "within a millenium after the voyages of Columbus. After some thousands of years, in the sense of labor performed under compulsion, slavery was revived.

Very slowly and gradually it became fully manifest to all mankind, even to the least intelligent, that every idler made one more mouth to feed and one more body to clothe, transport and care for; that idlers were fed, clothed and sheltered by the labor of the workers; and that every living idler diminished every worker's ultimate share of food, clothing, leisure and the other good things of life and increased each worker's working hours and effort.

"When this was comprehended it was also manifest that idlers could be dealt with in only three ways: they might be put to death, they might be supported in idleness for the term of their lives, or they might be made to work. The third course was adopted."

Subjects and wards are not entitled to organize themselves. Other orders and classes are organized as separate entities called leagues, which themselves form units of larger groups. Each league of workers maintains a university and a system of colleges and high schools for "education beyond those accorded by the governmental schools." Where desirable, other leagues maintain facilities to give all their children a full education.

Chapter 10, "Guilds and Religions" (written August 25-27, 1928)

All gainfully employed persons are enrolled in guilds. There are eighteen types of these in all:

professional	didactic	artistic	order	custodians	productive
financial	enformational	display	traffic	experts	workers
proficient	health	salvage	health	service	unskilled labor

The Productive Guild, which includes farmers, foresters, herders, dealers, shopkeepers, purveyors of ores, buliding materials, etc. is deemed the most important; "the world is governed and managed to suit them: it has to be."

All mature humans are also classified according to religion. "A religion is a formal or informal institution for strengthening, arousing, eliciting and engaging human emotional instincts as allies and aids of human intelligence in the effort to attain, achieve and maintain righteousness." Nine traditional religions still exist: Shintoism, Chinese Ancestor Worship, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hindu Brahmanism, Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Together these have about 700,000,000 million followers. Their original mutually antagonistic attitudes towards each other have modified considerably. Now no member has any trace of antipathy toward others, and all have lost strict belief in the dogmas and the tenets of faith. They "are held together merely by a vague, sentimental, hereditary affection for the ethics, scriptures, history and achievements of the craditional religion whose name the organization bears and especially for the literature and art which burgeoned under its influence."

There are also five major new cults that have come into being. "Each started with the vogue of one brilliant lecturer, teacher or exhorter and each embodies the doctrines of its originator and founder." About a billion people belong to these. Some thirty minor cults, with 100,000,000 members, exist as well.

"The remaining three thousand millions of adult human beings are listed as pagans. Modern paganism is a hale, robust, self-confident, animate and joyous cult. Its major tenets are that the visible universe is a reality, and not a delusion of the human senses; that there is in it no hint of plan or purpose; that the life of a human being between birth and death is all there is to life for any human being and that death is annihilation; that right and wrong are matters of

human instinct and opinion and not objective realities; that the only manifest purpose of life is offspring; that the only worthwhile object of each human being's life should be the nearest possible approach to the maximum of pleasure and minimum of pain, maximum of comfort and and minimum of discomfort, maximum of ease and minimum of toil, and maximum of self-approval and minimum of self-reproach; and that this object is best attained by learning as much as may be of the art of getting along with one's kinsfolk, friends, acquaintances and associates, and with humankind at large; that amid any set of circumstances, the nearest approximation possible in those circumstances to the natural way of doing anything is most conducive to health, prosperity and happiness; that it is always possible to make a close approximation to ascertaining the natural way of doing anything; that the most obvious factors in right living are having enough of everything and not too much of anything and treating others as each would wish to be treated by others; that the most vital factors in personal comfort are an adequate, moderate diet, a sufficiency of home space, furnishings, clothing, utensils and service, early mating, and lifelong matrimony, and normal parenthood; that only human beings adequately supplied with material necessities can genuinely attain the blessings of intellectual, social, emotional, artistic and spiritual joys.

"Pagan utilitarian hedonism has become more and more idealistic and exalted and its religious atmosphere is predominant all over the world."

Chapter 11, "The Scheme of Government"

(written August 27-30, 1928)

The vices of the electoral system and poor office holders caused by 4500 A.D. a complete reversal to the monarchic system. All consider it sound. It is now generally believed that rulers must be bred for their job, and trained for it from the cradle. Each monarch is guided by a cabinet of six ministers, which receive input from bodies of elected representatives. For empires, these consist of a parliament with four separate chambers; for continents, one of six; for states, a bicameral legislature; and so on. The elected bodies represent the people of the world in all possible ways: by localities, occupation, classes, races, sexes, religions, and ages.

Chapter 12, "Legislation and Suffrage"

(written September 1-7, 1928)

There are three types of laws, classified according to degree of validity: First, those of most general application, accumulated over the generations, which are embodied in constitutions. Second, statutes, which will probably never need revision, alteration or amendment. Third, enactments made since enactment of the last code. (Codes are recompiled whenever necessary—at least every 200 years, though usually not less frequently than every fifty years.)

Trial by jury has been replaced by the judgement of one man; in courts of appeal and the Supreme Court he is aided by counselling judges. The right of executive pardon has long since been abolished. Courts of cassation deal with cases where it is contended that past decisions should be rescinded or annulled; reversals are rare. Judges hold their appointments for life.

Except for wards and serfs, suffrage is universal at the lowest levels, but becomes more limited as one ascends the social scale. Couples who have been happily married since their first wedding, have two or more children and four or more grandchildren are considered the heart of the community; they have the greatest stake in its future.

Breeding permits are necessary to have children; these can be refused to those unfit by physical, mental or ethical reasons. Education is at first free, but is to be paid back later in proportion to the means attained through its use.

(continued on page 176)

Doom Beyond Jupiter

by *BERNARD DE VOTO**

When Atlantis was engulfed its inhabitants, who had developed a civilization far superior to anything that the earth was to see again for thousands of years, sealed up their most important machines, sank them in the sea, and migrated to the moon. The approaching exhaustion of the moon's atmosphere meant inescapable disaster, however, and, possessing machines to produce contraction by narrowing the electronic orbits of any substance, they reduced themselves to one-inch size and had their robots seal them up in lunar crystals ready to be reanimated if they ever should be touched by normal air again. So, in the Twenty-eighth Century a terrestrial brings some of the crystals to earth in his space ship. The Atlanteans free and expand themselves, capture the leading scientists and by hypnotism force them to design the necessary machines, dredge up their own submerged ones, and prepare to destroy the human race as a preliminary to reestablishing their sovereignty over the earth. But Lifania, the daughter of a chieftain, realizes that the Atlantean culture has run its course and is degenerate, and that there is no reason to destroy a flourishing civilization. With the terrestrial she flies back to the moon, where she unseals the machine that can completely annihilate matter, transforming it to pure energy. She turns it on the Atlanteans and destroys them. Large parts of the earth are consumed too, but the race survives.

Two earthmen land on Mars and find it ruled by the Trologs, a warrior race commanded by women who, socially as well as biologically, perform the functions of queen bees. Under them are the Grappies, gnomelike workers and servitors, the degenerate descendants of the race which gave Mars its great civilization. There are one hundred and eighty-nine independent Martian cities, whose Trologs fight formally and chivalrously with one another because they love fighting. One of the earthmen teaches Azara, a queen-bee-warrior-ruler, to fight for conquest, and her Trologs subject the whole planet. But her wars enable the Grappies to rise, capture the forbidden food which will give them intelligence, and destroy the Trologs. Azara dies fighting; the earthmen escape.

But in another context the degenerate survivors on Mars are the Mogu and an even more repulsive tribe called the Black Martians. The Mogu have pads for feet, blobby heads, triangular mouths, and undulating tentacles under their arms. They have dim systems of instinct, they herd in caves, and devote themselves to superstitious rites. An earthman lands on Mars and, using disintegrators, captures the Mogul's idol, a huge diamond.

A party of scientists, landing on a distant star, find that there are left of its great race only a few degenerate survivors, catlike creatures in whose reflexes are stored the knowledge of waves and emanations which that race had acquired. They are immortal, but need the id-substance which can be acquired only from living creatures. One of them attacks the earthmen, his reflexes enabling him to generate in himself the currents that will neutralize the deadly waves they turn on him. He almost wins, but in the end they destroy him. They are able to recognize his metabolism as that of a criminal type, no matter what era of his

*A classic reprint of early science-fiction criticism; its provenance is cited on page 152.

civilization he may belong to, and so they can intelligently anticipate his instinctive processes, and can devise the necessary measures to defeat them.

Another creature of dim mind and degenerate body is encountered on Jupiter. On an asteroid there are the Phylans, tiny creatures like the inhabitants of Lilliput. They capture some earth people but they have degenerated so much that they cannot endure loud sounds, and the earthmen stun them by screaming.

In the Twenty-third Century a brilliant officer of Science House who has at last learned how to predetermine the sex of children is wondering which of two girls he should marry. By clairvoyant phenomena which are explained in a quotation from Bishop Berkeley, he is able to see the far-distant implications of both marriages. One will begin the gradual domination of the earth by women, and the spread of a comfortable but effeminate and slowly degenerating civilization, peaceful, stable and secure, but certain to lose its grip. From the other will spring a predominately male civilization, heroic but without freedom or initiative, the martial instrument of dictators, which will eventually regiment the universe. But choice is still left and our scientist repudiates both destinies: he marries his laboratory assistant, and there is still hope for the race.

