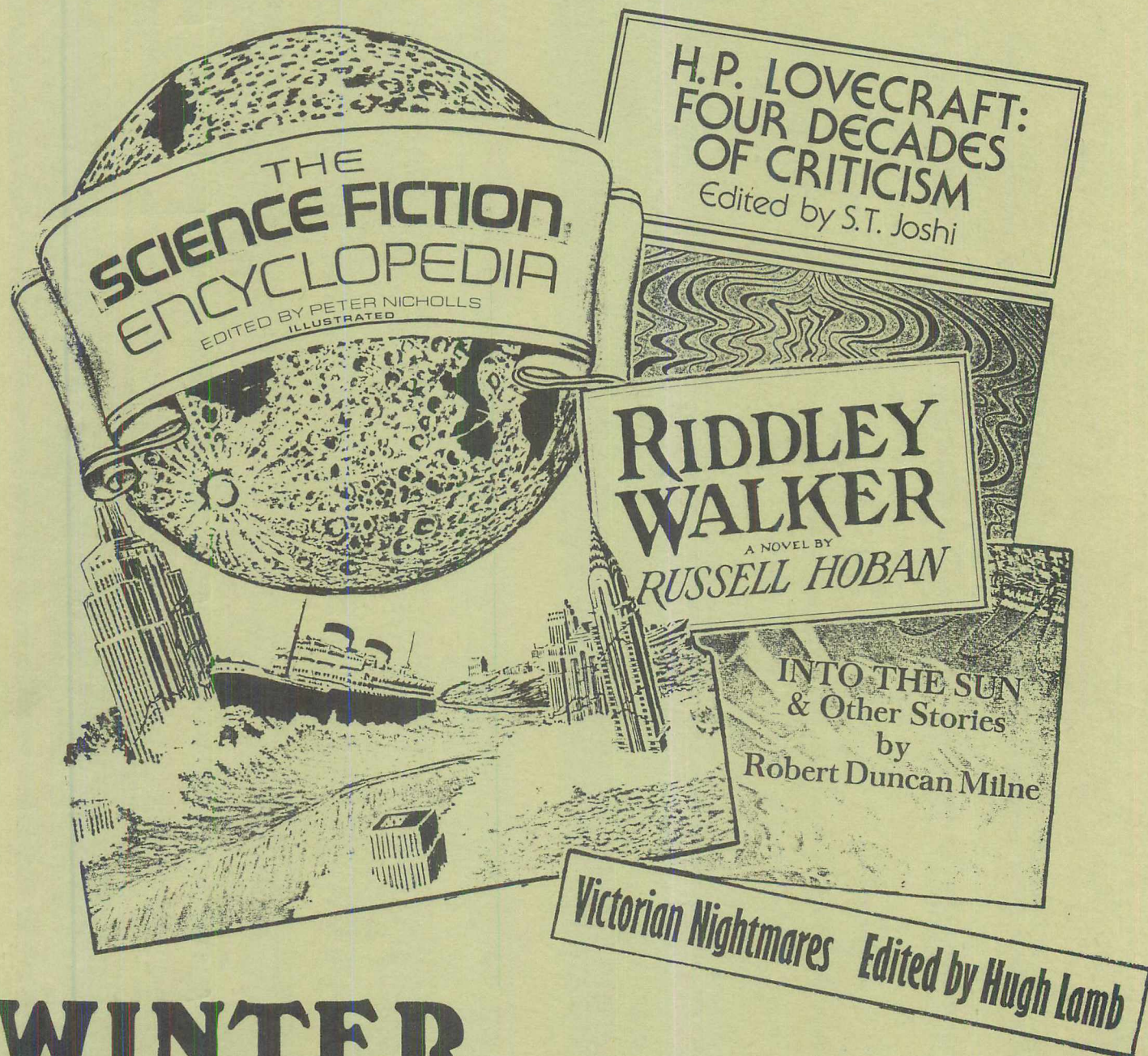


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Needle in a Haystack:

In Search of Robert Duncan Milne

by JOSEPH WRZOS

A good many years ago, during one of our long, rambling, but (at least for me) thoroughly absorbing telephone conversations about science-fiction and sundry matters, Sam Moskowitz casually asked if I had ever heard of a writer named Robert Duncan Milne. I said no, I hadn't, though obviously he had or he wouldn't have been asking. He then went on to admit that all he had was the man's name, nothing more, though knowing Sam's canny ways, I suspect now that he did know a bit more than he let on, but not much.

This was back in the early 1970's, a period when science-fiction scholarship was just beginning to get up a head of steam and when really comprehensive reference works and critical studies—in sharp contrast to the present—were not yet available. Despite the handicap I nevertheless assumed, quite naively as it turned out, that a quick trip to any local or university library would tell me everything I would want to know about Milne, whoever he was. But after several quick, then prolonged, visits to *every* reference library in the area, I gradually began to face the unsettling prospect: no matter what encyclopedia, biographical dictionary, periodical index or literary history I might consult, Milne's name probably wouldn't be in it. Finally, as I reluctantly closed the last source-book I could think of consulting—it too was dry—I forced myself to begin digesting an astonishing fact about this writer who was only a name. Here was an author so completely forgotten that he wasn't even worth mentioning in *Who Was Who*, the last refuge of the famous figure of yesteryear.

But I couldn't let things end that way. So while Sam presumably went his own scholarly way, trying to track Milne with the methods that had helped him to write such seminal works as *Explorers of the Infinite* and *Seekers of Tomorrow* and to turn up the forgotten but adroit pre-Wellsian science-fiction of the New York Sun editor Edward Page Mitchell (collected in *The Crystal Man*, 1973), I kept up my visits to other libraries, bookstores and collections of fellow enthusiasts in the field, ever alert for any sign of my quarry, always to no avail. Then one day, not really expecting anything to come of it, I picked up a copy of W. A. Swanberg's *Citizen Hearst* (1961)—and there in the index was "Milne, Robert Duncan, 66-67"!

However, my delight soon turned sour as I flipped to the indicated pages. For apparently the sole reason for rescuing Milne from obscurity was to illustrate how far publisher Hearst would go to boost the circulation of his San Francisco *Examiner* with sensationalism. According to Swanberg, Milne worked for

the paper, had the reputation of being its "outstanding alcoholic," and at one time wrote a lead story on his encounter with a special "Keeley Cure" which helped him kick his habit so completely that he both praised and recommended the method to fellow alcoholics. Unfortunately, within two weeks, Milne suffered a relapse, reverted to his old ways, later claiming that life without liquor had lost all pleasure for him and that he preferred "a state of drunkenness to a state of sobriety." Not a very auspicious breakthrough this anecdote about a hard-drinking, backsliding reporter on the West Coast at the turn of the century, but at least I had found Milne at last.

Fortunately, elsewhere in *Citizen Hearst*, Swanberg—a meticulous scholar—indirectly provided the key needed to unlock the rest of the Milne mystery. For besides thinking up sensational ideas to raise circulation, the enterprising Hearst also attempted to entice already employed writers and editors to join his fold. Among them was Jerome A. Hart, then editor of the *Argonaut* (a popular tabloid-sized weekly periodical published in San Francisco), whom he tried to sign on as managing editor of the *Examiner*. Hart declined the offer but later recorded it in his memoirs *In Our Second Century* (1931), a title listed in Swanberg's bibliography. And that revelation turned out to be the second and most important clue to unraveling the Milne connection because a quick scanning of the Hart book—a copy of which I immediately hunted up and read—suddenly lifted away the curtain of obscurity. Finally, Robert Duncan Milne stood forth plain.

According to editor Hart, in the early days of the *Argonaut*, about 1880, one of the many writers he helped to encourage and develop (though he did not discover him) was Milne, a Scotsman with a terrific stutter, a monumental drinking problem, and a remarkable facility for writing highly speculative but believable stories about the strange and the incredible. He wrote of the possibility of communicating with Mars by means of a giant aerial reflector, of machines capable of flying into "celestial regions," of bombarding San Francisco from hostile balloons, and of the ingenious defrosting and resuscitation of a man found frozen in Arctic ice for ten thousand years. In other words, Milne wrote science-fiction. And not just an occasional "different" story, but a whole slew of extremely popular tales that have been lost to us for almost a century—until now.

For this is where Sam Moskowitz re-entered the critical picture. Apprised of these few facts about Milne, he soon took up the chase in earnest, managing to obtain—in his infinitely resourceful way—the actual text of "Ten Thousand Years in Ice," the only Milne story known to make it into book form, as part of *Argonaut Stories* (1906), a Hart-edited paperbound collection of representative stories from the magazine. But when Sam and I read the Milne story, understandably excited, we were at first puzzled, even disappointed. What was all the fuss about? The idea of reviving and then communicating with someone long preserved in ice wasn't new even then (the Milne story was first published in the *Argonaut* for January 14, 1889), having been used by a French writer, Edmond About, in *A New Lease on Life* (in English, 1887) and by William Clark Russell in *The Frozen Pirate* (1887), not to mention Mary Shelley's posthumously published short story, "Roger Dodsworth: the Reanimated Englishman," which appeared as early as 1863.

What's more, both Sam and I at first found Milne's writing style, though highly literate, still somewhat tediously expository (an initial reaction that soon wore off after exposure to a wider range of his work). Even as a story, we felt, it wasn't *that* outstanding, unless one were fascinated by the admittedly convincing description of the painstaking procedure followed in thawing out safely and then reviving the body of a strangely garbed man frozen in Arctic ice from a time predating recorded history. Even worse, just when the work began generating its own kind of narrative spell, with Mr. Kourban Balanok, the resuscitated man, learning English and about to describe the prehistoric world in which he lived

and the cataclysm that overtook it, Milne abruptly concluded his narrative. This obviously left the way open for a sequel; but under the circumstances that possibility offered cold comfort for readers trying to enjoy "Ten Thousand Years in Ice" on its own.

Undaunted, Sam persevered. First, he discovered a major critical source, Ella Sterling Cummins's *The Story of the Files* (1893), which contained not only a full account of the *Argonaut* but also listed (and this was a strike of the first magnitude) titles for more than thirty Milne stories, most of which sounded like science-fiction. One of these, "The World's Last Cataclysm," turned out to be a remarkably original sequel (a passing comet with an iron core causes a catastrophic shift in the location of the Earth's magnetic pole) to "Ten Thousand Years in Ice," which we had initially faulted for ending where it should have begun.

Now the way was clear. All Sam and I had to do was check back issues of the *Argonaut* to locate the stories listed by Cummins, but—as we soon learned—*Argonauts* on the East Coast are either non-existent or, if cataloged, somehow no longer on the dusty shelves of even the Library of Congress! But this kind of obstacle, unavailability of primary sources, only whets the true scholar's appetite even more. It decided Sam to trace those *Argonauts* back across the country, if necessary to their point of origin, Milne's own milieu. And after years of tedious and expensive effort he finally succeeded in accumulating an enormous mass of Milne and Milne-related prime source-material.

What he found in the piles of photocopies solicited from the West Coast was far more than he anticipated: not only all of the Milne stories mentioned by Cummins but even more—over sixty of them—many of which, as he had inferred, were excellent science-fiction of a most impressive kind, considering the time and place of publication. Even more exciting, he also discovered the existence of a hitherto unrecognized West Coast *school* of science-fiction, fantasy and supernatural writers. These included Ambrose Bierce and the lesser-known W. C. Morrow, W. H. Rhodes (writing as "Caxton") and Emma Frances Dawson (musician, poet, translator, recluse, author of powerful weird fiction), along with a lesser hierarchy of minor though gifted writers whose works, like Milne's, had either been ignored by or simply unknown to the Eastern Establishment of critics and scholars.

But this state of affairs is now nearing its end with the publication of the first two volumes in a new series, *Science Fiction in Old San Francisco* (1980). The first volume, *History of the Movement from 1854 to 1890*, unfolds the forgotten facts about the rise of West Coast science-fiction from Rhodes to the close of Milne's career. The second, *Into the Sun & Other Stories*, gives permanent book form at last to a representative sampling of Robert Duncan Milne's best and varied stories. The publication of these works may well compel the academic and fan-scholar communities to redraw the literary map of nineteenth-century science-fiction. After assimilating the astonishing contents of these two volumes they will have to consider moving over such Olympian figures (each of whom, when one thinks about it closely, wrote relatively few actual *science-fiction* stories) as Edgar Allan Poe, Fitz-James O'Brien, Nathaniel Hawthorne and even (another of Sam's recent discoveries) Edward Page Mitchell in order to make room, a lot of room, at least for Robert Duncan Milne, whose nearly *sixty* bona fide science fiction titles may well stake his claim to being not only America's but indeed the world's first full-time science-fiction writer.

And what a writer he was! Keenly curious, informed about all the latest scientific and engineering developments in his day, a classical scholar (he had been educated at Oxford), a poet, a journalist, but also, alas, a confirmed remittance man who, immediately upon receiving his money from abroad, shamelessly squandered it on drink and lavish camaradie—behavior perhaps inevitable considering the basic mystery that lay (and still lies, despite Sam's valiant effort at

biography) at the dark center of the man's psyche. He must often have been peniless, far removed from the next remittance check, his little gray cells reluctantly drying out from the sea of drink and ready—for a man must live, after all—for action which, for Milne, took the form of somehow putting words on paper so precisely, so lucidly, so persuasively that all those more sober *Argonaut* readers probably found it child's play to climb the towers of his fancy.

Even the most cursory reading of the eleven stories gathered in *Into the Sun*, approximately a sixth of Milne's total science-fiction production, immediately conveys a sense of the author's versatility—and astonishing precocity. For many of the subjects, which current scholars tend to regard as of relatively recent vintage, appear here first, often much earlier than has been supposed; although if any lesson can be learned from Sam's discoveries, it is that there may well be yet older sources, ones predating even Milne.

In "Professor Vehr's Electrical Experiment" (1885), for example, an eminently sane scientist constructs a device capable of converting a worried young lover into raw energy and then transmitting him, via telephone wires, from San Francisco to New Orleans so that he can foil a rival for his fiancée's affections. Unfortunately, just as the reunited couple, both of them now pure energy, are making the return journey to San Francisco via the same wires, there is a sudden blow-out in the professor's power-line. The lovers never return, presumably having been absorbed into the electromagnetic spectrum.

One of the author's most effective flights of extrapolation uses the ancient idea of regaining one's youth. In "A Man Who Grew Young Again" (1887) a middle-aged Englishman seriously wounded in a hunting accident is saved by his doctor-companion when the latter, as an emergency measure, connects the wounded man's circulatory system with those of two strapping and youthful farmhands. The eventual result, as a single bloodstream courses through the veins and arteries of three individuals, is that the two young men begin to age and the older man grows younger, a condition that persists even when the latter is disconnected from his donors. So convincing is Milne's detailed account of the transfusion process that one has no difficulty in accepting the surprising and inevitable later complications for the now younger-older man, who is unable to convince others, both personally and legally, of his true identity. A deftly tragi-comic ending discloses that the rejuvenated man, after learning the shocking news that his youthful son has unexpectedly died at sea, actually marries his son's fiancée, a pert young lady who goes on with the ceremony even though she realizes she is marrying the man who was to have been her father-in-law. When the happy couple returns to England the bridegroom finds that his own mother, all his relatives, the servants and even the tenants of his ancestral estate persist—because of his youthful appearance and uncanny resemblance to his dead son—in thinking of him as the *new* master of the hall.

Other highly ingenious and novel ideas lie in most of the remaining stories in this collection. "A Base-Ball Mystery," one of the author's lightweight tales, concerns the illicit introduction into a major-league game of a magnetized ball and bat, permitting a slumping pitcher to throw a perfect game and hang on to his fickle girl. On a grander scale is "A Question of Reciprocity" (1891), in which San Francisco itself is held for ransom by a Chilean warship armed with unmanned, cable-controlled, helicopter-like aircraft capable of dropping both bombs and ransom notes. However, after payment of twenty million dollars in silver and gold is made, and as the enemy ship attempts to slip away in a typically dense Bay fog, it is destroyed by a proximity-fuse torpedo launched from an American cruiser hurrying to the rescue.

Milne is probably at his best with the "bigger" themes, as in the title story of the collection and its sequel, "Plucked from the Burning" (both 1882), in

which a comet smashes into the sun, causing such an enormous rise in the level of solar radiation reaching Earth that nearly all life is burned up in its pitiless glare. The narrator (a reporter like Milne himself) and a quick-witted physician, Dr. Arkwright, attempt to escape to higher and cooler altitudes by means of an abandoned balloon. But only the narrator manages to survive the ordeal, his companion having been blown overboard by a sudden and stifling gust of storm-wind. Distraught, the survivor clings to the edge of the gondola, staring down appalled by the catastrophic scene below, the streets and hills, the houses and wharves of the city shoreline all baked and fused into unrecognizability, every living thing most certainly dead. Sure that he too is doomed in the mounting heat and perilous storm-blasts, he begins to lose consciousness as another gust sends the balloon down in what appears to be a fatal descent. However, when he awakens a long time later—his balloon has blown all the way across the Pacific and come down in the higher reaches of the Tibetan Himalayas—he learns that he has been rescued and cared for by Buddhist monks who, because of their fortuitous location, have also survived the holocaust. Eventually, fully recovered, he leads an expedition down to a now-cooling coastline where, insatiably curious about the condition of his homeland, he commandeers a relatively undamaged iron steamer and voyages back across the Pacific, entering San Francisco Bay to find the metropolis desolate and apparently empty of all life. But not quite empty—because from the ship that night he observes a moving light on the shore. The next morning he investigates and pinpoints its location as the former site of what used to be an imposing edifice, the Nevada Bank. There, to his astonishment, he discovers two of his grizzled countrymen, digging for the bullion still buried under the rubble. They turn out to be miners who were lucky enough to be left behind in a deep mine shaft when the catastrophe struck. Delighted to meet another survivor, particularly a fellow American, the two prospectors cheerfully invite the narrator to join them in completing the digging, naturally for an equal share. Probably amused by the irony of the situation—although he doesn't say—he declines. Years later, by which time a few more survivors have been located, the narrator apparently comes to terms with his predicament. For he concludes his narrative by re-creating that these lucky few have rebuilt not the old world and its feckless ways but a new and simpler society, whose address he gives as "Utopia"—a land of simple, handsome and hardy men and women, still domesticating animals and cultivating modest crops, lacking what used to be known as the arts and sciences, following no formal religion, obeying no specific laws and, therefore, "all good, because there is no interest in being bad."

But even these detailed summaries probably cannot convey an adequate idea of how it feels to read a typical Milne story. As has been mentioned earlier, when Sam and I read our first Milne story (the only one available at the time) we were at first a bit put off by the author's penchant for holding back narrative momentum in order to draw a verbal blueprint of the process upon which the story line depended. Yet these expository passages, as Sam suggests, were probably the very feature most enjoyed by *Argonaut* readers, living as they did in an age of high excitement and a rapid string of inventions. How they must have marvelled at telegraphy, the telephone, the electric light, the phonograph and almost everything else that we moderns now take for granted! Those Milne fans probably savored scientific fact and engineering detail as much as modern readers might now applaud current literary style and purely fictional resourcefulness. But, as Sam also makes clear, early in his career Milne deftly mastered the art of balancing expository speculation with engaging narrative—so much so, in fact, that the great majority of his stories (and that includes every one in *Into the Sun*) merit the attention of today's scholar and general reader alike.

And for all this we should, in the end, feel nothing but gratitude to Sam Moskowitz, who for his entire career as a literary historian and scholar, has been pushing back the frontiers of science-fiction as we know it, forcing us to recognize that the field is far larger and more significant than we have heretofore imagined. And with the publication of these two scholarly yet entertaining volumes (the beginning of a series we hope will be completed soon) we can also begin to appreciate what he has done for a writer named Robert Duncan Milne, who fortunately—unlike his own fictional character, Mr. Kourban Balanock, the man from before the dawn of human history—had to wait only a century, not a hundred centuries, before someone accidentally noticed him lying deep in the files of oblivion.

Editor's note: Additional bibliographical background for this article will be found in "Open House," pp. 256-257; and a review of *Science Fiction in Old San Francisco* on pp. 242-244.

A Few Thorns

Comments and Opinions

by LINCOLN VAN ROSE

I have often wondered why so many authors, after choosing challenging themes, manage to make them dull and uninteresting. Of course I realized that they must be doing something wrong; but since I've never been exposed to any formal training in how to write fiction, the technical reasons for their failings were never obvious to me. Recently I became curious enough to find out a little more about this subject. Part of what I learned seems interesting enough to share, and also to apply to the field of science-fiction and fantasy.

Educators apparently began systematic study of how writing style affects reading ease back in the 1920's. Then (as now) they cloaked their findings in technical jargon that made accessibility difficult, and seldom reduced these findings to simple principles which people outside their own field could use. As the number of studies increased, the situation became more complicated than ever. For example, in *What Makes a Book Readable?* (1935) W. S. Gray and Bernice Leary enumerate no less than 64 separate characteristics of writing-style that are objectively describable. (They actually tested 44 of these.) By the late 1930's several competing formulas incorporating a number of such characteristics were being applied. They counted three to five variables, and required charts and long equations to interpret. They were never popular—it usually took longer to test a portion of prose than the author originally had needed to write it.

Experts gradually realized, however, that almost all the variables being tallied fell into two categories: sentences—their length and the relationships within them; and "word load"—the kind of words used (whether concrete or

abstract, adjectives, verbs, etc.), their length, and how well known they were. Length of both words and sentences proved to be the most important factor of all.

This relationship led Robert Gunning, in the early 1940's, to cut out a lot of smothering arithmetic and propose a truly simple way of measuring reading ease. Here's how you do it: First, choose a passage of writing at least a hundred words long. Count the number of words in each sentence and add them. Then divide that total by the number of sentences; this gives the average number of words per sentence. (Treat semicolons and colons as periods—thus my last sentence would actually be recorded as two separate sentences of nine words each.) Second, count the number of words in the passage with three or more syllables, and then calculate the percent of them present (how many there are per hundred words). But *don't* count such words if they are verbs, capitalized, or combinations of short, familiar ones, like "candleholder" or "bookkeeper." Third, add the figures you got from steps one and two and multiply their total by 0.4.

Gunning called this final number the Fog Index. The smaller it is, the easier reading a piece of prose will be; the higher, the more difficult—or fog-gier. Step three above was designed purposely to make the Fog Index numerically equivalent to the average school-grade level of reading ease. Thus if a passage has a Fog Index of ten that means 90% of it is understandable by someone in the tenth grade. (At least this was true twenty-five years ago; one might wonder if it still is today, what with the boob tube, trends away from the three R's in public schools, and the grade inflation afflicting colleges in the past decade.)

Gunning has assembled an interesting table of comparisons which I have adapted below:

COMMENT	FOG INDEX	READING LEVEL BY GRADE	READING LEVEL BY MAGAZINE
	17	college graduate	
difficult	16	" senior	no popular
reading	15	" junior	magazine this
range	14	" sophomore	difficult
	13	" freshman	
	12	high school senior	<i>Atlantic Monthly</i>
danger line	11	" " junior	<i>Harper's</i>
	10	" " sophomore	<i>Time; Wall St. Journal</i>
	9	" " freshman	<i>Reader's Digest</i>
easy	8	eighth grade	<i>Ladies' Home Journal</i>
reading	7	seventh "	<i>True Confessions</i>
range	6	sixth "	most pulps
	5	fifth "	comics

I've taken this from page 38 of his book *The Technique of Clear Writing* (1952), a book that I recommend to the curious reader who seeks more explanatory and supportive detail than is in my brief summary.

This table certainly doesn't imply that if you are aiming your prose at college seniors it should have a Fog Index of 16. Fog indexes simply represent the highest level at which people of various educational slots can read comfortably when they give a work close attention. Nor do Fog Indexes mean that one should write down to people, avoiding all long sentences and long words. And there is no implication that a writer shouldn't develop his own personal style. But what tests do show consistently is that a Fog Index of thirteen or over turns off the reader. He is likely to misunderstand the context of the piece or, if he doesn't have to read it, just toss it aside. After all, when reading for pleasure—fiction, for example—why should he bother?

Gunning claims, further, that high Fog Indexes are never needed, "for almost anything can be written within the easy-reading range." I verified this by analyzing Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*, a book that is chock-full of intellectual complexity and subtle nuances of thought: it has a Fog Index of 11.5*. Challenging concepts simply don't require an impenetrable, barbed-wire style of prose. And I also recall reading several years ago that someone—perhaps a *Commentator* reader can tell me who—when challenged to explain Einstein's Theory of Relativity in one-syllable words, was able to do it. Here is what another well-known author has to say on this subject:

I have never had much patience with writers who claim from the reader an effort to understand their meaning. You have only to go to the great philosophers to see that it is possible to express with lucidity the most subtle reflections. You may find it difficult to understand the thought of Hume; if you have no philosophical training its implications will doubtless escape you; but no one with any education at all can fail to understand exactly what the meaning of each sentence is. Few people have written English with more grace than Berkeley. There are two sorts of obscurity you will find in writers. One is due to negligence and the other to wilfulness. People often write obscurely because they have never taken the trouble to learn to write clearly.**

In applying Gunning's concepts to the science-fiction/fantasy field, I started right at home—this magazine. In *Fantasy Commentator* #29 my review of *The Futurians* has a Fog Index of 9.4. Wetzel's article on Lovecraft is 10.4. And Moskowitz's essay on Stapledon works out to 12.3 (careful, Sam—you're close to the danger-line!).

Next I applied this yardstick to fifteen science-fiction novels that most followers of the genre have read or at least heard about. I purposely chose ones that span nearly a century to represent all comparatively recent styles of writing. Here are the results, given in ascending order of their Fog Indexes:

6.0	<i>Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang</i> (1976)	9.1	<i>Before the Dawn</i> (1934)
6.2	<i>Gladiator</i> (1930)	9.4	<i>1984</i> (1949)
7.1	<i>A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court</i> (1889)	10.1	<i>Childhood's End</i> (1953)
7.4	<i>The House of the Borderland</i> (1908)	10.2	<i>Star Maker</i> (1937)
7.6	<i>Beyond the Blue Event Horizon</i> (1980)	10.5	<i>A Canticle for Leibowitz</i>
7.7	<i>The Time Machine</i> (1895)	10.6	<i>Sirius</i> (1944) (1960)
8.5	<i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> (1969)	10.7	<i>The Second Deluge</i> (1912)
		10.7	<i>Out of the Silence</i> (1919)

As you can see, the values for all of these titles lie well below Gunning's "danger line." And whether they are liked or not, I've never heard anyone complain that they were hard to read. Of course, having a reasonable Fog Index doesn't make something a classic, but it just might be one of the requirements for

*"Lord Russell explained that he had two models for style—Milton's prose and Baedeker's guidebooks. The Puritan never wrote without passion, he said, and the ciccone used only a few words in recommending sights, hotels and restaurants. Passion was the voice of reason, economy the signature of brilliance." —Ved Mehta: *Fly and the Fly-Bottle* (1963). I don't have a Baedeker at hand as I write, but Gunning has stated the Fog Index of *Paradise Lost* is 26!

**W. Somerset Maugham, *The Summing Up* (1938), pp. 30-31.

wide appeal. You can also see that there's no relationship between these numbers and *when* a book was written; high and low Fog Indexes lie near both ends of the time-span chosen.

You may ask how accurate these values are. If we limit ourselves to just a hundred words, mightn't one happen to choose an atypical spot? I felt the strength of this argument, so the figures cited—both the ones above and those yet to come—are based on random dippings into different parts of each text, four to ten paragraphs (as needed) totalling 500-600 words. I don't think increasing the wordage further would do more than change a decimal place by one or two units. Absolute accuracy would necessitate going from the beginning of any work to the end, counting every sentence and multisyllabic word. (I'd be interested to hear from anyone with patience and courage—or computer—to try this!)

Finally, I've applied Gunning's test to the work of a single author, H. P. Lovecraft. I chose stories from 1924 to 1935, his most productive period. This includes all of what have been called his New England horror tales, although I myself would classify most of them as science-fiction. Of these, I consider "The Colour Out of Space" his best work, topping "The Shadow Out of Time" and "The Dunwich Horror," my next favorites. Conversely, I think "At the Mountains of Madness" and "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" are his poorest. For what it's worth, my preferences happen to coincide strikingly with these stories' Fog Indexes. Here is the whole list, again arranged sequentially:

- 10.2 "The Colour Out of Space" (1927)
- 11.8 "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" (1931)
- 12.0 "The Dunwich Horror" (1928)
- 13.2 "The Whisperer in Darkness" (1930)
- 13.3 "The Thing on the Doorstep" (1933)
- 13.4 "The Shadow Out of Time" (1934-1935)
- 13.7 "The Haunter of the Dark" (1935)
- 14.1 "The Shunned House" (1924)
- 14.4 "The Dreams in the Witch-House" (1932)
- 14.6 "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" (1927-28)
- 14.7 "The Call of Cthulhu" (1926)
- 15.4 "The Horror at Red Hook" (1925)
- 16.7 "At the Mountains of Madness" (1931)

As you can see, I've omitted all collaborations as atypical. I've also omitted the shorter stories. Most of these seem more akin to work of his earlier period; they are composed in other styles and often deal with different themes. Though I've not analyzed them, I should expect their Fog Indexes to be scattershot and show no particular trend.

Can we draw any conclusions? First of all, most of Lovecraft's best work is surely to be found in the top half of this list. So is most of his late work. Secondly, while a low Fog Index may help a story, it doesn't guarantee high quality. "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" shows up well here (possibly because it has more conversation in it than the others), but no one I know has ever considered it a highly successful effort. Thirdly, Lovecraft's prose *is* more difficult to read than that of most science-fiction writers. The average Fog Index of all the stories above is 13.7—not only above Gunning's danger line, but significantly higher than the 8.8 average of the novels cited on the opposite page.

What I find most interesting about this last point is that some of Howard Lovecraft's stories were accepted for publication in pulp magazines at all. Take, for instance, the two that F. Orlin Tremaine bought for *Astounding Stories*. "The Shadow Out of Time" appeared in the June, 1936 issue, the rest of whose stories have a Fog Index of 6.8. Those accompanying the first installment of "At the

Mountains of Madness" average 7.1.* Tremaine must have had considerable faith in Lovecraft's popularity and the quality of the stories themselves to subject his subscribers to prose this difficult to read. And he himself recognized the difficulty. This is shown by his decision to break up "Mountains" (the more static and harder to read of the two) into a three-part serial, even though it is only half again longer than "The Shadow Out of Time." He also broke up Lovecraft's longer paragraphs into two or three shorter ones. I have not attempted a line-by-line textual comparison of the book and magazine versions of "Mountains," but I have been assured that Tremaine's actual cuts in the ms. were few and minor.

Was Tremaine's faith vindicated? Was he justified in extending amnesty from *Astounding's* editorial penal code to these two stories? Since the magazine printed a column of letters from its readers as a regular feature we can find out exactly what their reactions were. I have examined this column, "Brass Tacks," for the six consecutive issues where comments would be expected to concentrate (April through September, 1936). What I discovered may surprise you.

Of the 169 letters printed, 124 (73%) said nothing at all about either Lovecraft or his work. Five simply mentioned his name in some connection, or else cited one or both stories without assessing their quality. Another six apparently thought them mediocre, boosting a little and knocking a little. Out of those making explicit comments, twice as many panned "At the Mountains of Madness" as praised it (18 to 12). Some of the statements were particularly trenchant, too. Readers felt it "dragged horribly," was "tedious" and "monotonous", "drivel" with an "altogether boring" ending. The reception given "The Shadow Out of Time" was almost equally divided—six favorable comments to seven unfavorable ones. (And of letters praising the stories three, it should be mentioned, came from known admirers of Lovecraft: August Derleth, Duane Rimel and Corwin Stickney, Jr.) All of this scarcely adds up to a standing ovation!

I am not suggesting that letter-writers to *Astounding Stories* qualify as A-1 literary critics. But I do say that it is historically important to note that the majority of them, on the best evidence we have, never rated Lovecraft's work highly. (Some even denied it was science-fiction.) And in the capacity of a commercial editor had Tremaine had this hindsight he would surely have rejected both of Lovecraft's manuscripts.

In fact, had they been submitted by some unknown writer I am sure that he would have done just that. But Tremaine must have known about Lovecraft—the very introduction to "Mountains" tells us that: "Lovecraft comes back to science-fiction!" (The implication is that Tremaine knew that "The Colour Out of Space" had appeared in *Amazing Stories* in 1927.) Since part of an editor's job is watching his competitors, he would have been acquainted with *Weird Tales* magazine, whose readers found Lovecraft's fiction much to their liking. I presume he saw favorable comments on it there, perhaps even read a story or two himself. And it was probably on this basis that he was willing to take a calculated risk.

The Fog Index also provides us with a new insight into Lovecraft's relationship with Farnsworth Wright, editor of *Weird Tales*. Wright is supposed to have rejected a number of Lovecraft's tales because they were very long and because Lovecraft received a higher word-rate than other writers for the magazine. But Wright could simply have offered him the standard rate; he would probably have got the stories, there being virtually no other market for them. No one seems ever to have considered whether the real problem was something else entirely: Wright may have wanted shorter stories because Lovecraft's prose was so hard to read.

I suggest that Lovecraft scholars spend a little less time on the adulation that has become such a traditional part of their writing and do a little real thinking about these matters.

*I am grateful to the editor for access to his file of *Astounding Stories* so that statistics in this article could be compiled.

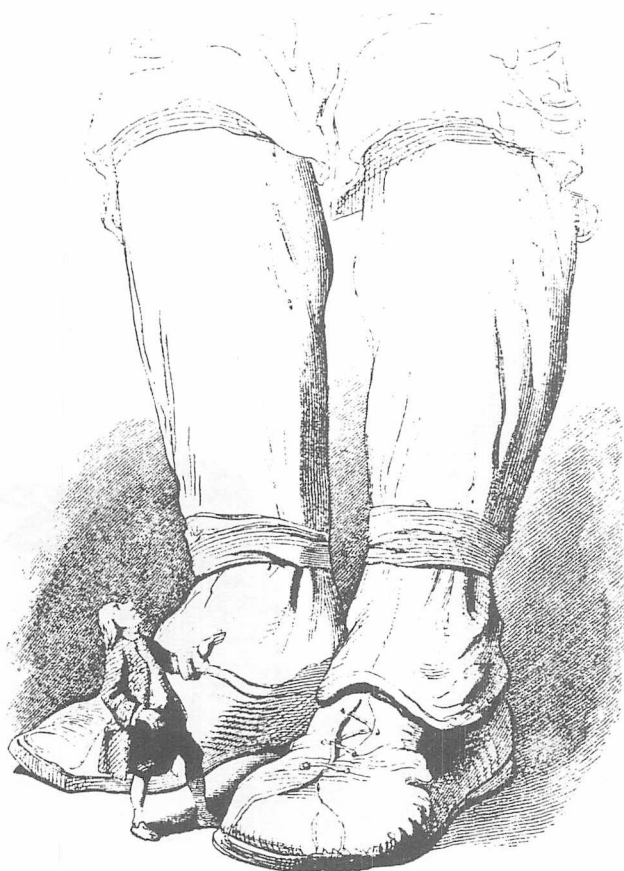
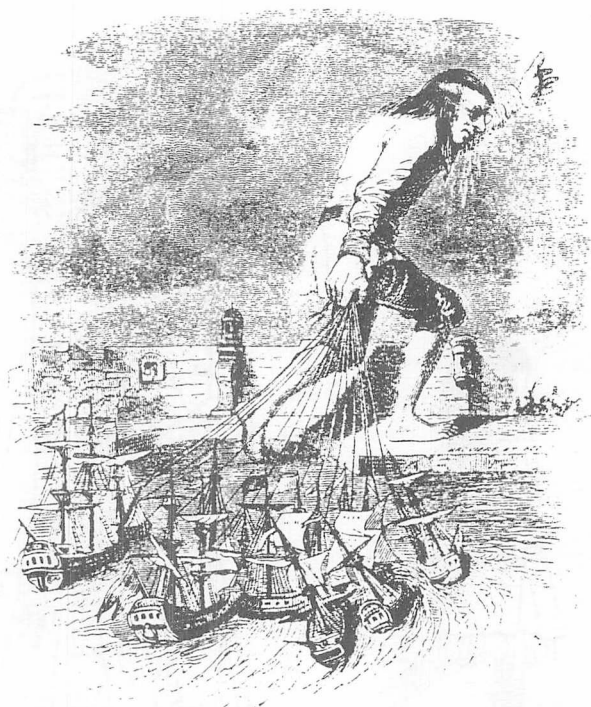
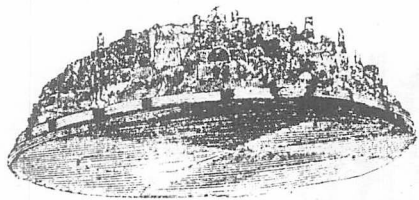
IT'S THE SAME EVERYWHERE!

In looks it was the strangest sort of creature,
Unprepossessing and Novemberish,
With no redeeming beauty one might wish:
Pink-white skin, unscaled; small of feature;
Short, useless nails; mouth like an asterisk;
A hairy head; five fingers on each hand
Instead of six; two eyes only, and
Over each, in frame, a small glass disc.

Now, I'm a liberal, and I always claim
Discrimination isn't right. Treat
Everyone alike, to each the same;
Be fair and square, forget about deceit.
But laws should be for men, not monsters frail—
I feel that to the last ridge in my tail!

— Lee Becker.





The most famous illustrations for *Gulliver's Travels* are those by J. J. Grandville, in the now extremely rare 1838 French edition, from which the above have been reproduced. A further sampling of them will be found on page 213.

Voyagers through Eternity

A History of Science-Fiction

From the Beginnings to H. G. Wells

by SAM MOSKOWITZ

Part II*

Gulliver removes his adventures from the tongue-in-cheek when he brings back to Europe as proof that Lilliputians do indeed exist a live cow so tiny it can stand on the palm of a man's hand. Note the similarity to Doyle's Professor Challenger returning to England with a pterodactyl in the finale to *The Lost World*.) He has also become so indoctrinated by the higher qualities of the Houhnhms' manners and reason after his sojourn with the distasteful Yahoos that association with human friends is difficult and even the smell of his wife is intolerable, which produces again the dual effect of satire and literary art.

The two masterpieces, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*, coming so close together were to prove major influences, extending to the present, on the direction and manner of writing science-fiction. Both demonstrated that it was not necessary to leave the surface of the Eighteenth Century world to find places where utterly strange adventures might occur. The plot device of a man castaway on another planet (instead of an island), making do with what he has, appears in new science-fiction literally every month. Ably demonstrated, but not as well learned, is the Swiftian lesson that for most effective satire an author must conceal his barbs in a *real* story. Both Defoe and Swift clearly display the necessity for believability through care in detail and orderly progression of events.

Like Defoe, Swift was nearly sixty when he wrote *Gulliver's Travels*. From an unhappy childhood to his appointment as Dean of St. Patrick's cathedral in Dublin his life had been composed of disillusionment. An extremely proud and sensitive man, he was deeply wounded by the unpleasant actions of those around him which most of us would shrug off as "human nature." This prompted his vicious satiric counter-thrusts. He proved a good friend to many, was successful with women (though he never married), and ended his last years paralyzed and insane.

Although Swift was primarily influential on writers whose characters experienced fantastic voyages on earth, Murtagh McDermot dedicated his *A Trip to the*

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

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Moon (Dublin, 1728) to Captain Lemuel Gulliver. It is not certain even today if McDermot is a pen name or a real one, and those who reviewed the book deplored its lack of originality. There is, however, one very important sequence in the story. Though the hero ascended to the moon in a whirlwind (like Lucian), he got back by blowing himself out of the moon's gravitational pull with gunpowder and then safely glided down on wings once the earth's atmosphere was entered. Not only is the method of return scientific, but the gunpowder concept very closely resembles de Bergerac's idea of a rocket, which had also been used previously by the anonymous French author of *Furetiriana* (Paris, 1709); the hero of that novel ascended by fire-works and returned by parachute.

Books dedicated to Gulliver and imitations of his voyages soon became common. Noteworthy among them (if only because it was for a time attributed to Swift himself) was *A Voyage to Cacklogallinia* (London, 1727), by the pseudonymous Captain Samuel Brunt. Brunt's adventure and action resemble Defoe, his Utopian and satiric aspects, Swift. Shipwrecked on a strange shore, Brunt finds a country in which the dominant species is an intelligent race of birds. It has been suggested that money to pay the national debt could be obtained by mining gold on the moon. Getting there proves no insuperable problem for the birds, who of course can fly, and a special streamlined chariot is designed so that Brunt may go along. Elaborate tests are conducted to acclimate the space-fliers to the thinner upper atmosphere. Brunt breathes through a wet sponge. When in space, he finds he is weightless. The moon, they discover, is inhabited by the spirits of certain of the dead from earth, and these have neither the desire nor will to dig for gold. Brunt returns to earth, knowing that the land of Cacklogallinia has sold an incredible amount of stock to finance his trip and will be bankrupted by the news he brings. This last aspect was doubtless a reflection of the South Sea Bubble and the Mississippi Scheme, gigantic financial speculations which had collapsed disastrously within a month of one another in Britain and France late in 1720.

A Frenchman named Pierre Francois Guyot Desfontaines wrote a sequel to *Gulliver's Travels* which appeared in Paris in 1730. In the same year it was translated into English by J. Lodeman as *The Travels of Mr. John Gulliver, Son to Capt. Lemuel Gulliver*. Two years earlier, in fact, a continuation of the original had been attempted by Swift himself; this appeared as a series of letters to *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*, beginning April 13, 1728 and ending uncompleted the next October 5th.

Aside from being extraordinary voyages and building - blocks of science fiction, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* are considered milestones in the development of the British novel. A Utopian work which is usually regarded by scholars as an important step following them in this direction is *Gaudentio di Lucca*, which was published anonymously in England in 1737. The author is now known to be a Roman Catholic priest, Simon Berington, but the work was initially attributed to Bishop George Berkeley, an Irish philosopher devoted to subjective idealism and the idea that nature is the message of God. Berington made no effort to claim authorship of the work during his lifetime.

The story purports to be an account extracted at Bologna by the Holy Inquisition. Di Lucca is a middle-aged man of outstanding appearance and graces, whose attractiveness to women caused one of them to accuse him of having bewitched her. In making a full confession to his inquisitors he tells them of Mezzorania, "a country in the heart of the deserts of Africa, whose inhabitants have lived unknown to all the world upwards of three thousand years," and how he was carried to this inaccessible land. The naturalistic and humanistic philosophy expressed in the lives of the people of this lost country is what caused many readers of the day to believe Berkeley was the author of the work.

Gaudentio di Lucca is an extremely well done Utopian novel, engaging the reader from the very start and carrying him along easily. The device of having

the inquisitors interrupt the flow of the story with their questions lends an air of authenticity and suspense, since the wrong answers could cost the narrator his freedom or even his life. These questions also prevent the tale from dragging, because they simplify the transition from one aspect of the lost civilization to another. The work had a great vogue until it was realized that the actual author was a little-known priest and not the great Berkeley. Abruptly, far fewer people found merit in it, and by 1821 English reprintings ceased.

Both Swift and De Bergerac are believed to have been key influences on Ludvig Holberg, commonly acknowledged the greatest of all Danish authors. Holberg, a Norwegian, almost single-handedly created the Danish theater, was a masterful poet, and a prolific essayist, historian and novelist. In *Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground* (published 1741 in Danish, German, French and Dutch, and in 1742 in English) he wrote one of the most famous stories of all time using the theme of a world in the center of the earth. Holberg was by no means the first author to use this idea, however; a number of books embodying it had preceded him. (20)* But his book started the deluge which included such influential and popular titles as Seaborn's *Symzonia* (1820), Verne's *A Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), Fezandie's *Through the Earth* (1887) and *At the Earth's Core* of Burroughs.

Holberg's book is also unusual since it can literally be described as interplanetary. The protagonist, Niels Klim, falls into a cavern during exploration in Norway and finds at the center of the earth a sun, around which revolve planets. He circles in an orbit around one of them, and pieces of bread that he has discarded from his pockets rotate around him as tiny satellites. Since the entire cavity of the earth is filled with air, there is no difficulty breathing. He escapes from orbit by harpooning a flying griffin, which flutters down to the planet's surface, dragging him along.

The centerworld planet of Nazar is inhabited by an intelligent race of mobile trees. In his travels through this world Klim utilizes his associations with them for satiric commentary on the failings and foibles of humans. Carried by birds to the inside surface of the hollow earth, he finds an intelligent race of monkeys. He intervenes in their affairs by instructing them how to make gunpowder. He becomes a king and conqueror in this strange land, but when an enemy nation there also learns how to make gunpowder his armies are routed; he blunders back to the surface of the earth, where he eventually writes of his adventures.

Although an entertaining and readable work, *Journey to the World Underground* suffers severely by comparison with Swift, with which it must be equated because its method and purpose are identical. But in a very real sense Holberg's work is a progenitor of the concept found in such "modern" stories as *The Girl in the Golden Atom* (1919) by Ray Cummings. There seems no fundamental difference between falling into a space in the center of the earth which contains a sun and a planet and *shrinking* to a size so small that atoms and electrons are visualized as suns and planets in a micro-universe.

In the same year as Holberg's book there appeared another inspiration of de Bergerac, Godwin and Swift, a book believed to be the first Swedish account of a trip to the moon. It was written by Johan Krook, and is titled *Tänkar om jordens skapnad, eller Fonton Freemassons äfventyr, till högvälborne herrgrefven* (*Thoughts on the Creation of the World, or Fonton Freemasson's Progress in Becoming an Esteemed Noble*).

The smaller quantity of science-fiction in European countries outside of England and France was no indication of lagging imagination or interest. Usually the better English and French works were eventually translated, but populations with other languages were relatively small, and in no other nation of the world at that time was literacy high. Europe's entire publishing industry depended for

*Footnotes for this article are on page 265.

survival on an audience that numbered in thousands, not millions. And to be a prospective purchaser of even a newspaper, let alone a book, the reader would also have to be well-to-do. In England newspapers were taxed according to their bulk, which limited detailed coverage of events and kept their price beyond those of low income. A circulation there of 15,000 for a magazine was astronomical.

The book industry was sustained by the limited variety of public entertainment and by the well-off often purchasing books in quantity. The number of books having general intellectual interest could be kept track of by those with means and leisure. Although the total book-reading audience was small, it was intensive, and an interested party could hope to keep up with all titles published in the area of his general interests. This accounted for the penetrating influence of works by Lucian, Godwin, de Bergerac, Defoe and Swift on the literati.

If any work helped give rise to a spate of imaginary voyages, Utopias, and science-fiction in Germany it was *Robinson Crusoe*. At first it spawned simple imitations, but then authors vied with one another to make their adventures even more fascinating, which resulted in lost civilizations, stranger happenings and ever more fantastic creatures. As the Eighteenth Century approached its mid-way mark, German fantastic adventures were flourishing; unlike those in England and France, however, they were not often translated. Their quantity, however, led Ullrich to compile his *Robinson und Robinsonaden* that I cited earlier.

VI

PETER WILKINS: LANDMARK SCIENCE-FICTION

With the exception of a few like *Robinson Crusoe*, the most frequent primary thrust of these works was satiric or political, sometimes with an added touch of scientific evangelism. But as their numbers increased everywhere it was inevitable that the fantasy element would become an end in itself. The appearance of *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins* thus becomes a notable event, since here the primary purpose of the novel was fantastic adventure, all other considerations being relegated to minor or supporting roles.

In those days it was the vogue (which prevailed in lessening degree until late in the next century) to present non-factual works anonymously or pseudonymously. *Peter Wilkins* appeared as authored by one "R. P.", and even though the book apparently sold well the publisher did not even bother to add his imprint. Although most first editions are dated 1751, it has been claimed that some copies bore the date 1750. The identity of both author and printer were revealed by chance. When the possessions of a publisher named Dodsley were sold at auction, there was found among them a contract with Robert Paltock, the author, who was to be paid £20, twelve free copies of the book, and a set of proofs of the illustrations for it. The research of Gordon Goodwin revealed that Paltock had been born in 1697, the child of his mother's third husband, and was an attorney residing at Clement's Inn.

On its merits as a story, *Peter Wilkins* is probably the best single novel of science-fiction between *Gulliver's Travels* and the advent of Jules Verne. It is one of the few I have mentioned which could be picked by a modern reader, just as it stands, and provide first-rate entertainment today.

The protagonist of the story, after a vivid and thrilling series of sea adventures, floating on the waters alone in a well-provisioned boat, is drawn into an underground waterway of a rockbound island. After five weeks underground he emerges onto a woodland lake encircled by great rock cliffs. There he sets up residence in Robinson Crusoe style. After a time he hears strange voices in the air, and one night finds a woman in some strange form of clothing lying outside the habitation he has built. She is winged, and one of the races native to this region. Eventually he marries her, and the two have children. The unusual cul-

ture of these people makes fascinating reading, and the introduction of firearms and cannon to help them settle their differences is reminiscent of Holberg. Since the people are winged, the aerial transport of these weapons adds a new dimension to their use. The protagonist also teaches them how to manufacture paper, and translates the Bible into their language. Following the death of his wife, and with his children provided for, Peter Wilkins attempts to return to civilization in a rig carried aloft by some of the local inhabitants. They become exhausted after days and nights of flying without sighting land and drop him into the ocean, where he is rescued by a passing ship. There he tells his story to Paltock, but dies on landing, willing the author the proceeds from his memoirs to help cover the expense of his burial.

The number of editions and translations of this work have been so numerous as to defy bibliographers. It is known to have been translated into French, German and Dutch; from 1828 on it was repeatedly printed in America (though usually in expurgated versions). The book also had admirers in high literary places; Samuel Coleridge called it a work of "uncommon beauty" and it is said to have been a favorite of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Lamb. *The Retrospective Review* at one time carried a discussion of the story that ran to sixty pages, (21) so fulsome in its praise as to be almost embarrassing. Among the comments its anonymous literary critic made are the following:

When we consider the high value deservedly attached to works of imagination, and, at the same time, the rare beauty of the fiction developed in the romance before us, it strikes us as incredible, that one, so calculated to please the fancy and beguile the attention, should have failed even to obtain notoriety enough to convey down to us, so much as the name of its author.... We must needs think it somewhat discreditable to the critical discernment of the times, which allowed a book, of such great and peculiar excellence, to fall still-born from the press; if, indeed, it be not more just to regard it as the misfortune of the age, that its taste was so constituted as to disqualify it for appreciating a work of so much imagination, and at the same time, of a character so simple and unpretending.

In the following year, 1751, there appeared another novel which greatly resemble *Peter Wilkins* in style and manner. It was titled *The Life and Astonishing Adventures of John Daniel*, and was attributed to Ralph Morris. Since no further trace of a literary Ralph Morris has ever been discovered, this could well be a pseudonym. It has also been suggested that the book might have been written by Paltock, since it contained, in addition to typical Robinson Crusoe episodes, some well-handled sex and the invention of a flying machine.