... This besotted nonsense is from a group of magazines known as the science pulps, which deal with both the World and the Universe of Tomorrow, and, as our items show, take no great pleasure in either. The fact that they do not seems more significant than any other turned up by a recent course of reading in them, which began as a mild literary inquiry. These stories are more maturely written than those in the cowboy pulps, for example, if only in that they use longer words and more involved sentences. Their conventions and narrative formulas are also less primitive than the chase-with-six-shooters of the horse operas. Some of them are, to be sure, just that chase rephrased in terms of death rays, with heroic earthmen overcoming malign Venusians on the last page, but the majority of them forego melodrama in favor of exegesis. They fulfill the hopeless dream of detective-story writers: they are a kind of fiction in which explanation is action.

For the stories deal with the marvels produced in science, and the first interest of the reader is to find out how the gadgets work. A cowboy story could not possibly interrupt a stage robbery with a page of rhetoric about sunrise in Raton Pass, but the writer of science-fiction can hold his audience enraptured with pages of talk about the FitzGerald Contraction, quanta, the temperature of distant stars, the molecular structure of minerals, and other matters which one would suppose to be far over the heads of the people addressed in the advertisements. The science thus discussed is idiotic beyond any possibility of exaggeration, but the point is that in this kind of fiction the bending of light or Heisenberg's formula is equivalent to the sheriff of the horse opera fanning his gun or the heroine of the sex pulp taking off her dress.

The inquirer, however, soon leaves literary questions behind. His earliest fascination is the characters who are to be his earthly successors in any century later than the Twenty-first, and who have wholly failed to develop along with their civilization. They roam the earth, the solar system and intergalactic space clad in space suits which enable them to breathe and to withstand heat and cold and pressure. They drive space ships powered by rockets, gravitational pull or wave energy. They eat compressed foods or have learned to convert energy directly without digestive processes. They possess means of instantaneous communication and weapons so powerful that nothing can stand against them. They have mastered terrestrial nature and are extending their mastery through space. But there are odd vestiges from our crude times. Girls still dress in tulle and non-coms still talk Nineteenth Century Boucicault. They ride the light-waves, but any Twentieth Century movie-goer, waking among them, would recognize love and the rewards of virtue at first glance. In fact, they have simplified with time's long arc: they are more primitive than we are.

And what impresses one about their magnificent civilization is the shadow that lengthens over it. Most of the stories remember a world catastrophe of about 1940, and nearly all of them anticipate another one to come. And they live not only in that dread but others we have never known. Asteroidal hook-leeches strip their bones. Scaly things, half serpent and half seal with crocodile heads, kill them in Martian caves. Experiments in bombarding the chromosomes with X-rays produce Paleozoic brutes that have human minds. Spiny tentacles of animate vegetables poison them. Drifting spores lodge on them and in forty-eight hours make them walking masses of fungus. The delirium of a Venusian fever makes its victims think that they are flying lizards.

It is clear that though science has given mankind better air-conditioning and some versatile alloys, its advance has mostly been limited to methods of transportation and communication and to the improvement of weapons. Our descendants can talk to one another across the universe and their guns disintegrate everything in the path of their rays, but the struggle for existence has not been diminished and the Rube Goldberg machines have not saved much labor. And if men find new dreads in the flora and fauna beyond the stratosphere, they are also open to annihilation by the inhabitants of distant worlds. Liberty and property precariously survive on earth, but elsewhere what began as a satire by H. G. Wells is accepted as inevitable: the workers are enslaved, and not only enslaved but fearfully degraded. They are animate machines, robots with nervous systems. They are scourged to work by the master class, with whips out of the Tenth Century B. C., and their dim minds churn with hate which is impotent now but will not be impotent forever. The numb ganglia of their nerves store up impulses toward a time when they will rise, seize the machines which they serve but cannot understand, turn them on their oppressors, and detonate the universe.

Totalitarian discipline proved to be the last necessity elsewhere. Perhaps it was tried on earth too, in one or another of the episodic civilizations between ours and theirs, though now it exists only in outlawed and rebellious islands. But it will spread from them again, a necessity on earth. A wandering star will distend our unhappy planet or the last war will break out, and the human beings who are left will be enslaved or will have to enslave themselves in order to keep going. The race, you see, degenerates as it advances; all its miraculous metals, space ships, ray guns, and three-dimensional telepathy are phenomena of decay. It treads the ordained way to extinction (footnote: see the second law of thermodynamics or Henry Adams on Willard Gibbs), and we are only repeating what happened in the galaxies. All worlds and races have degenerated---Jupiter, an asteroid, the farthest sun. Hope and belief have burned out, the nucleus has expanded, fate's equation has been factored to the last term. All movement is toward grayness, and life itself is degeneration.

Thus the science pulps. What is to be made of them? It is easy enough to classify these exhibits as paranoid fantasies converted into trivial fiction for the titillation of tired, dull or weak minds. As such they are not the most violent purchasable at fifteen cents a copy. Every news-stand carries perhaps a dozen magazines ("mags" in the gibberish of their correspondents) entirely devoted to what is called horror in the trade, but sadistic fantasy by clinicians. Not the violence is significant, but its linkage with the science the mags exalt.

No doubt it is human to escape from a gadget-encumbered civilization to one entirely composed of gadgets, but a conviction grows on the inquirer that this literature is not just a contemporary version of Richard Locke's moon hoax, not merely a part of a literary tradition as old as Apuleius, not even, in its own jargon, a degeneration from the stimulating and far more cheerful imaginings of the young Wells, but something different and perhaps quite new. One does not know just who reads the science mags. Clearly, their audience is not made up of scientists---though I know one physicist whom they fascinate as zoologists must have

been fascinated by Barnum's Feejee Mermaid. The fan letters they print, which may be written in the office of course, suggest that these readers are educated enough to write grammatical prose and criticize the gadgets. Whoever they are, something more than the need to escape must take them to their reading---and something more than mere satiation with the two-gun sheriff and the never-quite-seduced blonde.

It is significant that, if there is flight, it carries with it the thing fled from. It is more significant that literature is doing on this level exactly what it is doing on the levels which criticism examines with greater respect. The moon hoax is not linked with these stories but *The Decline of the West* is, and horrid monsters on Venus are only the gelid despair of science in simple words. They use Buck Rogers as a symbol that Mr. Steinbeck or Mr. Huxley would think too elementary, but they use him to embody the world's fear on the brink of the abyss. They perform, that is, the most constant function of popular literature, and they probably prove that the substance of literature is one and indivisible. As the sermons of back-country evangelists dilute and translate into the vernacular the ideas painfully worked out by thinkers on the age's highest plane, so what we call popular literature has, in every age, accommodated to simpler intelligences the sentiments and beliefs enregistered by artists in what we call good literature.

Nevertheless, the science pulps have something like uniqueness. There is no appeal from the doom they behold approaching in mathematical formulas from beyond Jupiter, and it has not been the tradition of popular literature, however agreeably it may have frightened its audience, to leave them doomed and resigned to doom. In Red Gulch and the hills of dream, life is accustomed to wear rainbow colors and the curtain comes down on lovers marrying in a hopeful world; but the light that irradiates these stories is the infra-red, and their happy ending is the black nothingness beyond space and the disintegration of all life. The sustained demand for the dissolution of mankind, the popularity of doom in pulp paper, is as striking a portent as you will find anywhere in literature. It nakedly reveals a paradoxical and suicidal comfort of our time. These stories crudely express the fantasies that oppress us all, which are not fermented in paranoia but merely reasoned from any day's headlines. It is as if a race drifting helplessly to destruction found itself able to drift there more tranquilly when assured that it was this way on the lunar continents eons ago and will be this on Jupiter ten thousand years from now. In the pulps also literature comes close home to men's bosoms.

---oOo---

THE DEAD TREE

Erect in death it stands up gaunt and bare,
 With limbs uplifted to the wintry sky,
 To supplicate for pity, or defy
 The threat of wrath with towering despair.
 Around the trunk, a wizard's witching snare,
 Lithe shadows in a web fantastic lie,
 Spun by the moon, in midnight sorcery,
 Who gazes down with madness' vacant stare.

What reads she in this ruin? Does the past
 Live in the present still? Does there linger
 The legend of a glory overcast,
 The song of birds long silent, and the stir
 Of leaves forever scattered to the blast,
 Yet echoed in eternal dreams to her?

---John B. Tabb

Book Reviews

by SAM MOSKOWITZ

A SPECTRUM OF FANTASY: The Bibliography and Biography of a Collection of Fantastic Literature by George Locke. Ferret Fantasy, Ltd., Publisher, 27 Beechcroft Road, Upper Tooting, London SW17 7BX, England, 1980. 246 pp. 30.5 cm. \$81.00. Edition limited to 500 copies.

In an era of some incredible books on or about the subject of science-fiction and fantasy, this volume, the culmination of five years of labor by the well known book-dealer, bibliographer and publisher George Locke, must be classed with *Science Fiction and Fantasy Authors* (a bibliography of first editions by another dealer, L. W. Currey), *The Edgar Rice Burroughs Library of Illustration* (a three-volume set of the artwork from that famous author's publications), and even Frank Magill's *Survey of Science Fiction Literature* (a five-volume set of science-fiction book reviews). The objectives of these last three, while comprehensive, are relatively straightforward, however; Locke's is a bit more personal and hence more eclectic.