John Daniel, a blacksmith and son of a blacksmith, leaves his father's home because his young stepmother has been making advances toward him. He signs on to a china-bound ship, but the vessel is wrecked and he is cast ashore with a shipmate, Thomas. They trap wild pigs for food, and an injury to Thomas reveals that she is a woman. The two fall in love, recite the nuptials to one another, and live together. They eventually have four children, two boys and two girls, whom they marry to one another. One of the boys, Jacob, builds a flying machine. He also discovers a leaf that, if chewed, dispenses with all need for food and drink.

Daniel and his son fly to the moon, where they meet copper-colored sun-worshippers who tell them of their customs, industries and food. A description of weightlessness in space is given, including the impossibility of differentiating between "up" and "down." Upon returning to earth, they land on a rocky isle where lives a race of humanoid beings that are the offspring of an English woman and a

sea creature, and present a manlike appearance except that they are covered by scales.

After leaving the isle of the semihumans they proceed to Lapland. Finally they take passage on a ship back to England. En route Jacob is killed while hunting whales. John Daniel learns that his wife has died of a broken heart upon his disappearance, and that the rest of his children are squabbling with each other over shares in the island property.

Once back in England, Daniel discovers that his young stepmother first drove his father to destitution and then wandered insane, begging for alms, until she presumably died. Now over ninety, he demonstrates once again that his son's machine can fly, and the viewers vow that if they were younger they would not be satisfied with a trip to the moon, but would also explore Venus, Mars and Jupiter to learn what manner of life might be found there. Having obtained some valuable jewels once owned by the woman who gave birth to the half sea-creatures while sojourning on that island, Daniel is able to retire peacefully in the village where he grew up.

Like *Peter Wilkins*, *John Daniel* is first-rate entertainment. It was written for the sake of the story, and not for Utopian, satiric or moralistic purposes. Further, it is for adults and not children. Should it ever be discovered that Ralph Morris was a pen name for Robert Paltock, one of the greatest storytellers in the history of science-fiction will have been discovered.

Just when it seemed that with two fine novels science-fiction was growing into a more literary mold, the fifty-eight-year-old French literary firebrand, François Marie Arouet Voltaire, fired another cynical, tongue-in-cheek satiric thunderbolt which seemed to take the genre at a ninety-degree tangent back into the realm of social and international problems, *Le Micromégas* (1752). A year later this was published in English by D. Wilson and T. Durham of London. After he was twice imprisoned and once exiled to England for two years, Voltaire had become a torch-bearer for judicial reform. Well educated and the son of a lawyer, he was early a successful playwright, and never hesitated to wield a vitriolic pen in battles for causes he believed to be right. High skill at finance had also made him a rich man, and permitted him to devote most of his time and talents to writing.

Perhaps best known for the acknowledged literary classic *Candide*, which is in some respects a philosophical spoof on both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*, Voltaire's *Micromegas* is his major contribution to science-fiction and one of the earliest of what have been called super-science stories. An intelligent alien from a world revolving around the star Sirius goes system- and planet-hopping by means of special magnetic attraction and repulsion. He is a giant described as eight leagues in height. (A league varies in size with date and locale; in English-speaking nations at the time it would be about three miles, making *Micromegas* some twenty-four miles high.)

On his journey he picks up a much smaller giant from the planet Saturn. On their jaunt the two land on Earth and begin striding around on it. In an effort to show how small are the achievements and relativeness of men in comparison to the size of the solar system, Voltaire has his characters unaware that a civilization exists here until the visitors accidentally see signs of it by gazing through a diamond which has magnifying powers. The giants are understandably reduced to uncontrollable fits of laughter by the inconsequential aspirations and limited goals of mankind.

Micromegas is a deliberate farce, and written by so brilliant a pen might have been expected to slow the public appetite for extraordinary adventures and interplanetary stories. Yet it did not. On reflection this should come as no surprise. Centuries before, Lucian's moon stories were supposed to be the travel tales to end all travel tales—and, as events proved, they were to be but the beginning.

(continued on page 259)



Ten Sonnets

by *STANTON A. COBLENTZ* *

From the Outer Universes

Before the first fish-lizard clove the sea
 This beam that flashes to our lens today
 Already streaked a lightning-rapid way
 Across the void of starred immensity.
 And what is that, we ask, to you or me?
 Sunswarm on sunswarm, in gemmed array,
 And emptiness on emptiness that lay
 Far as forever—deep as thought could be.
 From such galactic strangeness, in relief,
 The mind returns to small and common things:
 The wren, the moth, the beetle on the ground;
 Hears childhood's laughter, and its Mayfly grief;
 And musing on glint of eyes and roots and wings
 Holds great Orion itself not more profound.

First Man on the Moon

When some Columbus of the sky shall stand
 High on the lunar Alps and watch our globe
 Roll on with many a silvered sea and land
 And clouds and continents in a moon-pale robe,
 Then will that mariner of the gulfs of space
 Be gay or sad, remembering how our kind
 Conquered the worlds but not the human race,
 And tamed sun-power, but not man's reckless mind?
 About him, in the scarred infinitude,
 Black craters and the splintered airless spires
 And pitted, cold, Saharan plains will brood
 Under the daytime stars' unblinking fires.
 But will the explorer of the soundless void
 Exult, or murmur in ironic mirth,
 Thinking of man, space-challenging man, employed
 To climb the spheres and desolate the earth?

*The provenance of these poems is given on page 217, and comments on them by Lee Becker appear on page 257.

Space Travel

Strange it would seem if earthworms crawled on trees,
Or mackerel scuttled over rocks ashore,
Or humming birds desired the ocean floor,
Or mile-deep caverns hummed as haunts of bees.
But stranger is man, miscast beyond all these,
This creature wingless as the albacore,
Child of the dust and clay, who dreams to soar
Through moon-gulfs and the midnight vacancies.

Far from his natural soil, cut loose from ties
That lashed him to our green and sheltered sphere,
Alien amid the domed, fire-dotted skies,
He strains where inaccessible planets veer.
And heaven itself may watch, in awed surprise,
A frail mote climbing where the suns career.

As the Space Age Begins

And why should man, suckling the breast of earth,
Ponder the drift of suns or galaxies,
The death of systems, or the planets' birth,
The tribes of Leo or the Pleiades?
Why should he read the message hurled in space
On light rays older than the first cave fire?
Things strange to him as to the aphid race
The oratorios of a temple choir!

As when a child, at some cathedral door,
Hearing the organ raptures roll and surge,
May stand entranced—so man, upon the shore
Of night and vastness, feels a beat, an urge
From powers beyond him, and a wakening mood
Of kinship with the starred infinitude.

The Big Dipper

When still a child, upon an elm-grown lane,
Strolling in silence at my mother's side,
I watched this constellation wonder-eyed;
And all unaltered, those bright stars remain,
Though man's pale universes whirl and wane
And the whole world I knew of old has died.
What long, hard decades, deep as life and wide,
Since she I cherished then was freed from pain!

But to those orbs high-wheeling overhead
Our span is scarce a heartbeat—better so!
Though sharing our mortality, they show
A clockless order, and the rhythmic tread
Of time so vast that now and long ago
Are fused, and half revive the smiling dead.

Radio Telescope

And shall we throb at space-borne symphonies,
Or pleadings of some stellar Cicero?
And shall we hear the cocks of Perseus crow,
And jangle of traffic in the Pleiades?
Learn wisdom from some nameless Socrates
Light-years away where fierce star-clusters glow?
And tremble at echoes of the tread and flow
Of strange, more nobly crowned humanities?
Never before, since life's first shoot began,
Have murmurs reached us from the worlds in flight.
But now, through ears that plumb the topless height,
The living universe may speak to man
And show him not alone, an earth-bound mite,
But part of the infinite galactic plan.

The Second Self

By night or day, although we stir or sleep,
The invisible second self remains the same,
Mysterious monitor without a name
That leads us with a wisdom ages deep;
That fans the breath, and rules the whirl and sweep
Of live red corpuscles, and lights a flame
In each cell of our million-fibred frame,
And shapes the bones, the hair, the tears we weep.
How strange our kinship to this ghostly guide,
This dark housekeeper of the nerves and blood,
Which none can see, and none can put aside!
Here is the power that out of dew and mud
Erects the redwood; coaxes the rose to bud;
And floats galaxies on a shoreless tide.

World Potentate

Science, which blazes on ten thousand aisles
That only yesterday were blind as fog,
Ranges the star-gulfs, while her tubes and dials
Gauge the live universe of man and frog.
Within her scales she weighs the rolling globes;
Her eyes have traced the trenches of the deep;
She turns her lens on perished years, and probes
The islanded atom and the pits of sleep.
But what dark genius fires the sprouting cell,
And dyes the velvet cushions of the rose,
And lights the mind, whose storm and glory dwell
Trembling in transient flesh? She little knows
Who searches substance and explores the sheath,
But rarely plumbs the flame, the heart beneath.

After the Bomb

If some small planet, of the billion spheres
 That roll with teeming life through edgeless space,
 Glares with atomic fire, and disappears
 Totally as the warring Trojan race,
 Orion will turn calmly as of old,
 Perseus gleam with jewel-pointed light,
 And deep in Crux a savant may behold
 One casual spark puff out against the night.

But to this world that struggled eon-long
 To climb from scum and ooze to laurel green,
 And hear a Shakespeare's voice, a Schubert song,
 And probe the pit of heaven and proton screen,
 Who shall compute the loss? The void may throb
 With tremblings of a great, lone Watcher's sob.

The Face of Man

The face of man, while old perspectives change
 From ox-trails to the clanging motor street,
 Has scarcely altered in a minor range
 Since plunderers burned the halls of fabled Crete.
 The head of Khafra, fixed in fadeless stone,
 The Hermes of divine Praxiteles,
 Are such as even you and I have known,
 Unravaged by the raging centuries.

And in the mind whose movements mold the face,
 Though forms of thought rotate like women's styles,
 No change is clear since men of Helen's race
 Roared down as pirates on Aegean isles.
 Meanwhile quicksilver science domineers
 A world new hours transform like ancient years.

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—oOo—

"Open House"—concluded from page 258

Lastly, I must thank the editor of this magazine for allowing me access to his library and for his helpful comments and suggestions; without these, nothing of mine you see in this issue would have been written.

—oOo—

BACK ISSUES: #26, 29, 30 and 31 are obtainable at the current price from either your local dealer or the publisher.

Lucky Me

by **STEPHEN FABIAN**

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Eastern Science Fiction Association (ESFA) was formed to sponsor the First Post-War Science Fiction Convention, which was to act as the opening gun in the revival of dormant fandom after the conclusion of World War II. This convention, its first meeting, was held in Newark, N. J. on March 3, 1946 under the chairmanship of Sam Moskowitz, with L. Sprague de Camp and the editor of this magazine, A. L. Searles, as the featured speakers. In attendance were such celebrities as Robert Arthur, C. A. Brandt, Sam Merwin Jr., F. Orlin Tremaine, Manly Wade Wellman and others. The gathering succeeded admirably, for the Philadelphia delegation followed through with sponsorship of the Fourth World Science Fiction Convention the next Fall, and the science-fiction world has been a beehive of non-stop activity ever since.

Stephen Fabian's speech "Lucky Me" was part of the program of the ESFA's 35th anniversary meeting held in Wayne, N. J. on March 1, 1981, also under Sam Moskowitz's direction. Other featured speakers were Dr. and Mrs. Isaac Asimov, Stanley Schmidt, Donald Wollheim and the famed Edd Cartier, who was attending his first fantasy gathering in three decades. Among the great and near-great who have appeared during these 35 consecutive years of ESFA meetings are John W. Campbell, Arthur C. Clarke, August Derleth, Virgil Finlay, Hugo Gernsback, Robert Heinlein, Willy Ley, Frank R. Paul, and indeed almost everyone of any consequence among the Old Guard of the field.

When I began to ponder what I should talk about concerning science-fiction illustration within the time-limit given me, I eventually got around to wondering, this being a 35-year anniversary, what it was like to be a science-fiction illustrator back in 1946: how did it compare with my own life as an illustrator today in 1981? I did a little research to make that comparison, and I think it's worth telling you about it. At least I hope it will be of some interest to you.

For reasons that will be obvious as I go along I must set a tiny stage for that comparison. First of all, in 1946 World War II had recently ended and servicemen were still making the transition back to civilian life. People then were concentrating on earning a peacetime living, and according to my research the average annual income in the United States was a little under \$2000 a year—or about \$35 a week.

The market for the science-fiction illustrator's artwork at that time was limited to just seven pulp magazines. They were *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Planet Stories*, *Astounding Science Fiction*, *Famous Fantastic Myster-*

ies, *Startling Stories* and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. Since some of these were sister titles owned by the same publisher and edited by the same man, it might be more accurate to say that the market offering illustration assignments was really only five pulp houses, and these five published a total of 47 issues that year.

1946 must have been a disappointing year for many fans. According to my indices to science-fiction magazines of that period Isaac Asimov, who was busy getting his discharge from the army and settling down to civilian life, had only one short story ("Evidence") published. And Lester Del Rey appeared in none of those 47 issues. Neither did Ray Gallun.

Incidentally, Del Rey sold his first story ("The Faithful") to *Astounding* in 1938, and in his book *The Early Del Rey* he says of that first sale: "There is something about having one's first work of fiction accepted for publication that is not equalled by any other success on earth." And let me clarify that first sale. The very first time he sat down to write a story, on a dare from a friend, he sold what he wrote to the best science-fiction magazine of the day! Well, joy is an inside job, and how do you measure it? All I know is that when I received my first acceptance letter from a professional science-fiction magazine for my first pro attempt at illustration, I did 45 whooping kangaroo hops around the dining room table while my wife was yelling at me to watch my head. For all I know I might have hit the ceiling a few times, but I wouldn't have felt it! Since Del Rey says his experience is "unequalled" I'll call mine unparalleled.

But getting back to 1946: The leading artist that year in terms of the number of cover paintings published was William Timmins, with eleven out of the twelve on *Astounding*. Earl K. Bergey was next, appearing on all the *Startling* and *Thrilling Wonder* issues—a total of ten. Lawrence Stevens had five covers on *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, and so had Arnold Kohn between *Amazing* and *Fantastic Adventures*. Other artists represented by one or two cover paintings each were J. Allen St. John, Virgil Finlay, Robert Gibson Jones, Malcolm Smith, H. W. McCauley and Alejandro Canedo.

Now, what about the rates these artists received in 1946? In his book *SF Art 1926-1954* Lester Del Rey tells us that in the early days of science-fiction magazines the rates were ridiculously low—even for the times. But he was referring to the 1920's and 1930's, and he does not state what the actual rates were.

The 1940's seem to be a different story altogether. In the Virgil Finlay art book published by Donald Grant Sam Moskowitz tells us what the actual rates in 1946 were. *Amazing*, *Fantastic Adventures* and *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* paid \$150 for cover art. *Startling* and *Thrilling Wonder* paid \$125. Full-paged interior black and white illustrations rated between \$35 and \$50.

To put these rates into some kind of perspective, keep in mind that average income then of \$35 a week. So in 1946 when *Amazing* paid Finlay \$50 for a full-paged drawing, the average United States wage-earner had to work seven days to receive that amount. And when *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* paid him \$150 for a cover painting, that was equivalent to a month's work for that same average man.

How does all that compare to today's rates, 35 years later? Now the average income is about \$300 a week. But the average payment for a full-paged black and white drawing, taking into account rates paid by the paperbacks and the hardbacks as well as the magazines, has risen to only \$60. So today's rate equals only one day of average income as compared to seven for an artist in 1946. The cover rates today average around \$600. This is two weeks' average wages by the same comparison now, while 35 years ago a cover equalled a month's wages. So it seems that back in 1946 science-fiction artists were getting better payment for their work than are artists today.

But there were other facts involved that worked against them then. For one thing, there were virtually no markets for science-fiction art outside those

five pulp houses, and the seven magazines together could support just three or four artists on a full-time basis. And the most that any of them could make from their work just about equalled the average income in 1946. Secondly, in most cases the original artwork was never returned to the artists. In the letter column of the February, 1946 issue of *Fantastic Adventures* a fan asked if anyone had yet claimed Finlay's illustration from the previous issue. And editor Ray Palmer answered, "Finlay's originals of course are always snatched by someone in the art department even before we get a chance at them." Several months ago we had Robert Lowndes, a former editor, as an ESFA guest speaker, and when I asked him about the fate of original artwork published in his magazines, he said he wasn't quite sure about all of it, but very few of the originals were claimed by the artists themselves, so someone must have taken the unclaimed artwork, or it was thrown away.

This apparent disregard for original magazine art was not peculiar to the science-fiction field. At that period in time the whole broad general field of magazine publishing considered original illustrations and covers as having little or no value once their reproductions had been printed. In those early days of the 1930's and 1940's even as famous an illustrator as Norman Rockwell placed little value on his own originals. As soon as *The Saturday Evening Post* had published one of his cover paintings, Rockwell equated the original with yesterday's newspaper—something to be discarded.

What did the fans think of artists in 1946? Letter columns in these 47 pulp issues seem to show that they related strongly to the illustrations they were getting. Both criticism and praise abound in their letters. In the June, 1946 issue of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* the letter column is boldly headlined "Welcome Home, Finlay," and prints Finlay's short letter saying he is glad to be getting out of the service, and that he is looking forward to doing regular assignments for the magazine—but first he wants time to tell his wife all about the battle of Okinawa. Several fan letters hailed his return, and in that same letter column a private Lester Mayer, who 35 years later happens to be in this audience, wrote some words of praise for the artist Lawrence Stevens.

So my research of 1946, the year that the ESFA began, shows that only a handful of science-fiction artists managed to get regular assignments from the pulps, and although the pay rates seem surprisingly favorable in perspective, the field was very limited in terms of the amount of work available, and there was very little opportunity for income from reprints or from the sale of the original artwork. Overall, I should say that times were definitely *not* good for the average science-fiction illustrator 35 years ago.

What about today, 1981? The comparisons I have made between rates do not make present conditions seem impressive. But the opportunities today actually allow many more science-fiction artists to earn a living. And the upper limit one can earn at the top of the field is astronomically higher, even taking inflation into account. Frank Frazetta, probably the top illustrator, is earning well over \$100,000 a year.

Today the paperbacks are the primary market for a science-fiction illustrator. Every bookstore, drugstore, supermarket, airport, railroad and bus station displays them. Even schoolrooms, libraries and five and dime stores have taken in science-fiction. In over 120,000 retail outlets in the United States and Canada (and thousands more in over 110 other countries) paperbacks are sold and the public is buying them at the rate of over 400,000,000 copies annually. And a healthy percentage is science-fiction (using a broad definition of the term; fantasy, if you prefer), boldly sporting covers painted by a host of talents.

And do you realize how much competition there is in fantasy illustration these days? The current army of picture-makers is outrageously good: Frazetta, Berkey, Freas, Whelan, Morrill, Maitz, Schoenherr, Boris, Alexander, Sweet,

Di Fate, the brothers Hildebrandt, Ludgren, Kelly, Powers, Lehr, George and Ken Barr, and I must include my own personal favorites, Leo and Diane Dillon. Please forgive me if I have not mentioned someone whom you particularly like. The market (as you can see) is virtually flooded with talent competing to paint covers—but there are so many markets!

Nowadays, except for a few unscrupulous publishers (there are always a few of these around), original artwork is returned to the artist—unless, of course, its ownership is part of the contract and price agreement. Many collectors actively bid for such originals. During the past few years I have read in various business journals that the average investment in art has yielded higher returns than that in the stock market or in money market funds. I think this is true for science-fiction art as well. You should be lucky enough to have purchased an original Frazetta, Boris or Whelan when these names were new in the field! You might have paid in the low hundreds for such a painting. Today Mrs. Frazetta will not even make an appointment with you unless you are prepared to offer a minimum of \$10,000 for one of Frank's paintings.

In addition to paperbacks, current magazines and the art collectors' markets, the science-fiction illustrator today has hardcovered books—both major publishers and small press limited edition houses, such as that of the de la Rees (who are with us today), and who played an important role in my struggles to reach the professional ranks. Arkham House, Miller and Underwood, Fax and Donald Grant are other limited edition publishers paying well for artwork.

Then there are posters, art folios, art books, record jackets, calendars and movie-related markets. It may surprise you to learn that some fan magazines pay for artwork, and that the rates compare favorably with the professionals'. Despite the fact that there is still vast room in the field for improvement, some might say that today is a golden age for the science-fiction illustrator.

I hope that you react to the work of artists you see in science-fiction today. You are bound to like some and dislike others—and that's okay, for the field is healthy when no one artist is liked or disliked by everybody.

Some years ago the famous Western artist Charles Russell wrote: "To have talent is no credit to its owner; what a man is born with he can neither take the credit for, or the blame. It's not his doing." Well, I work at developing whatever artistic talent I was born with. And with the encouragement of my wife and friends I direct that effort to my work as a professional in the science-fiction field. There are artists lots better than I, but I also think there are some who are worse. To me, the important thing is that I enjoy reading science-fiction and I like being part of it through my artwork. And any man that can earn a living doing what he likes is mighty lucky. That's me.

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Book Reviews

MY UNCLE OSWALD by Roald Dahl. New York, N. Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980. 22.3 cm. 245pp. \$8.95. Also available as a Ballantine paperback, \$2.95.

Up to now Roald Dahl—author, on the one hand, of some wickedly sardonic short stories steeped in malice aforethought and, on the other, of more than a half-dozen charming and popular children's tales such as the delightful *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (probably better known in its movie version, *Willie Wonka*

and the *Chocolate Factory*)—has done comparatively little science-fiction, though a considerable portion of his shorter work touches upon the bizarre, even the fantastic. Of the science-fiction two short narratives stand out. In "Royal Jelly" an odd little bee-keeper increases his own fertility by consuming huge quantities of royal jelly; then, by feeding her the same substance, he accelerates the growth of his undernourished baby girl to an alarming degree. In "The Sound Machine"—ambiguously subtle enough to be taken, if one chooses, as a portrait of schizophrenia—a shy tinkerer develops a device for making audible high-frequency sounds beyond the range of human hearing but discovers, to his mortification, that a neighbor's roses shriek in agony each time one of them is clipped.

But with *My Uncle Oswald*—hailed by his publishers as the author's "first novel for grownups"—Dahl adds considerably to his fantasy (if not his science-fiction) output by reviving an engaging character, Oswald Hendryks Cornelius, who glittered in two previous stories, "The Visitor" and "Bitch" (both of which appeared originally in *Playboy* before being collected in *Switch Bitch* (1974)). In this new extract from a Georgian (ca. 1912) libertine's heretofore unpublished diaries, Dahl makes delightful though devilish use of two interesting scientific possibilities. The first: discovery of a powerful, natural aphrodisiac so potent that one pinhead grain of it can transform a mild-mannered bookkeeper into a sexual tiger. (This idea is a variation on the theme central to "Bitch," in which a Belgian chemist perfects a scent so concentrated that one whiff compels a male to ravish the nearest female on the spot.) The second: development of a process for preserving human sperm indefinitely by freezing it in liquid nitrogen at a temperature of -179° Centigrade (an idea certainly not new to science-fiction).

Yet what Dahl does with this double premise (though some may argue that he produces more a slightly overextended novelet than a novel) makes *My Uncle Oswald* a highly entertaining and, at times, outrageous romp. For the sybaritic Oswald, particularly in his salad days, isn't above seizing upon any scientific discovery that might be exploited—usually at the expense of the rich and powerful—in order to finance his Epicurean ways. Barely seventeen and preparing to study the natural sciences at Cambridge, he accidentally hears of the Sudanese Blister Beetle aphrodisiac, of such astonishing potency that no male, regardless of age or condition, can withstand its furious imperative. Quick to react, he makes the long journey to Khartoum in order to acquire an enormous supply of the stuff and then proceeds to amass a small fortune by discreetly reactivating the sex lives of the entire (mostly aging) diplomatic corps then serving in Paris.

Lucrative as the Blister Beetle proves to be for him, Oswald is determined to set his sights higher, ever alert for the break needed to make him a millionaire. And that opportunity knocks just after the Great War when, a veteran now, he resumes his scientific studies at Cambridge, this time learning that one of his professors has developed a freezing process for storing human sperm indefinitely. With the aid of the don in question and of a bewitching young biology student (she is part English, part Persian), he sets out, Blister Beetle powder at the ready, to dupe both royalty (most of the crowned heads of Europe) and genius (including such giants as Renoir, Stravinsky, Picasso and Shaw) into contributing, unwittingly, to an incredible genetic stockpile. His ultimate aim is to persuade rich but silly society matrons to have a child by artificial insemination—at an exorbitant fee, of course—fathered by the likes of, depending on taste, a King Alfonso of Spain, a Giacomo Puccini or even a Rudolph Valentino, who is added to the select list for sheer notoriety.)

How well Oswald implements his plans and what misadventures befall him along the way make up most of the substance of this surprisingly inoffensive yet exceedingly raunchy tale, a reader reaction no doubt attributable to Dahl's brilliance at managing to walk the thin line between witty farce and outright porno-

graphy. But the most interesting parts of the story involve the cameo appearances of great figures in art, music, literature and science active just after World War I. Who could forget the scene in which Sigmund Freud struggles to analyze his sensations even as the full power of the Blister Beetle explodes throughout his system, or later in the story, when Albert Einstein fights off the aphrodisiac's force for a record *five minutes* before inevitably succumbing to the way of all flesh? It is also interesting to note that the only science-fiction writers on Oswald's list, Wells, Kipling and Doyle, cooperate like pussycats after swallowing the drug-impregnated chocolate! As Yasmin, Oswald's luscious accomplice, casually informs him after returning from a session with the creator of Sherlock Holmes: "[He was] nothing special ... Just another writer with a thin pencil."

— Joseph Wrzos.

H. P. LOVECRAFT: FOUR DECADES OF CRITICISM, edited by S. T. Joshi. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980. xv-247pp. \$15.00.