What he has done is compile an annotated bibliography of his own collection, which happens to be a very good one, particularly rich in old rarities, totalling close to three thousand titles. He describes in minute detail his personal copy of each book listed, and also gives data on its first edition even if his does not happen to be one. He elaborates on publication variants. If the author has inscribed his copy, he reprints the inscription. In many instances he tells where and when he bought the book and what he paid for it, as well as offering his opinion as to its relative rarity.

Though discursive, the entries are of high interest to the dyed-in-the-wool collector seeking fine points and ancillary information, and can actually be read for their entertainment. Locke has been immersed in collecting and book-dealing for three decades, and his travels around England and the United States looking for stock have certainly offered him rare opportunities for acquisitions. But the high prices he has admittedly paid for some items, plus the printed equivocations about their intrinsic value, have also resulted in his selling portions of his "permanent" collection to finance the needs or whims of the moment.

One of the most puzzling inferences to emerge from the thousands of annotations to be found in *A Spectrum of Fantasy* is how unsure Locke seems to be of his own judgement on the value and collectability of items he has found. The book is replete with examples of opportunities passed up, books overpaid for, agonized doubts about desirability and rarity, and frequent comments about authors, books, and even the field itself that are naive. While it might be said that such circumstances are common to all collectors, there do seem to be more of them here—some of surprisingly recent vintage—than one would think possible from a dealer and collector of the author's outstanding reputation.

We also find clues to the factors that helped Locke make up his mind about a purchase, such as his comment when G. H. Ryan's *Fifteen Months in the Moon* (1880) was offered to him at an extremely high price. "Then I asked myself two

questions," he says. "The first was, when would I see this privately printed paperback again? The answer was probably never again. The second was, what would I charge for it if I were to catalog a copy? The answer was, as much as I was being asked. I therefore gritted my teeth and bought the book."

As a point of interest, Locke's collection is particularly strong on George Griffith, M.P. Shiel and William Hope Hodgson of the older generation of writers. His listings are supplemented with descriptions of original manuscripts in his possession, as well as mundane magazines---usually bound runs---which contain material of outstanding fantasy interest.

Advance subscribers to this work received the volume at a discounted price and with it their choice of one of three special pamphlets: "Five Hundred Years Hence" (an anonymous and previously unpublished manuscript written in 1830), "The Haunted Pompero" by William Hope Hodgson (which appeared previously in *Short Stories* magazine, but never in book form), and "Herlock's One Mistake" by Henry A. Hering (a Sherlock Holmes parody). These pamphlets are not sold separately. To complete its provenance I should also mention that twenty-five copies of *A Spectrum of Fantasy* bound in buckram, each lettered and signed by the author, were offered with all three pamphlets for \$120.00.

It should be obvious that while this is a very useful and valuable supplementary reference for the collector, its price will limit its audience. This will make purchase a matter of individual desire and capacity. I found the book unique and enjoyable, and recommend its contents.

THE WORKS OF M. P. SHIEL, 1979 UPDATE, volumes II and III. Cleveland, Ohio: The Reynolds Morse Foundation, 1980. 414 and 444 pp. (numbered consecutively). 27.9 cm. Price each: paperbound, \$25.00; in a 22-ring binder, \$32.00; hard-bound in cloth, \$35.00. (Available from J. D. S. Books, P. O. Box 67 MCS, Dayton, Ohio 45402.)

Back in 1948 A. Reynolds Morse had published under the colophon of Fantasy Publishing Co. of Los Angeles *The Works of M. P. Shiel*, then an outstanding annotated bibliography of that author. With the help of ten or more Shiel scholars he has since been updating and elaborating upon it to such an extent that comparing the results with the original would be like matching a 1980 Mercedes-Benz with a model T Ford. Just the fact that the original comprised 179 standard book-sized pages and these two new volumes total 858 letter-sized ones should hint that the resemblance is that of a child to a man.

A manufacturer of independent means, Morse has poured into these efforts funds worthy of a major foundation---and unlike many projects of foundations, his is impressive for its content as well as size. The first volume in this series was reviewed in the last issue of this magazine,* and a fourth, *M. P. Shiel by Diverse Hands*, which is scheduled to appear soon, will be composed of original essays on the subject by those who have contributed to the new Shiel studies. It is safe to say that no previous author below the stature of Edgar Allan Poe or H. G. Wells (or in recent times Isaac Asimov) has had so impressive a reference published about him.

Volume II covers all the works known to have been written by Shiel, with comments and annotations running literally to thousands of words about many of the individual titles; no edition or printing has been omitted, or lacks notation and description. The entries are almost like individual essays, and the book can be read from cover to cover with fascination before it is consigned to its shelf for reference. A separate section treats the short stories and collections as assiduously as the novels. The volume also lists all articles about and known references to Shiel. It is copiously illustrated with photographs of him, his various abodes, title-pages of his books, illustrations from these and his magazine appearances, and even sample pages from his manuscripts. (There is also a biblio-
**Fantasy Commentator* IV, 71 (1980).

graphy of existing manuscripts and their locations, where known.) Finally, there are facsimile reprints of his previously uncollected story "Wayward Love," and two hitherto unpublished collaborations with John Gawsorth, "The Missing Merchants" (a Prince Zaleski story) and "The Return of Cummings King Monk." The volume is handsomely printed in attractive twelve-point type, which is unusual for a bibliography or for comparable works of scholarship.

Volume III presents autobiographical and biographical material about M. P. Shiel, and anyone who did not personally participate in this project and enjoy an exchange of material with other scholars will be amazed and gratified at the quantity of previously unknown and unpublished material that has been unearthed. It makes absorbing reading indeed, and helps as well to fill what would otherwise be gaps in our knowledge of authors like Arthur Machen, John Gawsorth and Louis Tracy, and the nature of the publishing world during Shiel's time. This book includes a narration of Morse's trip to Shiel's last home, L'Abri, in Sussex, England, and conversations with the people who occupied it after his death, and with neighbors who knew him.

As a tremendous bonus, Morse has included—complete—"The Quest for M. P. Shiel's Realm of Redonda," previously published for friends as a separate paper-bound booklet. This describes Morse's two trips to Montserrat, his exploration of the rocky islet Redonda, conversations with people who knew the Shiel family, and the culminating discovery that Shiel's mother had Negro blood (a fact which photographic facsimiles of the records dramatically confirm). Since Louis Tracy was a friend and collaborator of Shiel, a bibliography of his works has also been included for good measure.

Usually bibliographies and biographical scrapings are rather dry. Not so these works. They are *the* prime sources on Matthew Phipps Shiel; far from being just a collation of what others have written they represent extensive original research, being composed of material simply not to be found elsewhere. There is adventure and even high drama here as Morse and his friends hire planes and boats to reach areas rarely visited by anyone in current times, recording their adventures not just with words but photographs. I recommend that anyone with a serious interest in either Shiel or in the subject of fantasy procure this set of books. One does not merely file them on one's shelves, but reads and rereads them, enthralled.

---oOo---

'PLUS ULTRA': AN UNKNOWN SCIENCE-FICTION UTOPIA (continued from page 169)

Local authorities have the responsibility for educating the young up to the age of fifteen; beyond that—college, technical school, etc.—only to those capable of profiting by it. From the earliest point education includes training to vote and situations involving voting to reach decisions occur constantly.

Chapter 13, "Ministries and Divisions" (written August 30-September 10, 1928)

The organization and duties of ministries are described. Although it is many centuries since weapons have been used (individuals no longer bear arms) fortresses exist housing them, and military personnel are taught their use in case an emergency might warrant it. One such weapon is a sleep-producing gas.

Such censorship as exists is largely voluntary.

Chapter 14, "Ministerial Bureaus" (written August 30-September 2, 1928)

The content here is a continuation of that in chapter 13.

Chapter 15, "Bureaus of Industry"
(written September 2-5, 1928)

This chapter summarizes and describes industrial progress. A combination of television and telephone communication is in wide use, what we today would term picture phones. (26) There is also a device called a "teleapter," by which an event happening anywhere in the world can be viewed; this seems equivalent to our system of communication TV satellites.

These fifteen chapters not only describe the organization of this civilization of 50,000 A.D., but furnish an overview of it, an outline which later ones fill in with details. Comments on many topics, then, are better deferred, though a few general remarks seem pertinent.

White has presented a number of reasonable forecasts which the passage of half a century has not made less plausible: population growth to a stable figure (although we are already close to the number he suggests, and increase is continuing, but at a lower rate); a single world government (toward which we still struggle); intensive cultivation for increased food supply (the mechanization of agriculture and development of hybrid plants seem overlooked, but White foresaw preservation by freeze-drying); the exhaustion of fossil fuels; the inevitability of classes in society (equality of opportunity cannot abolish biological differences); a solution to what we now term the welfare problem; and the dwindling of traditional religions with which we are familiar and their concomitant replacement by a "modern paganism" (which of course has itself acquired clearly religious qualities). His combination of democracy and absolutism---this seems very roughly describable as a benevolent dictatorship---parallels a trend that we see today, particularly in the Third World.