The title of this book promises much. I expected to find in it not only the best of what had been written about Howard Phillips Lovecraft, but some well-thought-out commentaries tying everything together. I was much too optimistic. What we actually have are twenty-one essays, selected mainly, it seems to me, because they are short; a helpful (though admittedly incomplete) chronology of Lovecraft's writings; one mediocre poem; and two appendices listing articles about the man and his work. Yet in his preface the editor acknowledges help from some two dozen people in assembling this collection. Truly the mountain has labored and brought forth a mouse!

Half a dozen of the entries in this book have no acknowledgements, from which I infer they are being printed for the first time. Unfortunately few of the new items are very good, and very good items among the older ones are few. What went wrong? Joshi says he has "been forced to be selective," but gives only two reasons why. First, "limited areas of Lovecraft's work have been covered again and again while other areas are still left untouched." Yet seven of these pieces *have* already appeared in book form, and represent material that ought to be thoroughly familiar. Second, he laments that there are "articles on Lovecraft not written in English," but "few" of them have been translated. This excuse is puzzling, for later on he states that "French critics in particular have significant and provocative views about Lovecraft—they consider him second only to Poe as America's greatest writer...." and calls foreign translations "extremely poor; among the worst being French translations of Jacques Papy and the Italian translations of Alda Carrer, Giovanni De Luca, *et al.*" (p. 233) Now, if Joshi is fluent enough in French and Italian to make such detailed criticisms, why couldn't he translate the desired articles himself?

In his editorial capacity he has, however, dutifully and liberally annotated every essay in the book. His added footnotes identify Lovecraft titles, characters and quotations when their authors have not done so, provide supporting or alternate views, correct errors (sometimes, anyway), and amplify or supplement points of interest. Even though some of these may tire the sophisticated reader, who will find much that is redundant and well known, they probably will be helpful to serious students less acquainted with the canon who need to have Lovecraft's work made more accessible. But some of Joshi's comments seem careless and beside the point, and he inserts too many of his own unsupported opinions. Every writer is entitled to a few pinches of hyperbole, but these are better put in one's own essays than used to season other peoples'. Examples are notes 13 on page 62 (where Joshi seems to misunderstand Leiber's statement) and page 77 (*Ghosts in Daylight*

—the title is also misquoted—does not contain the Onions story Penzoldt cites); note 20 on page 95 (the word "grotesque" is misinterpreted); and note 12 on page 184 (despite formal protests that he wanted employment, Lovecraft managed to avoid workaday jobs for almost all his adult life; it is far more likely that the reasons were psychological and deep-seated than merely temporal or geographical).

The reader should always be aware that Joshi speaks in a distinctly partisan voice. He states (accurately) that the published Lovecraft letters give us only incomplete abridgements; but James Warren Thomas's candid biography, based on uncensored copy, is dismissed as containing "biased judgements" (p. 233).^{*} He asks (again, fairly) that Lovecraft's racist opinions be viewed in the context of the cultural milieu of his own time; but jumps frantically to the defense (note 22, pp. 209-210) when a contributor states (accurately) that HPL "was an avowed racist for nearly all his life" (p. 203). It is one thing to feel affection for one's subject, quite another to let affection corrupt judgement. And when he cites Dr. David Keller's "celebrated but incorrect view that Lovecraft had syphilis" (p. 234) and says "this was disproven by Dr. Kenneth Sterling" (note 3, p. 183) Joshi is simply substituting his own moral certainty for proof. The facts are these: Keller did not prove that either Lovecraft or his father had syphilis, nor did Sterling disprove it. The medical record is insufficient to make unequivocal diagnoses. One can speak only of probabilities; on balance these favor Winfield Lovecraft's being a victim of the disease, and his son's escaping it.

When an editor sets out to correct his contributors' errors, we might hope he would correct all of them. Here this does not happen. Thus Fritz Leiber inaccurately claims that Edmund Wilson "praised" "The Colour out of Space" (p. 59); actually Wilson did no more than *cite* the story and say that it "more or less predicts the effects of the atomic bomb" (p. 49). Again, J. Vernon Shea attempts to link Shiel's "House of Sounds" with "The Music of Erich Zann" (p. 129); this is nonsense, since the latter was written in 1921 and Lovecraft never read the former until 1923.^{**} And although I do not have all the variant versions of Machen's "The Novel of the White Powder" at hand as I write this, memory tells me that the climax allegedly quoted by Shea (p. 134) is found in none of them.

More serious than these and other errors of editorial omission are occasional ones of commission. For example, Joshi states (p. 139, footnote 18): "It is unlikely that Lovecraft read *The Ship of Ishtar* so early as 1919, the time of the writing of "The White Ship." It's not merely unlikely, it's impossible, since this Merritt novel was not published until 1924—five years later! He also confuses Lovecraft's relationships with others. People who were never his colleagues are called that, and others who never heard of him until after his death are suddenly in the "Lovecraft Circle" (whatever that is) or associated with it (p. 23).

Let us move on to the individual pieces in this collection. I am sorry to report that two of them deserve particular censure because, each in its own way, they epitomize poor scholarship. One is "On the Literary Influences Which Shaped Lovecraft's works" by J. Vernon Shea. This mistitled effort attempts to establish connections between other authors' fiction and Lovecraft's, and in particular influences on the latter. Most of it is devoted to endless and tiresome citations of petty similarities between details in HPL's stories and the works he noted in his "Supernatural Horror in Literature." (On such a basis one could probably develop as good an argument for *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* owing a debt to *Portnoy's Complaint*!) Someone ought to inform Mssrs. Shea and Joshi that in order to demonstrate a valid connection between two works one has to show *all* of the

^{*}For a better account of Thomas's work, see George Wetzel's article, "Lovecraft's Literary Executor," *Fantasy Commentator* IV, pp. 40-41 (1979).

^{**}H. P. Lovecraft, *Selected Letters 1911-1924* (1965), p. 255.

following: that the chronology is favorable; that one author actually read work of the other; and that there exist textual correspondences that are striking and/or extensive, not merely incidental or vaguely similar. Shea avoids this orderly path of reasoning, and his surmises and speculations come to very little. In fact, some of his ancillary comments are so far out in left field (Machen's "The White People" is unpopular, overlong, "and nothing much seems to happen in it"; Blackwood has "a rather graceless prose style"; Lovecraft didn't write science-fiction—a remark Joshi himself echoes [p. 141]) that few serious readers are likely to have much faith in any of Shea's opinions.

The second entry I wish to censure is Paul Buhle's "Dystopia as Utopia: Howard Phillips Lovecraft and the Unknown Content of American Horror Literature." This is a wonderful example of what has been called the First Law of Campus Advancement: no work written in plain English ever forwarded a professor's career. Here is academic writing at its windiest, from ponderous title to intricate and empty final paragraph. "Mud from a muddy spring," as Shelley once wrote. It is full of pretentious name-dropping (Lewis Mumford, Vernon Parrington, Leslie Fiedler and of course Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud). On page after page are those vague, abstract terms that are so popular because they may mean anything (Progress, Horror, Enlightenment, The Last Frontier, etc.—the capitalizations naturally are Buhle's, and of course he doesn't define them). I don't like fobbing rhetoric off as information, and Joshi shouldn't condone it either.

Expressing thoughts clearly and accurately can be hard work. It can also be dangerous: readers then very quickly spot thoughts that are too trivial or confused to be worth expressing at all. Probably this is why today we are afflicted with such a pestilence of buzz-words and indirect language. None of it is necessary, of course. If Samuel Eliot Morrison, George Orwell, Bertrand Russell and Gilbert Highet can write clearly about history, politics, philosophy and the classics, why can't Paul Buhle do so in literary criticism? It is certainly possible "to talk about interesting books and important subjects without using the private and sometimes unintelligible language which implies that the Best is for the Few."^{*}

Deep and skillful filleting is needed to find the sinews in this blubbery prose. When found and examined, they seem too weak to be sinews at all. We have no "key" to Lovecraft's writings, complains Buhle, "so that his philosophical position must be inferred from tales, correspondence, and criticism" (p. 199). What more does any scholar expect to work from? He also claims that Charles Fort's *The Book of the Damned* was "an immediate best-seller" which influenced Lovecraft and George Allan England (p. 201). Despite a few favorable reviews (notably one by Ben Hecht) the book actually sold poorly. In his letters Lovecraft mentions three of Fort's books, including this one, but brands them "eccentric", saying "no genuine man of science has ever taken Fort seriously,"^{**} so Buhle's claim that Lovecraft (or "his fellow fantaisistes of the 1920's," for that matter) were "deeply affected" by Fort is wildly improbable. As for England, there actually *is* a reference to *The Book of the Damned* in his short story "The Thing from 'Outside'" (1923), but this happens to be the only science-fiction England wrote after Fort's book appeared; all of England's major contributions to the field—notably the truly Fortean "The Empire in the Air" (1914)—date from *before* 1919, and I know of no evidence that the two writers ever corresponded. I think England probably formulated their similar concepts first, and then read *The Book of the Damned* as a pleasurable (and quotable) confirmation of his own ideas. (If Buhle really wants to do a little scholarly work, he can make a better case for Fort's being influ-

^{*}Gilbert Highet, *People, Places and Books* (1953), p. 36.

^{**}H. P. Lovecraft, *Selected Letters 1934-1937* (1976), pp. 172-173.

enced by England!) Joshi, unfortunately, has overlooked all of these points.

There are other gaffes in Buhle's essay, but I'll end by citing his statement "The Project of New World conquest contained both a Utopian search for geographic infinitude and a characteristic European modernising desire to escape the contradictions of class society..." (p. 198); historians I read say the motive was usually money and, secondarily, escape from religious persecution. And Buhle's picture of the average Colonial American worrying about "the mysteries outside his material grasp", being tormented by "the shadows and wonders" of "the apparently chaotic universe around him"—you've got to be kidding! After seven days a week of land-clearing, house-building, food-gathering and maybe Indian fighting, isolated settlers would be too tired by nightfall to do much more than eat and fall asleep; and those in towns would get dogmatic answers to such matters every Sunday. Few people even today get worked up over these philosophical problems—they'd rather watch television. Anyway, to me the ultimate horror about "Dystopia as Utopia" is that Joshi could call it a "significant contribution" (p. 196), and actually claim its glutinous flatulence an improvement over the clear and logical expositions of Matthew Onderdonk.

As for the rest of the essays, probably Scott's "A Paragraph on Lovecraft as a Poet" is the best writing in the book (as one might expect). It reiterates the speculation, with supporting quotations, for "Fungi from Yuggoth" being influenced by Edwin Arlington Robinson. "'The White Ship': a Psychological Odyssey" is also well done—Mosig is one of the few psychological analyzers of HPL who has something to say and says it lucidly. He also honestly presents his speculation as no more than just that. In "H.P. Lovecraft: Myth-Maker" Mosig discusses the possibility that the most "quoted" of all his statements may be a paraphrase or even a fabrication by August Derleth, and not a quotation at all. I was put off, in H. P. Lovecraft: His Life and Work," the initial introductory essay, by the very first paragraph. Here the authors seem to give equal weight both to serious comments and book-jacket blurbs, and then say (p. 2) there is a "vague element of incestuousness"—whatever that may mean—in Lovecraft's family because of first-cousin marriages (which is like saying there is a vague element of the Arctic Ocean in the Sahara Desert). But things improve, important points are usually summarized well, and the last paragraph strikes a particularly fine note.

In "Lovecraft and the Cosmic Quality in Fiction" Richard L. Tierney likewise gets off to a ragged start before righting himself, but his essay eventually works out also. Edward Lauterbach's "Some Notes on Cthulhuian Pseudobiblia" is well written with a nice, light touch; happily it lacks the deadly serious, stuffy tone people love to use for writing about the Mythos. I found Peter Cannon's contribution dull and plodding, and the two from R. Boerem are slight and break no important ground.

There is much I could say about "Lovecraft Criticism: a Study." It has its minor errors and weak points: the phrase "Lovecraft circle" seems misused (p. 23), the verb "depreciate" is mistaken for "deprecate" (p. 21, twice), HPL's letters were first published in the 1910's, not the 1920's (p. 23), etc. But Joshi makes telling points about Derleth and de Camp (p. 24), and is probably right in looking forward to better assessments of Lovecraft in the future. It's interesting to see that several years of immersion in Lovecraft studies have apparently caused him, consciously or unconsciously, to adopt some of the mannerisms in HPL's own writing style: we see Lovecraftian spellings (modernisation, developement, reflexion, etc.) and Lovecraft's old-fashioned use of the semicolon (pp. xv and 9, for example).

The other entries seem reasonably competent, and Bloch's "Poe and Lovecraft" is particularly notable for its succinctness, in contrast to the windiness in so much of this book. On reading Leiber's two useful entries I reflected how

nice it would be if he combined these with some of the lesser-known material he's done on the subject into a single unified essay; the result might rank with Cook's and Scott's, the best two on HPL we have so far.

Joshi's prior contributions to the canon—his index to the letters, catalog of HPL's library and two volumes of uncollected prose and poetry in particular—have been worthwhile and useful. But *H. P. Lovecraft: Four Decades of Criticism* is not at their level. It leads me to conclude that Joshi has not yet accumulated the background and outlook needed to step up from the level of collation to that of critical assessment.

And how about the larger question—what have over forty years of attention to Howard Phillips Lovecraft produced? Not much that is worthwhile, I regretfully conclude. We have a few seminal insights from Leiber, Long, Onderdonk, Scott and Sonia Greene Lovecraft herself. Mosig, Wetzel and Joshi himself continue to plug along faithfully, and there are a few other rocks of stability breaking the surface of a vast swamp of battology and pedestrian comment. Lovecraft's own letters are only incompletely available, often so Bowdlerized in publication as to be unrecognizable. Through them we inevitably see the man and his work in disconnected, incomplete silhouettes. Until all serious scholars have routine access to complete texts we cannot hope for final, discerning judgements.

We need something else, too: to get rid, once and for all, of the sticky, sophomoric adulation that afflicts so many would-be contributors to the canon. W. Paul Cook said it all thirty-five years ago: "The best thing that can happen to the memory and future reputation and real standing of Howard P. Lovecraft is to have his admirers, disciples, devotees get at least one foot on the ground." Joshi's book shows it's still one of the biggest problems we face.

— Lincoln Van Rose.

THE LOVECRAFT COLLECTORS LIBRARY, edited by George T. Wetzel. Published by The Strange Co., P. O. Box 864, Madison, Wis. 53701, 1979. 27.1 cm. \$10.00. Edition limited to 150 copies.

Between 1945 and 1955 George Wetzel painstakingly assembled a large mass of material by and about H. P. Lovecraft. This was put out in mimeographed booklets by SSR Publications during the period 1952-55. Despite their considerable scholarly value only 75 copies were published of each booklet, and I do not believe the project was ever reviewed in the fan press. (In retrospect this seems incredible, for most of the material was either out of print, nowhere else available, or both.) Now, however, all seven booklets, totalling 228 pages, have been collected into a single volume. They are reproduced on fine quality, grained ivory paper, and as a bonus there has been added to them (on white paper, to distinguish from the original text) a foreward by R. A. Everts and eighteen captioned photographs of Lovecraft and his friends and acquaintances. All this is enclosed in "perfect" binding with a heavy, glossy paper cover.

All of this Lovecraft material comes from amateur journals in the 1916-1927 period. Many titles were published under pseudonyms. Volumes I, II and V contain his essays plus one allegorical story ("The Street," 1920), and volumes III and IV his non-professional verse. Volume VI comprises three personal and two literary commentaries about him. For volume VII Wetzel compiled the first extensive (40 pages) bibliography to appear. In his introduction to the latter Wetzel acknowledges help from (among others) Leon Stone; we should be particularly grateful for that, because since that time Stone's extensive collection of amateur press journals has been destroyed by fire.

The commentaries are particularly commendable. We have Wetzel's own contribution "The Cthulhu Mythos: a Study" in its original form, and "The Lord of

R'lyeh," Matthew Onderdonk's fine exposition of Lovecraft's contribution to fantasy fiction, which still reads as well to me as when I first perused its ms. back in 1945. The personal recollections of Ernest Edkins, James Morton and Edward Cole all appeared in *The Olympian* in 1940, but they too remain as readable and absorbing as they were forty years ago. Of these, Cole's "Ave Atque Vale!" is the most informative and eloquent. I believe it is also the earliest source in print of the legend (which might be true) that Lovecraft succeeded in enlisting for a brief period in the British Army during World War I, and it describes his conversational exchange with Barlow about essay-writing, which the latter thought was his strongest literary talent.

It is pleasant to see all of the interspersed photographs, which add another dimension of interest to the text. Particularly charming are the two of Sonia Greene, taken before her marriage in 1921-22. Her strikingly warm femininity, dark eyes and full features have been beautifully captured in one portrait; she seems Howard Lovecraft's opposite in every way—one can easily understand how he would be attracted to her, if opposites do indeed attract.

There is one historically quaint touch in this book. Throughout, Wetzel thanks Derleth unnecessarily for permission to reprint items from obscure amateur journals. Actually (except for those in volume VI) copyrights on virtually all material, if they existed at all, had lapsed before *The Lovecraft Collectors Library* originally appeared, and neither Derleth nor Arkham House ever controlled them anyway. This attitude toward Derleth was quite typical of the time, however, when he was revered widely as a sort of Great White Father of Lovecraftiana.

Over the years, a number of items in *The Lovecraft Collectors Library* have reappeared elsewhere. But many have not, and this remains their sole source in print. I recommend it not only for its clearly apparent historical value, but in particular to those interested in owning a representative cross-section of Howard Phillips Lovecraft's early amateur press association work at an unexpectedly reasonable price.

— A. Langley Searles.

—oOo—

Standing in the Shadows

Standing in the shadows, I watch my spirit
touch the horns of the midnight moon,
gleam in the light of a reckless star—
soaring to its appointed throne.

Standing in the shadows, the cloak of night
warms the chill of my dying flesh,
draping the ruins of an empty hall,
softening the echoes of shrieking dreams.

Standing in the shadows, none beholds
the dark descent of Death, himself
a victim of the shameless light
that dares replace his shadow
with a ghost of mortal man.

— B. Leilah Wendell.

Edward Lucas White:

Notes for a Biography

by *GEORGE T. WETZEL*

Part III*

IX FAMILY MATTERS

Agnes Gerry was born about 1859 of Scotch-German ancestors, some of whom were named Fusting and some McDonald. White once stated that while her grandfather was alive he provided amply for her needs as a child; this statement at once stirs curiosity about her father, Nathaniel Rutter Gerry, who was living at the time yet not her provider. (1)**

After her grandfather died, his estate was fought over by his ex-wives. Thereafter Agnes suffered not merely poverty but penury, often going to bed hungry and cold. When the family was at its lowest financial ebb, her step-grandmother callously urged them to move to a near-by mill town so that Agnes and her brothers and sisters could become child-laboring mill-hands.

White adds provocatively that "the household also had internal troubles" which he discreetly does not identify. But years later Agnes's brother Todd waxed eloquent on that point, writing "We were born, lived, grew up in a state of damnable poverty created and brought about by drunkenness, laziness [which] finally led to the disruption of the family," and that his father was left in Cantonsville "to sustain the dignity of the family which he had at all times failed...." (2)

Whatever the "internal troubles" of the Gerry household—and some can clearly be inferred from Todd's remarks—Agnes early in her life became the family breadwinner, first as a librarian in a country club, later as a typist-stenographer. She managed the home, became its head, helped her brother Phil through college. White never mentions meeting her father when visiting her, an omission that suggests he was not living there.

*Parts I and II appeared in previous issues; if your local dealer cannot supply them, these may be obtained from the publisher.

**Footnotes for this article will be found on pages 238-239.

The greatest measure of her happiness, said Todd, came after her marriage to White.

Of his own father, Thomas White, Edward said they made an affectionate pair. One thinks of one summer they spent at The Willows in 1897, often bicycling together; or of earlier years when Edward was a small boy. Thomas was proud of his son's poetry, and liked to quote or show it to his business friends, but had to be careful about criticizing it as Edward tended to be offended. (3)

Before his marriage Edward never mentioned that his father was especially fond of cats, had three, and permitted them liberties such as sitting upon a brown paper in the middle of the table. Edward, on the other hand, apparently lost his childhood affection for them and succumbed only many years later. He admitted then that he "loved cats, but only in the country where they can be out of doors when they like." (4)

The personality of Ethel White is almost a mystery, save for a few remarks in the family's early letters. Edward once implied that his sister was something of a hypochondriac. When she accompanied a business agent of his father to Europe he wrote wistfully that he hoped she would "have a different escort" when she returned. (5) But she died a spinster.

Kate White developed cancer and was twice hospitalized for operations. A year later Thomas had some sort of problem with his gall duct. Hoping to improve his health, Thomas took his wife and daughter to winter in Bermuda. But it availed him not, and he died May 30, 1902. At that time Edward was hard up financially. Quite naturally he looked forward to a distribution of his father's estate. Just before his death Thomas revealed that had made no will; under the law, then, his wife, daughter and son should share everything equally. (6)

Some time after the funeral Edward discussed this with his mother. She dismissed the law, asserting that being Thomas's wife gave her right to all of his possessions. Edward remembered that his mother, like her own, had the obstinate trait of believing that she held the only valid opinions in the home. "Recalling that," Edward wrote a relative, "I made no attempt to argue with my mother. I pondered the matter and concluded that \$10,000 or so would never be worth to me the equivalent of alienating my mother for the remainder of her life. . . I found by cautious soundings that she felt that, if I took a dollar of what I had a legal right to take, she would be robbed by me of it and I should be a thief in her eyes. I just gave up." (7) All he realized was his father's old tool chest and \$1500 from an insurance policy taken out when he was a boy naming him beneficiary.

This "trifling inheritance" (as he termed it) nevertheless enabled him to pay all his bills and stay out of debt until 1913. (8) Like Edward, Ethel tacitly waived her rights to any part of the estate. His mother and sister continued to live in their old home, refusing Edward's persuasions to live with him.

In the fall of 1902 Zoe Wells, a second cousin of White's who lived in Texas, was advised by her doctor to seek a change in climate. She came to Baltimore for that purpose and also entered Notre Dame School to prepare her for matriculating at the Maryland Institute for Art (which she did soon after). Her mother, White's cousin, asked him to board her. He agreed, but only if the money was paid in advance. This innocent transaction was to have disastrous later effects on White's finances.

Agnes also undertook the chore of chaperoning Zoe every summer on a vacation tour through several places in the Northeast. Of course White paid for his wife's share of the expenses, but one cannot help wondering if it were an extravagance that drained his bank account and contributed to his 1913 near-bankruptcy. Agnes herself stated that chaperoning the girl was no joke. This biographer wonders why they ever got involved in it to begin with. (9)

Using two fingers, White in 1886 learned to type. To most people his handwriting was nearly unreadable; the only person who could decipher his scrawl

readily was Agnes, who had learned how by reading his love-letters to her. By 1897 White's correspondence was typewritten. And by 1903 he began to keep carbons of even his most insignificant letters, binding them in separate volumes under appropriate titles: Personal, Family, Business and Literary.

By 1915 he found they were accumulating so fast and taking up so much room that he threw away or burnt everything over eight years old, including hundreds of letters from Agnes prior to 1903. The only exception were copies of the exchanges between Rudyard Kipling and himself beginning in 1893. In bulk his surviving letter-carbons approach the letters of H. P. Lovecraft.

Among other things, very early in these carbons, an inherent irascibility shows up. If a street-car passed White, despite his frantically waving an umbrella, he would chase and catch it at the next corner. In a few days he would type an indignant letter to the street-car company, complaining that "motormen have a nasty temper which causes them to delight in small annoyances to others and to relish inflicting discomfort upon any victim at their mercy. . . I may be mistaken but I think #1343 [his badge number] will bear watching in this regard." He once left a small satchel at a local store for repair. Everything about its delivery to his home incensed White: it was charged to his wife, marked "collect", and finally incorrectly addressed. He stormed that if it happened again he would take it as an invitation to deal elsewhere. (11)

When his uncle Joseph sent White a small allowance to cash and pass on to a relative in a mental hospital, it was made out to "Ed. L. White." In cheeky displeasure he instructed his uncle in the future to "please make out my cheque to 'Edward L. White.' My wife objects to the 'Ed. L.' and I don't like it any too well myself. I wouldn't address you 'Dr. Jos. A. White'." He could get equally brusque with other relatives, once complaining to his cousin Kate, from whom he rented a room for his summer vacations, that she had provided him with a mattress which was lumpy, and offering to pay \$5 towards a new one if she would buy it. (12)

X

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT SHORT STORIES

White's very first attempt at fiction was shown to his English literature instructor at Johns Hopkins University, Dr. William Hand Browne. After Browne courteously pointed out the inconsistencies and stylistic blunders in the manuscript, White burnt it. Other early efforts of his were in the manner of Poe. (13)

Among his effects are three folders inscribed "Early Attempts at Short Stories". In one folder are three stories bound together, written in his nearly undecipherable longhand in purple ink. They are titled "The Ventriloquist," "News from the Frontier" and "The Dragon Twins."

Typed manuscripts repose in the other two folders. One of these is a story titled "Mandola," which from internal evidence of probable autobiographical nature I should tentatively date as *circa* 1890. It is an interesting blend of the supernatural and science-fiction and suggests to me the influence of H. G. Wells, an author White admired.