All these things surely add up to an optimistic outlook. Indeed, it is more so than my own: I cannot see the bulk of mankind giving up of its own free will individual short-term gains for the sake of general future betterment, and I do not feel that any of our present world educational systems make such a change foreseeable. Yet White is well aware of such drawbacks. Here is his rationalization: (25)

Any forecast of the usages of posterity must reckon most of all with human nature, which, as we know, is just about what it was 5,000 years ago; which, we have every reason to believe, is very nearly what it was 50,000 years ago; and which ... has altered little from what it was 500,000 years ago; and so is more than likely to be, 50,000 years in the future, just about what it is today. In the past mankind, with human nature altering very little and only gradually, has developed capacities for cooperation, coordination and subordination on the whole progressively better and better from age to age and totally inconceivable to any humans alive 50,000 years ago. There is every reason to forecast that posterity will in a like space of time develop those qualities to a degree conceivable but all but incredible to us. Whatever humanity may achieve in the future will be achieved by the operation of the same needs, desires and impulses which have actuated mankind in the past. Among these motives self-interest has been the chief: all others have been ancillary and contributing.

NOTES

(24) Letter, E.L.White to Esther Phillips, Nov. 8, 1919

(25) E.L. White, "Preface" to *Plus Ultra*.

(26) Though probably conceived independantly by White, these were not new to science-fiction.

(to be continued in the next issue)

Edward Lucas White:

Notes for a Biography

by *GEORGE T. WETZEL*

Part II*

VIII THE YOUNG TEACHER

In August, 1888 Phil Gerry had introduced Edward Lucas White to his sister Agnes. At the time she was a secretary to a patent lawyer. The two soon were friendly acquaintances. In 1890 she took a job as a stenographer in the Office of Geological Survey, and was temporarily transferred to an office in Philadelphia where she lived for a time. Edward went to see her as often as he could, taking along many of his handwritten poems; these she typed, enabling him to submit them to various magazines. But the visits were obviously for more than mere gratuitous typing of manuscripts.

One day Todd Gerry, Agnes's younger brother, encountered Edward waiting for a train to Philadelphia at Baltimore's Union Station. Abruptly Todd asked, "Why has Phil quarreled with you?" "Because I am trying to marry Agnes," Edward replied. "It's none of his damned business!" said Todd. Exactly why Phil Gerry resented White's attentions to his sister has never been explained. Perhaps it was jealousy. In any event, his coolness extended to his sister as well.

In the Fall of 1891 White obtained a two-month job as a substitute teacher at the University School for Boys, the same one that had prepared him for his college examination. Then in 1892 he received an appointment to teach a Freshman Latin class at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, a step up the professional ladder, and despite his lack of a Ph.D. degree.

There, instead of devoting himself to Latin, he spent his energies in dreaming and writing poetry. His class seized the opportunity to become insubordinate, and in disciplining them White over-reacted. His appointment was not renewed. From this experience he learned a bitter lesson: his teaching duties must come first; when an idea seized him, he must note it down and put off working on it until leisure was available; and that in disciplining a class one must be free from anger. (92)**

*Part I appeared in the previous issue; if your local dealer cannot supply you, it may be obtained from the publisher.

**Footnotes for this article will be found on page 182.

At about the same time White's temper exploded and he quarreled with the editor of the *New York Sun*. This newspaper had printed some of his poems in May, 1891, and another group of them in February, 1892. The latter, however, had been cut and altered. Perhaps he had reason to object to these editorial changes. But such fits of temper, which he continued to show from time to time, appear to come more from a fundamental strain of irascibility in his nature. The "black, bitter Irish blood with which I am cursed [he wrote to a friend] belies my good intentions and explodes before I can foresee that it is going to . . . and leaves me regretful and ashamed." (93)

When White returned to Baltimore he luckily found another job teaching Latin and Greek at the Friends High School. When Christmas arrived, it found him in a fit of depression. Ostensibly because of that he typed his first letter to Rudyard Kipling, who was then living in Vermont. He began his letter with the salutation "Honored Elder Brother", imitating Chinese etiquette, and made certain critical observations on Kipling's poetic meters. Kipling, entering into the spirit of the salutation, addressed White as "Honored Younger Brother", but his reply was rather patronizing, a characteristic which disappeared as correspondence between the two continued over the years.

White's depression may in part have been caused by the attitude of Agnes Gerry. At first she had rejected his proposal of marriage with the argument that her life had to be dedicated to her two brothers—that her duty was to her family. Presumably White was able to dispose of that point, for she next gave the reason that White's salary as a teacher seemed too small to support both of them.

When he discussed the latter point with his father, Thomas advised, "There is no use in your trying to make both ends meet. If you sit down and figure over it you will die unmarried. For you the only course is to get married and take the consequences." (94)

But Agnes remained adamant. A Ph.D. degree would command better pay, Edward knew; but to obtain it he would have to re-enter the university. This his father could not subsidize and he himself could not afford. So when his teaching job ended for summer vacation White began tutoring as many pupils as he could in his parents' home, driving himself to acquire the money for tuition.

He also embarked on the course of a free-lance writer, but appears to have made practically no sales. The first article of his to be published was "Are Editors to Blame?", an obvious piece of hackwork. White seems here to be trying to ingratiate himself with editors to help future sales by siding with their policy of handling unsolicited manuscripts. Somewhat later he also wrote a wistfully ironic little poem describing the many rejections he had received. (95)

All this extra activity exacted its inevitable price. In the Spring of 1894 his health broke down. The doctor warned his parents that unless their son left the city that summer he was unlikely to live. Accordingly Thomas White took his entire family to The Willows, a farm near Cavestown in western Maryland which catered to summertime lodgers.

Edward had come under additional strain in the preceding year. Following an inadvertant remark of some sort that had been repeated in garbled form to her by third parties, Agnes had become estranged from him. In addition, the White household was in some upset over finances related to bookkeeper Steuart's departure from Thomas White's firm, as has been cited in the last chapter.

Notwithstanding all these things, Edward did succeed in saving enough money to pay for his tuition, and returned to Johns Hopkins to work for the coveted doctoral degree in 1895. Before Thanksgiving his health again broke down, and he remained an invalid until the following July. For a month he was too ill even to turn over in bed. (96) With this illness his hopes of an advanced degree were ended forever.

From the age of fourteen White began to have frequent dreams of a narrative nature, and some of his earliest writing efforts may have been derived

from these. Later dreams he experienced were not just narratives in which he was the chief protagonist, but appeared as stories he was reading in some book, the physical aspects of which—its binding, type-face and even specks in the paper—lingered vividly in his mind on awakening. (10a) Sometimes such a book would be in verse instead of prose. Thus in a dream he had in November, 1891 he saw letters of gold in old English script on a deep purple background a poem which he jotted down on awakening, titling it "Genius." (97)

Narrative dreams he could not work up in prose as readily, and usually he had to satisfy himself with a synopsis of what he could remember. In one of these people were conversing in Latin and Greek amid surroundings that appeared to be in the reign of Commodus. He later concluded this had arisen from vague memories of a picture once viewed in the Corcoran Gallery, J. Rollins Tilton's "Rome from the Aventine." (98) Many years later he recalled the dream, and based his novel *Andivius Hedulio* on it.

As a rule Edward White spent his summers in the mountains or at a farm. But once early in his life he had attempted to vacation at the sea-shore. Though he liked sea-bathing he found it gave him a congestive chill after a short stay in the water. He also found that if the weather was sunny the glare from the water gave him a severe headache within two hours. Thereafter he avoided the shore. (99)

From early boyhood he played cards whenever he could. At his uncle's he engaged in auction-pitch, and won so often his father finally forbade him to play lest it foster a tendency to gamble. (Such success at cards seems proof of a good memory, which later in life White bragged about possessing, as has been noted in chapter II.) To him, cards were not indulged in for profit but rather as a complete mental and emotional rest; with a hand of cards all his worries were forgotten. But around 1891 cards suddenly went sour for him.

During his fourth summer vacation at The Willows in 1897 he got into his last game. Among the thirty or so boarders there were some ladies who played euchre most evenings. One of them, to the annoyance of the other players, kept getting her daughter into the game. White was asked for advice, and proposed a scheme to manage it. He got into the game several evenings, took the girl as his partner, and bid high on no prospects so that they always lost. Finally the girl quit. (100) No doubt his father, who accompanied Edward on this summer vacation, found all this amusing. Many of the White family enjoyed cards, including Thomas, who played regularly to while away boredom on trains and in hotels while on business trips. There is no mention of father and son having a hand together, but at The Willows they often did share bicycle riding. (101)

By the end of that summer Agnes accepted White's offer of marriage. But both families were enjoined to keep the engagement secret at first—which suggests that Agnes did not yet feel fully committed and wanted to avoid public embarrassment if she should change her mind. Soon after this Edward wrote her the poem "Azrel." (102) This is original, but in some ways a very curious sort of love poem, wherein the figure of death ("Azrael" is the name of the Death-Angel in Mohammedan mythology) ever lurks in the shadows behind the couch of love. It evokes the similar macabre idiom of Poe, as in the letter's lines:

I could not love except where Death
Was mingling his with Beauty's breath.

Knowing White's fascination for Poe this is scarcely surprising, and he returned to this sombre mingling of love and death at least once more in "The Dance," a poem he wrote in 1903. (103)

Reading Kipling's story "Her Majesty's Servants" set White to thinking. In this story the Hindu oxen bolt when they recognize a European because, say the oxen, "They eat us." He reflected on how we love the little pet lamb, but end by butchering and eating it; what must be the lamb's point of view? Finally he cast

about for some creature that eats humans as they would in turn eat sheep. But he could think of none save the mythical ghoul of Asia, the *amina* found in *The Arabian Nights*. Out of such musings grew his narrative poem "The Ghoul." (104) This in turn became the basis for his later horrendous story, "Amina." (105)

When an idea seized him powerfully White could usually work on it even under the most adverse circumstances. So it was with that of "The Ghoul." He composed stanzas of it on the street, in the school study hall while awaiting his next class and elsewhere---all while ill, harrassed with worry, and teaching among uncongenial surroundings. The poem was finished in a week. He was inordinately fond of it, and bragged that no one but himself could have written it. But Agnes hated it. (106)

In August, 1898 Thomas White took his entire family took his entire family on an excursion trip to Niagara Falls, and generously invited Agnes along. For a brief while that mecca of honeymooners laid its spell on the two lovers. Then Edward had to leave the group on a somber errand to the little village of his childhood, Ovid, to arrange for the exhumation and transportation to Baltimore of the remains of grandfather Lucas.

Two days later the women followed him Ovid, where a nostalgic reunion was made with the washerwoman who had worked for the family at Eagle's Bluff. Then Thomas took his wife and daughter to Atlantic City for the remainder of the summer. Agnes returned to Washington, and Edward finished his vacation at The Willows near Cavestown.

But soon after Edward was settled there he was dismayed at receiving no replies to his letters to Agnes. Eventually her brother Phil wrote, informing him that she was in a hospital, recuperating from an operation. As he had no money to rush to Washington, Edward could only chafe and worry. When he eventually did see his fiancée convalescing in her home, she startled him by revealing that her doctor had said that while there was no reason she should not marry, she would never be able to have a child. "You don't suppose that will make any difference to me?" he asked. "Yes," she replied. "After our talks about parenthood I thought that when I told you that, you would just let me go."

When the surgeon operated on Agnes he had found an enormous benign fibroid tumor not only within her uterus, but involving accessory reproductive structures as well. Both ovaries and Fallopian tubes had to be removed. (107) Edward succeeded in convincing her that he was sincere in still wishing to marry her (108) but neither could guess then that this operation might accelerate her ageing.

During this period White labored over many attempts at fiction before finally selling two stories to *Dixie*, a little magazine published in Baltimore. "Channoah," his first published fiction, has a number of autobiographical threads woven into its fabric. It is a narrative of romantic love spanning childhood and adulthood. It begins with the mutual affection for a black kitten, Channoah, by a boy and a girl. Jack, the hero, is forced to leave college because of a fall in his family's fortunes (*vide* White's abortive post-graduate studies), and is hated by the heroine's brother (as was White by Phil Gerry). The last part of the story begins in Rio de Janeiro (which White visited in 1885). There Jack rescues from the harbor waters a black kitten, and coincidentally at the same time renews acquaintance with his childhood sweetheart. Short as this story is White had a subplot in it: Jack was selling arms to Brazilians plotting to overthrow the dictator Fonseca. (The resemblance to White's later novel *El Supremo*, wherein another American intrigues with Paraguayan revolutionaries against Francia is obvious; even the names of the dictators are similar.)

"The Talisman and the Jelly" appeared in *Dixie* a few months later. In this story a sultan possesses a talisman which, when dipped into ordinary wine, transforms it into that of a wonderful vintage. A wicked neighbor hires a thief to steal it and leave an imitation in its place. The sultan discovers the decep-

tion and flies into such a rage that it requires "several executions to quiet his nerves." White could sometimes pen lines of such wry or black humor, but not often enough to make a story stand on them alone.

For over three years now White had held no permanent job. Then he was offered a position at the Boys Latin School, and soon was earning a salary of a thousand dollars a year. His new employer, James A. Dunham, a former Canadian, was now a naturalized American citizen and had been a teacher all his life; he was six years younger than White. Dunham had come to Baltimore in 1889 to teach Latin at the University School for Boys (where White taught part-time). In 1894 he was engaged to run the Cary School for Boys by the family after its owner died. Though poor, Dunham was vigorous and ambitious. In time he bought the school. Its enrollment grew from thirty-three pupils to between 125 and 175, making it the largest and most prosperous of its kind in Baltimore.

On the strength of this position Edward and Agnes were able to decide on a marriage day. As this approached Edward found it necessary to educate Agnes in the mysteries of sex. In August of 1899 she was forty years old, but apparently knew little more about it than a girl of ten, and this despite being her mother's constant companion during two pregnancies. So on one starlit summer night as she sat with Edward in a hammock he delivered a patient (and, one gathers, pedantic) discourse on reproductive anatomy and physiology, with Agnes occasionally asking him questions and taking it all matter-of-factly. (109)

Throughout the summer of 1900 Edward was alone in his parents' home, tutoring private pupils. His mother was in a hospital in Philadelphia. One weekend that June he gave Agnes her engagement ring. And a little later that summer the two spent a perfect day at Mount Vernon, Virginia, going over by trolley in the early morning and returning at sunset on an excursion steamer up the Potomac.

Thanksgiving, 1900 was to be the day of their wedding. But early in October he got bronchitis, and the infection hung on. On top of this he developed an abscessed tooth. The dentist to whom he first went not only failed to put him to sleep with gas properly, but bungled the extraction, and the services of a second dentist had to be sought. As the day approached he was so ill that his doctor was doubtful if Edward could stand up to be married.

But he did. About that time a successful theatrical burlesque called *1492* was playing. White's cousins promptly dubbed the couple "1492," saying that the bride looked fourteen and the groom ninety-two. While travelling by train on their honeymoon, a stranger once said to White, "Your daughter is trying to attract your attention." His beard, though brown, was showing streaks of gray; with his bronchitis and the after-effects of his dentistry he probably did indeed look old and haggard.

Having now attained what he considered all that was worthwhile in life—marriage—Edward White observed that all his years up until that day had been lonely. But, he added, he was never lonely after that. (110)

(to be continued in the next issue)

NOTES

- (92) Letters, Edward L. White to "Kitty", Dec. 18, 1909; to A. Bugby, Aug. 31, 1917. A. Bugby to Edward L. White, Aug. 19, 1917. E. S. Gill to Edward L. White, Sep. 11, 1917.
- (93) Letter, Edward L. White to "Mame" (Mary Lee), Dec. 9, 1928
- (94) Letters, Edward L. White to Paul Lemperly, Sep. 22, 1917; to Sally Phillips, Jan. 4, 1918.
- (95) It appeared in *The Writer* (March, 1894) and *Century Magazine* (Sept., 1898).
- (96) His illness was described as "nervous prostration of the stomach."
- (97) It was published in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* (Aug., 1893).

- (98) Letters, Edward L. White to the Corcoran Gallery, Apr. 23, 1921; to Dr. Phelps, Nov. 26, 1930; Corcoran Gallery to Edward L. White, Apr. 21, 1921.
 (99) Letters, Edward L. White to Mrs. Spilman, July 30, 1929; to Mrs. Brown, Sep. 1, 1931.
 (100) Letter, Edward L. White to Mrs. Brown, Apr. 18, 1921.
 (101) Letter, Thomas White to Kate White, Sep. 14, 1897.
 (102) The poem was written Oct. 15, 1897, and published in White's *Matrimony*, p. 87. The text is given below:

AZRAEL

My nurse-maid used a cruel plan,
 To curb her charges' play,
 By tales about the Bogy-Man,
 Who carried you away.

I used to waken when I dreamed
 And, in the inky night,
 I sat up in my bed and screamed
 With childish fear and fright.

I dreamed about a lovely land
 And these a girl and I
 Were faring forwards hand in hand
 Beneath a sunlit sky.

Then, as we went, the sky grew dark,
 The shadows thickened round,
 I seemed to palpitate and hark
 For some approaching sound.

On the unstable verge of sleep
 I swayed, appalled and numb;
 I knew the Bogy-Man, to leap
 On one of us, had come.

* * * * *

My Love, your finger wears my ring,
 My heart is in your keep;
 Our lives are at their perfect spring,
 Our harvest yet to reap.

Let us be happy for a span
 Together, while we may;
 For, all too soon, the Bogy-Man
 Will carry one away.

- (103) Reprinted in *Fantasy Commentator* IV, 114 (1980).
 (104) This was included in White's book *Narrative Lyrics* (1908), and is reprinted on this page, following these notes.
 (105) This was included in White's book *Lukondoo* (1927).
 (106) Letters, Edward L. White to Sally Phillips, Sep. 29, 1917; to Mrs. Hill, Aug. 6, 1921; to Archibald Macmechan, Jan. 27, 1917.
 (107) Technically this is termed a bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy.
 (108) Letter, Edward L. White to Uncle Ned (Edward H. White), Feb. 2, 1924.
 (109) Letters, Edward L. White to Mrs. Dennett, May 11, 1929; to Uncle Ned, Nov. 8, 1913.
 (110) Letters, Edward L. White to Camilla, Sep. 6, 1930; to Dom Cipriano, Oct. 5, 1918.