Mountjoy, the narrator, is studying prehistoric man and owns a plaster cast of an ancient skeleton found at Neanderthal, Germany. Later he has a nightmare in which he sees the Neanderthal relic as a living being, stalking in the woods. After waking he remarks, "In dreams the nightmare effect of terror is tenfold that which one feels awake. The agony of dread, the sickness and cold sweat, and the total inability to move is made up of a torture unpaintable." (Here, of course, White is clearly describing his own reactions to nightmares.) Over a period of time the terror of this nightmare affects Mountjoy's memory. One day he decides to see how badly his memory has been affected by trying to recall details

from his dream. He evokes the Neanderthal image, and sees it again as if in his nightmare—but now it strikes down with its club at a shawl near where he is sitting. Later he looks for his fiancée, Mandola, who earlier had wandered off for a walk in the wood. He finds her seated on a stone, dead from fright, at her feet her pet dog a pulp of blood and bones; and on the ground footprints bigger than any human's. His ability to visualize has actually conjured into existence the horror from his nightmare.

"The Serge Coat" is another story based on White's actual dreams. He described it as "of double location and thought-transference," (14) but it would more accurately be termed a variation on the *doppelgänger* theme. Hume, the narrator, is walking in the autumnal countryside. Becoming overheated, he takes off his jacket and puts it under his arm along with a thin serge topcoat he is already carrying. Later in his walk he discovers that the serge coat is missing. The following spring he is tramping again over the same countryside, and by an accidental series of events enters a barn wherein he finds the lost coat. Several young women in the adjoining house chat with him as he passes. On arriving home, he tosses the coat in a drawer and lies down to nap. When he awakes, he believes he dreamt of entering the barn and talking again to the women. And as he stirs, his landlady, who been nursing him as he lay actually unconscious for ten days, notices the serge coat, which she is sure was not in the house at the onset of his illness. Hume keeps his puzzlement to himself. Not long after he encounters the young women, who say they met him not on the day he believes, but during the time of his unconsciousness. There is the possibility that this had its origin in the terrible illness White had in 1895-96, when like Hume he too was confined to bed.

About 1896 White plotted a tale titled "Diminution Island." Somewhere within 500 miles of Singapore is an isle cursed by a holy man so that any ship approaching within seven miles of it, with all animate and inanimate objects aboard, would instantly shrink to one-sixth of their original size. In time an Englishman's steam yacht crosses the danger-line. At this point White pondered what the visual sensations of the ship's party would be. What would happen to the time-keeping powers of their watches and chronometers? He also speculated about foot-high men carrying six-inch rifles encountering rats, hogs and tropical creatures of apparently great size. But when he read H. G. Wells's *The Food of the Gods* in 1904 he scrapped the idea. Wells, he felt, had handled it better than he could. However, in 1922 White wrote "Sorcery Island," which appears to owe something to this aborted plot. (15)

Painting as well as nightmares provided him story sources. When White toured Europe in 1889, for example, he saw Gerome's painting "Pollice Verso," in which a Roman emperor makes the thumb-gesture that a defeated gladiator be killed despite the contrary desire of the circus crowd. In 1892 White did some research on that gesture, whose interpretation differed among scholars, and felt his conclusions were better expressed in fiction than in an article. Deciding the result was too crudely executed, he never attempted to market it. But Agnes mailed the ms. to a newspaper in 1902, and it was bought. (16)

XI High Water Mark

Between 1905 and 1909 White produced not only most of his short stories but also some of his best fantasy. His interest in short stories declined, however, when he learned that novels paid better.

To a friend he wrote, "On the night of May 22, 1905, I dreamed a dream. It was a very vivid nightmare and at the crisis of it I groaned, so that my wife leaned over from her bed and took my hand and woke me. She had to comfort me like

a scared child, for I was a quagmire of reasonless, primitive terror. Then I went to sleep, *and finished the dream*. It was a very real and pretty good ghost story. I told it extensively to breathless audiences of varying social size." White related to another that he "had concurrent sensations of reading the tale in print and it all happening to me. It was so much praised that I wrote it out." (17) (Possibly he did this in August, 1905.)

It is titled "The House of the Nightmare." In this story an accident to his car forces a traveller to seek shelter for the night in a farmhouse apparently occupied solely by a boy whose father is away. The boy says that he is not afraid of ghosts, but only of nightmares—and especially one of a monstrous sow trying to eat him (for he had teased one some time ago). This is a clever twist—that nightmares might be worse than ghosts; and there is another: ghosts are not seen, but felt—they touch you or blow on you. The traveller goes to bed and dreams the very nightmare the boy dreaded. (This is the point where White awoke and had to be calmed by his wife.) And the boy turns out to be a ghost. White here created an idea new to weird fiction: that the residuum of one person's nightmares can linger long after the dreamer has gone and can enter another's sleep.

In his autobiographical book *Matrimony* White said that "The House of the Nightmare" "was the first short story of mine found magazinable and it won me the esteem of a New York literary agent." That statement is ambiguous and may be interpreted several ways, perhaps most plausibly that an agent read the story after it was published and as a result then solicited White's work. But that is not what happened.

White had originally contacted the New York literary agent Paul R. Reynolds in February, 1905, in the hope of interesting him in marketing some of his poetry. Reynolds demurred because of the small sums involved. Then White's brother-in-law (or sister-in-law, depending on which letter is accepted) persuaded him to submit a batch of his stories to Reynolds. So White sent "The House of the Nightmare," and a request for the agent's fees. Reynolds responded that he asked a \$10 reading fee for unknown writers, and charged a 15% commission on any sales he made. He also cautioned White that "ghost stories are very difficult to place." (18)

But surprisingly to both the story was sold within a month. (19) The quickness of the sale had an unfortunate effect on White. "Since then," he confided to a friend, "I have been unable to resist the pull of that part of my imagination that sees in every germ of a literary idea a possible cheque. It is degarding, but it is also irresistible." To another correspondent he revealed "I can seldom sell my best work . . . while my poorer work sells fairly well and I am continually tempted to rush out really bad work because it would sell readily and at once." To a third correspondent he explained that his really good tales would not sell because "they have too much spinal crawl and too anguished a shudder at the climax." (20) For these reasons there are among White's stories, sadly, a number of what even he called "potboilers."

When "The House of the Nightmare" appeared in print he was angered because it was "defaced by fool 'illustrations' which do not illustrate and marred by injudicious editorial alterations. What American farm boy ever said 'large as a steer'?" He then added the unduly derogatory judgement, "The tale is not good and is very poorly told." White also disclosed something about the story which had long puzzled this biographer: everything in it was just as in his dream "except for one small variation, the substitution of the white stone for a roadway occurring alternately straight and winding." (21) The stone never did fit intelligently into the plot.

The imaginative fiction of H.G. Wells was much admired by White, particularly *The Invisible Man*. He said he had "meditated since Feb. 1, 1898" on an idea it suggested to him. This became the story "A Transparent Nuisance," which

he penned in August, 1905. There are several humorous moments in this tale of a careless inventor of invisibility. In one scene an invisible skunk drags a dead rooster across a college campus to the consternation of its president. In another the author lampoons Victorian propriety. An elderly matron tells her daughter that Wells's book is pornographic: "It details the adventures of a man totally without clothing." The daughter retorts, "He was invisible." "That does not alter the fact," maintains her mother. But the daughter has the last word when she asks, "What is the difference between a man concealed by clothing and one concealed by invisibility?" (This exchange sounds as if it were taken from life.) Reynolds sold the story for \$60 in June, 1906. (22)

In February, 1906 White had the remarkable dream on which he based "The Song of the Sirens." He saw his vision "not as a painted picture, but as if I had been on the cross-trees of a vessel under that intense blue sky, gazing at the magic islet and its portentous occupants. The dream was the more marvelous since there is nothing, either in literature or art, suggesting anything which I beheld in that vision...." (23)

On July 31, 1906 he based a poem titled "The Sirens" on this. Nearly a year later he cast it into the prose with which we are familiar. Little bits of autobiography crept in, such as the ship in the story being the *Medorus*, her port of call being Rio de Janeiro, and the time 1885. (This parallels White's voyage to Rio in the same year on the *Cordorus*.) The story was bought immediately. But the editor thought it too long, and here there is reason to side with him. As a condition of sale he asked White to shorten it, which he did, excising the first 33 ms. pages—some 10,000 words—and substituting a two-paged introduction. (It was returned to its original length for its later book appearance.) When White saw the story in print he raged. Without bothering to seek approval, the editor had made further last-minute alterations, including changing the locale to Hawaii. White accused him of "mangling" the tale. (24)

The genesis of the story "Amina" is mired in some contradictory statements by White. It is unquestionably a prose statement of his earlier poem, "The Ghoul"; the main difference is that in the poem the ghoul kills the hunter, while in the story it is the ghoul who is killed. We know also (as noted in chapter VIII) that it was suggested by a poem of Kipling. Yet White stated, "The dream which I made into 'Amina' was a shuddery nightmare. In the dream I was Waldo and I had no inkling of what I was to see when the consul wrenched the garment from the warm corpse. I woke in a tremble and a sweat, quaking all over." To add to the confusion, he said in a listing of his writing published before 1922 that "Amina" was written Feb. 10, 1906 "after a theme meditated since April 10, 1897; the second date is that for composition of "The Ghoul."

After fourteen rejections "Amina" was finally bought for \$20, surprising White, who was ready to believe it unsaleable. This purchase too was conditional, for the editor wished one of the climactic paragraphs altered. With some justification White argued that the whole tale pivoted on the wording he had used: "There is no excuse for the tale's existence except the idea of the female ghoul as a creature, human in other respects save possession of teeth like those of a mastiff, the bearing of litters of young like those of a sow, and mammary structure conforming to the producing of ten or twelve young at birth. I strove to lead up to the horror of the revelation of the ghoul's external anatomical structure as briefly as possible without losing the sense of reality in the tale. That sudden revelation was, in my feeling, the main thing in the tale."

The editor wanted this substituted: "Waldo sickened all over. What he saw was not the front of a woman but the flaccid body of a female animal-mother of the pack." White offered a compromise version. The editor declined it, coming up with a third version which White accepted. In a parting letter White asserted

that the day after the story was bought he had been offered three times as much for it. But I have found no independent confirmation of this; and since his ms. had bounced from editor to editor for ten months, he was probably lucky to have sold it at all. The original version appeared later in his book *Lukundoo*. (25)

Poe's influence on White has been noted previously. As we have seen, White was able to shake it off only by banishing all Poe's work from his house, and by destroying all of his own stories traceable to Poe. And yet one story survived, "The Flambeau Bracket." White admitted that "The Cask of Amontillado" of Poe formed the background of the very vivid dream inspiring it. In speaking of this dream, he recounted how he awoke shuddering and tingling with the horror of its final revelation, "with the last three sentences of it, word for word as they stand in the story, branded on my sight."

"The Flambeau Bracket" was written in January, 1906. Interestingly, among the "Early Attempts at Short Stories" already mentioned there exists a somewhat different version titled "The Iron Stirrup." Both use the same simple plot. In both the incident that leads to the opening duel scene is a fire breaking out at a masquerade ball. Three masked men attempt escape from the building's second story, but their rope is not long enough; whereupon the masked clown strangles the masked domino and uses the corpse to lengthen the rope.

White's revision involves identifying the corpse hanging from the rope—an identity missing and not even hinted at in the first version. The ultimate horror of the tale turns on this identity, which provides motivation for the duel in the opening, behind which is a vendetta. Now this small change could easily have been grafted onto the original draft; yet White rewrote it extensively in the process. Why was this?

The answer is found in a letter he sent to a friend. When he wrote a poem, he said, "whoever else might better it, I could not... it was a finality for me... on the other hand when I wrote a tale I felt it had no finality, I might rewrite it and do it better... and so on forever." Such striving for perfection is a known trait of the migraine personality, which White definitely had.

"The Flambeau Bracket" collected 75 rejections over a 51-month period before his agent return the ms. White then sold it to the first magazine that he mailed it to for \$25. Possibly because of its style the editor asked White if it were a translation from a foreign language. (26)

A rather curious ghost story—if that is what it is—is "The Message on the Slate," which White wrote in 1906 and based on one of his nightmares. Very little more than that exists in his letters about it. But the actual text has in it some unique bits and pieces.

A woman comes for help to Vargas, a clairvoyant, after she has two curious, related dreams, in the second of which she is told that "the message on the slate will be true." She believes this is in some way relevant to the fact that her husband is still in love with his deceased first wife. Then she relates a strange story. The night before his first wife, Marian, was buried he had a second coffin set beside her; he locked the door and spent the night in the room with her. In the morning he had both coffins buried together.

Eventually the second woman courted him, and the two married. But from the first he discouraged her, saying that his love, his very self, was buried in Marian's grave, "that he was nothing more than a walking ghost, a wraith of what he had been, a spirit condemned to wander its allotted time on earth until his hour should come and he be called to join Marian." Were these expressions more than merely metaphorical?

Vargas, who actually is a charlatan, reluctantly agrees to proceed exactly as in one of his simulated trances, and a slate is set up to receive any spiritual message. Unexpectedly he falls into a real trance; and on the slate an

unseen hand writes, "That which is buried in that coffin is alive. If disinterred it will die."

Vargas's mechanistic philosophy is shaken—for he (like White) has no belief in the supernatural. He feels his "reliance upon the laws of space and time" has been "wrenched from its foundations." "The universe no longer seems . . . filled by an orderly progress of . . . predictable occurrences, depending upon interrelated causes; it seems the playground of the irresponsible, prankish, malevolent somethings. . . ." Such statements seem clearly anticipating the dictum of Lovecraft that the shattering of natural law, the violation of the limitations of time and space create the emotion of fear.

Like Pandora this second wife is consumed with curiosity over the second coffin, and arranges for it to be dug up. Her husband, inexplicably, does not oppose this. He, Vargas and several others accompany her to the graveyard. As the coffin is raised, Vargas glances at the husband, whose shape seems somehow blurred. As it is opened, he becomes almost hazy. Then through the glass of the coffin's head all see, astonishingly, the husband's face. Turning, Vargas discovers that the husband has vanished. And through the glass they see his eyelids fluttering, the eyes open, and then glaze in death.

Interpreting this story is difficult. It seems to be a variant of the external soul theme, somewhat complicated by the husband's ghost walking the earth prior to the disinterment.

Reynolds returned the ms. to White after twelve rejections, suggesting that if it were cut (it ran to 14,000 words) it might be saleable. But White said he preferred using his time to create new stories, since previous efforts to make longer ones saleable by abridgement had proved wasted. "The Message on the Slate" never saw publication until its later inclusion in the book *Lukundoo*.

To one friend White conceded that the story's ending might be unsatisfactory, but stated that "no literary skill could make the ending convincing. All I could do was to write a tale as near the nightmare as could be done." He described that nightmare to another correspondent, saying "The picture of the clairvoyant standing in the doorway clinging to the door-knob, dazed at sight of his visitor, is still vivid to my visual memory. So is the queer, hot, vapoury haze all over the cemetery in the final scene. . . ." (27)

Another story, "Lukundoo," explained White, "was written after my nightmare without any manipulation of mine, just as I dreamed it. But I should never have dreamed it had I not read H. G. Wells' very much better story, 'Pollock and the Porroh Man.' Anyone interested in dreams might relish comparing the two tales. They have resemblant features, but are very unlike, and the differences are such as no waking intellect would invent, but such as come into a human mind only in a nightmare dream." (28)

"I had a sharp attack of grip," said White to a correspondent, "and was well enough to be allowed out of doors. [This was on Jan. 7, 1907.] I crawled two squares and back and came home in that light-headed condition of low blood pressure on the brain which results in the visions of the religious mystics and all that sort of thing. I got back to bed at 2:30 P.M. and slept till 3:30 P.M. and dreamed 'Lukundoo'." According to White the title "is a word in an African native dialect meaning 'magic', 'sorcery' and the like."

The story concerns Ralph Stone, an anthropologist, who causes an African witch-doctor to lose face before his tribe. The witch-doctor revenges himself by a curse which causes manniken replicas of himself to grow parasitically out of Stone's body and drain their host of life. Reynolds found this shocking story impossible to sell. White likewise failed in free-lancing it, receiving not only rejections but remarks about its unpleasant nature, and from one editorial reader the statement that writing such a horrible tale was "a literary crime." White had a good laugh over this. It was eighteen years before "Lukundoo" was fi-

nally printed (in the November, 1925 issue of *Weird Tales* magazine). (29)

One day White received an invitation to visit an old school chum living in Centreville, on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The moment he caught sight of the portly Walter T. Wright waiting for him at the station, he knew the man must be the richest in town. He stayed over a weekend. On Monday morning, having time to spare before the Baltimore train arrived, Wright drove his guest to the local cemetery and discoursed about the graves.

"Your uncle must have been a Federal soldier," commented White.

"Not a bit of it," replied Wright. "He was a fire-eating Confederate! What made you think he was a Northerner?"

White pointed to the stars and stripes waving on the grave.

"Bless you, Doc," exclaimed Wright, "the old Rebs and the old Feds get together on the hotel porch here every May 30th, take snifters all around, and then tramp down the pike and stick Old Glory on all the graves!"

White choked. If there was that much emotion in the incident for him, he later reasoned, there could be for others if it were transposed into fiction.

So he used it as part of "The Little Faded Flag," which was made up of three true experiences he had heard from veterans of the Civil War. His agent never bothered to market it, posting it back to White with two criticisms: "If it were a story of possibly 3000 words it might be sold, but the idea does not seem to me sufficient to carry the length"; and "a great many Southerners are as bitter as they ever were." The second point, of course, was just what White was attempting to disprove, as he said in a later discussion with an editor: "I want to emphasize as much as possible the reason for hatred . . . in order to throw into relief the really astonishing quality of character capable of forgiveness after such an experience."

White submitted the ms. to the prestigious *Atlantic Monthly*; where it was immediately bought—though not, as usual, without conditions. White was astonished, and Reynolds admitted his judgement had been wrong. The conditions involved softening some rather grisly detail. During a charge, Union troops were shelled by Rebel artillery, and one Yankee soldier was mortally struck by a shell fragment. The narrator then continues: "But already, before I could reach him, while he was barely dead, a big black sow and her half-grown litter were gorging themselves on his warm vitals." For this the editor wanted to substitute: "But what I saw was already a loathesome carcass, not a man."

White capitulated, but added: "As to the sow and her litter I grieve at the idea of leaving them out. I have always had a leaning towards horrors. The tale of the sow and the litter I heard indeed at second hand and not from the man who saw the fact . . . he saw his chum die in that way in an early battle. He declared that the victim opened his eyes and gazed at him and died knowing what happened to him. Which extreme touch of utter horror I myself judged not magazineable. . . . (30)

"The Pigskin Belt" was dreamed in its entirety, White claimed. "I still tingle," he said, "at the recollection of the dream-horror as we leaned over the shape in the roadway and saw not an elegantly dressed woman a corpse, but a spotted leopard or panther. I thought so much of that plot that the form in which you have it is my third complete rewriting of it," he told a second literary agent he had later on. This third version was written in 1907. One of the other two, titled "The Yellow Belt," was among the mss. in his "Early Attempts at Short Stories" folder. It may have been the one written between 1890 and 1894 at The Willows, where he recited it to a young lady also vacationing there. The third version was returned to White by Reynolds after a couple of years as unsalable, and never saw print until appearing in *Lukundoo*. The two versions are very similar; indeed, some passages appear to be identically worded in both. But the last form

of the story provides motivations which are lacking in "The Yellow Belt."

(to be continued in the next issue)

NOTES

- (1) *Matrimony*, pp. 65, 172, 181-184; letter, E. L. White to Webber, Aug. 14, 1924.
- (2) Letter, Todd Gerry to E. L. White, May 23, 1927.
- (3) Letters, Thomas White to Kate White, Feb. 24, 1890 and Oct. 3, 1897.
- (4) Letter, E. L. White to Hannah Parker, Jan. 3, 1919.
- (5) Letters, E. L. White to Uncle Ned (Edward H. White), Oct. 4, 1906; Thomas White to Kate White, March 8, 1890.
- (6) *Matrimony*, pp. 72 and 190-191; letters, E. L. White to Dr. Price, Oct. 1, 1910; to Ethel White, July 9, 1917; to Uncle Ned (Edward H. White), Aug. 18, 1920; to Uncle Joe (Joseph A. White), Oct. 7, 1911.
- (7) Letter, E. L. White to (cousin) James Wells, June 29, 1915.
- (8) *Matrimony*, pp. 73 and 91.
- (9) Letters, Agnes White to E. L. White, Feb. 1904 and Apr. 26, 1904.
- (10) Letters, E. L. White to Carroll, Apr. 15, 1922; to Paul Lemperly, Sept. 28, 1917; to a typist, July 31, 1926; to Archibald Macmechan, Apr. 30, 1932; to Cousin James (Wells), June 29, 1915; to Lill, June 3, 1928.
- (11) E. L. White to United Railways Co., Apr. 11, 1908; to C. J. Dunn Co., Nov. 2, 1906.
- (12) Letters, E. L. White to Uncle Joe (Joseph A. White), ca. Apr., 1907; to Kate White, May 2, 1908.
- (13) Letters, E. L. White to Algernon Banks, May 11, 1924; to W. H. Boynton, Apr. 14, 1917.
- (14) Letter, E. L. White to Miss Fowler, Oct. 25, 1912.
- (15) Letter, E. L. White to H. G. Wells, Oct. 7, 1906.
- (16) Letters, E. L. White to [?], Apr. 26, 1919; to Taney [?], Nov. 3, 1932; to C. J. Webber, Feb. 18, 1922.
- (17) *Lukundoo*, p. 328; letters, E. L. White to Kitty, July 16, 1910; to Mrs. Lantz, Nov. 23, 1921; to Brand and Kirkpatrick, Oct. 29, 1923.
- (18) Letter, Paul R. Reynolds to E. L. White, Dec. 13, 1905.
- (19) It appeared in *Smith's Magazine*, Sept., 1906.
- (20) Letters, E. L. White to Kitty, July 16, 1910; to Ellen Calder, July 15, 1908; to Mr. Linn, July 20, 1908.
- (21) Letter, E. L. White to Maclean, Feb. 10, 1906.
- (22) It was published in the *New York Herald*, June 17, 1906.
- (23) *The Song of the Sirens*, pp. v-vi.
- (24) Letters, E. L. White to Paul R. Reynolds, May 25, 1907; to [?], Dec. 18, 1919; to the editor of *Sunset* magazine, Jan. 5, 1909. In magazine form the story was titled "The Man Who Had Seen Them."
- (25) Letters, E. L. White to Camilla Boone, July 12, 1927; to Miss Phillips, Sept. 29, 1917; to C. J. Webber, Feb. 18, 1922; to Meredith Nicholson, Apr. 30, 1907; to the editor of *The Bellman*, May 4, 1907; Paul R. Reynolds to E. L. White, Apr. 22, 1907. "Amina" appeared in *The Bellman* for June 1, 1907.
- (26) *The Song of the Sirens*, p. vi; letters, E. L. White to Mr. Linn, July 24, 1908; to Esther Phillips, Oct. 25, 1919; to Kitty, Dec. 18, 1909; to Paul R. Reynolds, Feb. 11, 1911; to the editor of *Young's Magazine*, Sep. 17, 1910; Paul R. Reynolds to E. L. White, May 19, 1910.
- (27) "Notes on the Writing of Weird Fiction" by H. P. Lovecraft; letters, Paul R. Reynolds to E. L. White, Dec. 5, 1907; E. L. White to Archibald Macmechan, March 17, 1928; to Camilla Boone, July 12, 1927.

- (28) *Lukundoo*, p.327.
(29) Letters. E. L. White to Mr. Field, Nov. 10, 1911; to Alice Hancock, Apr. 17, 1927; editor of *Sunset* magazine to E. L. White, Oct. 30, 1911.
(30) Letters, E. L. White to [?], Aug. 25, 1923; to Calder, July 15, 1908; to the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Nov. 16, 1907; Paul R. Reynolds to E. L. White, Dec. 5, 1907.
(31) Letters, E. L. White to Brandt and Kirkpatrick, Jan. 20, 1924; to Susan, March 24, 1927.

—oOo—

Alien

Somewhere in the galaxy
Before the earth's first morn,
The molecules to make me
Combined—and I was born.

I enveloped every quantum,
Absorbed each grain of dust,
Drank in every photon,
Savored each cosmic gust.

Afloat celestial eddies
In the curved arms of space-time,
My solitary drifting
Began from clime to clime.

Millenia slowly took me
On a path towards the faintest star
Seeking others like me,
Signalling afar.

Probing every planet,
Sounding every sun,
Scanning every nova—
Companions there were none.

As I grow old I wonder
Shall I be still alone
When my atoms part and scatter,
Are again through the cosmos blown?

When like all living beings
I fall to entropy
Will none know I existed
Throughout eternity?

I call but hear no answer;
If you can feel me, speak;
Before along empty parsecs
My lonely way I seek.

—Lee Becker.

'Plus Ultra'

An Unknown Science-Fiction Utopia

by *A. LANGLEY SEARLES*

Part III

IV

As we have seen, Edward Lucas White's gigantic unpublished Utopia, describing life as he visualized it in 50,000 A.D., is divided into five parts. The first of these, "From Beyond the Stars," most of which he wrote in 1919, is introductory, and rationalizes the rest of the work. The other four parts, totalling some 315,000 words, are collectively titled "The Promise of the Future," and were written during the summers of 1928-1932. In the previous installment of this article I dealt with part two (some 75,000 words) of this, which gives an overview of the world as White felt it would exist. Here I shall deal with part three; this portrays the actual working of future society at what he believed would surely be "its acme of individual and collective felicity."

Chapter 16, "The Walls" (written Sept. 7-9, 1928)

Here the types and construction of retaining and boundary walls are described. Many miles of walls are required for flood and drainage control, especially since most arable land is extensively terraced.

Chapter, 17, "Habitations" (written Sept. 9-10, 1928)

The mass of mankind lives in pueblos, each housing about 3000 inhabitants. Their height and construction varies according to geological conditions; 800-1000 feet high preferentially, but one-story and cellarless in earthquake regions. Separate towers in each pueblo accomodate different activities—there are

sleeping towers, eating towers, play towers for holidays, etc. Two- and three-town pueblos exist, with dumb-bell- or Y-shaped buildings. Four-towered pueblos are usually in the shape of squares with towers at the corners and enclosing a quadrangle, although H- and E-shaped structures also exist.

Chapter 18, "Urban Homes and Palaces"
(written July 26-Aug. 5, 1929)

Urban pueblos are largely residential, excluding most industry. They provide facilities for eating, sleeping, sociability. Comfort while sleeping is considered very important. In temperate zones a single person would occupy a cubicle nine feet high by six wide by twelve long, with an inner door at one end opposite a window equipped with a device to keep out air, rain and light when desired. The floor is of wood, walls and ceiling finished with dust-shedding enamel, and all room corners are curved. The furnishings consist of a cot, two chairs, and hooks for clothing; there is a dressing room and bath adjoining. The proper temperature is maintained by heating and cooling devices and insulation. In the tropics cubicles are larger, and near the poles smaller.

Facilities for couples and families are much more commodious; an urban family of four would typically occupy a suite of 23-25 rooms.

Higher classes have retinues and two dwellings (in the country and the city) since all classes believe that the duties of sovereignty overtax the constitution and demand these amenities. The nobility possess some 146,000 edifices for their use alone. "Sovereigns customarily abdicate at the first signs of senescence and mostly live hale though leisurely for two or even three decades" thereafter.

Chapter 19, "Towns and Cities"
(written Aug. 6 - 17, 1929)

Modernized traffic methods have determined the location and planning of all cities and towns. By 2000 A.D. "traffic had become the major factor and residential uses a minor consideration. . . every town and city on earth had to be redesigned and rebuilt in conformity with the demands of swift traffic in great volume. . . . The gigantic task occupied much of mankind's energies for fully ten thousand years." Parking problems for cars is foreseen: "Every such town or city has to consider first facilities for anchorage, wharfage, dockage, storage, truckage, garage and aviage." The air is the concern of the world government, and its use as a transportation medium cannot be constrained. Detailed plans for cities and their facilities are given.

Chapter 20, "Public Buildings"
(written Aug. 17 - 28, 1929)

All of these are oriented so as to exclude afternoon sunlight, which is held responsible for bungled work, irritability of temperament, etc. Descriptions of the construction of amphitheatres, race tracks, traffic terminals, state capitols are given in detail. The largest stadia hold 500,000 people.

Chapter 21, "Ornamental Structures"
(written Aug. 6 - 8, 10, 30 and 31, 1929)

Over a million sheerly ornamental structures of no utility whatever adorn cities and landscapes. There are fifty distinct types, and altogether more than 10,000 recognized varieties of these. White lists and describes 24 architectural patterns for them: Campaniles, donjons, gapurams, minars, minarets, obelisks, pagodas, pailols, pharoses, propylons, pylons, Russian and Swedish spires, steeples, teocalli, topes, torans, toris, towers, triumphal arches. ziggurats and reservoir towers. The less familiar ones are particularized in detail.

Chapter 22, "Architecture"
(written Sept. 3-4, 1929)

The style employed is determined by the region—thus White speaks of torrid, tropic, mild and cold climate architectures. These styles are modified by tendencies of regions to be prone to earthquakes or tornados. There seems to be a preference for cantilevering, and decorative colors are widely used.

Part three is the shortest one in *Plus Ultra*, and my remarks on it will be correspondingly brief. White's own eye-trouble is certainly reflected in his remarks on the quality of afternoon sunlight in chapter 20. I am therefore surprised that he makes so few provisions for lighting in chapter 18; I should have expected quite detailed descriptions there. I should also have expected him to specify some storage area in his cubicle, particularly for books. But his views on traffic problems (which, as usually happens, have overtaken us more quickly than he foresaw) seem thoroughly sound, and his suiting architectural structure to local climate (which in his time was only beginning to be realized a *sine qua non* of design) eminently clear-sighted. These chapters continue the optimistic outlook of earlier ones. It is refreshing, in these dystopian times, to read that an intelligent and practical realist could predict for blundering humanity so optimistically bright a future.

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Book Reviews

SCIENCE FICTION IN OLD SAN FRANCISCO: Volume I, History of the Movement from 1854 to 1890 by Sam Moskowitz; volume II, Into the Sun and Other Stories by Robert Duncan Milne, selected and with an introduction by Sam Moskowitz and five illustrations by Ned Dameron. 255 and 253 pp. 23.5 cm. Each volume \$15.00.

Watching playing seals from the Anglesea cliffs; a schoolmaster's son lending his friend George Chapman's translation of Homer; yes, perhaps even Edward Gibbon's visit to Rome in 1764—such chance geneses of notable works all came to my mind as I scanned these two books. What incident, I wondered, brought them into being? Was it the same one that initiated *The Crystal Man*, *Science Fiction by Gaslight*, *Under the Moons of Mars* and *The Raid of Le Vengeur*, Moskowitz's earlier landmark contributions to the history of the field? Not quite, I found on asking him. "I wondered what had happened to science-fiction in America from the time of the Civil War to Edward Bellamy," he said. "There are so few titles known from that period. But I felt intuitively that there couldn't be any discontinuity, that people must still have been writing science-fiction then. Their stories simply hadn't been found. So I decided to look for them."

Their unearthing and publication have been fraught with difficulties, needing the better part of a decade. And the research has been expensive; I wonder how many other historians would have been willing to spend several thousand dollars to get needed information even if they could have afforded to. You will find a little of this background in the preface to volume I, and elsewhere in this issue (pp. 195-200 and 256-257) Joseph Wrzos, who was involved in the project from the beginning, fills in most of the rest of it, and describes Milne's stories from volume II. I shall therefore say no more about either here, but instead devote this review to consideration of volume I.

Moskowitz traces fantasy on the West Coast back to 1854, when *The Pioneer*, San Francisco's first true magazine, serialized a story by Ferdinand Ewer (1826-1885) which described communication with the dead. Many leading spiritualists of the day were convinced it was true, and reprinted it several times. Ewer even wrote a sequel to it. The question of its authenticity got both works, their author and promoters nationwide publicity. The importance of these stories to the mainstream of science-fiction is twofold. First, whether or not Ewer intended to perpetuate a hoax, his stories do follow the tradition exemplified by Locke's moon hoax of 1835, Poe's balloon hoax of 1844, and those of William Rhodes ("Caxton") in the later 1870's. Second, they demonstrate the inextricable linkage of science-fiction to fantasy and the supernatural that has persisted through the centuries to the present day. Dividing lines among these three categories have always been blurred; what is wishful thinking or fantasy in one decade may turn into science-fiction or actual accomplishment in the next.

Moskowitz fills in transitional background here, describing scientific experimentation in California, mostly in the realm of powered aircraft, and cites "The Diamond-Maker of Sacramento" by Noah Brooks, published in *The Overland Monthly* in July, 1868, as probably the first true example of science-fiction to appear in the area. Brooks (1830-1903) was a well known author of boys' stories and a popular contributor to leading periodicals of the time; he also wrote "The Haunted Valley," which blends fantasy and the supernatural. In its life-span of a little over seven years *The Overland Monthly* printed only one more story in the field, however, Harwood Lathrop's tale of the future, "A Pioneer of 1920," which appeared in 1870. Moskowitz suggests this may have been because Bret Harte, one of its three editors (Brooks was another), preferred down-to-earth regionalism; a number of his own famous stories of this kind, "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" and "The Luck of the Roaring Camp," for example, were first published here.* So was Ambrose Bierce's first fiction "The Haunted Valley," which appeared anonymously in 1871, and the magazine also provides us with a link to the East, for one of its regular contributors was Leonard Kip, author of *Hannibal's Man* (a collection of science-fiction, fantasy and supernatural tales published in Albany, N. Y. in 1878).**

From here the pace quickens as William Henry Rhodes (1822-1876) comes on the scene. It has been claimed that he wrote science-fiction as early as 1844, while a student at Harvard, but the first example that has actually been authenticated is "The Case of Summerfield," which appeared in *The Sacramento Daily News* on May 13, 1871. This is a scientific hoax about a chemical that can ignite water. It garnered immense publicity, was widely reprinted, and proved but the first of many examples of fantastic fiction written in his lifetime. These, fortunately, were collected into *Caxton's Book* (1876), a title still in print today.

Because in those days no California newspaper published a Sunday edition, little appeared in print about art, music, the theater and the literary world. To remedy this the *Argonaut* was founded in early 1877. This weekly tabloid of sixteen pages dealt not only with the arts, but had editorial, society, and correspondence columns. Every number also had a story, and they included tales of fantasy, horror, the supernatural and science-fiction. Along with that of lesser known and anonymous writers we find work of Ambrose Bierce and Frances Dawson (1851-1926), much of whose work in the field has been collected into the volume *The Interant House and Other Stories* (1896). And, beginning in early 1878, we see here for the

*I think there may be more behind the editorial policy than this, however, because Harte left for the East Coast in 1871, and *The Overland Monthly* did not cease publication until December, 1875.

**This book was reviewed in *Fantasy Commentator* I, 139 and 159 (1945).

first time the name of Robert Duncan Milne (1844-1899), who became California's leading writer of science-fiction.

Milne was born in a well-to-do Scottish family, and received a thorough classical education. We are told about his family—I marvel here at the tortuous paths that must have been pursued to get all this information—his adolescence and early manhood. By all evidence he had a brilliant mind; not only was he proficient in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, but at home as well in the sciences and their practical application. He came to America some time between 1865 and 1873, and was drawn to San Francisco by the Mechanics Institute Fair of August, 1874, where he displayed a working model of a rotary steam engine he himself invented. Milne also had one great weakness: a fondness for alcohol. This weakness probably prevented his following a successful career; it certainly prevented his accessibility by posterity, catapulted him into the life of a peripatetic newspaperman, and eventually caused his death.*

Despite this handicap Moskowitz shows that he became the center of an entire *school* of fantastic fiction writers, whose existence has never heretofore been suspected. Their efforts are described in detail, and Moskowitz also demonstrates cross-fertilization between them and writers in the genre elsewhere. Then for good measure he ties everything together by furnishing capsule histories of the periodicals and newspapers that were then flourishing. He has even unearthed photographs of many of these writers and their editors; the one of Milne is unique—no other of the man is known to exist.

With the groundwork above readers will be adequately prepared to follow this fascinating history independantly. I shall summarize no further, but instead let you all discover and enjoy the riches here for yourselves. Two thoughts, however, emerge from my own mind after reading this book.

First, how important it is, if an author wishes to be remembered, that his work appear in book form. Some people, somewhere, have always been aware of the contributions to the field of Bierce, Rhodes, Dawson, O'Brien and William C. Morrow (another important author of this period you will read about here) because their work has been collected in books. Those writers who are obscure, or who drop from sight entirely, are those whose work appeared only in magazines and in newspapers—such as Mitchell and Milne. The supreme irony here is that Milne himself wanted to publish his work in book form, and was provided with funds to do so—only to squander them on an extensive drinking bout instead.

Second, how important newspapers have proved themselves to be to the history of science-fiction, and also how they shaped it for their own ends. I am not in the least surprised that science-fiction appeared there as hoaxes (when it seemed reasonable enough to be true) or pure and undisguised (when it was too sensational to be). And as has been pointed out, people who never owned a book in their entire lives never missed reading a daily paper in those days, and modern city life was "the greatest news story of the Nineteenth Century."**

I have only one complaint to level at volume I of *Science Fiction in Old San Francisco*. It needs an index, because (as usual) the amount of new information the author has crammed into it is amazing. Equally amazing to many people (though not to me) may be the interest and enthusiasm with which he communicates that information. This book will unquestionably remain an irreplaceable critical reference for years to come. Once more Sam Moskowitz has not simply revised the course of science-fiction historians—he has literally charted it for them.

*For a vivid account of the relationship between newspaper work and alcoholic beverages see H. L. Mencken, *Newspaper Days* (1941), pp. 178-192.

**Gunther Barth: *City People* (1981).

—A. Langley Searles.

THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA edited by Peter Nicholls, et al. Garden City, N. Y.: Dolphin Books, 1979. 25.5 cm. 672 pp. \$24.95 (hard-covered), \$12.95 (paper).

Even with its poor binding (that of the hardback is just as bad) this book is certainly worth the asking price. It has an introduction and glossary, and does a very good job on people, magazines, films, and many other themes. But with over thirty contributors helping to compile it, the vast number of factual errors it contains is astonishing. In my opinion this indicates that some contributors lack even the elementary rudiments of the expertise expected.

Let us take two simple examples, one trivial, one serious: In the section on Russian science-fiction, the book by Obruchev is titled *Sannikov Land* on page 511, but under "Obruchev" on page 434 it becomes *Sannikov's Land*. Since I own the book I know the first title is correct, but the ordinary reader will have to guess. And on page 74 the fan magazine *Bizarre* is listed as being edited by William L. Hamling. Again, my own copy lists the editors as Walter E. Marconette and J. Chapman Miske. Nor is there any notice that the magazine is printed and has a colored cover by Bok, plus material by a remarkable lineup of professionals. As I shall describe below, the entire section on fan magazines is unsatisfactory and gives very little information.

One could fill the entire review with a listing of errors and stupid conjectures in this book but that would not really do it justice. Error is endemic in this type of work, and one should simply try hard to reduce it to an acceptable minimum. On the other hand, some reviewers seemed astounded to find the book filled with so much information. What did they expect to see an encyclopedia filled with—apples and oranges?

The "people" entries seem usually well done, especially for the ones who returned the forms Nicholls sent out. However, one wonders why there is no entry for the first woman author to appear in a science-fiction magazine, Claire Winger Harris, while Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who has probably had entire libraries written about him and his works, deserves mention for his one short story in the genre, "The Dreams of a Ridiculous Man."

Treatment of the themes varies in value from worthless to superb. The one titled "Antigravity" (seven lines on page 38) is a prime example of the first sort. One's state of ignorance is the same after reading it as before. Such time- and space-wasters should be eliminated in all future editions.

Perhaps it is my own prejudice, but I get the impression from reading many of these themes that their presentation follows a standard format: An idea is traced back to some obscure French, British or even American source, there is a jump to the 1900's and the British periodicals (or maybe one of the Munsey magazines, or perhaps *The Blue Book*), and then, with a studied avoidance of the 1926-1939 period the theme goes to Campbell, Gold or Boucher, ending with a quick transition to the 1960's and 1970's. For a typical example check Brian Stableford's essay on "Hive-Minds" (pp. 287-288); there is not a single mention of David H. Keller's story, "The Human Termites."

Peter Nicholls's own essay on women (pp. 661-666) is truly excellent, although he too overlooks Harris; it shows some of the Johnny-come-latelies to our field that there were other pioneer females science-fiction writers beside C. L. Moore and Leigh Brackett. If anyone wishes to count the number of women listed in Donald Day's *Index to Science Fiction Magazines, 1926-1950*, he will find names of over seventy women among the 1500 people there. That works out to about 5%, which I suspect is probably pretty close to the percent of women readers that the magazines had during that period. People should not assume that the problems of one time and place are those of all times and places.

The encyclopedia's coverage of films, television, comics, etc. is excellent. Sometimes, however, an important observation is missing—for example,

the fact that "Things To Come," while a great critical success, was also a box-office flop.

Fan magazines seem to receive the worst coverage of any topic. Not a single American fan magazine of the 1930's is cited, and only one (*Fantasy-Times*, later *Science-Fiction Times*) from the 1940's. Nicholls states the concentration is on Hugo winners, but this is no excuse for omitting their important past history. And even with this limitation we get scanty and confusing information.

Take the magazine *Inside*, for instance. On page 308 we are told, "See *Riverside Quarterly*. Under that heading on page 499 we read that "... *RQ* formed a part continuation [whatever that means] of the fanzine *Inside*, which won a HUGO award in 1956." This leaves an entirely erroneous impression about *Inside*. Its first editor was Ron Smith, and during its career (1953-1958, as I recall) it incorporated several older titles such as *Science-Fiction Advertiser* and Bob Tucker's *Science Fiction Newsletter*.

This is by no means a unique example—*Yandro's* entry on page 668 has an almost brilliant lack of information. It may indeed be "one of the longest-running fanzines," but that doesn't tell us whether it has published ten issues, a hundred, or a thousand. (Actually there are something over 250.)

The bulk of the fan magazine entries were done by Peter Roberts. His expertise in this field surely needs no defense from me, but either by design or oversight he didn't bother to use much of it in this book. Fan magazine entries deserve the same care and attention as those for professional magazines; certainly they should list title (with all changes and mergings), editors, date of first issue, frequency of appearance and the number of issues published by some agreed upon date, along with some description of the format and contents.

The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction is a magnificent conception which falls short of true excellence in that most fundamental quality of all—accurate information. If future editions are printed with a critical culling of present errors and such supplementation as I have noted above, it would be able to take its place as one of the best references in our field.

—Edward Wood.

NICHOLLS: COMMENTS AND ERRATA

p. 27: *Amazing Science Stories* did not feature "stories reprinted from the Australian *Thrills, Inc.*, including two pirated from *Super Science Stories*." The two issues have, respectively, the contents of *Thrills, Inc.* nos. 2 and 3 respectively plus one story that appeared in *Super Science Stories*; but Pembertons, the publisher, had British rights to the contents of *Super Science* (and indeed produced fourteen issues of a British edition of it), so there is no reason to doubt that these stories were covered by their agreement. No pirating was involved.

p. 28: There is no mention of the "reissue" *Amazing Stories Quarterly* that appeared during two periods in the 1940's.

p. 29: *American Fiction* is not a magazine, merely a numbered series of pocketbooks.

p. 29: *American Science Fiction Magazine* is also (despite the title) not a magazine, but just a series of booklets. The reason for this apparent anomaly is that the publisher had specifically acquired book rights only, and couldn't openly issue a periodical. Near the end of his operation this agreement apparently changed, for he (we think it was a one-man operation) started *Selected Science Fiction Magazine* (cited on p. 535) which was at least numbered.

p. 46: Miles J. Breuer had only two stories in the Clayton *Astounding*, which hard-

ly makes him a "regular contributor."

p. 59: The description of René Barjavel's *La Nuit des Temps* is misleading: the work actually deals with two frozen survivors of a prehistoric culture revived into the present era, and probably owes quite a lot to Cox's *Out of the Silence*.

p. 59: "Green Hell," omitted from a collection of Arthur K. Barnes's Gerry Carlyle stories, is not in that series (though it does have the same Venus setting as the first of the series, "The Hothouse Planet").

p. 64: There are slight errors in the names of three Neil Bell novels. The correct titles are: *Who Walk in Fear*, *Three Pair of Heels* and *The Facts about Benjamin Crede*.

p. 75: Clark Ashton Smith contributed fiction to *The Black Cat*, not poetry.

p. 79: Our count of Hannes Bok's cover paintings for fantasy magazines is only 41; perhaps we have missed a few, but the total surely can't be 150, as cited here.

p. 90: The inference here that Howard V. Browne's artistic talents developed and matured in the fantasy field during the 1930's is totally wrong. He was an accepted artist and illustrator of considerable competence long before this. In the June, 1939 issue of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* he is stated to have "had covers and illustrations in almost every American magazine of any importance . . . his paintings have been accepted by the National Academy and have been displayed in many other exhibitions." He painted the cover for *Scientific American* for February 3, 1917, and about four dozen others for *The Electrical Experimenter* and *Science and Invention*. Oddly, most of his works for the pulps lacks perceptible signatures.

p. 130: The correct title is *Comet*, not *Comet Stories*. (How could this error have been made when a picture of the magazine is reproduced above the entry?)

p. 133: Under "Computers" the date of Edmond Hamilton's "The Metal Giants" is given as 1928 instead of 1926.

p. 143: Erle Cox's entry should be rewritten with corrections and expansion. His novel *Out of the Silence*, for example: It was serialized in *The Argus* from April 19 to October 25, 1919 before appearing in book form (Melbourne: Vidler, 1925); it wasn't expanded in the 1947 edition, but *cut* by 16,000 words. (British and U. S. editions were published in 1927 and 1928.) Finally, the threat is to the entire world, not just Australia.

p. 158: One wonders if de Camp's story "The Stolen Dormouse" (which Moskowitz suggested may have been the prototype for *The Space Merchants*) is not mentioned in order to accentuate the stature of the Pohl-Kornbluth novel, or (in keeping with what seems to be a general attitude of this encyclopedia) to belittle Moskowitz whenever possible.

p. 163: Lester Del Rey did not adopt the pseudonym Philip St. John in 1950 for his late work, but used it as early as 1939.

pp. 178-179: While the short story "Dr. Cyclops" was written by Henry Kuttner and published under that name, the novel *Dr. Cyclops* was the work of Charles Stoddard (an editor at *Thrilling Wonder Stories*), we believe, not Manly Wade Wellmen.

p. 192: "ELECTRICAL EXPERIMENTS" is a misprint for *The Electric Experimenter*.

p. 201: Bill Evans did a tremendous amount of bibliographical work during the 1940's and 1950's, not simply that for E. E. Smith's novels in 1966.

p. 201: I. O. Evans's most historic achievement, *The World of Tomorrow*, is never mentioned. This unique book was the first to reprint illustrations from science-

fiction magazines, anticipating by many years such books edited by Aldiss, Kyle, Frewin, Sadoul, etc.

p. 206: *Fanciful Tales* was a strictly amateur effort. (There is no such thing as a "semi-professional" publication: it's either sold commercially or it isn't.)

p. 207: The statement "it seems certain that neither Chandler nor Spillane actually wrote the stories credited to them" in *Fantastic* is dubious. "Professor Bingo's Snuff" is cited in Gardiner and Walker's *Raymond Chandler Speaking* (1962) as having been twice mentioned in letters by Chandler himself; it appeared during 1951 in *Park East Magazine* (U.S.) and *Go* (London) before *Fantastic* reprinted it.

p. 216: If Ralph Milne Farley is the pseudonym of Roger Hoar "for all his sf work" who wrote those two tales that *Amazing Stories* printed in 1938 by Lt. John Pease?

p. 222: *Virgil Finlay* and *The Book of Virgil Finlay* are described as portfolios; they are not—they are bound books.

p. 223: "F. Austin-BRITTEN" should read F. Britten-Austin (as correctly given on page 52 under the latter heading).

p. 225: The movie still shown is not from the 1936 serial film *Flash Gordon*, but rather from the later *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe*.

p. 225: Homer Eon Flint is said to have "often collaborated with" Austin Hall. If in mundane works, we hardly need to be told; but if it was on fantastic fiction—what was there, apart from *The Blind Spot*?

p. 248: Gosseyn, the hero of Van Vogt's *A* novels, is said to be "a pun on go sane as opposed to unsane." Our recollection is that Van Vogt stated he found the name somewhere, used it with no inkling of the punning interpretation, and later was quite surprised when the latter was pointed out to him.

p. 269: In light of some of the misstatements Peter Haining made in his picture-book *Terror!* and his anthology *Weird Tales* it does not seem correct to call him "an authority on pulp magazines, particularly *Weird Tales*."

p. 270: Austin Hall's "People of the Comet" did not appear in *Weird Tales* as "Hop o' My Thumb."

p. 282: J. K. Heydon is Australian, not British.

p. 340: Slater La Master was born in 1890.

p. 349: Murray Leinster once stated that his science-fiction was less than 5% of his writing output. This is worth citing not only because there is no inkling of his mundane work in Nicholls, but because it would seem to show Leinster wrote s-f for the love of it, not for lack of talent to sell to other markets. (Some of his early stories received mention in the annual O'Henry Awards volumes.) That he was an inventor of some brilliance isn't mentioned, either.

p. 265: The section devoted to H. P. Lovecraft is rather a mess. First, E. Hoffmann Price (with his middle name misspelled) is scarcely a Lovecraft "disciple," nor was he ever influenced "greatly" by him. He was far more successful in life than Lovecraft ever was, and was able to indulge expensive tastes such as collecting Oriental rugs. None of his stories shows any Lovecraft influence. Secondly, "The Colour out of Space" has no suggestion of the so-called Cthulhu Mythos in it. In fact, that ugly phrase was probably never known to Lovecraft, but seems to have been invented by Derleth and used to classify his stories after his death. (Lovecraft never wrote about any group of "Elder Gods" vanquishing Cthulhu and his allies, but writings of Derleth, Laney and Carter have created the impression that

that he did.) Arkham and its surrounding area are found in "The Colour out of Space," but they appear in a number of stories, including "Herbert West: Reanimator," which nobody claims is a Cthulhu Mythos story.

We also read here (and again on p. 482) that "The Shadow out of Time" was "severely cut" in its *Astounding Stories* appearance; it wasn't. And that Donald Wandrei was among the "most prominent" writers "who at some time adopted and occasionally developed HPL's mythic pattern"; he wasn't. Accounts of how Lovecraft's two stories were routed to *Astounding* have been fraught with contradictory details. What actually happened was this: Wandrei sent in "The Shadow out of Time," Julius Schwarz brought in "Mountains" personally, and Schwarz handled the business details for both, receiving payment and sending the proceeds (less his commission) to Lovecraft.