The Ghoula

by EDWARD LUCAS WHITE

Because my mate did not return,
 And since my little ones must eat,
 I sallied forth alone to learn,
 Myself, to win my children meat.

Whatever man upon my way,
 Hunter or villager robust,

I met alone and marked for prey,
 My smile would lull his first distrust;

My beauty touched his heart at length,
 And in my form he could not guess
 A hint of that titanic strength
 Which even female ghouls possess.

At dusk, at sundown, or at noon
 I lured him from ravine or road
 To where the ruins are. And soon
 We feasted in our dim abode.

Men's flesh is best. If none come near,
 I caught some bullock, sheep or goat,
 Or, waiting at a pool the deer,
 Leapt like a panther at its throat.

Three days, and to my youngling's cries
 I brought but pilfered scraps of food.
 I saw the famine in their eyes
 And hunted in no gentle mood.

Next day above the desert plain
 Our Persian sky arched blue and clear.
 From the lookout where I had lain
 I saw a figure drawing near;

An Englishman who strayed alone,
 Careless of nomads, ghouls or spells,
 To beat the waste of sand and stone
 For hares or bustards or gazelles.

He spoke our homely Persian tongue;
 I found him nowise hard to fool;
 And yet, he was so tall and young,
 I wished that he had been a ghoul.

My hunting had engrossed my mind,
 Since of my mate I was bereft.
 Now, staring through the months behind,
 I felt how lonely I was left.

My starved mouth watered at the view
 Of pink cheeks, tender, plump and nigh,
 And yet it seemed a pity, too;
 He looked too comely far to die.

As by my side he idly paced,
 Before the ruins we had neared,
 Between two boulders on the waste,
 Some distance off, a doe appeared.

He raised his rifle and took aim,
 Then as I watched to see her spring,
 He stopped and said: "It seems a shame
 To kill a pretty, dainty thing."

It startled me to find this youth,
 So heedless, hale and lithe of limb,
 Felt for his game the selfsame ruth
 Which I had felt at sight of him.

She stood and stared before she ran,
 "What good to us that she should roam,"
 I said: "Best shoot her while you can,
 We have no meat at all at home."

The bullet missed. The creature fled.
 He flushed, surprised, chagrined and vexed.
 Then smiling cheerily, he said:
 "I may do better with the next."

"That leandoe was not worth regret,
 You may get meat some other way."
 I answered, with my purpose set,
 "Indeed, I rather think I may."

How cool the shadowed archway smelt,
 Pleasant and softly lit inside!
 His arm went round my waist. I felt
 My young would not have long to bide.

They cowered huddling in their lair.
 Their pangs I knew they would endure
 In silence, rather than to scare
 Quarry of which I was not sure.

Inebriated with my charms,
 He held me closely, unaware
 That he was helpless in my arms
 As is a rabbit in a snare.

Time after time our lips had met;
 His curly head to mine I drew,
 A kiss upon his throat I set—
 And bit his windpipe through and through.

Firm flesh to eat, clean blood to drink,
 Fitted to make my dear ones thrive,
 And yet, since then, I often think—
 He was so handsome when alive.

Who knows, but for my darlings' need
 I might have softened, let him go?
 I find it in my heart indeed
 To wish that he had shot the doe.

---oOo---

OPEN HOUSE—continued from page 184

Years ago, a nearby private school had a faculty member named Adrian Onderdonk. I wonder if he was related to Matthew? The name isn't common, and I seem to detect a faint resemblance of the picture on page 120 and Adrian as I remember him; he would have been perhaps 28 or 30 when I first knew him in 1943.

Eleanor Onderdonk tells me that her husband had a number of cousins, chiefly in Long Island and Ohio, and that there indeed was one called Adrian, though she believes his last name was Mather rather than Onderdonk.

In Memorium: Alex Osheroff

Alex Osheroff was my friend.

A good many science-fiction fans and scholars could make that statement, especially those who knew him back in the late thirties when---like other, more illustrious, pioneering fans such as Forrest Ackerman and Sam Moskowitz---he put out his own fledgling fanzine efforts: *Robot*, the first issue dated August 1, 1937, with its complete contents printed entirely on the back of a penny postcard, and the larger, more ambitious *Science Fiction Scout*, its meticulously hectographed pages now faded to blurs by the intervening decades.

Not too long after that, like so many of his generation, Alex was swallowed up by the tides of World War II, serving with the 331st Bomber Group on Guam until the first plutonium bomb, "Fat Man," was detonated over Nagasaki, terminating the war even more suddenly than it had begun with the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. For the rest of his days, he would be mesmerized by the thought of those twin mushroom clouds over Japan, possibly because when a not-uncommon science-fiction idea became fact, he was---relatively speaking---only an island away.

But when I first met him, I knew nothing about Alex's First Fandom efforts or his war experiences. It was at an early meeting of the Eastern Science Fiction Association, held in Newark's Slovak Sokol Hall, a dingy, ill-lit chamber crowded with bentwood chairs and still redolent of the aroma lingering from countless beer-guzzling banquets past, a setting and atmosphere Alex would get to know intimately by serving, at various times, as ESFA secretary, treasurer and, finally, director. At the time, I was just another callow, self-conscious high school senior awed by the presence, in the flesh, of so many well known authors, editors and artists (not to mention insufferably self-assured fans), whose names I knew only from the pages of the pulp magazines where their work appeared.

It was typical of Alex, on that occasion, that *he* walked up and introduced himself to a total stranger, me, and in no time flat completely succeeded in putting me at my ease with his obvious and refreshing interest in *my* interests, *my* tastes and opinions. That struck me at the time (as it still does now) as a rare quality in anyone; and, profiting from his more mature example, I soon found myself, despite the egocentricity of youth, beginning to be curious about *his* tastes and interests. That first encounter left a permanent mark on both of us, signalling the start of an almost lifelong friendship which, allowing for inevitable ups and downs, lasted until Alex's final days.

And it was during those last days, which he must have known had come (although I didn't), that Alex showed what he was made of. Just before his sudden return to the hospital he telephoned me, excited and enthusiastic about a poem he had just written, still glowing from the heat and intensity of composition. Apologizing for intruding (he wasn't), excusing himself for taking up valuable time (he wasn't), he read his short lyric, "Raven Night," an impassioned tribute to the memory of the three great fantasy writers he loved: Edgar Allan Poe, H. P. Lovecraft and David H. Keller, the last of whom Alex had visited at his Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania home, where he met Keller's wife Celia and listened in wonder as the aged author read from some of his manuscript works (among them the famous essay, "Shadows Over Lovecraft"*) as they sat in his book-lined study. (So stimulated was the young Osheroff by this encounter with the Good Doctor---the first one, before Asimov---that he paid homage in the form of a critical article, "The Logic of

*published in *Fantasy Commentator* II, 237 (Summer 1948).

The Keller Cycle".* Years later, Alex would often confide that he regretted never managing to get back to Stroudsburg for a final visit before Keller's death in 1966.

When he had finished reading his poem, Alex waited for my reaction. I'm glad—particularly now, since I couldn't know what was coming—that I could say, with no pretense: "I like it, Alex. I like it a lot—though, you know, it still needs a few touches of revision," to which criticism he readily agreed, as he often had done on earlier occasions. Then we pondered where the poem might be submitted for publication until—suddenly and premonitorily, as it turned out—Alex changed his mind, deciding not to let his manuscript languish in some editor's files, waiting for months, maybe for years, to see print.

So—and this, too, was so much like the man—he decided to make special copies and send one to each of his closest friends. But he wasn't granted the few days he needed to make good his decision. So no one received "Raven Night" in the mail.

But that, thank God, is something human agency can rectify—because through the kindness of his wife Rhoda, I've been permitted to make a copy and share it now with all his friends, both far and near—and and with all those who gotten as great a kick out of knowing him as I have.

—Joseph Wrzos

RAVEN NIGHT

One black night I dreamed of ravens,
By the hundreds,
Over Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania,
Home of David Keller.

One raven Colonel Keller caught,
And tamed it,
And the Kellers, he and Celia,
Named it "Kelleraven,"
The name retained forevermore.

In a dream I see the Kelleraven.
In a dream I pose it questions.
In a dream it always answers:
"In a dream, forevermore!"

"Shall I visit Keller once again,
In a study lined with books,
Hear the powerful rendition
Of Kelleryarns he reads once more?"

In a dream I see the Kelleraven.
In a dream I pose it questions.
In a dream it always answers:
"In a dream, forevermore!"

"Once more hear the Lovecraft 'Shadows'
In the night with Keller reading,
Lovecraft merged with Keller,
And I, enthralled, as years before?"

In a dream I see the Kelleraven.
In a dream I pose it questions.
In a dream it always answers:

"Only in dream, forevermore!"

**ibid.*, III, 67 (Summer-Fall 1949).

—Alex Osheoff, (August 5,
1923—March 15, 1980)

Open House

Letters From Readers

We hear first from Sam Moskowitz:

Curiosity about R. Norman Grisewood led me to check the cardinal references at the New York Public Library, and then parts of my own magazine collection. From the first I learned only that the "R." stands for Robert, and that he has had a third book published, *The Drifting of the Cavashaws* (Fenno, 1913), which was illustrated by Warren Y. Cluff. This doesn't sound like science-fiction, but I haven't been able to examine a copy.