The British collection *The Haunter of the Dark* is called "the UK edition of *The Dunwich Horror and Others*"; actually it is a selection of stories from *The Best Supernatural Stories of H. P. Lovecraft* (1945).

pp. 384-385: The statement that the words "BINDING DELUXE" on the cover of *Marvel Tales* "appears to be a joke" would itself be amusing if it did not so clearly reveal the ignorance of the writer. "Binding Deluxe" is of course merely the title of a story featured in that issue of the magazine!

p. 394: The appearance of *A. Merritt's Fantasy* magazine did not, as implied here, have anything to do with Merritt's becoming wealthy. And the pamphlet *Through the Dragon Glass* was issued in 1933, not 1940.

p. 407: The title of C. L. Moore's story "Julhi" is misspelt.

p. 411-412: Sam Moskowitz has probably written more sound description and criticism of and on science-fiction than any other writer, and the very apparent prejudice against him here would be puzzling if it were not so offensively blatant. The claims that his work contains "many inaccuracies", is "hurried", or that he is guilty of "withholding his sources of information" are completely untrue. Nor is it clear why "humourless" (p. 146) is a relevant complaint about his prose; do Claeson and Franklin, for example, include jokes in their articles? If Peter Nicholls could write and edit as competently as Moskowitz, these pages of corrections would not be required.

p. 446: Raymond A. Palmer did indeed become editor of *Amazing Stories* in 1938. On p. 28, however, he is said to have done so in 1939.

p. 455: *The Earth Tube* appeared under the pseudonym of Gawain Edwards. Pendray, we believe, had a lot to do with the 1939 Time Capsule; this is surely one of the most interesting facets of his career, but nothing is said of it here.

p. 475: Shouldn't J. B. Priestley's non-fiction book *Man and Time* be mentioned?

p. 507: It is not true that Hubert Rogers "did very little work for other magazines" than s-f. He probably did more covers for them than for *Astounding*, having been active since the 1920's. He also did paintings for book-jackets of the small fantasy publishing houses. And if Rogers deserves an entry here, shouldn't William Timmins, who did about as many s-f covers, get one too?

p. 514: According to Heins's bibliography of Burroughs (p. 259), the correct name of this artist is James Allen St. John.

p. 521: *Science and Invention* used slick paper, and is therefore not a pulp magazine. It is also untrue that it "ceased publication after Gernsback's bankruptcy"; the magazine appeared without a break up to and including its August, 1931 issue (vol. 19, no. 4).

p. 524: The entry "SF IN THE CLASSROOM" is inaccurate and incomplete. The first college-level course in science-fiction was taught in 1953 at The City College of New York by Sam Moskowitz, not in 1961 by Hillegas and Franklin; in fact, several others preceded the latter. (This is another example of Nicholls's anti-Moskowitz prejudice cited earlier.) The early history of science-fiction in the classroom has been accurately set forth by Searles in *Essays in Arts and Sciences*, vol. IX, no. 2 (August, 1980), pp. 163 ff.

p. 525: The account of the sale of *Astounding Stories* is oversimplified. It was purchased from Clayton by T. Raymond Foley (later—if not then—partner of William Delaney, who acquired *Weird Tales* in 1938), and from Delaney by Street and Smith.

p. 538: Nicholls's "apocryphal tale of the [*Astounding*] writer who got away with mentioning a 'ball-bearing mousetrap' on one page, revealing on the next page the device: a tomcat" is not apocryphal at all; this weary old joke appears in George O. Smith's "Rat Race" (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, August, 1947).

p. 550: Clark Ashton Smith could not have sold a story to *The Overland Monthly*, for that periodical did not pay for contributions.

p. 552: The correct title for the Smith novel is *Second-Stage Lensmen*; the plural number is crucial to the plot (as Campbell indicated when announcing the story in late 1941).

p. 575: Leslie F. Stone is not a pseudonym, but the first married name of the woman; her maiden name was Leslie Rubinstein.

pp. 621-622: It is not true that the British edition of *Unknown* ceased publication because it ran out of stories from the U. S. edition to reprint.

p. 635: The correct title of Lem's story is "Are You There, Mr. James?"

p. 642: Contrary to the caption of the picture, there are several instances when Martians are visible in the film *War of the Worlds*.

p. 646: Weinbaum's *The New Adam* is told in the third person, not the first. Nor is *The Black Flame* a "fix-up"; its two stories appear in their original forms.

p. 651: Why is it assumed that Wesso is dead? (This comment applies to a number of other personal entries.) The contributors just haven't tried to get the facts.

p. 656: Williamson's story "The Alien Intelligence" is not unreprinted; it appeared in the 1951 *Wonder Story Annual*.

p. 666: Wright's *The Throne of Saturn* is not a variant title of *Beyond the Rim*, but rather *The New Gods Lead* with two stories (from *The Witchfinder*) added.

—T. G. Cockcroft and Graham Stone.

RIDDLEY WALKER by Russell Hoban. New York: Summit Books, 1981. 220 pp. 22.1 cm. \$12.95.

The after-the-holocaust theme is one of the most popular in science-fiction, and has long been used successfully. It can be traced back at least to 1886, when *After London* by Richard Jeffries was published. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud* (1901), Sutphen's *The Doomsman* (1906), London's *The Scarlet Plague* (1915), Shanks's *The People of the Ruins* (1919), Wright's *Deluge* (1927) and Vassos's *Ultimo* (1930) are among the other notable early novels using it. Nor has this theme been too weighty for shorter works: my own personal favorite happens to be a short sto-

ry by Stephen Vincent Benet, "By the Waters of Babylon." We find it even in poetry—Margaret Widdimer's "Ancient Lights," for instance.*

In the 1950's and 1960's, after nuclear weaponry had made it unnecessary for writers to ransack their imaginations for plausible *raisons d'être*, holocaust tales flourished as never before. Fact had caught up with fiction; now they were topical. Probably the most thoughtful of these was Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1960). Over the past decade, however, the theme has been in slow diminuendo, so Russell Hoban's novel has fewer competitors.

He places us about 2500 years in the future. Sometime shortly after 1997 the oft-predicted nuclear exchange finally occurred, reducing mankind to a hunting and gathering economy from which he has never recovered. Everything is described by young Riddley Walker, suddenly projected into adulthood by the death of his father. His microcosm is a few square miles along the southern shore of England near Canterbury ("Cambry")—by implication what the rest of the world is like as well. We have barely reached a feudal arrangement; tribes live behind log stockades and venture out only in groups to protect themselves from packs of marauding dogs. Below the cities, shunned places whose ruined buildings still show spalled white areas from atomic blasts, are the cellars of the Eusa folk—a minority group of blind and deformed mutants with rudimentary telepathic powers who share a strange, symbiotic existence with the rest of the population.

All are precariously controlled by a few officials and their bodyguards ("hevvies"). They have become the chief repository of history, which is handed down orally in the form of ritual rhymes and parables, much of whose meaning has been garbled or lost over the centuries. These officials travel from place to place, partly to show their presence and authority, partly to present their fable of the past in Punch and Judy fashion ("a Eusa show") with formal patter and puppets named Lil Addom and Eusa (whose connection with St. Eustace Hoban invokes but never clarifies). Local "connexion men" (Riddley succeeds his father to become one of these) interpret the shows' meanings to their tribes. The ultimate (and hopeless) goal is to translate this fable into concrete terms which will permit recreation of a nuclear weapon (the "burstyn fyr") and thus restoral of all the good things existing in man's lost civilization, when there were "boats in the air and picters in the wind." To this end much energy of the populace is devoted to excavating, dismantling and studying corroded and broken machinery, which is useless even for its metal, for mankind is no longer capable of metallurgy.

All this is told by Riddley in a language that is a garbled mixture of English slang (for example, gert = great) and words that Hoban thinks two millenia will bring into being. (There are some known rules for evolution of spoken sounds—Grimm's Law, for example—of which he seems quite unaware.) I shan't quarrel with the result, partly because an author ought to be granted some literary leeway, but mostly because the result is so eerily effective. (Perhaps the author's talent here is related to his having written books for children earlier in his career.) Hoban's strange vocabulary is wonderfully evocative, but I warn you that it takes some getting used to. (Parenthesized examples throughout this review should give some idea what it's like; much is roughly phonetic.)

The climax of the novel is the rediscovery and use of gunpowder (the "l littl l", as opposed to a nuclear device, the "l big l"). This probably symbolizes an inescapable repetition of the constant warring escalations of weapons and defenses in past history. That isn't a particularly original forecast, but it is told well in absorbing circumstantial detail. Unfortunately Hoban's ignorance of science here will grate harshly on knowledgable readers. He seems totally un-

*For a description of many works having this theme, see "Chaos," by Thyrril L. Ladd, *Fantasy Commentator* II, 99-101 (1947).

aware of how gunpowder is made. It takes far more than merely mixing together the right proportions of pure ingredients! To this I can testify personally from my own careful boyhood attempts at preparing it; my efforts led to material that would burn but never explode, and that is exactly what would have happened here, were Hoban's description followed. It is too bad he didn't bother to familiarize himself with the essential details of the process, because they could readily have been encompassed by making a few minor changes in the plot.

Two more things in this novel bothered me. First, the whole story we are reading has been written by Riddley on paper. But his culture cannot produce paper (Hoban's overlooking technology again!), and it is scarcely believable that any would be lying around intact after two thousand years. Second, Riddley is simply too canny, too mature, too all-knowing about some things for a twelve-year-old. Yes, I know that maturity to surroundings arrives more rapidly in simpler cultures, and I know how rapidly city children become street-wise—but I still feel that Hoban has overdrawn his character in this respect. (That he almost gets away with it shows how beautifully real he has made him, of course.)

How much faults like these will detract from your enjoyment of the work probably depends on how much scientific accuracy you're willing to sacrifice for the sake of a good story. For myself, I found its good qualities clearly predominated over such weak points. In fact, I found some of the scenes unforgettable—if the one on pages 99-101 doesn't raise your hackles you just aren't sensitive to fine writing.

On balance where does this leave us? I shouldn't call *Riddley Walker* a classic in the genre, or even the best exploitation of its theme, but still it is very, very fine. It's also probably the best science-fiction novel to appear so far this year.

— *A. Langley Searles.*

Driftwood

In the Greylands
 sleep the children of the dead,
 cradled in the belt of Orion.
 The gates of Horn
 open to receive their voyage;
 passing into the waters of Lethe
 their cosmic ship
 sails ever closer to the edge,
 where awaiting darkness swallows all.
 Time remembers
 their swift passage as a ripple
 stretching from one shore to another,
 on an ocean
 whose tides promise only to return
 them again into the crack of doom,
 where creation
 spits up the wreckage of their ship
 into the lap of future man.

— *B. Leilah Wendell.*

Tips on Tales

Short Reviews of Books Old and New

William Woolfolk's *The Sendai* (1981) is a "warning" novel about the results of misapplied genetic engineering—the creation of rapidly maturing humanoids with weak minds and strong backs to take over the world's routine physical work (this revelation takes up most of the book) and the creation of superintelligence (which disappointingly we hear little about). Most of the standard props are at hand: a brilliant but aberrant scientist, a not too bright but personable hero, his curvaceous girl-friend, and so on. The usual plot-twists and coincidences needed to provide suspense and rapid action are here too, and the writing-style is never individual enough either to enhance or take your mind off what is happening. Surprisingly, the whole is more enjoyable than the sum of its parts. The excitement builds rapidly, scientific and medical parlance seem accurate and are domesticated smoothly, and we are led eventually to a satisfying if unsurprising conclusion. Most people will find *The Sendai* pleasant, though not memorable enough ever to re-read; it provides a good way to spend an afternoon or evening on an undemanding TV level without turning on your set.

—Lincoln Van Rose

Hugh Lamb's *Victorian Nightmares* (1977): Once Sam Moskowitz showed in his *Science Fiction by Gaslight* (1968) that Victorian periodicals were a seminally rich source of fantastic fiction, his imitators promptly trooped in to mine it too. This may be a good thing, if only because it makes the period more accessible to both scholars and interested readers. Also, as reprintings mount they more and more come to represent *in toto* a true cross-section of the period rather than just its choicest morsels. Lamb has further widened the subject by collecting tales of terror, horror and the supernatural rather than only science-fiction. So far he has edited half a dozen volumes of these, the most recent and typical of which is *Victorian Nightmares*.

There are 21 stories here; nine are supernatural (three being of that unhappy variety claiming to be humorous), and the rest deal with horror, suspense, or the macabre. We see a few well known names such as Bierce, Bangs, de Maupassant, Marsh and Erckmann-Chatrain—mostly associated with work considerably below their best—but most of the other writers are seldom encountered, and a few may be totally unknown to most readers. Their work, too, is mediocre rather than outstanding.

Lamb apparently delved fairly deeply to research his authors. He appends a short literary biography of each which is particularly useful, and usually (though unfortunately not always) tells us where the stories used were found. His data are for the most part reliable, though the implication that Erckmann-Chatrain's weird fiction has never been available in English is not true, and he has somehow missed the original illustrated collection of Flaxman Low stories of 1899, for only the severely abridged 1916 edition of these is cited.

In his foreward Lamb states that these selections are either out of print or have seldom been anthologized; this is true, and is certainly a plus for

the collection. But he also claims it is untrue "that the Victorian ghost story and the tale of terror have now been thoroughly researched and the best examples all reprinted." Well, they may not have been thoroughly researched, but the cream of the crop certainly *are* well known. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than reading the examples here. I can pardon Lamb's enthusiasm for his subject, but in all honesty must state there isn't a single title in *Victorian Nightmares* (or, indeed, any of his other collections that I have seen) which can rank with the classic efforts of Le Fanu, James, Crawford or Lee.

This is not to say that most of Lamb's selections are not acceptable (they are) or that a few are not good. In the latter class are "The Ship that Saw a Ghost" by Frank Norris (whose writing is surprisingly modern), "Ghosts that Have Haunted Me" by John Kendrick Bangs (if we must read humorous supernatural stories this is probably one of the better ones) and Dick Donovan's "The Corpse Light" (which I have praised myself* although I cannot agree with Lamb's opinion of the rest of this author's work).

Aside from lack of intrinsic excellence, the chief fault in these stories is their prose. This is, not unexpectedly, quintessentially Victorian, with periphrasis cultivated as the epitome of literary excellence. To derive the most pleasure from them, therefore, you should not only be in a leisurely frame of mind but read them over an extended time rather than at a single sitting. There are worse ways to spend a few lazy summer afternoons.

—A. Langley Searles

The Best of Murray Leinster (1978) is one of about twenty "Best of . . ." paperback collections that Ballantine has issued under the Del Rey Book colophon. It contains thirteen stories, all of them competently written in the author's typical workmanlike style, and covering the period 1934-1956. None is of classic status. Ten are from *Astounding*, and they include the popular "Logic Named Joe," the greatly overrated "First Contact," and "The Fourth Dimensional Demonstrator," one of those rare, successful examples of humor in science-fiction. There is an example of his writing for the slicks ("Symbiosis" from *Collier's*), and a couple of entries from *Thrilling Wonder Stories* ("The Lonely Planet" and "Keyhole"), both fairly good. There is only one real dud in the book ("Critical Difference"). But annoyingly, what may be Leinster's finest story, "The Red Dust," is omitted. For some strange reason so are all his later contributions to the Munsey magazines, as well as his "Med Service" series.

Murray Leinster was chiefly concerned in his fiction with the man vs. nature theme, one aspect of which is problem-solving. Probably this accounts for his durability as a writer—he plied his trade successfully for over half a century. And as J. J. Pierce points out in his brief introduction, "The Dean of S-F," he "is still a good read." In the 1980's his best stories remain solid and satisfying, even if they lack the excitement they once had. I don't mind this; every so often it's nice to get out of the fast lane.

—Lincoln Van Rose

Marcus Paul Dare's *Unholy Relics and Other Uncanny Tales* (1947) continues the tradition of supernatural fiction that Messrs. Arnold & Co. of London has been perpetuating since M. R. James's *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904). Unhappily, it is the least successful book of them all. The foreword tells us why: the stories "are all founded upon actual experiences of the author in the realms of the uncann." Thus he usually concentrates more on merely relating an event than embodying its theme in well-constructed fiction. (This seems the common failing of most writers who are believers in the occult and supernatural, and a number of critics have pointed out that their work as a result seldom rises above a mediocre level.)

**Fantasy Commentator* I, 193 (1945).

Nor are matters helped any by interpolated remarks such as "had I only known what was to occur", "I wish I had not laid aside my work . . . for I might have prevented the tragedy", etc., which serve only to dilute what feeble climaxes these stories already have.

Most of Dare's themes are strictly traditional and familiar—spiritual revenants, revenge after death, haunted clothing or furniture and the like—and his supernatural agents range from malefic to merely quaint or fanciful. "Borgia Pomade" has the only fresh gambit in the collection—it is about an ancient jar that, when used for women's face-cream, brings about horrible changes on whoever applies it—but the inept development of this tale is exasperating. The theme of disease being supernaturally transmitted is not new, but it has not been used very often, and thus "Bring Out Your Dead" is also more moving than most other entries, but still serves to remind the reader of other writers who have handled it better. This is also true of "A Nun's Tragedy," where the crypt of a deserted church is being explored; I couldn't help remembering how much more effectively this had been done by Lovecraft in "The Haunter of the Dark."

Almost all the stories in *Unholy Relics* involve the same protagonists, two well-to-do bachelors who live in a restored British manor house and pursue various antiquarian and bibliographical researches that interest them. This does add a helpful Jamesian note to the "adventures" which befall them, but it is not enough to make any of them really meritorious. There are a baker's dozen of such stories in this slim volume.

—A. Langley Searles

Open House

Letters From Readers

We hear first from Norman Metcalf:

I very much enjoyed your article on Edward Lucas White's *Plus Ultra*. His Roumanian in "From Behind the Stars" seems to me modelled on the scientist Nikola Tesla (1856–1943). Both have Balkan backgrounds, were poor, and came to the United States with great inventions that would revolutionize technology looking for a wealthy patron. Have you read O'Neill's biography of Tesla? There might be more similarities between his life and the fictional Novaresco's than coincidence alone would account for. (*I have not been able to locate a copy of this biography as yet. Wetzel tells me he has seen no reference whatever to Tesla in the file of White's correspondence which he has examined.*)

About White and multiplexing: A German patent was issued for a duplex telegraph (to carry two messages simultaneously) in 1865, and Edison invented a quadruplex telegraph (for four) in 1874. Carson and Armstrong were independantly trying to adapt multiplexing to voice transmission about the time White wrote his novel. One wonders whether White was aware of this, or in isolation made the very same extrapolation that they did.

Did you have Arthur D. L. Smith's sequel to *Treasure Island* in mind when decrying the quality of sequels in your review of Friedell's *The Return of the Time Machine*? (*No, Harold Calahan's Back to Treasure Island [1935].*) As a general rule I'd say you're right; sequels shouldn't be written. (Van Vogt once told me that he has a rule of not more than one book-length sequel to anything.)

But there are some exceptions. Haggard sustained quality through several series, and Edgar Rice Burroughs managed to write several good sequels amongst a deluge of garbage (some of which must have been written tongue-in-cheekly for his market).

Joseph Wrzos comments further on Robert Duncan Milne:

Now that the literary cat is out of the bag with the publication of the first two volumes in Sam Moskowitz's *Science Fiction in Old San Francisco* series, it's time for the community of scholars to assess Sam's findings and judgments—and to get busy supplementing his work. Incredibly thorough as he has been (conducting his research a continent's breadth away), Sam has done all he could to excavate the bulk—if not all—of Milne's writings, both science-fiction and otherwise. But who knows what still may be found in other periodicals and newspapers in the area? Possibly more stories by Milne, some of them perhaps even better than those reprinted in *Into the Sun*. And what about the Robert Louis Stevenson—Robert Duncan Milne connection? Aside from the obituary Sam cites in volume one, is there really any *hard* evidence that Milne knew and helped Stevenson during his bleak months in 'Frisco? Questions such as these require the collaboration of all of us, especially those on the West Coast near any first sources. To give interested scholars a leg up, here is some background I deliberately excluded from my essay on Milne to keep it from collapsing under the weight of bibliographic detail.

The initiating source cited, Swanberg's *Citizen Hearst*, is no doubt readily available in most reputable library collections. Hart's memoirs, *In Our Second Century, from an Editor's Notebook* (San Francisco: The Pioneer Press, Publishers, 1931), may be less available. However, my local librarian, in a modest New Jersey suburb, had little difficulty arranging an inter-library loan; so I assume that major libraries either own a copy or know where to borrow one. *Argonaut Stories*, edited by Jerome A. Hart (San Francisco: Payot, Upham & Company, Agents for the Pacific Coast, 1906), will probably be more difficult to obtain, especially since (as Sam notes in volume one, page 216) it was issued *paperbound*, and hence probably not purchased by libraries out of the 'Frisco area, and also less likely to be collected. Yet paperbound or not, books find their niche: the copy I consulted (again through loan) was from the library of Princeton University.

Most difficult of all to read (although there is a copy in the New York Public Library) may be the "break-through" source which revealed many Milne titles, data which made it possible to locate them in back files of the *Argonaut* and other publications. This is *The Story of the Files* by Ella Sterling Cummins, a comprehensive history and review of Californian writers and literature that contains a wealth of "forgotten" lore on many others (such as Mark Twain and Bret Harte) not directly related to the Milne "school." This volume (published in 1893 and copyrighted that same year by the author) was "issued under the auspices of the World's Fair Commission of California, Columbian Exposition, 1893", and must give bibliographers chancing upon it nightmares. It blithely ignores bibliographic custom possibly because (though hardbound, printed on coated stock and 464 pages long) it may have been issued as a souvenir—admittedly a bulky one—at the Fair. To complicate things further, an advertisement in the back of my copy offers copies for sale from Cummins herself (at her Baker St., San Francisco address). The advertising copy describes the book as being "octavo, leatherette bound, poppy decoration, profusely illustrated, 450 pages, price \$2.00" Since my own copy has more than 450 pages, there must have been more than one printing; probably the increased pages are due to additional advertisements carried both in the front and back of the volume. No publisher is listed on the title page, nor is a copyright date given on the reverse side of the title-page. That page is devoted to what appears to be an advertisement for the Union Photo Engraving Co. of San Francisco, which not only provides designs and (photographic?) portraits but also shares the

same page with the Press of the Co-operative Printing Co. (also of San Francisco), who *may* have published this particular volume, since no other publisher's name is anywhere near. The publisher problem is *not* solved by looking at the spine of the book itself, for there we see (at the top) "Californian Story of the Files", and (at the bottom) "By Ella Sterling Cummins, 1893". Curioser and curioser!

Even more so is how I obtained my copy of this book. When I couldn't find one in the New York area, I wrote to my sister, who lived in a suburb of San Francisco, naturally assuming that she might locate it in one of the many second-hand bookstores or dealer-specialists that must make 'Frisco as exciting for Western collectors and scholars as New York is for those in the East. The result? You guessed it. Her local dealer did find a copy—but he got it from New York City! No wonder it's taken almost a century to discover Milne & Co.

Louis Russell Chauvenet writes:

Lee Becker's verse is much better this issue, but he perpetrates a blunder and perpetuates a myth in "Lost Boundary." No witches were burned in Salem, Mass. Those that were killed in the well-known hysteria were put to death otherwise, mainly by hanging. . . .

Eagle-eyed contributing editor T. G. Cockcroft also wrote to this effect, asking also if the word "chiral" in his sonnet "Echoes" should not have been "spiral"; to this Lee Becker replies:

Yes, I was aware of how executions in Salem were done, and as a matter of fact in an early draft of "Lost Boundary" line 12 was "Felt Salem's noose, felt flames from Rouen's pyre," or something like that. But this got changed into the more alliterative version you saw, which I felt was more effective. I suppose I could plead poetic license, but instead I'm going to ask both of you to reread the line as it stands and note that it *doesn't* state any witches were burned in Salem—you, its readers, *inferred* that. (With my help, admittedly!)

And in the other sonnet the word "chiral" is no slip. ("Spiral" would be too weak an adjective to employ here.) The word means having the quality of handedness (it's derived from the Greek *cheir*, hand); any helical shape (like some shells) can be left-handed or right-handed, i. e., have an object:mirror image relationship. I used the word to emphasize the shell's Earth-like familiarity in contrast to its alien ("non-Euclidean") quality.

My main reason for writing, however, is to say a few words about Stanton Coblentz's verse (as you asked me to!) on pages 214-217. (The second one, by the way, isn't a sonnet, strictly speaking, because it has fifteen lines.) All of these except the first (written in 1955) epitomize the fine efforts that were appearing regularly in this country as a poetic reaction to early aspects of space exploration—Sputnik (1957), Explorer I (1958), photographing the far side of the moon (1959), the first astronaut in orbit (1961), and so on. Most of it (including these ten sonnets) is to my mind much better than the great majority of verse I have seen in either fan or professional science-fiction magazines, and I think I can suggest a reason: writers for the latter have been too close to the subject too long. They see scientific achievements as confirmations or vindications of their own forward thinking; they miss the sense of wonder (if I may call it that) which these accomplishments bring to those who know less about their methodology. The latter perhaps view these achievements more romantically because their realization seems sudden and dramatic.

Anyway, my point is that a lot of good science-fiction verse has been published in what fans I think call mundane periodicals. I hope their reading this fine sampling by Coblentz will lead to more from the recent past appearing in fantasy periodicals, where readers might appreciate it most.

I have others I'd like to reprint if permission can be obtained. . . . From New Zealand T. G. Cockcroft writes:

Here's an additional note on Nicholls's *Encyclopedia*: It isn't correct to say that Buck Rogers was "transported 500 years into the future"—he simply *slept* (or perhaps more accurately was in in suspended animation) that long.

I've been looking again at Wetzel's article in *Fantasy Commentator* #29. In note 18 (p. 42) he lists the excerpts from Lovecraft letters published in its first issue among "Lovecraft pieces" contributed to *The Acolyte* by R. H. Barlow; but these are excerpts from letters to Laney's friend Duane Rimel—at that time Barlow had never heard of Laney.

Barlow apparently did receive a copy of the first *Acolyte*, for in the second (p. 2) Laney says he has "two unpublished [Lovecraft] articles . . . sent by R. H. Barlow, with a promise of more to come." Derleth probably did not see the first issue (if he had, he probably would have jumped on Laney for publishing parts of Lovecraft letters without permission), but he did see the second and third (see *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!*, pp. 16-17); and in *The Acolyte* #3 we read (p. 2) that "August Derleth has kindly given *The Acolyte* blanket permission to use anything by Lovecraft, provided we can also get permission from the original publishers." Surely this suggests that Derleth gave his permission before he had seen any issues—if as Laney says he got #2 and #3 together. Laney and Barlow could interpret this as covering anything (whether previously printed or not) Barlow put in Laney's hands.

Some years after all this I mentioned the appearance of "Notes for the Round Tower" and some other Lovecraft material in *Golden Atom* (which I thought he knew about) to Derleth. He expressed mild surprise (from which I inferred he had not known of it until I told him) but no annoyance; also he readily gave me permission to use the same notes in a publication I was planning.

I think it would be useful for historians to identify the stories that Bernard De Voto describes (but doesn't name) in his "Doom Beyond Jupiter" (p. 170-171 of that last *Commentator*). They are:

- ¶ one: "The Jewels from the Moon" by Ephriam Winiki
- ¶ two: "Warriors of Mars" by Arthur Tofte (I didn't recognize this one but Graham Stone was able to supply it)
- ¶ three: "The Mogu of Mars" by John Coleridge
- ¶ four: "Black Destroyer" by A. E. Van Vogt
- ¶ five: "Strange Creature" by Raymond Z. Gallun
- ¶ six: "Greater than Gods" by C. L. Moore

All appeared in just three magazines, which De Voto probably grabbed at the same time at a newsstand: *Astounding Science-Fiction* (July, 1939), *Amazing Stories* (August, 1939) and *Science Fiction* (August, 1939).

Contributing editor Lincoln Van Rose says:

There was enough critical comment in my review of Joshi's book on Lovecraft, so I left out an allied gripe I had of it: how could a prestigious university press publish such a collection in the first place? If there is no resident reader at Ohio University who can tell the difference between valuable scholarship and what will probably never amount to more than an entry on someone's *vita* can't mss. be reviewed by some outside authority on the subject who can?

Recently I've encountered a book which gives a plausible answer to my first question, *Fortune's Child* (1980) by Lewis H. Lapham. In "Guests of the Management," one of the essays in this fine collection, he remarks: "The trade and university presses produce more than 40,000 titles a year, and yet, judging by the shoddiness of the merchandise, the curiosity and judgment of the literate audience continue to decline." So, he might have added, does ability of editors.

(concluded on page 217)

"Voyagers Through Eternity"—continued from page 212

VII

ROBINSON CRUSOE AND CONTINENTAL SCIENCE - FICTION

Despite the extravagance of its imagination and the sharpness of its satire, it was not *Micromegas* which influenced writing of extravagant adventures on the continent, but primarily *Robinson Crusoe* and secondarily *Peter Wilkins*. Holland boasted within a few years' time many extraordinary voyages: *De Walchersche Robinson* (anonymous, 1752); *Gevalen Van Den Oude En Jongen Robinson* (anonymous, 1753); *De Vrouwelyke Cartouche of de doorsleepene Land en Zeeroofster, Behelzen-de Haare roekelooze en ongebondene Leevensloop* by Petrus Lievens (1756); *De Haag-sche Robinson of de Gevalen van Alexander* (anonymous, 1758); *De Wonderlyke Reis-gevalen van Maria Kinkons* (anonymous, 1759); and *Voyage de Robertson, aux Terres Australes, traduit sur le Manuscript Anglois* (anonymous, 1766).

Germany also was rich in such stories, publishing *Paul Wilhelm von Meerheim eines Obersächsischen Chymici glücklich vollführte nach denen unbekannten Ost- und Südwärts gelegenen Indianischen Inseln, von wannen derselbe nebst seiner Comeraden Glückliche und zur größten Freude seine Freunde retourniret ist, vielen zum Vernügen bekannt gemacht* by the pseudonymous Paul Wilhelm von Meerheim (1753); *Die Insul Charlotten-Burg und der darauf besindliche Herculsberg* (anonymous, 1753); *Des Malivischen Philosophen Robine and dessen Sohns und Nachfolgers Robinson Leben, Reisen, Thaten und Beheerschung der Philosophen-Insul* (anonymous, 1754); and *Seltsame Lebensgeschichte Zweyer Schwaben* by Otto Bernhard Verdion (1753).

The Polish kning Stanislas Leszczynski had a combination Robinsonade and Utopia titled *Conversation of a European with an Islander, Native of the Kingdom of Dumocala* (1752). A spate of French "science-fiction" works were propagandistic, their aim being to arouse people to the wrongs of government and lead them toward events which would culminate in revolution. *The Shipwreck of the Floating Islands* (1753) by a man known only as Morelly shows in its very title its debt to Defoe. The anonymous *Histoire d'un Peuple Nouveau, ou Découverte d'une Isle à 43* (1756) combines adventure with philosophical near-Utopian overtones; it particularly deserves mention because some argue that it is a posthumous work of Bernard Le Bouvier de Fontanelle (1657-1757). It was published in Geneva.

The persistence with which popular themes are repeated in science-fiction is underscored by the London-published *A Voyage to the World in the Centre of the Earth* (anonymous, 1755). The debt it owed to Holberg's earlier *Journey to the World Underground* is made particularly plain by its long subtitle: *an Account of the Manners, Customs, Laws, Government and Religion of the Inhabitants. Their Person and Habits described with several other Particulars. In which is introduced the History of the Inhabitants of the Air. Written by Himself. With some Account of the Planetary Worlds*. Data about the planetary worlds are obtained (with due acknowledgement) from the works of Godwin and de Bergerac. To domesticate everything even further, there are also references to Paltock's *Peter Wilkins*.

Does the pervasive adoption by writers in the Eighteenth Century of the otherworldly backgrounds of their predecessors and contemporaries seem incredible and blatant? Let the reader note how in science-fiction of our own times story-backgrounds have become standardized and bear monotonous resemblance to one another. Few modern authors bother to invent new types of space vehicles, significantly different formats for galactic worlds, or even different complexions for the future. So in reality we cannot deplore past practices without being hypocritical.

Ever since *The Odyssey* myth was being transmuted into science-fiction, and the process was taking place in the Eighteenth Century even as it is today. A typical example is that of the Wandering Jew. He first appears in chronicles of

the Thirteenth Century monk Roger of Wendover and his successor Matthew of Paris, although he was apparently not identified as a Jew until the early 1600's, when the myth began to be used as an anti-Semitic propaganda device. It was Matthew of Paris who coined the retort "Tarry thou 'til I come," supposedly spoken by an exhausted Christ to the shoemaker Joseph Cartaphilus, who refused to let him pause for a moment of rest while bearing his cross to Calvary. The myth was affirmed to be true by a number of popes, and stories of the Wanderer's actual appearance were reported at intervals.

The basis of the Wandering Jew's immortality was supernatural—a curse. Many of the powers with which he was invested and events that accompanied his presence were also supernatural. A blending of the Wandering Jew's supernatural qualities with science-fiction first occurred in *Man in the Moon*, written by Miles Wilson, a curate of Halton Gill, a village in Yorkshire, England. While descriptions of this story exist, no copy has ever been located, and its publication date is not known (though it must have preceded Wilson's second work, which is described below). Here the Wandering Jew, Israel Jobson, builds a ladder of wood and rope on which he climbs to the moon. There he finds living intelligent robots built of pot metal and kept in repair by coppersmiths.

His adventures continue in *The History of Israel Hobson, the Wandering Jew* (London, 1757). This time a chariot is used for space travel (Elijah's very own!), Jobson returning to the moon and seeing wars of the metal men. Now that he has a more advanced method of transportation he decides to take a look at the Martians in one of the earliest fictional visits to their planet on record. They turn out to have two sets of eyes; while one set sleeps the other studies the universe. Saturn is also visited, and while the inhabitants have but two eyes, one is at the front of their heads and the other at the back. The touring of several worlds, the postulation that the chariot is an anti-gravity machine, and the interesting incorporation of the Wandering Jew myth all make *The History of Israel Jobson* one of the most ambitious and important works of science-fiction of the Eighteenth Century.

The story of the Wandering Jew shows national variations, has persisted in fiction continuously, and still appears in modern times. Under the pseudonym of George Danzell, Nelson S. Bond tells of a spaceman, rescued from an asteroid, who proves to be the Wandering Jew, hoping that death had at last caught up with him. (22a) Wilson Tucker describes visitors from space who find only one man left alive on the planet—the Wandering Jew, then three thousand years old. (22b) And the most effective and memorable recent example is probably Walter Miller, Jr.'s use of the Wandering Jew as the superbly delineated character who binds together the episodes in his novel *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1960).

Interest in heavenly bodies other than the moon was also shown by the Swedish scientist and philosopher, Emanuel Swedenborg. Today he is remembered as inadvertant founder, through his writings, of a religious sect as The New Jerusalem Church or The New Church. An outstanding scientist granted nobility for his achievements, he abandoned his important governmental and scientific posts in 1747 after he began seeing visions, and thereafter devoted most of his time to metaphysics. During this later period he had published in Latin *The Earths in Our Solar System, which are called Planets, and the Earths in the Starry Heavens* (London, 1758). Although diluted by admixture of a spiritual element, this still represents another forward step in presenting concepts that move science-fiction further outward toward the planets and also posit (as had Voltaire's *Micromegas*) the more fundamental thought that other stars were suns circled by inhabitable worlds.

Naturally this would not deter presentation of voyages simply to the moon since it would be another two centuries until man in fact travelled there. Francis Gentleman used an attractor ray to draw an earthman to that satellite in

his *A Trip to the Moon* (York, 1764), freely admitting the device was attributable to his reading of Cyrano de Bergerac. And only a year earlier there had appeared a short volume which, while it did not deal with interplanetary topics, did explore two themes of fascinating potential, though the author failed to realize them fully. One was the history of the future, the second, the shape of future war. This volume was *The Reign of George VI, 1900-1925*; it appeared anonymously, probably because it might have been construed as Utopian criticism of the then-contemporary King George III. Victorious in wars with Russia and France, George VI is crowned emperor of France, Spain, Mexico and the Phillipines. The humanitarian, progressive policies he adopts create overall prosperity and he generously sees to it that some of the state's ship-building projects are contracted to the British dominions in North America, which by the 1920's have become flourishing colonies of some eleven million people. The book is cleanly and concisely written, but the author's utter lack of imagination caused him to miss a golden historical opportunity.

A no more positive attitude on progress is taken by Louis Sebastian Mercier, a French playwright and bastion of romanticism in the arts, with his *Memoirs of the Year 2,500* (Paris, 1771; translated into English 1772). Mercier did not subscribe to the notion that there would be technological advances. A few sociological and governmental problems are straightened out, but his placement of this accomplishment in the future instead of some lost Andean valley or an undiscovered warm zone in the Arctic seems happenstance. He has been termed a writer of the revolution—but in actuality he believed in censorship, bookburning, isolationism, rewriting history, and looked askance at the irreligious. The authors of both these books have received credit as futurists which they do not deserve.

Though also no futurist, Mercier's close friend Nicolas Edmé Restif de la Bretonne proved a far more imaginative and zestful writer. His *Southern Discovery by a Flying Man, or The French Daedalus* (1781) tells of the adventures of men who have built sets of wings which can effectively carry them aloft. The story is divided into three parts, of which the first two are good adventure and the third a rather tongue-in-cheek satirical Utopia. Bretonne's ideas of extraordinary restraints on sex by married couples contrasts vividly not only with his own life-style but with the pornographic novels whose writing was his livelihood.

An author who did not require stimulus of pornography to inspire his muse, but who could write simply from his own intimate experience, was Giacomo Girolamo Casanova di Seingalt. Through the intervening centuries Casanova's name has symbolized the epitome of masculine technique in inducing the willing compliance of the opposite sex, a reputation reinforced by the twelve volumes of memoirs he wrote near the end of his life. Like the writer, editor and publisher of modern times, whose autobiography *The Life and Loves of Frank Harris* continues to be a steady seller, he was a man of considerable achievement whose reputation rested on the public's desire to be titillated rather than informed. Following an education for the priesthood, Casanova's life was one of adventure and sensuality in which he nevertheless held many responsible posts and mingled with the great of his time. His last years (from 1785, when he was sixty, to his death in 1798) were spent in relative tranquillity as the secretary and librarian of his friend Count Waldstein in Dux Castle, Bohemia.

It was here, as a prelude to his memoirs, that he wrote the inadequately known science-fiction novel *Isocameron*, published in five volumes in Prague, 1788, and reprinted in Germany as *Edward and Elizabeth* (1922). Casanova gave as his inspiration for this novel the reading of Plato, Erasmus, Bacon, More, Campanella and Ludvig von Holberg. He hoped the work would make his literary reputation, and to give it an air of profundity he filled it with long philosophical asides and prefaced it with an introduction 150 pages long. But the readers of his day did not react with enthusiasm, and Casanova had to regard writing *Isocameron* as a sort

of warmup for his memoirs. A mild renewal of interest in Casanova occurred when Jules Verne restored science-fiction to new heights of popularity and two French critics, Lorédan Larchey in 1869 and Louis Dépret in 1877, wrote articles on *Iso- Cameron*, Dépret noting some resemblance between it and Verne's *Voyage to the Center of the Earth*.

As a matter of fact, Casanova had the makings of a good science-fiction writer; he was a competent story-teller and had a highly original and creative imagination. In an edition abridged to about a third of its length it appeared in Italy under the Lerici imprint as recently as 1960, and *L'Espresso* printed segments of this the same year. (23a) These in turn were translated into English and published in the United States in 1961, (23b) conceivably the only portions of the work ever to appear in English.

The story itself is of considerable interest. A man and a woman, Edward and Elizabeth, are aboard a ship sailing along the coast of Norway. Near the southern tip of Lofoten, by the isle of Muske, the vessel is drawn into a "maelstrondt." (24)

Casanova's protagonists are actually sealed in a very large lead coffin which is supplied with food, water and special equipment. It is equipped also with three thick lenses for viewing outside or, when loosened, for admitting air. This coffin is pulled by the maelstrom for untold miles towards the center of the earth. So deep does the trapped pair travel that they become weightless, floating about inside the box. (While it is accepted that the closer one gets to the center of the earth the lighter is one's weight, the resemblance of the lead box to a space ship is also worth noting.)

When the box finally stops moving it is under water. Swimming about it are intelligent, humanoid creatures about two feet high who are apparently bisexual. These creatures pipe air containing some substance of nutritive value in through one of the lens-holes, raise the box to the surface, and then, with what is called a "mercury acid", dissolve it. The lid of the box, pulled by the magnetic attraction of a molten iron globe which acts as a central sun, goes soaring off and disappears.

The "people" here are multi-colored, and have thirty balls of white cartilage in their mouths in place of teeth. They have an advanced civilization with giant apartment houses, some with 10,000 units, dug deep into the ground and artificially lighted by lamps filled with phosphorescent mercury. To the inhabitants of this underworld the universe above them is literally a heaven of soft mud and except for the central sun there is no other "heavenly body."

VIII

CANDIDE AND THE "SCHLEMIEL" AS SCIENTIST

Robinson Crusoe, though not itself a work of science-fiction, probably was one of the most far-reaching and continuous influences on the genre. So, too, was *Candide* of Voltaire, first published in 1759 in Paris. Its format parallels that of the savagely biting *Gulliver's Travels*, except that the lands visited can often be found on maps of the time. All subtleties are eschewed and bad taste is sometimes deliberately injected to demonstrate that the world can be rather unpleasant—the very opposite of the belief "all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds."

To show with what unexpectedness the best laid plans can be dashed and how circumstances can perversely affect the tide of events, Voltaire stretches contrivance and coincidence to the unartistic point of artificiality. However, the story of a luckless protagonist moving from venture to venture and place to place with misfortune constantly dogging him has become a permanent part of fantastic literature. Tales of hapless inventors whose every device goes wrong and

who always end up in confusion and misery are particularly popular in science-fiction. They are epitomized by the term "schlemiel" (25) in Yiddish or "pechvogel" in German.

Thus in the late Nineteenth Century we see a series of stories about Bulger Boom, an inventor who is almost destroyed by his airships, chicken-pluckers, incubators and horseless carriages (26). In more modern times there are the Hawkins series of Edgar Franklin, (27) the Professor Jonkens by Howard R. Garis, (28) Jacques Morgan's "Scientific Adventures of Mr. Fosdick (29) and the ingenious (and ingenuous!) exploits of Dr. Hackensaw by Clement Fezandié. (30) These last two series appeared in periodicals published by Hugo Gernsback, who was later to bring out the world's first science-fiction magazine; and as a seventeen-year-old Gernsback had himself written in German a still-unpublished novel titled *Ein Pechvogel*, which tells of the misfortunes of a young man seeking to make his fortune from such things as solar power and umbrella-dispensing machines with no better luck than Candide.

The influence of *Candide* was soon evident. *Adventures Philosophiques A. Tonquin* by Jean Gaspard Dubois-Fontanelle, an extraordinary voyage published in 1766, has several times been cited for its similarity to *Candide*. This is particularly evident when sardonic humor is injected into the story.

In order to follow the course of science-fiction adequately through the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century one must be a linguist as well as a bibliographer and literary historian. Relevant titles appeared in virtually every important country of Europe, most frequently inspired by the work of Swift and Defoe. The literary world was a bit shaken, however, when the four-volume set titled *Wasabiyawwe, the Japanese Gulliver* was translated into English by Basil H. Chamberlain in Japan in 1744. (31) At first this was cited as an example of the far-reaching influence of Swift, but since its author remains anonymous and his work is far less imaginative than Swift's, it may actually predate any European counterpart. Certainly the literary implications of either interpretation warrant further exploration.

The inspiration given fiction writers by the ascent of the first practical hot-air balloon by the Montgolfier brothers at Annonay, France, on June 5, 1783 was almost instantly observable. Using the device as a political tool, an anonymous pamphleteer masquerading under the name "Vivenair" published in 1784 *A Journey lately performed through the Air, in an Aerostatic Globe... to the newly discovered Planet Georgium Sidus*. It is quite likely that this is the first interplanetary story where a space traveller lands on an asteroid, for Georgium Sidus has bonafide recorded existence. From it an adventurer observes the Earth as a globe, and faults astronomers for greatly underestimating the reach of its atmosphere. He further corrects the supposedly great distance that Georgium Sidus is believed to be from Earth, and attributes that error to the planetoid's very small size, which lends the false illusion of great distance. The people on Georgium Sidus are of great size and have faces on both sides of their head. Their world does not revolve, one side remaining constantly light and the other dark. Their actions and customs prove to be a readable if not very remarkable satire on the British parliamentary system. When refused permission to visit the dark side of the planet, our adventurer launches his balloon and floats home.

Only by courtesy can *The Aerostatic Spy*, which appeared anonymously in two volumes in London in 1785, be considered science-fiction. Floating from country to country in a hot-air balloon was then a novel way of conducting a travelogue; but had the author been more interested in his method of travel as a means of adventure than as a literary device for delivering a lecture on international mores, science-fiction history might have been changed: he could have preempted Edgar Allan Poe's balloon hoax of a voyage across the Atlantic (1844), and Jules Verne would then not have been inspired by that work to write *Five Weeks in a Bal-*

loon (1863), which would launch him to fame and fortune as the world's greatest science-fiction writer until the appearance of H. G. Wells.

In 1785 there also appeared Rudolph Erich Raspe's *Adventures of Baron Munchhausen*. This remarkable collection contains many elements found in the extraordinary voyage, including an adventure on the moon. There actually was a Hieronymous Karl Friedrich von Münchhausen, a German who served as an officer in the Russian army, who was renowned for the imaginative "exploits" he conjured up to entertain his guests, and Raspe is believed to have adopted his name for these stories. But he apparently got the idea of collecting them into a book by reading about the Scottish explorer James Bruce's travels in Africa, and it is to Bruce that *The Adventures of Baron Munchhausen* is dedicated.

Although he held responsible positions as Professor of Archeology and curator of a museum in Kassel, Germany, he appears as a rather shifty character. He was accused of stealing and selling medals from the museum's collection, and to escape the law left Germany for England in 1775. A reference in *Gentleman's Magazine* describes him as a storekeeper at Dolcoath Mine in Cornwall.

Because Raspe was German, many still think that that the Munchhausen stories appeared initially in Germany, but their first printing actually was in England. The only ones from what today is available as the "complete" collection of Munchhausen stories to appear in that first edition are numbers two through six. The initial German printing did not come out until 1786; it was added to and translated by the poet Gottfried August Burger, and bore the title *Wunderbare Reisen zu Wasser und Lande, Feldzüge und lustige Abenteuer des Freyherrn von Münchhausen, wie er dieselben bei der Flasche in Cirkel seiner Freunde selbst zu erzählen pflegt*. It was through a biography of Burger, printed in 1824, that the true identity of the protagonist in the book was finally revealed.

The moon voyage appears in chapter five, and is clearly written tongue-in-cheekly. The Baron throws an ax at two bears trying to rob bees of honey with such force that it overcomes gravity and fastens itself on one of the horns of the moon. To retrieve it, he plants turkey beans, which grow so fast that they reach the same spot. (This is obviously a variant of the old German Jack-and-the-beanstalk legend.) The Baron then climbs the beanstalk to the moon. Its silvery brightness makes it difficult for him to find the axe. By the time he does, the beanstalk has so dried up that it cannot support his weight. So he gathers straw and twists it into a rope on which he descends by chopping off lengths of "the now useless end of the upper part, which, when tied to the lower end, brought me a good deal lower." By this repeated cutting and splicing he returns to earth.

This is the only moon sequence Raspe wrote, but his followers could not resist the temptation to add to these loosely connected tall tales, and by the time a seventh edition appeared under the title *Gulliver Revived: or, the Vice of Lying properly exposed* (1793) it had another chapter on a return to the moon. The device used this time is that of Lucian—a hurricane seizes an ocean vessel and carries it aloft there. On the moon live giants who ride as mounts gigantic griffins with three heads. All life forms are proportionately larger, as in the second part of *Gulliver's Travels*; Lunarians, for example, are 36 feet tall. They have wars with people of the sun and visitors from the distant star Sirius, who have eyes at the end of their nose, and when asleep cover them with their tongue. The Lunarians eat by opening a portal in their side, inserting a fully cooked meal, and then closing it while digestion takes place. Lunarians grow on trees: these produce a fruit which, when boiled and opened, reveals a baby, its occupational tendencies already determined. Lunarians can carry their heads around in their hands, or, if they wish, leave them at home. When the moon-people grow old, they dissolve in a puff of smoke.

It is this last chapter which gives Baron Munchhausen ranking as an in-

fluence on science-fiction, though no one pretends its intent is anything but far-cical. Because of these two moon sequences Baron Munchausen has become a symbol of space exploration, just as have Cyrano de Bergerac and Jules Verne. An *avant garde* 1961 Czech moving picture, *Baron Prášil*, has the first astronaut encounter all three when he lands on the moon.

Although there have been many editions published, none actually is complete. Nor are the authors of all the Baron's later exploits known. Sometimes these have been written by prominent names. In the Nineteenth Century that master of the macabre, Théophile Gautier, added some of his own tales in a special edition he edited. (32) Many new adventures appeared in this century. Two Sunday editions of *The New York Journal*, for example, carried the unattributed satire "Marvellous Adventures of a Modern Munchausen at the South Pole," (33) which combined ingenuity of transport with wit; stilts, balloons and gliders were among the means used to traverse the Antarctic wastes. The ubiquitous Hugo Gernsback also penned a series called *Baron Munchhausen's New Scientific Adventures*; he completed thirteen of these, all of them science-fiction. (34) They begin with the Baron helping the allies capture Berlin during World War I, return him again to the moon, and finally take him to the planet Mars for a comprehensive tour that describes every facet of a Percival Lowell-type civilization flourishing there.

(to be continued)

NOTES

- (20) For example, Athanasius Kircher's *Mundus Subterraneus* (1665); *Account of a Journey from the Arctic Pole to the Antarctic Pole through the Center of the Earth* (1721) by an anonymous French author; and *Lamekis, ou Voyages Extraordinaires d'un Egyptien dans la Terre Interieure* (1735-1737) by Chevalier Mouhy.
- (21) Vol. 7, part 1 (1823).
- (22) (a) "The Castaway"; *Planet Stories*, Winter, 1940.
(b) "The Planet King"; *Galaxy Science Fiction*, October, 1959.
- (23) (a) In its editions of Nov. 24 and Dec. 4, 1960.
(b) *Atlas*, March and April, 1961 issues.
- (24) Striking thematic and geographical parallels exist between this and Poe's "A Descent into the Maelström" (where the site is near the island of "Moskoe"), and an episode in Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1869) (where Captain Nemo's submarine is caught in a maelstrom off the island of Lofoten).
- (25) The term was popularized by the name of the protagonist in Adelbert von Chamisso's novel *Peter Schlimihls wundersame Geschichte* (1814).
- (26) These were written by "Bricktop", a pseudonym of George C. Small, and collected as *Bulger Boom, the Inventor* in special no. 23 of *Wide Awake Library* (Sept. 29, 1884).
- (27) Franklin is the pseudonym of Edgar F. Stearns; twelve of these stories (not all that he wrote) are collected in *Mr. Hawkins' Humorous Adventures* (1904).
- (28) These began in *The Argosy* for Aug., 1905.
- (29) Introduced in *Modern Electrics* for Oct., 1912.
- (30) Beginning in *Science and Invention* for May, 1921.
- (31) An American edition eventually appeared in 1879 (New York, Appleton & Co.).
- (32) This was translated into English and published by Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co. with illustrations by Gustave Doré; this London printing, while undated, probably appeared before Gautier's death in 1872.
- (33) April 7 and 14, 1901.
- (34) They appeared in *The Electric Experimenter* starting with the May, 1915 issue.

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