I also located one short story by Grisewood. This appeared in vol. 1, no. 1 of *Detective Story Magazine* (Oct. 5, 1915); it is titled "The Hindoo Charm." It is not inconceivable, since this is the very first issue of *Detective Story*, the first specialized pulp magazine in history, that this is not a new story at all, but has been reprinted from some previous Street and Smith pulp, and that Grisewood contributed to some of the older magazines around the time his books were being published (1909-1913). I examined the next ten issues of *Detective Story*, plus a number of individual issues over the next five years, but found no further Grisewood stories.

"The Hindoo Charm" borders on fantasy. A detective enters a curio shop run by a foreigner and on two occasions purchases a string of semi-precious stones, but finds after leaving the premises that they are not in his hand. He brings along an associate as a witness, and this associate swears that after a third purchase he also left the store with empty hands. It is then deduced that somehow the detective has been hypnotized each time into thinking he had the stones, and that the stones themselves are the focus of the hypnotic suggestion.

Later on a train he tells the story to a man in his compartment, and then excuses himself to get off at his station. He calmly walks off the train while it is motion and is almost killed; he has not been near any station, but has been hypnotized into thinking he was. There is a vagueness on how this was accomplished, what the motive might be, and the connection between the man in the train and the man in the shop, but the writing is extremely good and the story adroit.

If any reader can fill in the gaps in our knowledge of Grisewood, would he please write Mr. Moskowitz or the editor of this magazine? . . . From New Zealand Tom Cockcroft writes:

I am greatly pleased with William Contento's recent index to anthologies and collections, but wish it could have included the *Avon Fantasy Readers* and the *Science Fiction Readers*. Don Wollheim assured me years ago that these were indeed anthologies and not magazines; he said that material for them was bought as for use in an anthology, that they were not kept on sale for any fixed time, and that the publishers did not have to print an account of ownership, as they would for a magazine.

I think "The Green Splotches" of T. S. Stripling is a fine story, and I was mildly surprised to learn from Contento's book that it has been used in only one anthology---and that thirty-five years ago! It was reprinted in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* magazine for August, 1952, and in a letter to one of the maga-

zine's readers published in the February, 1953 issue Stripling stated, "I haven't written any other science fiction except an old story called 'Web of the Sun' which came out in *Adventure* long, long ago. It has been reprinted since, I believe, but I don't remember where."

He seems to have forgotten "Mogglesby," a story reprinted in *Avon Fantasy Reader* no. 11 (1949) from the June 1, 1930 issue of *Adventure*; and one called "Christ in Chicago" appeared there April 8, 1926, according to a skimpy list of fantastic stories in that magazine included in an index published by Bradford Day in 1953. Can someone tell me the issue of *Adventure* in which "Web of the Sun" appeared, and where it was reprinted? And what it and "Christ in Chicago" are about? Are they good stories, and do they deserve reprinting today? It would also be nice if someone could compile and publish a complete list of all the fantastic fiction in *Adventure* magazine.

S. Fowler Wright is another writer whose fantastic fiction doesn't seem to have been fully sorted out. In my copy of *Megiddo's Ridge* (Robert Hale, 1937) there is listed as having been published under his Sydney Fowler pseudonym *The Secret of the Screen*; more than twenty years ago I was told by someone who had read this book that it was a good novel about a "time television" similar to that mentioned briefly in *Power*. Bleiler's *Checklist* and Tuck's *Encyclopedia* say nothing of it. Francis T. Laney, who was planning an article about Wright's tales (which I doubt was ever completed), once advertised for a copy, from which I infer that he, too, felt the novel was part of the genre.

Lack of space forces postponement of Mr. Cockcroft's remarks on Finlay, promised for this number, until the next issue. . . . Next, Edward Wood comments on the last issue of Fantasy Commentator:

I hope I was not responsible for that "1938" at the bottom of page 66 in my review of *The Way the Future Was!* [You weren't; that was my typographical error. ---ed.] By the way, the fiction that the American News Company was responsible for the fantasy magazine debacle of the 1950's is repeated by Barry Malzberg in the current *Analog Yearbook* (Baronet, 1978) in his article "The Fifties."

Everything in the issue was excellent but truly outstanding was Lincoln Van Rose's review of *In Memory Yet Green*. Only in Pohl's omission of Asimov's name could I perhaps disagree with Van Rose. Asimov was not writing much science-fiction at all in that decade, so I can easily see why Pohl would skip his name. As long as we have an honest reviewer like Mr. Van Rose the course of fandom needs no correction.

In Memory Yet Green shows that every writer needs a good editor. An editor should improve a book; if he does not, he's unnecessary. I might add that even in matters science-fictional Asimov makes mistakes. Here are a few:

page 94: The first issue of *Science Wonder Stories* was dated June, 1929, not August. (Isaac got it right in *Before the Golden Age*.)

page 260: It seems obvious Asimov doesn't know that Polton Cross was another pen name of John Russell Fearn.

page 481: The Healy-McComas anthology first appeared as a Random House trade book, and wasn't put into the Modern Library until several years later.

page 580: This isn't an error---but one wonders why Isaac picked up his first copy of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* on March 2, 1950. Why didn't he get the first issue which went on sale in the Summer of 1949?

page 601: *Destination Moon* the first intelligent science-fiction movie? Whatever happened to *The Invisible Man*, *Things to Come*, *Deluge* and all the other fine films made in the genre since Edison invented motion pictures?

Finally, I might want to add the word "childish" to the characterizations in Mr. Van Rose's review, and I do that with regret because I like Asimov's science-fiction and his science popularizations; he does have a splendid knack of

making difficult things simple. But behind his smiling face, in my opinion, is an essentially lonely man who has led a very lonely life.

M. David Johnson comments:

Olaf Stapledon's article in the last *Commentator*, "Man's Future," paints a very rosy picture of telepathic interactions among the species. However, I wonder if perhaps it isn't just a bit too rosy. While speech, "far from decreasing the possibility of individuality, has immensely increased it", it has also provided a very useful and well used mechanism for severely castigating, embarrassing and discouraging those who do not conform to the norm. While telepathy *may* even further enable "each individual to be enriched by participation in others", it will also afford a much more effective mechanism for stifling individualistic departures from normal thought, a possibility which could easily prove fatal to the race as a whole. The mundane mind is an awful and stultifying power: unleashed in direct contact with other minds, it could prove to be a disaster of incalculable proportions.

To grow up in a telepathic environment and "avoid a great many false shames" may not be as desirable an eventuality as Stapledon indicates. While it certainly *does* have many merits in many contexts, the ability to suffer shame for perceived inadequacies is a part of the learning and growing process which turns us into adults instead of children. The achievement of adulthood in such a telepathic society might become obviated with time, and, idyllic as an entire lifetime as a child might seem at times, I believe a great deal of satisfaction and reason for living could thereby be lost.

Also, the question of secret preparation for war seems to skip over the reality that governments seem always able to find *some* way for circumventing obstacles to their desires. Telepathy might make it more difficult but I think we can be reasonably well assured that governments will continue to achieve secrecy despite it: secrecy is the nature of the beast.

And I'm afraid that the concept that "All torture would agonize the torturer" would be simply an instant turn-on to society's sado-masochists. They would be able to participate on both sides of the scenario simultaneously. True, it seems reasonable to assume that sado-masochism would eventually be bred out of a truly telepathic society, but the period of transition could be quite traumatic, and might even defeat the transition itself and throw us back into some sort of dark ages before the telepathic society had time to form fully and take hold.

On the whole, though, I found "Man's Future" an intriguing and absorbing look into a possible future and enjoyed its possibilities immensely.

The above remarks are reprinted from the February, 1980 issue of Starfire so that readers of this magazine who are not members of the F.A.P.A. might see them. For the same reason there follow comments from the February, 1980 issue of Horizons by Harry Warner, Jr.:

It's remarkable how applicable to present-day science fiction is one sentence of Edward Lucas White which was quoted in the last issue: "Each [Utopia] appears to me to take the random, ill-founded personal preferences of the author and the more or less accidental, ephemeral and transitory usages and fads of his period, project them into the future, and intensify and indurate them." Yes, yes, I know that modern custom expects us to regard this kind of story as relevant science fiction, socially significant science fiction, modern mythology, and so on. I find it as unsatisfactory as White did a century ago.

And it's surprising and somehow humanizing to find a mighty intellect like that of Olaf Stapledon, who could write so fluently about the infinitely far future, getting the year wrong in his letter to Sam Moskowitz reproduced here. He is still writing 1948 on the next to the last day of March, 1949!

(continued on page 184)

VOYAGERS THROUGH ETERNITY

(continued from page 145)

tastic adventure became to a greater extent Robinsonades. Prominent titles reflecting the influence of Defoe were *L'Isle des Esclaves* (*The Island of Slaves*, 1725), *L'Isle de la Raison* (*The Island of Reason*, 1727) and *La Nouvelle Colonie, ou la Ligue des Femmes* (*The New Colony*, 1729), all by the noted French dramatist Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivau; and *Naufrage des Isles Flottantes* (*Shipwreck of the Floating Islands*, 1853) by Abbé Morelly. Morelly's true identity was never uncovered despite the fact that he became famous for his theory that man was not inherently evil, but that environment played the major role in his behavior.

In the period prior to the publication of *Robinson Crusoe*, Francis Godwin's early interplanetary, *The Man in the Moone*, together with some of the satiric devices of de Bergerac's fantasies, because of their continuing popularity, also exerted an effect on the worlds of music and the theater. Godwin's "gansas" carrying a man to the moon had become almost a synonym for space travel, and were referred to in the poetry, essays and songs of Councillor Manners, Samuel Butler, William Congreve, William Meston and Samuel Wesley.

Most fascinating was an adaption of *The Man in the Moone* to comic opera by Thomas D'Urfy in 1706 under the title *Wonders in the Sun*. It is actually a sequel to *The Man in the Moone*; Domingo Gonsales reappears as a leading character, and goes off on new interplanetary explorations, encountering strange creatures, stranger customs and considerable tomfoolery.

An earlier musical prepared by Elkanah Settle which opened in London in 1697, *The World in the Moon*, also had the swans returning there, and is notable as possibly being the first work of science-fiction to introduce extraterrestrial "little green men."

Arlequin l'Empereur dans la Lune, premiered in Paris by Biancolilli, was likewise based in part on Godwin. In England, the play was picked up by Aphras Behn and produced as *The Emperor of the Moon*. A doctor and scientist is fooled by two young men who are interested in marrying his daughter and his niece into believing there is a realm in the moon when they produce, though his own instruments, illusions which appear to be lunar creatures. Lucian is mentioned by name, the titles *The Man in the Moone* and *A Discourse of the World in the Moon* actually are cited in the dialogue, and Kepler and Galileo appear as characters.

V

THE GENESIS OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

The satire transferred by Francis Godwin and Cyrano De Bergerac was to influence one of the truly surprising figures in the history of science-fiction, Jonathon Swift. "No man is an *Island*, entire of it self", and all great men, particularly great writers, are composites and recastings of those whose actions they have studied and works before them they have read. Many books have been written about the literary influences on Swift. Our concern here is to show that he was a part of the stream of science-fiction history, lending genius to what he derived from those before him and providing inspiration for those who would follow.

It can hardly be a coincidence that in the very opening of his book Swift has Lemuel Gulliver shipwrecked so like Defoe had Robinson Crusoe only seven years before. And even Swift's biographers admit that he paralleled the devices and thinking of Cyrano de Bergerac, particularly in vesting animals with intelligence and employing debating techniques for satiric purposes. One of the closest proximations to de Bergerac appears in chapter six of "Voyage to Lilliput," in the lines that begin: "Their notions relating to the duties of parents and children differ extremely from ours..." and ends 200 words later with "...at which time they are

supposed to have some rudiments of docility", in which the point is driven home that a child is under no obligation to the parents simply because they conceived or propagated it. Obviously derived from de Bergerac's *Voyages to the Moon*, this philosophy has come down the centuries to create the basis for Philip Wylie's fame in *Generation of Vipers* (1942) and lead to his coining the term "momism."

The book we today refer to as *Gulliver's Travels* was originally published anonymously in London as *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. By Capt. Lemuel Gulliver, in the Year 1727*. It was translated in the same year into French, Dutch, German and Spanish. Since then it has gone through so many editions and been published in so many languages that it is doubtful if a complete record of them could ever be made. It must rank high on the list of the world's best known books.

In broad outline the work is well known. It is precisely divided into four separate adventures. The first, "A Voyage to Lilliput," finds Lemuel Gulliver, after a sea disaster, making his way ashore to a land where the people average about three inches in height. The second, "A Voyage to Brobdingnag," reverses the process and has Gulliver enter a country where people are as high as church steeples—they are in the same proportion to him as he was to the Lilliputians. The third part, a "catchall" section of the book, deals with a number of adventures which I shall describe in the next paragraph. The fourth concerns a land where the Houhnhnms (intelligent horses) are the dominant form of life and Yahoos (humans) are beasts of burden, and has since become one of the most famous portions of *Gulliver's Travels*.

The third portion of the book provides the perfect squelch to those who claim Swift did not write science-fiction. There is a visit to Laputa, a circular city floating in the air. Another is to Balnibarbi, whose people have been so impressed by the science of Laputa that they insist on all old methods being discarded instantly and new ones instigated; but since the new ideas are largely grandiose schemes with no technology for implementation, the country is gradually falling into ruins. A trip to the island of Glubbdubdrib brings Gulliver to a land where magic is the natural law. (18) Here people have the capability of bringing back any of the great men of the past. Shades from history serve meals and perform household chores. (19) (One advantage of this class of labor is that help can be dispensed with at a snap of the fingers and requires no pay or residence.) For entertainment, Gulliver is shown Alexander the Great at the head of his army, Hannibal crossing the Alps, Caesar and Brutus (whom he engages in conversation), Homer and Aristotle, and a host of other greats of science, literature, philosophy and art, as well as politics and warfare. In this portion of the work Gulliver also visits the land of Luggnugg, where immortal mutants are born. These are called Struldbruggs; but far from benefiting from their longevity, magnification of the failings of normal-lived people literally condemns them to an endless life of horror. A brief visit to Japan involves only a few satiric barbs at the willingness of Christians to dispense with their religious precepts for the sake of trade.

What converts *Gulliver's Travels* into a timeless classic, a quality that many other authors more interested in their polemic than their story might take to heart, is that it adroitly combines elements of adventure, invention and satire, and therefore can be read on different levels of comprehension, and by a child or an adult. The observations of Gulliver on the civilizations he visits have a direct bearing on his situation as a captive or guest. He illustrates his points with events and anecdotes. There are times when Gulliver is in distinct peril, and he is much more than a foil with which to score a satiric thrust. What also makes the story science-fiction is the incredible detail in which Swift involves himself to show the positive and negative aspects of a giant in a land of tiny people, a small being in a land of gargantuan humans, or a human in a land where superior beings are the dominant species. When Gulliver approaches the flying is-

land, he plunges with impressive thoroughness into precise details of its size, construction, magnetic form of attraction and repulsion and the limitations of its powers of flight (it cannot go over two miles high). Any civilization that can build a flying city is, obviously, very advanced scientifically. Swift offers a detailed description of its astronomical observatory, and gives what is either a guess or an extraordinary prediction: "They have likewise discovered two lesser Stars, or *Satellites*, which revolve around Mars." Asaph Hall, the American astronomer, would not confirm this until 1877, when he located the two satellites while Mars was in close conjunction with the earth.

(to be continued)

NOTES

- (1) "The Lotus Eaters" by Stanley G. Weinbaum (*Astounding Stories*, April, 1935); "Stars" by David R. Daniels (*ibid.*, June, 1935); "The Lotus Eaters" by Bolling Branham (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, April, 1943).
- (2) For example, "The Cyclopeans" by Richard S. Shaver (*Amazing Stories*, June, 1949, where the giant is actually a Cyclops).
- (3) "Siren Song" by Lester Barclay (*Fantastic Adventures*, February, 1940).
- (4) "Scylla's Daughter" by Fritz Leiber (*Fantastic*, May, 1961).
- (5) In Ross Rocklynne's "The Immortal" (*Comet*, March, 1941) ageing stops for a spaceman who lives twenty idyllic years with a woman thousands of years old.
- (6) Such as that of Lionel Casson (1962), which retains the erotic passages generally deleted from earlier translations.
- (7) "Frank Reade, Jr.'s 'White Cruiser' of the Clouds; or, the Search for the Dog-Faced Men" by Luis P. Senarens (*Frank Reade Weekly Magazine*, Oct. 31, 1902).
- (8) As quoted by John Lear in *Kepler's Dream* (1965), p. 88.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- (10) This sequence is anticipatory of Dr. Doolittle's *Garden* (1930), which describes a similar effect as a giant moth carries his party to the moon.
- (11) Godwin refers to these birds as "gansa's" or "ganza's", and identifies them at one point as swans. He seems to have adopted the name from Philemon Holland's 1601 translation of Pliny's *Natural History*, where the following passage occurs (vol. 1, p. 281): "The geese there, be all white; but lesse of bodie than from other parts: and there they be called ganzae." The German word for goose is *gans* (pl. *gänse*).
- (12) *The Retrospective Review*, vol. 8, part 2.
- (13) The prolific adventure writer H. Bedford-Jones wrote "The Singing Sands of Prester John" (*Blue Book*, February, 1939) and the lesser known but equally imaginative Norvell W. Page based two short novels on this character: "Flame Winds" (*Unknown*, June, 1939) and "Sons of the Bear God" (*ibid.*, Nov., 1939).
- (14) Everett Webber's *Escape to Utopia* (1959) is especially recommended.
- (15) (a) *Astounding Stories*, Dec., 1934-April, 1935.
(b) Ballantine Books, 1953.
- (16) "The Inverted World" (*Galaxy Science Fiction*, Dec., 1973-March, 1974).
- (17) (a) *Tales of Wonder*, August, 1940.
(b) *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, December, 1949.
- (18) A device used in "The Roaring Trumpet" by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt (*Unknown*, May, 1940).
- (19) Reminding readers in the field of zombie legends and of the once very popular books of John Kendrick Bangs.

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